

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.

25 June 1987

**2. University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-time students are enrolled at the University College of the Northern Territory?
2. How many part-time students are enrolled?
3. How many students who completed Year 12 at Northern Territory schools are:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents at the University College?
4. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Arts faculty?
5. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Science faculty?

20 October 1987

3. Aboriginal Employment

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In view of the Northern Territory Government's stated commitment to improving Aboriginal employment and in the light of recent reports indicating a decline in Aboriginal employment levels, what are the numbers of unfilled positions in each of the following categories:

- (a) Police aides;
- (b) Trackers;
- (c) Health workers;

- (d) Assistant teachers in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities; and
- (e) Teacher aides in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities?

4. Motor Vehicle Accidents

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

How many persons have been:

- (a) killed; and
- (b) injured

in motor vehicle accidents in the Northern Territory so far this calendar year and who were travelling as passengers in the rear of utilities or motor trucks?

Impact of TAB Link with Victoria

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

What impact has resulted from the TAB of the Northern Territory associating with its Victorian link for TAB as far as the float is concerned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am in a position to advise honourable members of the impact of the Northern Territory TAB entering into the VICTAB system. In fact, I happened to be at the Alice Springs racecourse on Saturday and it was very interesting indeed to see the betting pool for the Caulfield Cup reach almost \$2m. It was also interesting to note that the Northern Territory TAB trifecta on that particular race paid \$1055 compared to the Victorian trifecta which paid \$490. The Northern Territory TAB is linked to VICTAB for win and place pools but we do not have trifecta or quadrella betting links with VICTAB at present.

I know that the TAB has been the subject of considerable debate in this Assembly and was talked about at length before its introduction. We now have the Victorian TAB link. The pool started officially in the week ending 10 October. Originally, it was proposed that the link operate from the beginning of August this year but that target proved to be impracticable for technical reasons that were largely beyond our control. The link was established in late September and testing took place in the first week in October. The bugs were eliminated and communications were thoroughly tested. At last, TAB clients in the Territory were able to avail themselves of the stability offered by the giant Victorian win and place pools. I understand that the Victorian TAB now has race holdings in excess of \$1200m. That signifies the enormous level of interest in punting in Australia, particularly in Victoria.

Mr Speaker, let me give you some figures to illustrate the impact of the link on the Northern Territory. In the week ending 26 September, when the link was not operating, TAB turnover increased by 10.2% on the corresponding week of the previous year. In the following week, while testing was happening, turnover increased by 36.9% on the previous year. In the week ending 10 October, the first week that the link operated officially, turnover increased by 54.5%. In the second week, the Victorian link operating turnover was up by 39.3%. To put it in dollar terms, since the link was introduced, win and place betting has increased by an average of \$143 000 per week over the previous 13 weeks of this financial year. Punters in the Territory are obviously showing a greater willingness to use TAB since the win and place pools have been linked with Victoria, and that is good news for everybody. It means that the Territory generates extra revenue and greater benefits to the racing industry which should not be underestimated as an employer of Territorians and as a catalyst for the tourist industry.

Mining and Energy Seminar

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What level of Territory business support has been forthcoming for the government seminar, to be held in Darwin tomorrow, to keep suppliers informed about business opportunities arising from new mining and energy developments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some weeks ago, I gave a press interview on the huge potential available for local suppliers to become involved in the mining industry. At the same time, we announced the tremendous developments that were occurring in the Timor Sea, the most prospective hydrocarbon area of Australia today. We said that we would have an industry seminar and advise various local suppliers how they could get a slice of the action. I was told by industry representatives at the time that there should be a great deal of interest and that I could expect perhaps as many as 6 to 30 people to attend the seminar. I am pleased to say that when the department closed off registrations yesterday, a total of 230 people had registered to attend the mining seminar. Last evening, I had the pleasure of dining with Mr Knapp, from the Australian Mining Industry Council, who is here to represent Australia's major lobby group and representative body, and he is tremendously excited about the potential and the opportunities that exist in the Territory.

On another note, it is our intention to mount an industrial display next May. This will take place in the showgrounds and so far we have received 800 expressions of interest from people wishing to attend that particular seminar. Of course, most of those come from interstate and the only difficulty involved with such an exhibition seems to be the lack of accommodation that will be available to house 800 additional people within the Territory next year. I think that that illustrates the amount of interest being shown in the Northern Territory at present. During the debate on the Appropriation Bill, we spoke of the fact that things really look prosperous for us, particularly in the mining industry.

The Supply Seminar will take place at the Beaufort Hotel and I believe it will be an outstanding success. When I first issued the directions for it, I was sceptical about the number of people who might attend, but that has been totally vindicated by the 230 registrations lodged before we closed off registrations yesterday. The response is nothing short of magnificent and I believe that the major developers, and the projects to be discussed tomorrow, show that the Territory's future in the mining and energy fields is very bright indeed. Those developers include companies such as Ranger, Nabalco, Gemco, Sedco, Fourex, BHP Petroleum, Gulf Aquitaine and Magellan whose representatives will all be present at tomorrow's seminar. Other major contributors to the seminar include the Australian Mining Industry Council, the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association and the Commonwealth Heavy Engineering Board.

The seminar is all about telling Territory suppliers what is occurring now and what will occur in the next couple of years, and what will be needed by way of supplies for those developments. Superb opportunities are emerging for Territory business across the whole supply range. The interest shown has been enormous and I fail to see how it can be anything else than an outstanding success. In the same vein, I can report that next year's Mining Expo will outshine any other industrial display ever held in the Northern Territory. It will occupy an area the size of the Darwin Showgrounds and I believe that it will give us the opportunity that we have been looking for to obtain a greater share of the mining business available to us.

I congratulate all those people who have registered their intention to attend tomorrow's seminar and I wish them well, as I do the 800 people who have registered their intention to attend the Mining Expo to be held next May. I also congratulate the officers of the Department of Mines and Energy who have worked so hard to arrange the 2 events.

Commercial Television Outside Darwin

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I am quite sure that the member for Braitling, with his keen interest in television broadcasts of sporting events, will be interested in the answer to this question. Will the Northern Territory government act in the same manner as its counterpart in Western Australia to ensure that commercial television is available to all communities in the Northern Territory outside Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure of the full extent of the Western Australian government's involvement in the provision of television services to remote parts of Western Australia but I am sure that the Western Australian government is not facing the same financial difficulties as the Territory government at present. I am equally sure that, whatever the commitment of the Western Australian government to remote area television, expenditure on that service would be a minute percentage of its budget. This year, the Northern Territory faced a financial cut from the federal government of unprecedented proportions. This has caused this government to undertake some very agonising cost-cutting measures which have severely affected the government's priorities virtually across the board. Some honourable members will have further opportunity to contribute to that debate during the passage of the Appropriation Bill at these sittings of the Assembly

The honourable member is seeking some further indication from me as to whether or not the government will provide financial assistance to the licence holder of the Remote Area Commercial Television licence in the Northern Territory. I can advise him that I have met with representatives of Imparja in Darwin and, recently, I inspected its premises in Alice Springs and sought from the organisation a submission on what it proposes to do and when, and what services it is proposing to offer. To date, as minister responsible for communications in the Northern Territory, I have had no communication from it telling me when it proposes to go to air, what it proposes to put to air, how many hours it proposes to broadcast for etc. Those subjects have not been addressed at all. I have asked it to provide that information so that I may consider what government requirements could be met through such a service.

Land Acquisition in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

No doubt the minister will be aware of concern amongst landowners, land agents and potential land buyers and developers in the Undoolya Road area of Alice Springs and the roundabout to Sturt Terrace regarding a proposed land acquisition for a 4-lane highway. When will the government make a clear decision on acquisition so that uncertainty is removed and business can proceed in a normal fashion?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly share the concern of the member for Sadadeen and the residents in Alice Springs who live along Undoolya Road. Recently, I was fully briefed on proposals to Cabinet from the Minister for Transport and Works. I can advise the member for Sadadeen that I have requested that the utmost urgency be placed on the submissions to be put before Cabinet and the presentation of the various options available so that the residents for whom

the member for Sadadeen expresses concern can be given a direction that will enable them to examine the future viability of their properties. They will also be advised of the government's intention in respect of any acquisitions necessary as a result of the widening of the Undoolya Road to cater for the future development of the Undoolya option.

Road to the Olgas

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In light of the comment that has been made by the tourist industry and by the federal government over the past few days, what steps have been taken to ensure the safety of travellers on the road to the Olgas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to advise that appropriate action has been pursued by both the Minister for Tourism and myself recently. At a time of the year when they would normally be pursuing every possible chance for business, it is sad to hear that tour operators are withdrawing their services from that Mt Olga section. That is quite understandable because the condition of the road is an absolute disgrace. The road has been graded and re-graded for decades to the point where, in places, it is approximately 1 m below the level of the natural environment.

Mr Bell: It has been for 15 years.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the Olgas road lies in the electorate of the member for MacDonnell. I would like him to relax for a moment and listen to some information that may very well be of importance to him and to his constituents as well as to the large number of tourists who are using the Yulara facilities. I mention his constituents because that road takes traffic out to the Docker River area. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are inherently unstable and the potential for a serious accident along that 30 km section of road from the Yulara turn-off to the Olgas is extremely high. The road becomes corrugated almost overnight. The re-grading occurring there seems to be almost useless.

Mr Bell: You know that is not true, Fred.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell ought to know better than to raise such ridiculous interjections. He is on the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management and ought to know that the Department of Transport and Works has been trying for at least 7 years to obtain approval for a bitumen road, which would ensure the safety of his constituents and of travellers. We have had a full survey design and total appraisal of the project forwarded to the federal government for 3½ years.

The delay appears to be on the part of the ANPWS, Professor Ovington and the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management, which ought to have a bit more motivation towards resolving this matter. It is not a laughing matter. The damage that occurs daily to vehicles amounts to thousands of dollars. However, my principal concern is the high risk to persons who use that road. These are constituents of the member for MacDonnell and, if he does not share my concern, I am most alarmed, to say the least. What we need is at least an acknowledgement that the project will proceed in the alignment suggested by the Department of Transport and Works. It is the most cost-efficient measure. In the long term, it will involve approximately \$4m, and there are ways of staging the works. We have suggested to the Australian National Parks and

Wildlife Service that the expenditure of \$0.25m in the first year would provide some relief on the worst sections of road. To re-grade the road is only a very temporary bandaid measure at best.

Suggestions have been made that the road ought to be located from Ayers Rock and divert round to the south, adding some 10 km or 15 km which would involve expenditure of a further \$2m or \$3m above the estimate. There have been suggestions also that the road should divert to the north, right away from the park itself. The Department of Transport and Works took a very positive approach and completed the designs and the surveys at its cost and forwarded them to the federal Department of Housing and Construction, as it was then, for approval. It is rather disappointing that the ANPWS and the likes of the member for MacDonnell still sit on their hands exposing our tourists and our Territorians to severe risk.

Road to Cahills Crossing

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

There is at least one other road in the Northern Territory that exposes tourists to risk. In fact, recently an elderly couple lost a caravan on this particular road. I refer to the road between the Arnhem Highway and Cahills Crossing which I understand is the responsibility of the Northern Territory government. When will the Northern Territory government take appropriate steps to upgrade that road?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, once again, I am delighted by the question from the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to inform him and members of the House that that particular section of road is in Kakadu National Park. The Northern Territory government, through its Department of Transport and Works, has continually re-graded and provided some nominal upgrading works to that section of road over the last decade. For the information of the Leader of the Opposition, at the moment we have before the ANPWS a submission that, possibly on a cost-sharing basis, we upgrade that road and the road into Cooida, both of which are in Kakadu National Park.

The Northern Territory government, through the Department of Transport and Works, is more than happy to take more than its share of the responsibility for looking after our tourists and our constituents.

Mr Smith: Really, it is your responsibility.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, as far as responsibility is concerned, I will inform the Leader of the Opposition again that the responsibility for roads in Kakadu National Park rests with the ANPWS. It has absolutely nothing to do with the Northern Territory government although ...

Mr Smith: Why do you maintain the Kakadu Highway then?

Mr FINCH: If we did not maintain the Kakadu Highway, at great cost to the Northern Territory government, and upgrade the other roads into the park, quite clearly it would not happen. I am delighted to inform the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues that this government has taken more than its fair share of responsibility. I find it alarming that again he does not recognise and acknowledge just what the federal government's responsibility through the ANPWS is. However, I seek his cooperation in pursuing this

cost-sharing arrangement so that it may be possible to obtain the approval of Professor Ovington. The Northern Territory government has absolutely nothing to be ashamed of concerning the roads in Kakadu National Park. We have done more than our fair share at the cost of the taxpayer and, if it were not for us, it would be absolutely chaotic out there.

Political Input to Statehood Education

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I noted the comments of the opposition spokesman on education on ABC radio this morning, when he suggested that various political groups should have input into the preparation of proposed curriculum material on statehood. What is the minister's position in relation to this proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was very concerned this morning to hear the comments from the opposition spokesman on education because again he showed his total lack of understanding of how the Department of Education works and the principles of curriculum development. Later in these sittings, I will be detailing the member for Stuart's total lack of understanding in regard to his shadow responsibilities. That is detrimental to the Northern Territory and I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to take note of the performance of his colleague and to view it with the same concern with which it is regarded by myself and probably a large number of other people in the Territory.

The member for Stuart has suggested that the development of curriculum material regarding statehood is something that should not be done by curriculum professionals but referred to various political groups for their comment and input. Any suggestion that politicians should be involved in curriculum development certainly will not be coming from this side of the House. Whilst the member for Stuart thinks that should happen, I do not think it is the position of his party. The Leader of the Opposition might tell us whether he supports his shadow spokesman on education in this matter.

Statehood for the Territory is a very exciting issue and is unique in Australia today. We are going through processes that the rest of the country went through 80 to 100 years ago. It is important that the constitutional development of the Territory be part of the education process of young Territorians. Hopefully, it will become part of the education process of all Australians. It is therefore important that curriculum materials be developed and continually reassessed by appropriate professionals. In this case, the materials will be developed by the SACE Curriculum Development Unit, which is the body which looks after social and cultural education. That group will be assisted through the secondment of a senior education officer, a high school teacher and 2 primary school teachers. The materials developed by this group will be presented to the SACE committee whose membership includes school principals, an ICPA representative, someone from the Darwin Institute of Technology and representatives from FEPPi.

If there are any concerns about the booklet, the SACE committee can submit it to the full Board of Studies for further consideration. Most honourable members would be aware of the composition of that board although, obviously, the opposition spokesman on education, whose performance has been so abysmal, is not. For his benefit, I will outline the membership of the board. It consists of members of the Confederation of Industry, the Trades and Labor Council, the Council of Government Schools Organisation, the ICPA, the

Teachers Federation, independent schools, the Catholic Education Office, the University College, DIT, educationalists from the department and school principals.

It is abundantly clear that the Northern Territory has an education system which excludes political interference in the preparation of curriculum materials. It should be clear, even to the member for Stuart, that the preparation of such material is in the hands of people who are best qualified to handle it. We should all show some trepidation at suggestions by the member for Stuart that these matters should be handled by politicians. I certainly hope that the Leader of the Opposition will censure the member for Stuart severely for his suggestion that that is what should occur.

I will make one more point before I sit down. On the radio this morning, the member for Stuart claimed that the cost of this project would be prohibitive, particularly since there had already been some severe cuts in the curriculum development area. He was incorrect on both counts. He was referring to an expenditure decrease of \$233 000 this year as against last year. The reason for that decrease is that there were a number of people on paid leave last year and additional staff were employed to cover those paid positions. That is no longer the situation and there have been no staff cuts whatsoever in the curriculum area. The member for Stuart has been shooting from the hip again without making any inquiries or finding out the real reasons for the variation in expenditure. He makes these accusations willy-nilly and this is not good for education processes in the Territory, which are important to all Territorians.

The opposition should have an education spokesman who is conscientious and carries out proper research into expenditure and other matters. The member for Stuart would rather open his mouth and rave on. He will not listen to the facts. The Leader of the Opposition also thinks it is a joke. It is not. I am sure that the rest of the community does not think it is a joke.

Later in these sittings, in concluding the debate on my ministerial statement on education, I will detail the absolute ignorance of the member for Stuart in regard to education matters. That will take 20 to 30 pages. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition is genuinely concerned about education and I hope he will take note of my remarks and either find a new education spokesman or severely censure his deputy and urge him to do some homework so that his actions are commensurate with his responsibilities in respect of education. His performance has been absolutely abysmal and disgraceful.

Ambulance Services at Yulara

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

When will the Northern Territory government honour its election promise to the people of Yulara by providing adequate ambulance services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been saying publicly for some time that there has been considerable discussion at Yulara about the nature of health services to be provided there. There have been great differences of opinion about precisely what services should operate. During the past 2 weeks, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Community Services and the Regional Director of the department in Alice Springs have visited Yulara and held in-depth discussions

with providers and users of health services at Yulara. We will be taking appropriate action in due course.

Operation of Mines Safety Control Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Which government body currently controls the operation of the Mines Safety Control Act, the Department of Mines and Energy or the Work Health Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be very disappointed if the member for Nhulunbuy did not ask this question in these sittings. In answer to an almost identical question during the last sittings, I outlined the proposed amendments. There have been no changes to administrative orders at this stage. However, these will occur in due course. As members will be aware, I returned to my office only yesterday. The matter has been further promoted during the last 24 hours and documentation is being prepared so that it can be processed by Executive Council.

Proposed Amendments to Police Administration Bill

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

My question follows on from recent media comment regarding the proposed amendments to the Police Administration Bill. Could the Chief Minister advise the Assembly why he has decided to delay the passage of those amendments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware that, yesterday, I indicated the intention not to proceed with the legislation during the course of these sittings. This is because there has been considerable public debate about the legislation and I am grateful for the interest that has been generated. There were discussions last week between the police department and the members of the legal fraternity concerning the legislation. I understand those discussions were very positive and fruitful. Both the police and the legal fraternity have suggested that it would be appropriate that we not process this legislation through all stages at these sittings in order to give them time to consider specific aspects of it. Such consideration could lead to amendments being proposed during the committee stage of the legislation.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I repeat that the bill merely seeks to confirm, by specific legislation, procedures that have been practised by the police for some 20 to 25 years. In fact, this has resulted from recommendations and suggestions from judges. The case that initiated it was what is known as the Williams case.

Mr Smith: Rubbish!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to show his ignorance. He seems to think he knows more than the Department of Law, the police and Northern Territory and interstate judges. I would prefer to take their advice than the Leader of the Opposition's.

Mr Smith: You do not understand their advice; that is the problem.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, as I have said, it is intended to clarify this very difficult area of law and to make it specific. The judges have indicated that they believe it cannot be dealt with appropriately through the normal common law judicial decision process. It needs some definition to protect the interests of citizens, to clarify the rights of citizens and to provide an effective opportunity for the police to carry out necessary investigations.

Administrative Arrangements

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

This is a supplementary question to the member for Nhulunbuy's question. Is it a fact that none of the administrative arrangements entered into by his government on 19 March have been approved by the Executive Council and or the Administrator as is required and that, as a result, the Power and Water Authority, the Department of Industries and Development and other departments that were created or changed at that time have been operating illegally since 19 March?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will obtain specific details of the administrative arrangements that have been put in place. The administrative arrangements that have not been promulgated at this stage are those dealing with the actual establishment numbers of departments. The numbers and classifications within departments has been a most complex exercise. Every department has been working at addressing the new structures. The administrative arrangements establishing departments and the appointment of departmental heads were processed by administrative orders issued in March when the original ministries were established. However, I am very conscious and very concerned that the actual establishments themselves have not been finalised through the Executive Council. That exercise could have been done quickly but it had been done simply by taking all the people in the establishments that existed previously and putting them in place and then going back later. The process is part of an overall restructuring of government and necessary reduction in the size of the public service that flowed from budgetary considerations. They have all been addressed. I understand that the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services has now completed the work necessary for him to be able to present the detailed documentation to have the complete establishment structured.

Dam in Batchelor Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he assure me that the full necessity of dam building in the Batchelor area will be assessed before any compulsory acquisition of currently worked farm land from those people engaged in primary industry is considered, in view of the importance of horticultural production to the development of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question on the vexed subject of building dams in the Northern Territory. The subject is one that takes up a considerable amount of time and engenders considerable debate. One has only to look at Alice Springs. The Mary Anne Dam in Tennant Creek was probably the dam in the Northern Territory that was built the fastest and

involved the least debate. To my knowledge, the member for Fannie Bay has been talking now for some 4 or 5 years about the development of a lake rather than a dam within his own electorate. That has caused a considerable amount of debate, particularly within Cabinet. It has been suggested to him that he should buy a long-handled shovel or run a colour-in competition to raise money for such a facility.

All members would be aware that the building of water reservoirs in the Northern Territory is a very vexed question indeed. The member for Katherine has approached me recently about water in the Katherine region, and we will meet at lunchtime today about that. The member for Arafura may perhaps ask me a question this morning about Milikapiti which has run out of water due to sand intrusion in No 6 bore. That has necessitated the school being closed this morning. Officers from the Power and Water Authority have left for that region this morning.

The member for Stuart never seems to miss an opportunity to talk about water and water supply in the Northern Territory. I have spoken in this Assembly before about this and the member for Flynn has mentioned the impact of 6-year droughts on the Territory. Recently, some information has come to me from a person who has spent a considerable number of years in the Northern Territory studying weather patterns. He suggests that the Northern Territory is 37-year cyclic and that we are in the middle of a 6-year period during which we will experience very dry wet seasons and that this will bring about increased demand for water as people try to develop additional water resources. As a result, the water tables will decrease. Let us hope that he is wrong, but this is a man who has done considerable research on this subject and the evidence he presented to me was persuasive. I hope that, in 4 or 5 years time, the Leader of the Opposition is not laughing about this particular issue, particularly in the middle of the next election, because it is one of considerable concern to all Territorians.

The evidence that has been presented to me suggests that we could be in the middle of a 6-year dry period in the 37-year cycle. There will be cries from members on both sides of the Assembly for more and more water as it becomes very scarce and our catchment areas start drying up. On the evidence given to me, I believe that the Northern Territory is in for some particularly dry spells during this coming wet season. I do not want to start panic and have people moving in from the central desert areas as they did years ago. Places such as Yuendumu and Hermannsburg were established largely because of their year-round supply of water.

Mr Bell: That is not true.

Mr COULTER: It is true. I will provide that information to the honourable member who may not be aware of it. I will give him the details.

On the evidence that has been presented to me, we could be in for a dry spell. Batchelor is probably the most favoured site of the 6 dam sites that have been mentioned because of its close proximity to the Darwin River dam. The other area that probably presents itself as a second option is the Warrai proposal at Adelaide River. That site has the advantage that there are not too many people living there. In fact, most of the catchment area is part of Cann Creek Station which is owned by Billy Doyle and there is some mining interest in the valley.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: That is not what they say. They have written letters to me.

Mr COULTER: I could not understand why they would do that.

Mining interests in Warrai also have to be looked after. We are looking at ways in which we can promote that as a site, but it has a penalty. The penalty is that a pipeline would be required to bring the water to the Darwin River dam area and that would cost some \$10m. I am also well aware of the development that has occurred in the Batchelor area. There has been grass seed production, buffalo domestication programs, large rambutan orchards and, as the member for Victoria River has brought to my attention on a number of occasions, \$2.5m has been spent on Meneling Abattoir, which would be inundated by the Batchelor dam if the proposal went ahead. In fact, the member for Victoria River came out against that site in my absence recently.

Mr Speaker, I can assure the member for Koolpinyah that I am aware of the problems associated with the construction of all these dams, in particular the dam at Batchelor. I gave an undertaking at a meeting in Batchelor, which she attended, that I would have some answers by October. Unfortunately, that deadline could not be met and it now looks like being November before I will be able to provide preliminary estimates of developing such a facility in that region. I share the member for Koolpinyah's concern but the simple fact is that we are running out of water. Our population expansion and water requirements by horticulturists place additional demands on this scarce commodity. I also remind the member for Koolpinyah of the effects that a dry period may have on the bore fields in her electorate. It is a serious problem and I congratulate the officers in the Power and Water Authority who have dedicated a considerable amount of time to this particular issue and I hope that I will have satisfactory answers in the near future.

Airport Facilities

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

During the last sittings, he indicated that he would be meeting with the federal minister responsible for aviation matters. What was the outcome of those discussions, particularly as they relate to airport services in major Territory centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I met with both Senator Evans and Mr Peter Duncan, the federal ministers responsible for transport in its various forms. Both of those meetings went extremely well and I am pleased to report that, with support from all federal members and the opposition in this House, at last we see some sanity coming into the debates on Darwin and Alice Springs Airports.

In regard to Darwin Airport, we now have public acknowledgement that the north side option is the real option. I am delighted that Mr Peter Duncan, the federal Minister for Transport and Infrastructural Support, made that announcement while he was here. It has been clear to all Territorians for quite some time that that was the logical step to take. The intervention by a previous minister does not warrant any comment other than to say that it is sad that we have missed out on 2 or 3 years of tourism development as a result of inactivity.

These are different times and I am delighted to acknowledge that the response from both of those ministers has been extremely encouraging. I hope that they will be able to take to their Cabinet some immediate measures to resolve the Darwin Airport problem in the shortest possible time. It would be

my hope that, given some cooperation either through direct federal funding or by permitting private enterprise participation at Darwin Airport, we would be able to move immediately and set in place a satisfactory facility within approximately 2 years. Such a facility would provide not only for Territorians and domestic travellers but, more importantly, it would allow international airlines access to Darwin and thence to the rest of the Territory to provide a broadening of our economic base and jobs for our kids.

In Alice Springs in recent months, we have seen an astronomical growth rate of about 30%, based on last year, which was some 20% or so above the year before. The growth rates have been placing the Alice Springs terminal under extreme pressure. The federal minister announced that the federal government was proceeding with a \$1.1m extension to the existing terminal building. That will provide some short-term relief only. More importantly, the federal government is putting some \$5m-odd into the taxiways and aprons. That is to be applauded. However, what we need to be conscious of and what we have basic agreement on is that the long-term plans may very well require some entrepreneurial or private investment to cater for the rapidly increasing tourist market through Alice Springs to Yulara etc.

As we travelled north over the 2½ day period, work had commenced the week before on extensions to and upgrading of the Tennant Creek airstrip to allow for F28s to land at Tennant Creek by Christmas. Off the cuff, I think 17 December is the recommencement date. Works are progressing very satisfactorily there. It was pleasing to have the federal minister see at first hand the state of that strip which had been allowed to deteriorate over quite a long period of time. It is important that Territorians, particularly residents of Tennant Creek, recognise that that was a jointly-funded project involving \$1.1m from the federal government. It had intended to upgrade the strip to take commuter-size aircraft. Quite correctly, the Northern Territory government recognised that an F28 standard was far more appropriate both from a tourism point of view and for local usage. As a result, the Territory government provided \$1m to ensure that the strip could be lengthened and strengthened to F28 standard.

In Katherine, of course, a great deal of work is occurring at Tindal RAAF Base. The Katherine terminal building is under severe attack not only from the local residents but from white ants. The building there will need to be replaced. That is on the design list and the federal government has undertaken to provide the Territory with copies of the preliminary drawings so that we can advise as to the appropriateness of the planned facilities from a Territory viewpoint. I understand that work may be programmed for the 1988 calendar year and that would be good to see.

In summary, in regard to aviation matters, I am extremely delighted and, on this occasion, more than happy to acknowledge the cooperation of the 2 federal ministers who showed quite a dramatic difference in attitude to the needs of remote areas and towards privatisation or getting on with the job using whatever entrepreneurial means are to hand. I acknowledge their participation.

Cullen Bay Marina

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The developers of the proposed Cullen Bay marina have been looking to the Northern Territory government for an agreement regarding certain aspects of that proposed development. Has an agreement been reached between the Northern

Territory government and Darwin Marina Estate and, if so, when will details of that agreement be available and, if not, when will the government be in a position to sign that agreement?

ANSWER

In a nutshell, Mr Speaker, an agreement has not been reached, but I will canvass some of the issues involved with the future development project. This government is certainly prepared to support this project. It has been the subject of previous publicity and I think that it goes without saying that, when the project is finally completed, and during its construction, not only will it provide many jobs in the Darwin area but it will greatly improve the lifestyle of people in the Top End.

Some of the issues that have been of concern and have been addressed in the appropriate manner by the government involve those areas relating to the environment, the release of some land at Emery Point by the Department of Defence, consideration of the Foreshore Protection Plan and the relevant zoning of the land. The Port Authority has been involved. Consideration has been given to the engineering viability of the project, objections by local residents, access and the compatibility with development proposals for the old Darwin Hospital site.

I can confirm that a draft development lease and conditions has been finalised and will come before Cabinet very shortly. I can advise the member for Port Darwin that, after consideration by Cabinet of the relevant terms and conditions of that development lease and further discussions with the developers, I would hope to be able to announce that the project will proceed in a manner that will enable the construction of the facility to occur at the earliest opportunity. The government makes no bones about the fact that it supports the project, provided that all the sensitive issues relating to the environment, foreshore planning, zoning etc are dealt with in the appropriate manner. The terms and conditions of the development lease should be finalised by Cabinet in the very near future.

Fees for TAFE Courses

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it true that he intends to impose fees on students of TAFE courses in the Northern Territory and, if so, can he advise those students and the parents what the level of fees will be and to which courses they will be applied?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, once again the member for Stuart has demonstrated his knowledge of education matters. It would have been appropriate if he had prefaced his question with some comment regarding the cut of \$23m to TAFE by the federal government. Because his Labor colleagues were involved, he did not really want to mention that and why there are such problems with TAFE. Even someone with no knowledge of education matters would realise that a cut of \$23m will have an impact. Setting that aside, however, I will provide some information for the member opposite.

TAFE fees at the DIT and the Alice Springs College of TAFE are matters set by their councils. The council of the Alice Springs College of TAFE is considering the matter at the moment. The shadow spokesman for education

should know - although he does not - that the DIT is totally independent. The legislation regarding its independent status was passed by this House. The college councils will consider whether charges will be levied and they will advise people appropriately regarding those charges.

The matter of charges must be seen in the context of the prevailing situation in Australia. Last year the federal government introduced an administrative charge for universities, an amount of \$250 per student. That charge was applied in an effort to ensure that the public education dollar could be spread a little further. In the light of the \$23m cut in the TAFE area, our Territory institutions are to be congratulated on continuing to provide an excellent service under adverse economic conditions. It certainly is a credit to the people involved, including members of the staff and the council. If college councils decide that there is a need for charges to be levied, I am sure that they will be made so that ...

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: I find it pretty frustrating to hear the member opposite displaying his ignorance. I would like him to inform this House later during these sittings on what steps he has taken to ask his federal colleague to return the money that has been taken out of the TAFE area and what steps he has taken to ensure that his federal Labor colleagues provide the same level of assistance to tertiary education in the Territory as they provide to the rest of the country. It is a shameful situation. The member for Stuart makes snide comments while members of his party, who profess to be supporters of education and of underprivileged people, blatantly cut funds for the education of Territory students. The member opposite would be far more productive if he went to his federal colleagues and asked them to treat us equally with the rest of Australia instead of making snide remarks regarding education in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate TAFE administrators for the work that they have undertaken to continue to provide quality education. If there are to be charges in that area, they will be decided by the institutions involved. I will back them all the way because they are operating under very adverse conditions brought about by the policies of the party of the member opposite.

Writ by Burgundy Royale

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Can he confirm that, on or about 7 October, Burgundy Royale Investments lodged a writ before the Federal Court of Australia seeking release from liens held over it by the Northern Territory government, Westpac and perhaps the Northern Territory Development Corporation on grounds which include promises made by the then Chief Minister and the then Deputy Chief Minister, now the member for Fannie Bay, when they were on a 1979 investment mission to Asia, that: (1) the Beaufort Hotel would be given a casino licence; (2) developers of the Beaufort were guaranteed that a further 5-star hotel would not be built in Darwin until the Beaufort was fully operational; (3) the new airport terminal would be constructed by the time the Beaufort opened; and (4) the railway line would be built by the time the Beaufort opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously the Leader of the Opposition in his role as debt collector for those people aggrieved and various other causes he takes up from time to time has been very well briefed on this particular question judging by the contents thereof. It is true that there has been some legal action taken by Burgundy Royale Investments against the Northern Territory government and also against Westpac. That is a matter before the courts and I will not be entering into any prolonged discussion or debate on that particular issue other than to say that our legal advice is that the action against the Northern Territory government is not particularly sound. We believe that we will be able to defend the writ that has been taken out against us.

Review of Restricted Areas Legislation

Mr FIRMIN to TREASURER

When might the review of restricted areas legislation be available for consideration by government and is he in a position to comment today on any aspects or recommendations of this report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the author of the report, Mr d'Abbs, has been involved in a number of reports in the Northern Territory. Honourable members will recall that he compiled the report on domestic violence. He has played an active role in looking at the social implications of various trends in the Northern Territory. I have before me a draft report from Mr d'Abbs in respect of the review he was commissioned to conduct into the effects of dry areas on Aboriginal communities. I have been assured that the final report will be presented to me by the end of October. I hope to be able to table it at the next Legislative Assembly sittings. I know honourable members have been anxious to get hold of the report but I am told that the delay has come about, in part, because of a need to re-analyse some of the data and to allow the incorporation of new data which has been obtained from the Aboriginal drug consumption survey being carried out by the Drug and Alcohol Bureau.

The first draft adjudges that the restricted area provisions are a qualified success. It finds that some areas of the legislation need addressing and it goes into detail on those. It is a matter of fact that the government was aware of this when it first commissioned the report last year. I do not intend to go into the detail of the recommendations in this House

until my colleagues and I, particularly the Minister for Health and Community Services, have had a chance to examine them. Suffice it to say that, in addition to other matters, the report addresses the permit system and the enforcement of restricted area provisions of the act. These are matters of grave importance to Aboriginal communities and this government does not intend to take them lightly. Before any recommended amendments are approved, I intend to ensure that they are properly canvassed and that they reflect the expressed wishes of the community.

However, we will be looking into tidying up parts of the act relating to vehicle seizure and forfeiture and the responsibility of the courts in these matters. Honourable members will be aware that this matter has been canvassed in this Assembly on many occasions and I understand that it will be debated again tomorrow. Penalties for offences will also be considered and I will advise the House on further details after considering the final report.

In relation to amendments to legislation which will be discussed in the Assembly tomorrow, I can advise that the Liquor Commission is reviewing its procedures for issuing of licences and the social issues which relate to the consumption of alcohol. As part of an overall review to ensure that it meets the demands which are placed upon it, the commission will also be considering what expectations the community has in relation to its functions. I hope to table the report in the Assembly in November after it has been considered by Cabinet and the issues have been canvassed by government. I look forward to debate on the issues during the next Legislative Assembly sittings.

Writ By Burgundy Royale

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, this is a supplementary question on the matter of the Burgundy Royale writ. Can the Treasurer directly confirm that the writ issued by Burgundy Royale was based at least partly on the grounds that, in the 1979 trade mission to Asia, the following promises were made: that the Beaufort Hotel would be given a casino licence; that the developers of the Beaufort were guaranteed that a further 5-star hotel would not be built in Darwin until the Beaufort was fully operational; that a new airport terminal would be constructed by the time it opened; and that the railway line would be built by the time it opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is reading from a public document. I will sit down with him and read it out to him if he has some difficulty in understanding it. An interesting aspect of this may be that, if the Burgundy Royale can be successful, Mr Hawke might well find himself in court because he was the one who promised us the airport in the first place. We could be in good company.

We are only one of a number of defendants who have been named in this writ and we will be defending it most vigorously. I understand that they are in possession of some documents, but the only document which pertains to the Northern Territory government is the Tourist Marketing Survey which was carried out by the then minister, Mr Roger Steele, in 1979. I would suggest to honourable members that that was a conservative document in terms of the number of tourists who are now entering the Northern Territory. As I have said, the Northern Territory government will be defending this most vigorously.

Public Holidays

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is his decision on the celebration of any additional public holidays, both in 1987 and 1988?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I am advised that the Northern Territory has celebrated a public holiday known, in latter years, as the 'additional day' for a very considerable period. My department's research indicates that the public holiday was gazetted when it was under the administration of South Australia and that, on transfer to the Northern Territory, that public holiday continued to be gazetted. In more recent times, the holiday has been gazetted to fall between the appropriate days of Christmas Day and New Year's Day during the Christmas holiday period. I do not think there is any need to remind the Assembly that the celebrations planned for Australia's bicentennial in 1988 are very significant. As a part of those celebrations, the whole of Australia will celebrate the Australia Day public holiday on 26 January. In the spirit of the bicentennial, all states, with the exception of Queensland and New South Wales, have extended the period of celebrations by gazetting a public holiday on Monday 25 January. That is the Monday falling between the Australia Day public holiday and the preceding weekend. In those states, I am advised that the action taken involves a transfer of Boxing Day to 25 January.

Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, because of its portable nature, I have been able to move the additional public holiday from the traditional week following Christmas forward to Monday 25 January, thus enabling Territorians to enjoy the 4-day weekend within which to celebrate Australia's bicentenary. I hear objection from the member for Koolpinyah. In fact, the extra public holiday has been held in the Northern Territory for a long period. It was gazetted in 1984 for the 3 years up to 1987. In fact, this year, it is to be celebrated at the end of December. However, next year, I have brought it forward to 25 January. It will cost business in the Territory no more because it is a public holiday that has always been there. I am quite happy to look at the proposal to get rid of the additional public holiday but it is quite reasonable to hold that public holiday in January in 1988 in order to create a long weekend for the bicentenary. I do not believe that any employer in the Northern Territory will have an argument with that. It is a very significant occasion. There is a school holiday. Teachers may be a little fortunate in that they were due to go back on 25 January next year. I believe the occasion is significant enough to warrant the action that I have taken and I am quite happy to defend it.

Mineral Exploration Licences

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is the Department of Mines and Energy able to process applications for mineral exploration with reasonable expedition and could he indicate to the House the approximate length of time required to process an application?

Mr Ede: It is a disgrace.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is indicative of the amount of mining activity that is occurring at the moment. If that is a disgrace for the honourable member for Stuart, then I suggest he is the one with the problem, not the Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr Speaker, I thank the shadow spokesman on mines and energy for his question. Indeed, we have had a problem in the Department of Mines and Energy where we had a backlog of some 190 applications for mining activity of various types throughout the year. In the Department of Mines and Energy, we find it very difficult to maintain staff in boom periods. Geologists are being offered \$100 000. A particularly good officer, Gary Higgins, has left the Department for Top End Resources recently. He will be sadly missed in the Department of Mines and Energy. Recently, we advertised some 20 positions that are vacant at the moment.

After budget discussions with the Chief Minister, an additional 5 staff were employed in the exploration titles area to overcome that particular backlog. I can advise the member for Nhulunbuy that we have started to overcome the backlog of the 190 applications. However, since June, we have had an increase of some 50% over last year in the number of titles being sought in the Northern Territory and the backlog has jammed up again. I may have enough courage to approach the Chief Minister, in the next couple of weeks, for another 5 people but I can assure the Assembly that we are trying to process those particular applications as fast as we possibly can at the moment, with the additional 5 staff that have been employed there.

The size of the backlog is dependent on the types of title and the complications involved. I ask all prospectors and exploration people to bear with us. I can give some outstanding examples of the expediency that has been displayed by the Department of Mines and Energy. The member for Barkly would be aware of White Devils which received approvals to go ahead with its open cut within 8 weeks. I believe the open cut has commenced with Roche Bros as the operators. They were particularly impressed with the expediency with which the Department of Mines and Energy handled that. I have many other stories of that nature.

However, there are some examples where there are competing interests, where expiration dates have been reached and, along with the mineral boom which is occurring in the Northern Territory, a rush of exploration licences can come in for a particular title and it is a matter of sorting out the best miners and the best program available for a particular area of land. There are many competing interests for these titles. Mr Speaker, can I remind honourable members that we are experiencing a boom period in mining and that involves some problems. I am thankful that, as Minister for Mines and Energy, those are the sorts of problems that I have. I do not like them, but it does show that exploration activity is required in the Northern Territory, and I believe that this is largely attributable to the 150% return about which I have spoken to the member for Nhulunbuy. Some concern was expressed about giving away money, especially by the ex-Treasurer, the Minister for Industries and Development, who has never been known to give away too much except homing pigeons and boomerangs. We were really concerned that we might lose by offering the 150% return on exploration activity against 35% of the mineral royalty rate, but it looks as if that is proving successful and that people are queuing up.

We apologise for the delays wherever they occur. We have increased the staff there by 5 to handle that and we are trying to proceed with the processing of applications as fast as we possibly can.

'Towards the 90s'

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Yesterday the member for Stuart implied that the discussion document 'Towards the 90s' had been thrown out the door. I believe the honourable member has a misunderstanding in relation to the status of that document.. I ask whether the discussion document 'Towards the 90s' has been thrown out the door.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very glad that that matter has been raised by the member for Port Darwin because, yesterday, we had another example of the despicable attitude adopted by the member for Stuart towards his shadow responsibilities for education. We are talking about 'Towards the 90s' which was issued as a discussion document in June this year. The whole concept of the document was to engender discussion and to look at ways and means of increasing accountability, of rewarding good teachers who wish to stay in the classroom, of maximising value for every taxpayers' dollar that is spent on education, and to look at directions for the next decade. Some of those themes have actually been picked up by the federal Minister for Education in statements he has made so far regarding tertiary education, accountability and results. Actually, he has indicated that the rules have changed for tertiary education and that tertiary institutions will not be funded unless they produce the results.

'Towards the 90s' is in that vein and is a document that requires people in the Territory who have an interest in education to develop points of view on it, to become involved in discussion and to put forward ideas and suggestions which will be productive for all Territorians. As members in this House who listen would realise, I made a statement on education at the last sittings which gave a fair amount of detail as to where 'Towards the 90s' is and where it is heading. Obviously, the member for Stuart, who has shadow responsibility for education, has not taken any notice or even listened to what is occurring in respect of that document. He had the audacity yesterday to say that the document had been disposed of and was finished. I find that incredible. The shadow spokesman for education takes his responsibilities so seriously that he puts his head in the sand and says it has gone away. It has not gone away, Mr Speaker. I would recommend that the member for Stuart start taking a real interest in his responsibilities and do justice to them on behalf of a large number of people who support the Labor Party.

The Leader of the Opposition has a responsibility also to ensure that his shadow education spokesman does his job. I would like to offer a little bit of advice to the Leader of the Opposition and, whether he takes it or not is up to him. I think that he should consider making the member for MacDonnell shadow spokesman for education because at least the member for MacDonnell has an interest in the subject and produces some useful and workable alternatives. He shows a genuine interest and his contribution to debate is sometimes quite productive. The Leader of the Opposition has a responsibility to the community in regard to education. I ask him to examine some of the statements that have been made by the member for Stuart and see how flippantly he has treated the subject.

Mr Speaker, coming back to the document, we have had over 120 submissions amounting to 1000 pages. I am sure the member for Stuart has not contributed a page, but be that as it may. The matter is being examined by the Education Advisory Council. It has collated the material and it has been discussed. As I have said many times, the next step is a refined second discussion document which, hopefully, we can produce by the end of this year. At this stage, it looks as though it will be ready early next year.

Mr Speaker, I certainly hope we will receive a rather more mature response from the shadow spokesman on education on the second document. It is a matter that should be treated sensibly and properly and which will not disappear. The member for Stuart cannot put his head in the sand. He has a responsibility to this Assembly and to the community to ensure that his contribution to education debates is based on fact and not hearsay and scare tactics. I am dismayed at statements by the member for Stuart that this matter has been thrown out of the window. I can assure him that it has not. I can assure him that many people in the community have shown a great deal of interest in the document and have contributed accordingly. I would certainly encourage him to do likewise. It is still on the notice paper and it can be finalised during these sittings.

Cattle on Oolloo Station

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Was a contract let to clear cattle from Oolloo Station with the contractor tendering \$60 000, and has the contractor now cleared over 45 000 head from the property at a value well over \$0.5m?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm at present the matter that the member for MacDonnell has raised. However, I will seek information and provide it to him during the course of these sittings.

Uluru Board of Management

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Earlier this year, much public comment ensued about the Northern Territory government's reluctance to nominate an appointee to the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management. Finally, however, the government announced that it would make a nomination. What has been the outcome of that nomination?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the question because it does give me an opportunity to make a minor correction to a statement I made on this matter in the course of the debate yesterday with respect to the Jawoyn land claim. Firstly, we made 2 separate nominations in fact. In late 1986, the government nominated both the Minister for Conservation and the Minister for Tourism to be representatives on the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management. They were nominated on that basis because they were the Northern Territory equivalents of the 2 federal government political nominations on that board. Subsequently, on 31 March this year, I wrote to the then federal Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment, Hon Barry Cohen, nominating the Minister for Conservation and Tourism, Mr Hanrahan, as the Northern Territory government's representative to the board. The minister replied on 7 May this year advising

me that he had written to the Chairman of the Central Land Council seeking his agreement to the appointment before proceeding with the process of appointment. That is the last we have heard on the matter, Mr Speaker.

The federal government and the Territory opposition were loud, particularly last year, in their criticism of our reluctance to make a nomination initially. Therefore, members will understand my cynicism when, some 6 months later, no further correspondence has been received from the federal government. The member for MacDonnell, a board member himself, was particularly strong in his comments urging the government to join the board of management. What has been done to allow our nominee to join the board? As far as I can ascertain, nothing at all. So much for the Labor Party rhetoric extolling the absolute necessity for a government appointment to the board.

Mr Speaker, I wrote to the Prime Minister yesterday, protesting at the lack of action on this matter by his ministerial colleagues and seeking his intervention to secure the appointment of Mr Hanrahan to that board of management. It is very easy to criticise this government and to play party politics with issues like participation on the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management. As recently as the beginning of this year, the member for MacDonnell made a lot of noise about the matter. If he is making a stand on principle, he has a responsibility to follow it up and support the course of action he has advocated. I find it quite disturbing that he has made absolutely no comment in relation to this exercise. He is aware, because it was raised in the House this year and made public ...

Mr Bell: How long did you take to make the nomination?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell asks how long we took to make the nomination. Quite frankly, that is totally irrelevant. We took a specific and very public stand on the matter. Despite that, at the beginning of this year, the member for MacDonnell ...

Mr Bell: The trouble is you stood in about a dozen places.

Mr HATTON: The member for MacDonnell advocated that we should change our position and nominate a single representative to that board. The federal minister made exactly the same request of us. Now that we have complied, it is natural and logical that the member for MacDonnell should welcome our step and seek to encourage the placement of our representative on the board or else he could be accused of playing cheap political games and using rhetoric to play party politics rather than achieving the high moral ground he sought to take on this issue.

I can accept that there is a degree of inefficiency in the federal government and I can accept that there is a degree of inefficiency in the way members opposite carry out their various responsibilities, including their role as members on the Uluru board. This matter, however, goes well beyond simple administrative inefficiency. On a number of occasions, the member for MacDonnell pleaded with us to do as he asked. It is completely irrelevant for him to make excuses for his federal colleagues and other members of the board on the grounds that we took 6 or 12 months to make a nomination. I urge the member for MacDonnell, who is a member of that board which sits in his electorate, to be as good as his word early this year and to actively promote the involvement of the Northern Territory government nomination on that board.

Mr Speaker, we have nominated a representative to the board because of the vital importance of the Uluru Katatjuta National Park to the Northern

Territory. It does not change our view that it is inappropriate for politicians to sit on the board. Since that is the only choice we have, we have decided to act in the interest of the Northern Territory but it is, without doubt, inappropriate that politicians should sit on the board. It is equally inappropriate that the federal government should create a situation where the Northern Territory government does not select the 2 nominees but, rather, there is 1 representative from each side of this House. The federal government did not offer the same opportunity to the federal opposition. Instead, it placed 2 ministers or their representatives on the board. Finally, I reiterate that the position of the Northern Territory government in relation to the management of the park has not changed in any way. We will never resile from our position that Uluru must eventually be a Northern Territory park managed by the Northern Territory Conservation Commission.

Sightings of Cane Toads on Tipperary Station

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I address this question to the Chief Minister in his capacity as acting Minister for Conservation. Can he confirm that there have been recent sightings of cane toads on Tipperary Station? If that is true, can the acting minister tell this House what action has been taken on this particular matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not been advised of that but I will seek the information as a matter of urgency. I would be quite disturbed if that were the case.

Mr Ede: We want his name.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am not going to rise to that bait. I am very very tempted to suggest it is sitting on the frontbench opposite, but I will not do that.

Pesticide Residues in the Northern Territory

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What is the current situation in regard to pesticide residues in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House on the current state of play in this most important matter. Nationally, the Northern Territory maintains an excellent record in the current crisis of pesticide residues in meat for export. There have been no violations although in excess of 800 fat samples have been tested in the Territory, this sampling representing some 60 000 head of cattle and buffalo. However, the problem is a national one and it is imperative that we control the chemicals used in agriculture both to ensure that we retain our export markets for primary products and to safeguard the health of the population. In some ways, we are perhaps fortunate that we have not had longstanding agricultural or horticultural industries in the Northern Territory. The organochlorine chemicals, such as DDT, which are very persistent in the soil, have never been used extensively nor in any quantity. The same chemicals have not been used in livestock in the Territory for about 20 years.

The major legislation to control pesticides and agricultural chemicals in the Territory is administered by the Minister for Health and Community Services - the Poisons and Dangerous Goods Act 1983 as amended in 1985. This act controls the availability and use of pesticides and the licensing of pest control operators. Under this act, the senior chemist of my department has been appointed registrar and will be responsible for establishing and maintaining a register of pesticides. Discussions are being held with the relevant parties in relation to proposed Commonwealth legislation for clearance and registration and any other points that require further clarification. Amendments may then be needed to the Poisons and Dangerous Goods Act in the Territory to clarify some of the current functions of pesticides registration, for example, deregistration. Northern Territory retailers are being informed of registration and offences as it affects them - that is, the sale or use of unregistered pesticides will be illegal.

The other area where agricultural chemicals will be controlled is under the Stock Diseases Act. DDT has already been banned for use in livestock under the Stock Diseases Act. I have approved the preparation of regulations and action is now under way to ban the organochlorines and persistent organophosphates for use in livestock under that act. It will also be necessary to declare pesticide levels of significance a disease under the Stock Diseases Act in order that quarantine, restriction of movement of livestock and clearing of properties can occur. Dieldrin and other organochlorine chemicals used for termite control could be used to protect wooden stockyards and holding paddocks. This has been a major cause of pesticide residues in the states. It is not thought to be a major area of concern in the Territory since most stockyards are of a permanent steel construction or are steel portable yards. It is of more concern in the small farm areas surrounding Darwin and Katherine where more wooden yards and possibly more dieldrin have been used. Amendments to the act are being prepared to cover this area.

The Commonwealth government, among other things, is concerned in the clearance and registration of chemicals and drugs used for agricultural and veterinary purposes. On 14 August 1987, the Australian Agricultural Council agreed to establish a working party of senior state, territory and Commonwealth officials to report on how a single national clearance and registration scheme for these chemicals could be achieved. The uniform clearance, registration and labelling of chemicals is considered to be a first line of defence against market reaction to consequential residues in food products. The Northern Territory relies heavily on bodies such as the Technical Committee on Agricultural Chemicals to clear chemicals which may then be registered in the Territory under our legislation.

The Northern Territory is represented on a state and Commonwealth committee to implement the Australian Agricultural Council's integrated action plan on pesticide residues. With respect to the integrated action plan, the Commonwealth is planning a mechanism which will allow for clearance of properties, and my department is presently preparing proposals for clearance of the whole of the Northern Territory under that plan, with the possible exception of the small farm areas I mentioned earlier around Darwin and Katherine.

Policewoman for Groote Eylandt

Mr LANHUPUY to CHIEF MINISTER

Does this government intend placing a policewoman on Groote Eylandt and, if so, when will that happen?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter of locating a policewoman on Groote Eylandt has been raised on a number of occasions. One of the difficulties is actually getting applications for the location of a policewoman at that particular station. The matter has also been raised by the Women's Advisory Council which took the issue up with me as the minister to whom it reports, seeking to obtain some definite action.

There is a wide range of social problems on Groote Eylandt, including domestic violence and prostitution amongst young girls. Considerable concern has been expressed by the Groote Eylandt community. People believe that the presence of a policewoman would greatly assist in alleviating some of these problems. The matter has been taken up with the Commissioner of Police and he is seeking to take some action to locate a policewoman on Groote Eylandt as soon as possible. I reiterate that one of the difficulties lies with actually getting volunteers. Whilst it is possible to instruct a policewoman to relocate there, it would be preferable to obtain a volunteer for transfer to the island because, obviously, the person would far more readily fit into the community and become actively involved. From the point of view of morale, if we can arrange a voluntary transfer, then so much the better. The Commissioner of Police is seeking to place a policewoman there as soon as possible.

National Companies and Securities Scheme

Mr SETTER to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer to an article published in the NT News of 22 September in which the Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Northern Territory's decision to oppose the federal Labor government's takeover of the National Companies and Securities Scheme showed a lack of will to tackle interstate corporate offenders. Is the Northern Territory's stand against the federal government's intention to unilaterally establish a centralised companies and securities scheme likely to encourage white-collar crime in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I hope that the Leader of the Opposition has advanced his knowledge on the matter further since he made that statement. The Territory, through having control of its own Corporate Affairs Office, is far better able to fight corporate crime than it would be through the centralised system that the federal government is intent on forcing on Australia. As Attorney-General of the Northern Territory, I can ensure that our Corporate Affairs Office has the resources it needs to fight corporate crime, and I assure honourable members that our office has a full complement of investigative staff. Those investigators work very closely with the Northern Territory Police Force. In fact, a member of the Fraud Squad is actually stationed at the Corporate Affairs Office. That certainly creates a very close and effective situation.

The system which operates at present enables very close monitoring of our local scene and encourages liaison both with local business people and interstate corporate offices. We have a situation where the federal government, through the federal Attorney-General, is proposing a change from our present scheme of Corporate Affairs Offices and the National Securities and Companies Scheme. The federal government is advocating that it take total control of the situation. As members know, we only moved into the scheme last year when we passed uniform legislation relating to companies. There was cross-vesting of companies so that companies could move from the register in one state and be fully covered in other states. All the legislation relating to companies and the operation of companies was uniform around the country.

Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition advocates following the suggestion made by the federal Attorney-General to have one national scheme. I can assure the honourable member that business in the Territory is totally opposed to that idea, right through from the Confederation of Industry and Commerce and the Small Business Association to all aspects of the industry in the Territory. Those of us who can remember the days of control from Canberra realise why. There is nothing more hopeless for advancement of any organisation than having control vested 3000 km to 4000 km away without any input or any ability to influence the people who hold the reins. It means that the views and opinions of that large concentration of population in the south-east corner of Australia overwhelms any views, suggestions or needs of other Australians elsewhere in the country.

Mr Speaker, I inform the Leader of the Opposition that Labor governments in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are totally opposed to a national scheme as well as conservative governments in Tasmania, Queensland and the Territory. In fact, the only state which supports the federal government is New South Wales. I do not know what is behind that. Probably there are some benefits for New South Wales. The fact that, apart from New South Wales, all states oppose the federal scheme, stock exchanges right throughout the country oppose it and major business organisations around the country oppose it does not seem to faze the federal Attorney-General nor, obviously, the Leader of the Opposition in the Territory.

I think that all Territorian businessmen and others are aware of the problems with having central control and of the inhibitions it creates. Much groundwork has been done to create potential for business over the next 10 to 20 years in the Northern Territory and any concept of controlling that from a central point for the benefit of Australians in the south-east corner of Australia will stifle business in the Northern Territory, as it will stifle business in Western Australia, South Australia and any other area that does not fit in with the New South Wales and Canberra syndrome. Certainly, that will not help Territorians in the growth of business and in the creation of jobs for our school leavers.

We have a law that is uniform throughout Australia and a system which allows input by all states. I refer to the ministerial council of which I am a member and which controls the scheme. Each state is treated equally so that the smaller populations are not overruled by the larger populations. It also means that changes cannot be made overnight. It has to be discussed with a quorum of all state ministers and it allows business to know that there will not be any overnight changes to legislative provisions. It allows for planning for the long term and stability in the organisation of companies and national securities.

Any suggestion that the present system encourages crime, which is what the Leader of the Opposition said in his comments in the NT News on 22 September, is rubbish. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to talk to local business people and find out why they oppose the concept of a national scheme, and to support the growth of business in the Territory and some local control and input in relation to the rules that control business and corporate affairs in the Territory.

Seat Belts for Taxi Drivers

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will he undertake to consider a request from taxi drivers that the wearing of seat belts be made optional for them? Their concern is that personal safety is at considerable risk on occasion from certain passengers and that seat belts make them particularly vulnerable as they cannot defend themselves whilst strapped in?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter raised by the member for Sadadeen is very serious and it has been of concern to me for some time. We have not yet reached the absolutely shocking state that Sydney and Melbourne have reached with taxi drivers being physically assaulted and, in some cases, murdered while doing their job, particularly in the middle of the night. Taxi drivers interstate quite often are extremely reluctant to work night shifts or are very selective in the customers that they pick up. Here in the Territory, we are trying to promote the tourist industry and it is very important that the taxi and hire car industry plays its part.

The specific suggestion raised has certainly not come before me directly as yet but I take it on board for serious consideration and will also look at ways of assisting taxi drivers to find other appropriate means of ensuring their safety. In other places, they have emergency call systems using automatic buttons and so on. Some taxi drivers protect themselves with self-defence equipment such as monkey wrenches and so on. It is a serious matter, however, and I do not take it lightly. I undertake to investigate it.

Road safety statistics of serious accidents and fatalities indicate that one of the biggest killers on our roads is the failure to wear seat belts where they are installed. We certainly do not want the wearing of seat belts to place taxi drivers in some other form of danger. Driving in the close confines of urban areas could allow the matter to be seen in a different light and I will have the department and the Road Safety Council look at the suggestion seriously to see whether we can take it up to assist taxi drivers or find some other means of supporting them.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Sighting of Cane Toads on Tipperary Station

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I can confirm that 1 mature male cane toad has been sighted on Tipperary Station. It was identified yesterday and has subsequently been confirmed. A team of Conservation Commission rangers is on its way to the homestead area of Tipperary Station to determine whether other cane toads are present and, if so, to clear them from the area. Quite probably, it is an individual cane toad. It is suspected of having arrived in a shipment of palms from Queensland. I have addressed this Assembly on the subject of cane toads on a number of occasions.

Mr Bell: The member for Barkly could be responsible, with his associations with the Premier of Queensland.

Mr Tuxworth: You will notice that there are none in Barkly.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am sorry the member for Barkly made that comment. He should learn more about his electorate because the south-west area of the Barkly electorate is where we have the major threat of the entry of cane toads, particularly around Wologorang Station. In fact, they are moving around the Gulf of Carpentaria at the rate of some 27 km per annum and there is a major infestation in the western part of his electorate.

The cane toad represents one of the greatest biological and environmental threats facing the Northern Territory. A pair of mature cane toads can infest an entire waterhole and neighbouring streams in 1 breeding season. A female lays about 15 000 eggs at a time and lays several times during the course of a year. The cane toad has no natural predators in Australia. The glands behind its head secrete a poison which is venomous to any predator which attacks it. It is omnivorous, consuming plant life as well as small fauna such as lizards and small snakes. It breeds rapidly and can cause significant problems for the cattle industry by getting into water troughs and secreting its poison there. Cane toads present a major problem and we are on constant alert.

There have been a number of sightings of cane toads in Katherine and other locations in the Territory, including a couple in Darwin. I have vivid memories of 1985 when the Kulaluk area was searched for several days after a cane toad was discovered there. The Northern Territory Conservation Commission employs probably the leading expert on cane toads in this country and we are actively involved in national research, in combination with Queensland and the federal government, to discover a biological control for the cane toad. Frankly, that offers the only hope of counteracting the threat. A viral disease which has been identified around the Townsville area, known as the Townsville Disease, has dramatically reduced the cane toad population in that area. Our people are working actively on research into that disease. I have addressed this Assembly concerning that work on a number of occasions in my previous capacity as Minister for Conservation.

I cannot emphasise how important it is to maintain a continuous monitoring in respect of this particular pest. The Northern Territory is a natural habitat for the toad. If it becomes established in the wetland areas in the north, it will spread rapidly right across the Top End of the Territory with untold environmental damage to wildlife. Unfortunately, it is quite possible that it will arrive in vehicles or products from interstate. It tends to bury itself and it is believed some cane toads have arrived inside pot-plants from nurseries in Queensland. It is not possible to detect them without inspecting every pot-plant arriving in the Northern Territory, which would involve a massive cost. The hitchhiking habit of cane toads has been the subject of much mirth. They have a tendency to climb up underneath vehicles and secrete themselves so that they can be carried over considerable distances.

The cane toad is a major threat to the Territory and I can assure honourable members that the Conservation Commission is constantly monitoring and policing the matter as well as engaging in research on biological controls. I am sure that, as information becomes available, the minister will keep this Assembly informed.

Burgundy Royale Debts

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

As I understand it, the government has paid rent for office space at the Beaufort 5 years in advance. Does the liquidator consider this to be a debt held by the government against Burgundy Royale and, if so, where does it rank in the order of debts and, secondly and conversely, if no arrangement has been entered into with the liquidator for the recovery of the rent advanced, how does the government propose to avoid paying rent again when the property is sold?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will not be discussing the matter of Burgundy Royale in terms of its financial position or anything of that nature in this Assembly because the writ has now been listed. No financial considerations or part of the Burgundy Royale situation will be discussed by me during the course of these sittings.

Work Health Authority

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Recently, I heard a radio interview with a representative of the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union who saw fit to denigrate and insult the operation of the Work Health Authority. This individual, Mr Peter Tullgren, has apparently described the Work Health Authority as a paper tiger and has gone so far on public radio as to cast aspersions on an insurance company because he says it owns a rehabilitation service. In view of the recent statement made by the minister on the Work Health Authority, will he advise on further action on this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for that question. It is most unfortunate that we have experienced recently these outrageous outpourings from Mr Peter Tullgren about the Work Health Authority. I say 'unfortunate' because Mr Tullgren holds a privileged position in that he has been appointed to the Work Health Authority Ministerial Advisory Council. Mr Tullgren was nominated for a post on that council by the trade union movement, and he does the membership of the union movement a great disservice because, whilst he has not seen fit to attend either of the 2 meetings of that advisory council that have been held, he has chosen to enter into some sort of public anti-Work Health Authority campaign, using the media as a vehicle. If Mr Tullgren has a brief for the people he reports to, he should bring forward some constructive criticism for improvements to the Work Health Authority instead of denigrating through the media one of the best work health organisations in this country. He is in a better position to do that than most people because he is a member of the advisory council.

I was appalled at Mr Tullgren's outburst on Territory Extra on 30 September. Whilst I do not intend to take up the valuable time of this Assembly by discussing his criticisms in detail, I would like to make 2 brief points. Firstly, Mr Tullgren referred to the Work Health Authority as a paper tiger. The authority is held up nationally as a model for the administration of occupational health and safety; it promotes the obligation of our society to rehabilitate injured workers instead of simply paying them off and

assigning them to the unemployment scrap heap. It is instrumental in bringing about significant reductions in the cost of workers' compensation, which all citizens of the Territory ultimately bear. Any paper tiger which can do those things has considerable value to the Northern Territory and is worthy of my support.

My second point concerns Mr Tullgren's claim on radio that an insurance company owned one of the Territory's rehabilitation services. In my view, that verges on slander. His statements were tantamount to an accusation that this insurance company covertly instructs its rehabilitation service to reduce its liability for compensation payments by pushing injured workers back to work before they have completely recovered. That is an outrageous statement and I hope Mr Tullgren has some evidence to back it up if he intends to stay out of the court. If I were involved with an insurance company accused of that, I would be taking the matter to court to have the record set straight. I will be very surprised if Mr Tullgren does not find himself in trouble over that matter.

Northern Territory Public Service

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I understand that the government has stated that, in the course of this financial year, it will save 600 Northern Territory Public Service positions to take the figure from around 15 600 down to about 15 000. If that is correct, can the minister explain why the total salaries bill this financial year, as contained in the budget papers, is up by \$15m and further can he state whether a significant component of this increased cost is due to the upward reclassification of positions related to the new staffing structures? Further, could he confirm that there are 8 new E4 positions in the Department of the Chief Minister as a result of the reclassification structure?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be happy to provide some detail on that question. We will be decreasing public service numbers down to a figure of 15 030. Over the last couple of years, the figure has been 15 500 to 15 600. However, not all of those positions have been filled. In fact, we will be losing about 240 people who have become excess to requirements. We are working very carefully to ensure that nobody is made redundant compulsorily.

The Leader of the Opposition would be well aware of the nurses' anomaly pay claim which has resulted in a significant increase in costs to the public service. He would also be aware of the \$10 increase that came into effect in March of this year. That \$10 increase is being paid. He would be aware that a 1.5% increase is likely to come into place. Hopefully, it may be delayed, but a 1.5% increase will probably come into place this year and had to be allowed for in the budget. I have no problems at all with the fact that costs have increased because of the increased costs of the nurses' anomaly pay claim, the 1.5% increase and the \$10 increase earlier this year. We cannot hold back the growth of the public service in the very essential areas of police, teachers and nurses. Their numbers are increasing all the time with the growth of the Northern Territory. We have to allow for those people and that answers the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition. He mentioned 8 new positions in the Department of the Chief Minister. I do not have details of that before me at this time, but I will look into that matter and get back to him on it.

Mr Smith: Eight new E4 positions.

Mr McCARTHY: I am sorry, say that again.

Mr Smith: Eight new E4 positions.

Mr McCARTHY: I do not believe that is the case, but I will get back to the Assembly with details of that during the course of these sittings.

Bradshaw Terrace Bus Bay

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is the present situation concerning the Bradshaw Terrace bus bay and what was the outcome of any discussions he has had recently with the Darwin City Council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that at least the city council came some way towards seeing the light, so to speak, in regard to the particularly dangerous situation at Bradshaw Terrace. The council has agreed to defer its final decision on that area until we complete a comprehensive report on all the possible options. The current situation is that 3 of the 6 stops in the area have been eliminated. Whilst that has not created a significant problem for travellers, it has meant some rescheduling and the cost associated with that.

The real problem is that the council, contrary to the advice that we would have given it, has installed a second pedestrian crossing less than 10 m from the Linton Street intersection. It does not take much imagination to visualise the dangerous situations that will arise there and some have already been observed by bus service employees. Pedestrians are moving across the road right next to the intersection, which is dangerous in itself. In addition, while people are on the crossing, buses are stopped across Linton Street thus blocking off traffic and creating a further hazard. We have drawn the attention of the council to the situation and, hopefully, it will address it quickly.

The situation illustrates the problems which can arise when people make gung-ho decisions without proper deliberation about the full implications of their actions. Whilst I commend the council for postponing its final decision on the matter until we can properly report, I find it quite difficult to sit by without commenting on another dangerous situation the council has inadvertently created with this crazy pedestrian crossing next to the Linton Street intersection.

The survey will be completed in November or December and hopefully will put forward some practical, safe options for council to adopt, with or without the support and assistance of the Department of Transport and Works. We certainly have not been other than totally responsible in proceeding with the comprehensive study, with the assistance of Lend Lease, which ought to be commended for its serious input into the matter.

Grant of Crown Land at Berry Springs

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is it a fact that the government has given or is thinking of giving a grant of Crown Land to Aboriginal interests in the Berry Springs area for commercial purposes? In tandem with this proposition, what discussions have taken place with the local progress association, the local people and the Litchfield Shire officers and where do the proposed plans fit in with the deliberations of the Rural Planning Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to lay to rest some of the speculation and innuendo that appears to be coming from residents of the rural area. It appears that on talkback radio I mentioned the possibility of an Aboriginal cultural centre being established on commercial land adjacent to the Berry Springs Nature Park and Zoo. May I explain, for the benefit of the member for Koolpinyah, what is proposed. There is a 40 ha site adjacent to the Berry Springs Zoo on which it is intended to establish commercial concessions because we believe that it will be the most visited tourist destination in the Top End. The proposal is for the establishment of a caravan park, a restaurant and a souvenir and craft shop.

I was approached some 6 months ago by Aboriginal interests about the possibility of establishing an Aboriginal cultural centre in Darwin. I put it to them that the perfect location was adjacent to the commercial ventures being established at Berry Springs Zoo. The reason for this is obvious. It is on the road leading into Litchfield Park, which will attract visitors and locals alike. The Aboriginal cultural centre will not proceed unless the Aboriginal people, in conjunction with the government, are able to organise their finance. The accusation that we are establishing another reserve such as Bagot or Kulaluk is quite wrong. What is proposed is a building within which Aboriginal people and their organisations will have the opportunity to sell and possibly manufacture their arts and crafts. This fits perfectly with the policies of the Northern Territory government to do whatever it possibly can to involve Aboriginal people in tourism.

Mr Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah has been invited by myself to join the management committee of the Berry Springs Zoo. Very shortly, the membership of that committee will be finalised and draft terms of reference that I have prepared will go to that committee. It will investigate how the concessions will come to fruition and how an Aboriginal cultural centre may be implemented. I would like to put at rest the minds of those rural residents who feel that they have not been advised properly. My ministerial officer spoke at length with a member of the progress association who gave an assurance that he would take a more positive role. In effect, by allowing such land to be used for commercial purposes, we are bringing enterprise to the rural area. This will create employment.

It will be one of the greatest assets available for tourists travelling to the Top End. We make no secret of the pressures being placed on our visitors in Kakadu. We need another location close to Darwin and the publicity that was given recently to the establishment of Berry Springs Zoo says it all. It will be one of the world's best and most outstanding features because it will deal generally with everything Territorian. Once again, I put on the record my congratulations to the members of the Conservation Commission who have helped in developing that facility. I have no doubt that it will be one of

the outstanding successes of tourism in the Top End. An Aboriginal cultural centre, a restaurant and a caravan park operated independently of government will do nothing but add to the asset and attract tourists to visit Berry Springs, the nature reserve and the zoo on the way through to the Litchfield area.

Cutback in Darwin Operations of Commonwealth Department
of Administrative Services

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In Tuesday night's adjournment debate, the minister reported the concerns of the Australian Professional Engineers Association, which also expressed its concerns on the ABC radio news this morning, regarding the cutback in the Darwin operations of the Commonwealth Department of Administrative Services. What impact might this move by the department have on the Northern Territory economy?

ANSWER

In a word, Mr Speaker, significant.

Mr Bell: That will do, Fred.

Mr FINCH: My answer does warrant some elaboration because a particular problem has been identified for a number of years and I, naturally enough, have a solution.

The Department of Administrative Services construction group, along with federal government departments, is facing some cutbacks. The Deputy Secretary of the department has opted to eliminate quite a large number of level 1 positions. The position of the Darwin senior officer is one of them but that in itself is not the end of the story. Changes to the departmental structure will reduce the design capacity in the local office to an absolute minimum. Similar problems have been raised in the House on a number of occasions. Well before I entered this House, Paul Everingham spoke about problems which went right back to the immediate post-cyclone period when all management functions for the department in the South Australian and Northern Territory region were transferred back to Adelaide, despite the vast predominance of work being carried out in the Northern Territory.

Since Cyclone Tracy, I believe there has only been one annual period where the workload for South Australia has exceeded that of the Northern Territory. In one particular year, \$90m was spent in the Territory while \$1m was spent in South Australia, for a fence at the Adelaide Airport. The department's rationale for not increasing local design capacity was the difficulty of recruiting staff in the immediate post-cyclone period. Despite many moves to change this over a period of time, there has been only a token increase in the establishment of the design cell here, and that came about in 1983-84. That capacity is now to be reduced again. Whilst there was some increase in the number of design jobs carried out here for Territory projects, that is to be wiped out.

The impact will extend much further than the department's local staff of 20 to 30 people. There will be no capacity to give work to local consultants where it will be done by local people in local offices. That will not only affect jobs. It has been clearly illustrated over the years that products coming out of design offices in Adelaide are usually most inappropriate for

the Northern Territory environment. We need designs which take account of environmental considerations like the heat, cyclones, horizontal rain and so forth, which designers in Adelaide are not at all familiar with. We have previously had projects designed in Adelaide where the materials were not available in Darwin and local manufacturers, agents, and suppliers did not have an opportunity to bid. The cost involved in bringing in these specialist materials is onerous in itself. Construction techniques which are appropriate in other places are inappropriate locally. The cost of that is in itself quite tremendous. I estimate that 100 or so jobs are involved for Territorians. Apart from that, the cost to the public purse of having jobs designed inappropriately elsewhere is of great concern.

The other night, the member for MacDonnell seemed to have great difficulty accepting that I was seeking a bipartisan approach in this matter. I wonder whether the Labor opposition in the Northern Territory does have any access to Canberra because my suggestion that we ought to take this matter on as a cooperative issue was scoffed at. This is a serious matter for the Australian taxpayer and also for local employment. If members opposite do not believe that, they should talk to the people in housing and construction, in architects' offices, in quantity surveyors' offices, in engineering offices and in surveyors' offices and those people will tell them what it means in job terms.

One solution is to get the federal department to reverse its decision and listen to what its Darwin people and its Adelaide office people are saying and reinstate the status quo. Probably a better solution would be for the Department of Transport and Works, which has the capacity and the local expertise and is able to coordinate local consultants, to take on an agency basis all of the design work that is to be completed within the Northern Territory. With a military base to be established and an air terminal to be constructed, hopefully in the near future, there will be a high demand. It would not only be good for the federal government but also it would ensure maximum benefits to the local community. Those benefits are not simply short term during the design phase. They will be realised during construction when there is a need for the designer and the guy in the field to be able to talk directly. There is also a need for people to be available on a long-term basis to provide ongoing consultancy.

The situation that has arisen now could have been avoided by the relocation of the principal regional headquarters to Darwin where it rightfully belongs. If that is not to happen - and I suggest that perhaps there should be some lobbying in respect of that - the federal government should be realistic and accept the offer of the Department of Transport and Works to complete these works effectively and efficiently on an agency basis.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, can the Treasurer confirm that, as acting Minister for Lands in January this year, he instructed the Northern Territory Land Corporation to sell Block H at Finnis River for \$650 000?

ANSWER

The answer is no. I did not instruct the Northern Territory Land Corporation.

Odours at Northlakes

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he offer the residents of Northlakes and nearby residential areas some relief in the matter of unsavoury odours which drift from the Marrara golf course treated-effluent irrigation system?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am in a position to give honourable members a rundown on the developments that have occurred in that particular area. The member for Sanderson has been in my office on a number of occasions about this particular issue and, of course, the member for Jingili, who lives some distance away but represents an area within the immediate vicinity, has also mentioned it. As the local member myself previously, I worked very hard on this particular issue. Unfortunately, as the member for Berrimah, I happened to go to the office of the Minister for Transport and Works. The member for Sanderson was that minister in those days. I used to discuss this particular issue at some length with him. It was not until I became minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority that we saw the action really speed up on this particular issue.

I am happy to be in a position to offer fresh cause for optimism to the long-suffering residents in the area and to the Minister for Education who has long suffered complaints from his constituents about the quality of the air at various times.

Mr Hanrahan: It was pretty bad last night.

Mr COULTER: The member for Flynn would share his concern about this matter.

Perhaps I should outline the nature of the problem briefly for the benefit of honourable members who are not fortunate enough to have such a well-grassed and well-watered 18-hole golf course in the middle of their electorates. In 1981, agreement was reached to utilise treated effluent to irrigate the golf course and other nearby recreational areas. However, since commissioning it in 1983, growing numbers of complaints have reached the government about unpleasant odours emanating apparently from the golf course which had had the effect of putting entire families off their nightly dinners. Those complaints came to a peak late last year and, following representation from the member for Sanderson, it was resolved that something had to be done about it.

From the number of complaints and from on-site investigation, it was obvious that the main source of the odour problem was the effluent storage lake. The first stage of the remedial exercise involved aeration of the lake to reduce the growth of blue and green algae. I am pleased to say that the aeration process, which began mid-year, has distinctly improved the effluent quality and reduced the rate of the build-up of sludge. The second stage has involved stopping chlorination of the effluent at Leanyer, with the approval of the Department of Health and Community Services, and a third stage involves introduction of a freshwater flushing cycle into the golf course system at the end of each irrigation cycle. This reduces the effect of stagnation in the mains. To this end, the 1987-88 budget allocated \$70 000 as a grant-in-aid to the Darwin Golf Club to provide a freshwater flushing facility. Further remedial plans involve the possibility of introducing fish - and the Minister for Industries and Development would be interested in this I am sure - into

the lake to improve the biological cycle and further reduce the growth of offensive blue-green algae.

In summary, I can report that, since aeration of the lake started in earnest, no complaints from residents have been recorded so far. I believe we have put an end to this problem which has frustrated people in the area for some time. I would like to congratulate the people from the Water Directorate for the energy and effort that they have put into resolving this particular issue. It has presented some problems at times, and we have been unsuccessful at times in the remedial action that we have tried to implement out there. However, at long last, it appears that the solution has been found.

Conservation Commission Headquarters and Herbarium

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Can he confirm or otherwise that the headquarters of the Conservation Commission and the commission herbarium are to be transferred from Alice Springs to Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the herbarium will remain where it is for the moment, until we finalise the arrangements for the move to Palmerston.

Mr Ede: So it is moving.

Mr HANRAHAN: It is intended ultimately to establish the Conservation Commission in toto at the Palmerston site, including the herbarium.

After working with the Director of the Conservation Commission for some considerable time now, I have made the decision to move the Director, and only the Director, back to Darwin. That move will be effective on 1 February 1988. There will be no significant change within the structure of the Conservation Commission as it stands at the moment, but there will be an additional position in the Alice Springs region which will virtually become Deputy Director South, if my memory serves me correctly.

I have been attempting to create a commission that operates as efficiently as possible and, to all intents and purposes, the only way ultimately to achieve this aim, because of the workload and the balance of staff in the regions in the Territory, is to have the Director live in Darwin. For that purpose, he will take up residence in Darwin effective 1 February 1988.

Park Area for Larapinta Valley

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

A number of blocks of land in the Larapinta Valley area have been set aside for future land use. These uses include parks, sporting oval sites and a future school site. In view of the fact that some 700 people are now in residence in this area, when will a block of land be handed over to the Alice Springs Town Council to enable at least one park to be made available to the children of the residents of this new area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the constituents of the member for Araluen in the Larapinta Valley area of his effective representations. Only yesterday, I was able to write to the Alice Springs Town Council and offer a piece of land for the development of a park, at nil cost and with freehold title to ensue. The land is Lot 7178 Lindervale Drive.

I share the concerns of the member for Araluen. The Larapinta Valley is a fast developing area. Many people are moving into the town. It lacks some of the basic infrastructure of a suburb somewhat removed from the main business area and I think it is essential that a high priority be placed on it to ensure that the establishment of parks and other community facilities takes place. Of course, I say that in the context of the budgetary constraints on us this year. I certainly give an undertaking to the residents of the Larapinta Valley area that I will work closely with the member for Araluen, listen to his advice and do whatever I can to ensure that the development of parks and other community assets in that particular area is a matter of priority.

Howard Springs Community Health Centre

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recently, on television, the minister indicated that the government was prepared to subsidise the operation of the Howard Springs Health Centre if private medical practitioners were willing to establish a practice there. In light of the fact that the centre was closed recently due to financial cuts, what form and level of subsidy is the minister prepared to provide?

ANSWER

I made those comments in a television interview when the reporter asked me for details about the Howard Springs Community Health Centre. It turned out afterwards that the story had come from the Nurses Federation and was all about how I was supposed to be privatising every community health centre in the Northern Territory. Obviously, that is not the case.

The Howard Springs Community Health Centre was closed because I believed that government funds could be saved whilst the same service could continue to be provided through the Berrimah and Palmerston centres. Infant care, for example, would be handled from Palmerston while domiciliary care would continue to be handled by the same people, based in the Palmerston or Berrimah centres. All outreach services in the area would continue. The other main reason for closing the centre was that we had received some expressions of interest from private practitioners who wished to open up a service in that area. This would mean that not only would the previous services continue to be provided for the residents there but they would be enhanced by the availability of a general practitioner, as well as attracting a pharmacy into the area.

I have been negotiating with a number of doctors who have indicated interest. The point I made in the TV interview about the possibility of government subsidy - which is not really the appropriate word - was that we may have to help the business over a short period of time in order for it to become viable. This could perhaps be done by not charging rent for the premises or something of that nature. If that is the case, so be it. It will be one way of increasing health services in the area. I have been very

pleased indeed with the number of expressions of interest from GPs to operate in that area. I can advise the people in the Howard Springs area that health services will actually be increased because of the cuts in the government's budget in respect of health and community services. I am confident that that will be evident in a very short period.

Leanyer Sewage Ponds

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, my question follows from a question put by the member for Jingili. Is the minister aware of dangerously high sludge levels in the Leanyer sewage ponds and can he assure the House that the Power and Water Authority will take whatever action is necessary to prevent the emanation of noxious odours and their dissemination over the northern suburbs as a result of those high sludge levels?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. It is interesting that the member for Ludmilla has not asked the same question. I understand that he is quite happy and that the effluent pumping system in his electorate is operating quite well and without any noxious odours emanating from it. The design of the Leanyer sewage ponds is such that sludge builds up. I am not sure that the member for Karama is right about it having reached dangerously high levels. Engineers from the Water Directorate tell me that the sludge build-up will be treated in the normal manner, as it was designed to be treated, and that the design limits have not been exceeded. When the sludge is removed for treatment, I suppose there may be some odour.

Honourable members will be aware that people living in the Leanyer area are no strangers to odours. The Leanyer dump was a source of odours for some time and, over a period of time, design changes were made to stop noxious odours emanating from it. Eventually, of course, a new dump site was found. I advise the member for Karama that we are aware of the sludge build-up which is designed to be part of the operation. The sludge will be treated and I suspect that, when that happens, there may be an odour for a short period of time. That is an inevitable result of the operation.

Discovery of Alanite at White Range

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I know the minister is well aware of the discovery of alanite at White Range in the Arltunga area near Alice Springs. Alanite is the compound from which yttrium, a rare earth element, is derived. Yttrium has real potential for use in superconductors, an exciting scientific development. Will he undertake to encourage Australian investment in this particular compound and also to encourage secondary and even tertiary production relating to it here in Australia so that Australians will reap the full advantage of it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member's question may arise from an article in the Centralian Advocate. I do not have the date of the issue it appeared in but I took a copy of it. The headline was: 'The Japanese Move in on Mining Scoop'. I also noted that the member for Stuart, speaking in the debate on the Appropriation Bill, seemed to agree with the member for Sadadeen about the need for Australian involvement in processing industries.

The article gave the impression that Arltunga is one of only 2 places in the world where this particular commodity is found. My advice from my department indicates that that is not correct and that the material is found in beach sands right around Australia. Apart from Queensland, there are not too many places where beach sands can be mined although I believe Western Australia recently received \$100m from a Japanese consortium to develop a similar process with semiconductor material. The major occurrences of rare earth materials in Australia, which appears to be relatively rich in them, are in heavy mineral beach sands which contain monazite, which is a by-product of heavy mineral beach sands mining for ilmenite and zirconium.

Active exploration is under way for rare earth elements in a number of places in Australia, including the Hall's Creek district in Western Australia. Rare earth elements are produced by Renison in Tasmania and exported to France. The French company Rhone-Poulenc announced its intention in January this year to build a \$100m monazite processing plant in Pinjarra, Western Australia, to treat monazite produced from Western Australian beach sand products.

The point that I am making is that, at the moment, the end users of this product seem to be the ones with the risk capital. There are not too many Australian companies who have demonstrated that they wish to become involved with the value-added product. I guess that is nothing new in Australia. It is what I spoke about in relation to the Appropriation Bill. I said that the Northern Territory should investigate every possibility to become a resource producer of value-added products, not simply provide the raw material. One of the areas where we could become heavily involved in secondary and tertiary product development is the uranium industry. It would be good if we could become involved with rare earth minerals because that is the state of the art technology, as the member for Sadadeen pointed out to us recently. These metals are much sought after by mining companies. If we could develop anything like that in the Northern Territory, it would be advantageous to us.

The recent interest in rare earth elements stems from the discovery that alloys containing rare earth elements become superconductors at temperatures above that of liquid nitrogen. If further research can produce an alloy that conducts at room temperature, the effect on the electronic industry would rival the effect of the invention of the automobile on the transport industry.

In the vicinity of White Range near Arltunga, an interesting deposit containing the material alandite has been discovered by Alice Springs prospector, Bluey Bruce. The mineralisation occurs in association with pegmatitic veins on the exploration licence that has been granted to Mr Bruce and his associates. The tenement at this stage remains in the names of individual holders and has not been included in the property that forms part of the White Range Gold NL float. The discovery of alandite in this area is interesting but requires much further exploration before its significance can be assessed.

In the article in the Centralian Advocate, the comment concerning the presence of infrastructure and activity on site is related only to the exploration for gold in the White Range area. To date, no significant exploration in the area that contains alandite has taken place. We wish Bluey Bruce all the best of luck. I hope he can find a substantial amount of this quality product and that he can attract venture capital from Australian companies or even overseas companies. Wherever possible, we should look to Australian investment but we should remember that the British developed that magnificent state of Texas in the United States of America. The British set

up the big cattle ranches and the ribbons of steel across the state. We will take investment from wherever we can get it. However, it would be nice to see some Australian entrepreneurs helping Bluey Bruce to develop this exciting product.

Australian Traineeship System

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Has any progress been made on the introduction of the Australian traineeship system in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a very timely question. The subject of the Australian traineeship system was a significant agenda item at the Labour Ministers' Conference that I attended in Sydney last week. Honourable members will be aware that the Australian traineeship system was announced in 1985 in the federal budget. This announcement signifies the federal government's adoption of a recommendation from the Kirby Inquiry into training.

The Australian traineeship system is aimed at providing an additional window to employment for school leavers in the 16 to 18 year age group. Traineeships have a duration of 12 months, involving integrated on- and off-the-job training and are conducted in a non-trade area. The Australian traineeship system in the Northern Territory is administered by a joint secretariat consisting of officers of my department and officers of the federal Department of Education, Employment and Training.

To date, there have been 2 traineeships completed in the Northern Territory. The first was within the Australian Public Service and some 8 persons graduated on 27 March this year. All of those 8 persons were offered full-time employment within the Australian Public Service within the Territory. On 24 April 1987, the first private sector traineeship in Australia was completed when 8 trainees were awarded their competency certificates after having completed a tourism and hospitality industry traineeship conducted at the Beaufort Hotel. All of those trainees were employed by the Beaufort Hotel in a full-time capacity following graduation.

Currently, there are 3 traineeships in progress within the Territory. Firstly, there is a traineeship for 10 people in the tourism and hospitality industry - again at the Beaufort and I commend the Beaufort for its effort in this regard. The Australian Public Service has commenced another traineeship for 15 persons. Finally, in the building and construction industry, some 14 trainees commenced the Territory's first group traineeship under the sponsorship of the Master Builder's Association in May - 10 of these trainees are from Darwin, 3 from Katherine and 1 from Jabiru. These trainees are undertaking a package of training which includes a range of skills in construction occupations, including concreting, steel fixing, scaffolding and building labourer requirements.

A further development in this area is agreement between the Territory and Commonwealth governments on the funding of a position of traineeship liaison officer. This position is located within the Darwin office of the Confederation of Industry and Commerce. That officer commenced employment during August this year and is responsible to the Confederation of Industry and Commerce for the development of Australian traineeship systems in various industries under the umbrella of the confederation's membership. I should

perhaps mention here that a similar offer was made to the Territory Trades and Labor Council, but it has not yet taken up that offer.

Many of the delays in getting traineeship schemes off the ground have resulted from the need to negotiate individual agreements with the particular union covering the area concerned. Whilst much progress has been made in these negotiations, there is significant scope for them to be streamlined, and further negotiations are under way with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union for an umbrella agreement. If these negotiations are successful, such an umbrella agreement will obviate the need for individual agreements on individual traineeship schemes.

In the area of forward planning for further traineeships, I can advise the Assembly that discussions are well under way for developing a training package, together with the Transport Workers Union, for a traineeship in the furniture removals and storage industry. Within the area of local government, a training package has been finalised for local government municipal works and parks and gardens traineeships. Recent indications are that traineeship schemes in this area of employment may be able to be implemented in early 1988.

Initial discussions have been held with the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association aimed at examining the feasibility of a station hand traineeship. If these discussions prove fruitful, it is proposed that that scheme will be based in Katherine. That is logical because Katherine is recognised as a service centre for the majority of the cattle stations within the Top End. Discussions with Katherine Rural College management are planned for this month. These discussions are aimed at an assessment of the college's ability to provide the off-the-job training component.

Work has commenced on the drafting of a formal agreement to facilitate an office-clerical traineeship in the private sector in the Northern Territory. To this end, Territory offices will be in contact with federal officials in the Federated Clerks Union to finalise this agreement. It is expected that the training package for an automotive replacement parts traineeship will be completed. The industrial agreement to facilitate this traineeship has been agreed to and it is to go before the Arbitration Commission later in October.

Preliminary work is under way to assess the potential for an insurance industry traineeship being conducted within the Territory. With regard to the traineeship proposed for the Northern Territory Public Service, I must advise the Assembly that significant difficulties have been experienced in reaching any sort of agreement with the Australian Public Service Association for this traineeship. What is promising is that a way has been found around the Australian Public Service Association's intransigent attitude and, at this stage, it is anticipated that a traineeship in the office-clerical area, within the Northern Territory Public Service, will commence early in 1988 in order to coincide with the school leavers seeking employment and the semester requirements of the Darwin Institute of Technology which is to provide the off-the-job training component.

As a general response to the question, traineeship schemes in the Northern Territory have been somewhat sluggish in getting off the ground. Of course, there is the exception of the high level of success in the tourism and hospitality area, and I am sure that all members will agree with me that this is a very important area for training, given the Northern Territory's growing tourist industry. However, the future outlook of the Australian traineeship system in the Northern Territory is promising. The groundwork carried out

over the last 12 months is now starting to bear fruit and I would anticipate an acceleration of traineeships over and above those that I have outlined in the Assembly today.

Mr Speaker, the federal government has strengthened the scheme recently and I see a great deal of hope for it. I think it is one of our best potential means of training people in the Northern Territory, and they are very happy with the way the Territory government has been supportive of the scheme. I hope that unions will take the same responsible attitude and do away with their intransigence. The pressures that they place on the ability of people to employ trainees, in demanding levels of payment beyond what is required, has been the major factor in slowing up the development of some of those schemes.

Air North Settlement

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In the last sittings, I asked the Chief Minister a question concerning Air North and the settlement of the aerial medical contract. He said that a proposition had been put to the government by Air North as settlement of any legal action outstanding over the contract. Has that proposition been accepted by the Northern Territory government and does it involve payment of moneys by the Northern Territory government in settlement of any claim or any legal expenses incurred by Air North?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have details of any funds changing hands between the Northern Territory government and Air North as a result of the finalisation of the contract. My participation in this matter has involved getting the contract started by Skywest. That took place on 4 September. I have no information about any moneys changing hands between government and Air North in any settlement.

Darwin to Alice Springs Railway

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to the front page story in the leading Japanese financial daily yesterday which, amongst other things, stated that preference will be given for concessions relating to our rich natural resources in return for investment by Japanese companies in the railway. What concessions have been discussed and what agreement has been reached?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot say this question comes as any surprise given that the Leader of the Opposition gave a clear indication through the media this morning that such a question would be asked. I will preface the answer by saying that I received a copy of this press report late yesterday. Honourable members will be aware that I made some public comment that I would be seeking to find out where the report came from and to verify the accuracy of the statements made in the report. We have been unable to identify the source of this particular statement and apparently the media has been unable to track down the source of the statement also.

I would like to refer to some of the comments the Leader of the Opposition made in the media today because it would be worthwhile having the matter clarified. In Territory Extra this morning, and also in news reports, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that the suggestion to include proposals, such as potential rights to develop mineral resources or other projects, is somehow a new issue that has been thrown into the ring as far as this railway is concerned.

I will not suggest that the Leader of the Opposition is either deliberately lying or deliberately misleading the people. I must work on the assumption that either he does not do his homework or, quite frankly, is simply incompetent in terms of following the debate on the railway. I would like to refer honourable members to a number of reports. I refer to a media release that I issued on 20 April 1987. It said: 'Mr Coulter discussed mineral developments and markets with his Japanese counterpart while Dr Conn is to represent the Northern Territory government in the Japan Australia Transport Study Group'.

There was an article in the NT News of 20 April. The front page story referred to myself: 'He said all parties involved in the \$610m railway project had shown strong interest in possible allied mineral developments'. On 20 April, at a press conference in Darwin, I stated: 'With the other industries that can be developed off that transport mode - mining, agriculture and other industries that become more viable with the rail line - you start to get an understanding of why it should be called a transport study group rather than really a railway study group'.

On 29 April, I said in answer to a question put in this Legislative Assembly: 'I might say here that the project may involve more than a railway line. The line is really the linchpin in the development of a transportation system which involves shipping, ports and rail as related transport modes. It is possible that other projects can be mixed and matched with the railway in a consortium-backed multi-project venture that could well improve the viability of the total scheme, and provide more investment opportunities for the Northern Territory'.

Mr Speaker, I can say to the Leader of the Opposition that that is still the position. The concept of concessions is similar to the process that was used in the United States in the construction of rail services there. As I have said consistently on the railway, we may well blend in other development opportunities, as concessional rights to the consortium that would construct the railway line, to improve the overall viability of the total project. There is no suggestion of subsidies, underwriting or other special arrangements in respect of the railway line. The objective is to get a railway line built and if, in doing that, we can blend together other development opportunities that become viable with the railway or which - to use a colloquialism - can 'sweeten the pie' to improve the overall viability of such a business consortium, then I support that approach fully, because to use a railway line and to accelerate economic development in other areas in combination can only work to the benefit of the Northern Territory and Australia generally. There is no suggestion there of any hidden subsidies.

This railway line is a significant and fundamentally important social infrastructure and transport infrastructure facility and, as such, deserves careful consideration of any options that are available. There have been no fixed agreements on any form of concessions or otherwise. Certainly, different options have been outlined in a similar vein to the way they are being outlined in the House.

Those discussions are open for consideration by the government and consortium members and consideration is being given to how they can be brought together. There will be meetings during November which we hope will further advance the proposal. I reiterate the comment I made yesterday, that I am heartened by the interest being shown in the railway. I advise honourable members that interest is increasing on almost a weekly basis among Australian businesses. They are showing keen interest in examining the railway project with a view to possible participation in the consortium.

In case any members run the risk of being misled, I can advise that we are still working towards the creation of a consortium. The study group is the vehicle for examining opportunities and identifying potential participants in such a consortium. The consortium is not yet formed. We are working towards that and the details will be worked out as the project develops. I still feel reasonably confident that we can commence construction of the railway some time during 1988. I make no firm commitment to that date because the task is very complex and difficult. The establishment of this railway has confounded governments in the Northern Territory community since 1911, but I genuinely believe that we are far closer to the realisation of our plans than ever before.

I would like to remind honourable members that the Leader of the Opposition has been an active proponent of the view that the Northern Territory should reconsider the federal government's 60:40 proposal, which would involve a direct capital works injection by the Northern Territory government of around \$300m.

Mr Smith: No, that is wrong.

Mr HATTON: The injection would be 40% of \$610m in 1986 dollars. The Leader of the Opposition can do his own sums, but it is certain that any such amount would be a very high direct cost to the Northern Territory community. I will not rule out the possibility of the Northern Territory government becoming involved in the railway, although my preferred position is that it be a 100% private enterprise project. Equally, whilst there may be some

opportunity costs in encouraging private investment, the net benefit to the Northern Territory would be more than offset by those. Although I am not suggesting that it will be the case, benefits offered could include the waiving of rights to mineral royalties. The entire project could be put together in such a way that it would generate additional business development along the rail corridor.

Mr Smith: It will be subsidised by the back door rather than the front door.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition refers to that as subsidisation through the back door. I am talking about the possibility of giving a concession in terms of forgoing revenue from projects that would not start if there were no railway line. If there were no railway line, there would be no revenue from such projects because the projects would not commence. These matters will be considered in more detail as issues develop. We know the opposition likes to criticise and knock developments in the Northern Territory but I was really sad to see the Leader of the Opposition jump on the bandwagon and try to find some way of criticising yet again what could be one of the most exciting development projects or consortiums that the Northern Territory has seen. Our government will work with all expedition to try to have this project under way in the interests of the Northern Territory and to generate some wealth both for the Territory and Australia.

Annual Leave Loading

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Can he advise of any progress on the government's decision to apply to the Arbitration Commission to abolish the 17½% annual leave loading?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members will be aware that the air fares, district allowance and 17½% leave loading conditions enjoyed by government employees are covered, in some cases, by awards of the commission. This is especially the case in respect of the 17½% leave loading. It is therefore necessary for the government to apply to the commission to vary those awards. In the case of air fares, those applications seek to abolish air fares for all employees recruited after 1 August 1987 and covered by awards. In the case of the district allowance, the applications seek to reduce the amounts of allowance to the levels agreed in discussion with the TLC - that is, down to zero for employees without dependants and \$960 per annum for those with dependants.

In the case of the 17½% loading, the applications seek to remove the provision from all awards covering government employment. The government's intentions in that respect are no surprise to honourable members and certainly no surprise to the unions. It was the subject of considerable discussion in the talks with the unions in June. It is pretty fair to say that the TLC is not happy about that but it recognises the government's right to seek to remove the 17½% loading from the award. The applications have been before the commission for some time now. The commission has a very heavy schedule and we do not have a definite date as yet for those applications to be heard. We have to fit in not only with the commission but within the fairly heavy schedule of the person who is taking our case to the commission. I would expect that those hearings will come up in the fairly near future.

Darwin to Alice Springs Railway

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

The story in the Japan National Economic Day purported to represent the Northern Territory government and its position in places. Can he provide this House with a categorical assurance that the story was not planted by either the Northern Territory government directly or by any agent of the Northern Territory government who has been involved in these talks, particularly Dr Ishizaki or Dr Sugawara?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have advised the House already that we do not know the source of this story. We have been trying to check it. We have spoken with Dr Ishizaki who was equally surprised at the story and denies any knowledge of having fired the story. Equally, I can assure the honourable member that I certainly did not plant the story and I know the Treasurer did not. It came as a surprise to us. We have not yet been able to make direct contact with Dr Sugawara but I must say that we would be very surprised to hear that he had any involvement. It has been confirmed today that one of the companies named in that report, EIE Pty Ltd, with which Dr Ishizaki is associated, has subsequently denied the report and is confirming what I have said in this House today: that there is no fixed agreement. I am genuinely confounded as to where that story came from, as is our government. We have been trying to source it down ourselves.

Imprisonment of Juvenile

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer to the case of a 15-year-old girl who was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment, which has received a great deal of publicity recently. Is he satisfied that his department has performed adequately in this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this young lady certainly attracted widespread media attention when she was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment by the Darwin Juvenile Court on 12 August 1987. While in Darwin Prison, the young lady was seen by a psychiatrist and a psychiatric nurse who provided relevant reports on her psychological and emotional condition. As a result of their visit and a subsequent assessment completed on the young lady, the staff at the Darwin Prison were instructed as to the most appropriate means of ensuring that her emotional and psychological needs were met while she was in the prison.

Reports from the prison indicate that she responded extremely well to the program established for her in prison which included an educational component, supervised by the education officer within the prison. Further, the reports indicated that her behaviour and attitude within the prison improved markedly. The assessments indicated that she required consistent handling while she was in prison and highlighted the benefits to be derived from family counselling upon discharge.

On Tuesday 13 October, through her solicitor, the young lady appealed in the Darwin Supreme Court against the severity of her sentence. Upon hearing the appeal, the judge confirmed the sentence of the lower court. However, he released her forthwith on a 12-month supervised bond of \$500 in her own

recognisance. She was ordered to enter into the bond and to accept the reasonable directions of a delegate of the minister with regard to residence, associates and employment, and to abstain from alcohol and drug consumption except that prescribed by a medical practitioner. She has now returned to live with her mother.

As a result of the Supreme Court's action, arrangements are being made for the family to receive family counselling from staff of the Tamarind Centre in conjunction with community welfare officers. In addition, the fact that she has been placed on a supervised bond will require juvenile justice officers to maintain regular contact with her. Now that the court has made the decision to release the young lady into the community, every effort is being made to ensure that her return to the community is successful.

Mr Speaker, I want to place that on record as being what I hope is the final chapter in this episode relating to this young lady. I said publicly that I was surprised that the matter attracted media attention. I was also surprised at the criticism that was launched against members of my department in the welfare area in particular and, I dare say, criticism of the magistrate for his decision in sentencing this young lady. It did nothing to help in her rehabilitation. Whilst I do not advocate it for future cases, I believe the sentence had an impact on the young lady. I certainly hope the young lady takes the decision that she has a future in front of her and that she will stick on the straight and narrow. The appeal court confirmed the sentence. If she does misbehave, she will go straight back to Darwin Prison.

Society becomes very frustrated over the number of houses that are being broken into and the number of similar offences that are being committed by juveniles, particularly in the Darwin area but no doubt right throughout the Northern Territory. I think the sentence of the magistrate was indicative of that frustration. It is too late for parents to start criticising welfare workers, prison officers, magistrates, police and the like once their children reach that stage.

Mr Speaker, I would like to leave you with some food for thought. Following the introduction and publicising of mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, the number of notifications increased greatly. During the last 12 months, an increase in notification has been quite evident.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The opposition has been fairly tolerant during question time over the last few sitting days but, quite clearly, the minister has gone right over the top on this particular occasion. He was asked a particular question about a particular person and he now intends to deliver a general speech on a general subject. If he wants to do that, he should do it by way of statement.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I would like to speak to that point of order. In fact, the question was whether I was satisfied with the work that my officers had been doing in the department relative to these matters. I believe that the answer that I am giving is quite relevant.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I ask the minister to keep his answer relevant to the question.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, in September 1987 alone, 39 reports were received and, if this trend were maintained, 400 reports could be anticipated in the 12 months from July 1987. In the past 12 months, the overall number of child protection reports has approximately tripled. The number of substantiated

reports has approximately doubled. I put the challenge out to the parents of children in the Northern Territory to take a look at themselves before their children find themselves before a Court of Summary Jurisdiction where they are likely to be sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

The number of child abuse cases that are emerging is horrific. I have no doubt in the world that they are nothing more than the tip of the iceberg in terms of what is occurring in some homes in the Northern Territory. I can assure honourable members that welfare officers are working extremely hard on a number of cases which have been reported to them. I make a plea to parents of young children to look to their responsibilities as parents and not cry out when matters reach the stage where their offspring are sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

Prison Labour from Gunn Point Prison

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What has been done by the Division of Custodial Services to use prison labour from Gunn Point Prison to work on maintaining facilities for campers and picnickers in the Gunn Point area and to act as agents for the Department of Lands and Housing in the administration of this area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Conservation has put that proposition to me recently and I am investigating the matter through the department to see if we can come up with some agreement on how we can work together in that area.

Deregulation of Aviation Industry

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Since the federal Minister for Aviation has made an announcement regarding deregulation of the aviation industry, is the minister able to advise the House of the benefits the Northern Territory is likely to receive in relation to international aircraft visits?

ANSWER

A number of developments have occurred since the time of the federal government's announcement on deregulation and termination of the 2-airline policy in 1990. A couple of those developments are of concern to us, although the Northern Territory government certainly endorses and supports the removal of government interference in the marketplace in the aviation industry.

I have written recently to the federal Minister for Transport in regard to the possibility that, should one of the existing 2 airlines gain pre-eminence in the industry, predatory activities might commence and there would be a need for some oversight. My concern is based on the fact that Australian Airlines will require some considerable financial injection over the 3-year period to 1990. This could come from the government or, more appropriately, through some form of privatisation of Australian Airlines which would ensure that it could be an equal competitor with Ansett. My concern was that the federal minister had announced that he would leave any oversight of the industry to the Trade Practices Commission and the Prices Surveillance Authority. I suggest that their powers and limited expertise might be inadequate and that such machinery would be both cumbersome and ineffectual. I have written to

the federal minister reinforcing the view which this government expressed in the review of May 1985. We proposed then that, at least during the initial period, there should be a specialist and independent statutory authority which could encompass restricted trade practices functions in relation to the aviation industry. The problem is that the Northern Territory, particularly with its long routes and relatively low numbers of passengers, may receive some harsh treatment from the major airline companies. Whilst we welcome the deregulation announcement as such, I have expressed those fundamental concerns to the federal government.

The second area of concern relates to Qantas. Whilst deregulation will allow Qantas to take advantage of interlining, which is the picking up of international tourists from domestic ports, the decision did not go far enough in relation to the Northern Territory, Western Australia and northern Queensland. I believe there would be great advantage in allowing the international carriers to pick up domestic passengers to fill empty seats on routes to and from those areas. This would make additional routes available to Territory passengers. One would assume, for example, that there would be some excellent holiday packages to and from Townsville, where Qantas currently lands.

A couple of days ago, the federal Minister for Tourism expressed some concern about the 50% rule which requires Qantas to gain 50% of passengers travelling into and out of the country. I would support the relinquishment of that 50:50 arrangement, which would certainly enable more passengers to be flown in and out of the Territory so that we can exploit our promotion of tourism and, we hope, a new terminal building to be built in the very near future.

In summary, deregulation will not lead immediately to cheaper air fares unless some no-frills airlines develop over the next 3 years. I hope that there will be no adverse effect on air fares. There is potential, should the federal government act appropriately, to allow domestic pick-up by Qantas and to adjust the 50:50 arrangement so that we can achieve additional international tourist numbers in the Northern Territory.

Roadside Inn Review Report

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

I refer him to a question I asked him on 17 September 1987 regarding the Roadside Inn Review. He advised in response that, within 30 days, he would submit the report to Cabinet and immediately thereafter the report would be made a public document which he would be more than happy to circulate far and wide. I ask him to advise this House on the truth or otherwise of stories that this report has been given selective distribution and, regardless of his answer to that question, will he allow us mere mortals to see this report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that I would give the member for Stuart status as a mere mortal but, for his advice, the Roadside Inn Review Report is still not before Cabinet and will come there in due course. Particular details relevant to individual operators have been forwarded to the operators for comment. Most of the recommendations in the report have already been acted upon and are in train. I would hope that, before the end of the year, I will be in a position to make the document public. I really do not have any objections at all to giving the member for Stuart an advance copy. The only

thing I would ask is that he respect the confidentiality of certain parts of it that deal with facts relevant to particular operators. I am sure those operators would not be prepared to have some of the comments publicised far and wide and I think they should be given the opportunity to answer the relevant recommendations contained within the report.

Budget Directions and Information

Mr HARRIS to TREASURER

Yesterday's editorial in the NT News was rather critical of the Northern Territory government's direction with the budget. Comment was made about taxpayers not being allowed to know what is happening with their money and also that the budget has been hijacked by the public service. What is the true position regarding the direction of the budget, and what avenues are available to inform the public of what is happening with their money?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Port Darwin for his question. Indeed, it was interesting to read yesterday's editorial and the comments. The rounding out of the figures used was very interesting. The cost of running the public service is a favourite hobbyhorse of many journalists. \$500m was the figure used for the salaries of public servants. Of course, the figure is around \$450m, but that was not rounded down to \$400m; it had to be rounded up to \$500m.

I would like to cover that issue in rather more detail. There really have been meaningful cuts in the past 3 years to staff numbers in the public service. The maximum staffing allocation in 1986-87 was 15 700 and we are now funding just over 15 000 public servants. Significant inroads have been made into the reduction of the number of public servants employed in the Northern Territory. The quarterly expenditure figures are now available and give considerable detail. I have heard members on both sides of this House doubt the authenticity of some of the matters mentioned in the column on the back page of the Sunday newspaper: the Bushranger column. From time to time, some members have expressed their concern about the authenticity of those particular items. I for one am a convert to some of the items now, in particular where Bushranger suggested that he had a copy of the quarterly statements when he was preparing his article. I do not have the actual item here, but that is interesting. As it became a public document and was gazetted on the Friday, I guess he did have a copy and therefore we should not doubt the authentic nature of some of the comments in the future.

The quarterly statements provide considerable information about the budget and the member for Port Darwin can gain considerable insight into the budget from those figures. It is true that capital works have been reduced this year. I mentioned that in my budget speech. Indeed, we will be dealing with the Appropriation Bill today and I will be speaking in reply to the second-reading debate immediately after question time. I will be drawing attention to the contributions made in this Assembly about the capital works program. There is nothing new in that. We have said that we have had a scaling down of capital works programs in the Northern Territory. The largest single component was the completion of the Channel Island Power Station which has resulted in the capital works' allocation being \$70m lower in 1987-88 than in 1986-87. Other major cuts to capital works have been possible because of progress that we have made in previous years, in particular in relation to roads and housing, the 2 areas which suffered the most severe cutbacks in the last budget.

There was a cut of \$17m in roads funding and some of that was due to cuts in federal funding. The housing allocation was down some \$6m. Members would be aware that we have reduced our housing program from 600 houses down to fewer than 200 houses in this budget. The allocation for the safe anchorage is down \$5m. There were reductions in allocations for many capital works. Special regard had been paid to the effect of cuts on small contractors, especially in the Darwin region. There was a \$3m provision in the budget for small, labour-intensive projects. We also intend to upgrade some 1474 houses in order to inject work back into the community. There were also significant cuts in relation to repairs and maintenance.

Mr Speaker, much more information will become available today during the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill. The quarterly statements became available to the general public last Friday in the gazette. As I will indicate in my reply to the debate, the budget is working. In the first 3 months of this financial year, the government's direction has been maintained and we are developing a truly meaningful economy in the Northern Territory that is being led by private investors rather than the government, which has led the economy in previous years.

Land Application in Pine Creek

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to comments by the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services and resolutions from the Pine Creek Branch of the Country Liberal Party saying that he should step down from the consideration of decisions with respect to his uncle Jeff's application for the block in Pine Creek, on the corner of Kakadu Highway and Stuart Highway. Will the minister in fact step down?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the opportunity to clarify the situation so it can be put into perspective. There appears to have been much ranting and raving by various people as to the status of the application. Quite simply, the application came before Cabinet in a summary document that indicates briefly all the applications made for land, be it by the Darwin City Council, the Alice Springs Council, this department or that department. That is the status of the application. The concern that has been expressed as to my involvement is possibly a little premature. I doubt whether anything will sit on my desk as Minister for Lands and Housing relevant to this development application for some 6 or 7 months. It will take that long for all the issues to be resolved.

What I will say is that I am prepared to look at the matter in a positive way. It is not very often that we are presented with developmental proposals in the Territory from people who are prepared to spend money. I would rather see how we can address the genuine concerns of the people of Pine Creek and also ensure that the development is not lost to the Territory. Certainly, I think that is very possible. I would welcome any further discussions with members of the CLP in Pine Creek, the local government authority and anybody else who would like to put a proposition before me.

As for the question from the member for MacDonnell, I certainly have no intention of standing aside in this matter. This morning, I advised the Chief Minister that I would ensure that any decisions relating to the matter would be taken to Cabinet so that Cabinet as a whole could be properly informed and make the decision. I trust that keeps the member for MacDonnell happy.

Jawoyn Land Claim

Mr REED to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he advise the Assembly of the results of his visit to Katherine last Friday to discuss the Jawoyn land claim, particularly in light of weekend press reports on the matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to be able to advise that I went to Katherine last Friday and took the opportunity to speak to a wide cross-section of the community there. The object of my visit was, firstly, to initiate dialogue with the Jawoyn Association and the Jawoyn community on a number of very significant issues that are vitally important to the Northern Territory and to have those matters resolved in the interests of the Territory. Secondly, I wished to gauge the opinion of the people of the Katherine region, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. In that respect, I must say that the meeting was particularly successful. During the course of the day, I met with Mr Werner Sarny, the major tour operator within the Katherine Gorge National Park. I met with regional heads of Northern Territory government departments. I met with the Jawoyn Association and with representatives of the Katherine Town Council, the Master Builder's Association, the Confederation of Industry and Commerce and the Tourist Promotion Association. I met also with the Katherine Gorge Action Committee and, at a public meeting late in the afternoon, I met with interested members of the public in the Katherine area.

Mr Speaker, there was some comment in the media over the weekend about my being kept waiting and that somehow that was a gross humiliation of the Northern Territory government. I must advise honourable members that the Jawoyn Association itself advised us last Thursday that, prior to the meeting commencing, there would probably be a delay as the people came together as they wished to sort out the procedures for that day for what was a general meeting of the Jawoyn Association. We understood that and, in fact, we advised the media of that fact prior to proceeding to Katherine. Whilst there was a delay, it was not an unexpected or an unforeseen delay, and it was not an undue delay. In fact, I allocated a period from 10 am until 12.30 pm of that morning for the discussions and they were successfully concluded prior to that time.

I am sure honourable members will be pleased and interested to know that the Jawoyn Association has nominated a negotiating group of 9 representatives of the association who will be advised by 3 members of the Northern Land Council. The objective of that group is to meet with the Northern Territory government to seek to resolve the issues arising from the Aboriginal Land Commissioner's recommendations which deal with such matters as the future of the Katherine Gorge National Park. On the agenda, equally, is the issue of land tenure over that particular park. It will deal also with issues of detriment, particularly as that relates to access to a suitable water supply to meet the needs of the Katherine region.

I place on record again the fact that the Jawoyn Association has consistently maintained the viewpoint and given undertakings that it will ensure that there will be access to water and has said that the Katherine Gorge National Park will be maintained as a national park. Public statements were made by representatives that it would be operated in the same manner that it is now. Quite obviously, however, the hows and whens and wherefores of that need to be resolved. That can be done and it is our intention to ensure

that they are resolved properly and satisfactorily in the interests of the entire community during the course of those discussions with the Jawoyn Association.

I will be meeting the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at the earliest opportunity and, again, I will be putting to him that there should be an opportunity for us to resolve these matters prior to the grant of any land. The statement I made in the Assembly last week is still the position of the Northern Territory government and I can advise honourable members that our position with respect to that was specifically referred to the Jawoyn Association during our discussions.

I might add also, in case there is any misunderstanding, that at all meetings with the various sectors of the community there was an acceptance of and support for the course of action that I have recommended and am adopting. That came in the course of those debates from all sections of the community, and I include in that the Katherine Gorge Action Group, the business community and the representatives of the public. There has been widespread support for the approach being adopted by our government in trying to resolve this, and I welcome the positive approach adopted by the Katherine community and particularly I thank the member for Katherine for his positive contribution in this exercise. I know he will continue to play an active role to see this matter satisfactorily resolved in the interests of all Territorians.

Administrator of the Northern Territory

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to the determination that the Prime Minister made some 18 months ago in that the renewal of the Administrator's commission would terminate in June next year and would not be reviewed. Has the Chief Minister commenced discussions with the Commonwealth government on whom the Administrator's replacement might be, and would he be prepared to give Territorians an undertaking that a true Territorian will be put forward as the Territory's nomination for the next Administrator?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for that question and I would like to make a couple of points in responding. Firstly, we have been making representations to the federal government and we intend to make further representations in the near future, specifically to the Prime Minister. It is our view that there should be no replacement of the Administrator, particularly during the bicentennial year. My first submission to the Prime Minister will be to seek that the federal government review its decision, made late in 1985 or early in 1986, a decision which the Northern Territory government and the member for Barkly opposed strongly. It was a pre-emptive decision, taken without consultation with the Northern Territory government. Mr Speaker, I will be seeking an extension of the current Administrator's term. Unfortunately, because this is not a state, we do not have the right to make recommendations directly to the Crown. If this government's reasonable request is refused, I can assure the honourable member that we will be recommending that a Territorian should be nominated as the next Administrator of the Northern Territory.

NT News Editorial on Northern Territory Public Service

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

I refer him to yesterday's editorial in the NT News, headed 'NTPS Feeds Itself', which stated: 'This financial year, the Northern Territory Public Service wage bill for the first time will exceed \$500m. Add to that the cost of office space, stationery, electricity, the vast car fleet and the rest. Add then the interest on borrowings, the Territory's fastest rising budget item, and it is no exaggeration to say the administration of the Territory government is consuming about 60% of total outlays'. Can the minister comment on the accuracy of that part of the editorial?

Mr Ede: The question has already been asked.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question has not been asked. The question asked by the member for Casuarina is quite different from the question that was asked of the Treasurer. It relates to whether the public service is unproductive and whether it consumes an enormous proportion of our budget. As the Treasurer indicated, the figures in the NT News were wrong. This year, the Northern Territory Public Service will cost about \$50m less than the \$500m quoted.

I would like to refer directly to some comments in the editorial concerning the budget of the Department of Labour and Administrative Services. The \$7m expenditure in the first 3 months of the financial year has not been unproductive. Most of it - \$4.425m in fact - has been spent on the rental of office accommodation. This expenditure goes back into the community because the majority of our space is leased from private developers who themselves employ people, including cleaners and so forth. Money is also expended on electricity, security, grounds maintenance and legal costs, none of which are unproductive. Private developers employ cleaners, ground maintenance staff and, dare I say, lawyers.

The editorial infers that our public service is unproductive and is growing more quickly than it should. In fact, public service numbers have been maintained at a very reasonable figure over a number of years. In 1979, 13 100 persons were employed in the public service. That was the figure in the year following self-government and it has since grown by 16% to 15 200. In that same period, the total labour force in the Northern Territory has grown by 47%, from a base of 51 300 to 75 400 and the Northern Territory residential population has grown by 34% from a base of 114 000 to 153 800. The increase in public service numbers is quite modest in comparison. The approved figure for this year is 15 038, which represents a reduction of 500 in the last 12 months. Taking into account all the activities of the Northern Territory government during the last few years, there has been a very insignificant growth in public service numbers.

The number of public servants was 13 100 in 1979, 14 100 in 1980, 14 300 in 1981, 14 100 in 1982, 14 600 in 1983, 15 000 in 1984, 15 400 in 1985 and 15 500 in 1986. That growth has not occurred primarily in administration. Because the Territory is growing, we have to employ more teachers, more health professionals, including nurses, and more police. Those numbers have to increase with the population. The growth in the public service has been insignificant compared with the 47% increase in population.

As far as I am aware, the editorial's figures are reasonably correct. Certainly, the figure for the Department of Labour and Administrative Services is correct.

Mr Hatton: The figure for the Chief Minister's Department is not. It is more than our entire budget.

Mr McCARTHY: I did not check the figures for the Department of the Chief Minister but those for my Department of Labour and Administrative Services are correct. We have spent \$4.425m on rentals for office space, with the remaining \$2.575m being spent on other labour and administrative costs. I do not think that is outrageous. The public service of 15 000 people is working extremely hard. We have kept the numbers down and we are getting very good value for money from our public service. It is hardly a problem here compared with other states and the federal government whose public services are growing at an enormous rate. I think that that particular editorial ought to end up in the wastepaper basket because it is totally unresearched.

Stormwater Drains in Larapinta Valley Subdivision

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

At present, due to the lack of community facilities in the Larapinta area in Alice Springs, young children are using stormwater drains to play in and there are reports of young children walking some 200 m up these pipes. At this time of year, Alice Springs can be subject to sudden heavy rainfall and flash flooding. What action is the government taking to provide stormwater drain covers in the Larapinta Valley subdivision?

Mr Bell: The question is why they were not put there in the subdivision, Eric. The government ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for MacDonnell can wait for the reply.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think that is a most reasonable question from the member for Araluen and it is very similar to one raised by the member for Jingili recently in respect of action at Casuarina. In fact, the difficulty in finding a workable solution at Casuarina was that there were a number of entry points along the drain itself which could have led to an even more dangerous situation if gratings had been provided across the ends of the main drain.

The whole question of responsibility for drains in the Northern Territory is still to be resolved. In this particular instance, we are talking about a drain that may expose local children to some danger. As there are no additional entry points along the length of that particular drain, I have written to the department seeking its cooperation. At this stage, although the department had already offered to hand the drains over to the local government in Alice Springs, in this case the department will install gratings. This should ensure a safer environment for the children in the honourable member's electorate. I am sure that he will be delighted to hear that news and that the children in the electorate will be able to play more safely.

Alice Springs Water Supply

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I understand that contracts have not been let in time for new water bores to be drilled and commissioned in the Mereenie field to maintain an adequate water supply for an expanding Alice Springs this summer. Will he take the action necessary to ensure that Alice Springs has a water supply secured for the high demand summer period?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure which bore field the honourable member is referring to.

Mr Collins: It is the Mereenie Basin outside Alice Springs.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will take that question on notice and provide the honourable member with more detail. Can I tell the honourable ...

Mr Collins: The bores were in the budget.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will take that question on notice and supply the honourable member with a more detailed answer during the course of these sittings.

Land Application in Pine Creek

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

I refer him to the Minister for Lands and Housing's previous answer that he would not step down from decisions about the block in Pine Creek. I also refer him to the Westminster tradition of collective Cabinet responsibility as summed up by Pettifer in his comment that 'it is required by convention that all ministers must be prepared to accept collective responsibility for, and defend publicly, the policies and actions of the government or else resign'. Will he accept the decision of the Minister for Lands and Housing not to step down or will he resign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think that is a very unusual question. In actual fact, of course, I will accept the decision of the Minister for Lands and Housing. That is his decision. It is his right to make that decision. I said that I would bring to the Minister for Lands and Housing the proposal from a meeting held at Pine Creek last Sunday. It was a much wider meeting than a meeting of the local CLP. Other people from the town attended that meeting. It was more a public meeting. Resolutions were passed at that meeting and I said that I would bring them to the minister, and I pointed out to those people on that day that this was the prerogative of the Minister for Lands and Housing. I think that his agreement to take this application to Cabinet for decision is the right one.

Hansard Staff

Mr SMITH to SPEAKER

Can you confirm, Mr Speaker, that Hansard staff worked through the night until 4 o'clock this morning?

ANSWER

I am advised by the Clerk that that is correct. They worked until 4 o'clock this morning.

Bradshaw Terrace Bus Bays

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I heard this morning that, because of the Transport Workers' Union, a decision has now been taken by the Darwin City Council to remove all the bus bays along Bradshaw Terrace. Is that information true?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been advised this morning that a council meeting last night decided to remove the final 3 bays from Bradshaw Terrace. It is no wonder that one becomes frustrated in these matters. It is bad enough that the council itself is prepared to act without appropriate technical advice but we also have the Transport Workers Union, which cannot even take the advice of its own members, acting as traffic engineers. That is apparent from the northern suburbs rag that the member for MacDonnell is holding up. The position taken by the Transport Workers' Union is certainly one of the options that is being discussed by the consultants in a constructive and positive way, but it has a number of negative features. I find it absolutely astounding that the committee of the council should take the advice of Mr Hearn of the Transport Workers' Union who is putting himself up as some sort of traffic expert.

Mr Dondas: I wonder what role Jamie Robertson has in this?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I do not really know what role Alderman Robertson has played in this matter but one cannot help but be a little suspicious. I mentioned that the union was working without the advice and support of its own members because, at a recent visit to Casuarina interchange, I was told by supervisors and the bus drivers themselves that the situation as it had recently stood resulted in less traffic congestion and a safer environment, with the exception of one point which I will come to in a minute. It was the opinion of the drivers themselves that our approach was the correct one: to undertake a deliberative study on the effects and impact of the possible options for overcoming the Bradshaw Terrace problem. In addition to the moves made by the council, what was required was simply to install a single, proper crossing.

What did the council do? It has gone off half-cocked again, without any appropriate technical advice, I would suggest, and installed a crossing that is creating a dangerous situation because buses are being backed across Linton Street. And what has the council done now? On this so-called magical advice from the Transport Workers Union, it has removed those 3 stops. Passengers - school children, like those sitting in the gallery this morning, pensioners, ladies with babies, ladies heavily laden with shopping - have to cross

Linton Street, without the facility of a pedestrian crossing now, in order to catch a bus at the interchange. Who will take responsibility for that, Mr Speaker? I would suggest that residents of the northern suburbs, and those who use Casuarina Shopping Centre, ought to be taking their concerns direct to the council aldermen, and I would be pleased to provide them with some telephone numbers so they can do so effectively.

Mr Speaker, this is another clear example of people acting irresponsibly and without proper advice. I can see that the Transport Workers Union has set itself up as some sort of expert and it ought to be condemned for its interference in a matter that is none of its business and condemned for not even listening to the advice of its own members.

Bradshaw Terrace Bus Bays

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In relation to the previous question and the answer given by him, and the savage calumnies heaped on the Transport Workers Union, is he able to confirm that, in January this year, his department received this constructive proposal about the safety problems and the problem of protection from the elements for patrons of the Darwin Bus Service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am able to confirm that the department received that proposal along with 4 or 5 others. For nearly 12 months, the Department of Transport and Works has been trying to obtain the cooperation of the city council in completing a proper study and assessment. The preliminary assessment which the member opposite waves around has been put forward as a panacea to all the problems. It contains some pitfalls. It does not take much to see the difficulties of making major changes in Trower Road and Linton Street and in providing safety measures for people travelling to and from Monterey House. Those are factors that need to be taken into consideration before one runs off half-cocked.

Despite the fact that the council is responsible for that whole area, the Department of Transport and Works was prepared to share the cost of a proper study and provide technical input. That was not good enough for the city council. What did the Department of Transport and Works do? It took it upon itself to accept total responsibility, in a financial and technical sense, for examining this matter which is extremely important to pedestrians and shoppers in the northern suburbs. Its position can only be seen as one of total responsibility. I should add that Lend Lease also made a financial contribution. The Department of Transport and Works has nothing to be ashamed of in relation to its efforts.

Kulgera Roadhouse

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question comes as a response to persistent rumours I have heard during the last couple of months and I think it is time they were put to rest. Does he have a financial interest in the Kulgera Roadhouse?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very happy to answer the question from the member for Sadadeen. The rumour campaign has been rather interesting and it appears that Uncle Jeff is growing in stature each day. As I understand it, his was one of 3 or 4 competing interests and that, together with his partner Barry Browse, he purchased the Kulgera Roadhouse, which was on the market in the normal way. At various times, I have been touted as a director, a silent partner and a financial backer. Indeed, all sorts of interesting roles have been attributed to me. I can certainly advise honourable members that I have no financial interest nor any intended financial interest in that roadhouse. I am not a financial backer, nor are any of my family companies or my family itself financially involved in any way, shape or form with the Kulgera Roadhouse.

The new owners of the roadhouse have embarked upon a \$500 000 stage 1 development plan. It is anticipated that total works to take place at Kulgera over the next 2 years will be worth \$1.5m. Kulgera was our biggest problem in terms of tourists entering the Territory and I would like to commend those 2 entrepreneurial gentlemen for doing such a good job because the comments of tourists and people who are in a position to compare the present facility with the previous one indicate that highly commendable progress has been made. I wish those 2 gentlemen every success in their future ventures.

Marine Industrial Chemical Complex

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Rumours continue to circulate about the construction of a marine industrial chemical complex on the foreshore of Frances Bay. Is he aware of these rumours and will he confirm that there is no proposal for the construction of a marine industrial chemical complex on the foreshore of Frances Bay?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Fannie Bay has made representation in this regard also. The suggestion of a chemical plant at Frances Bay is absolute rumour which, certainly to my knowledge, is not based on any proposal which has been put forward. What is required there are some additional facilities to provide support to the safe mooring basin. I am delighted that support from local industries and businesses has complemented that facility. There are some additional requirements that will evolve as a result of fishing companies relocating their bases to Darwin. A 5 ha area adjacent to the fishing mooring basin is settling and, once it has settled sufficiently to allow the provision of services and roads, we will be able to consider the provision of further support infrastructure for the fishing industry. It is needed, not only for the fishing industry but for pleasure craft as well. The developments that we will see in that port area will be quite commendable. As I mentioned, there is no foundation at all in any rumour relating to any chemical plant or any other sort of facility.

Drug Abuse Education Program

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

I understand that he has recently given approval for the first police officer in the school-based community policing program to travel to the United States to take part in a drug education training program. What are the

details of this visit and the benefits which are expected to flow to the Territory from it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Jingili for this question which shows, once again, that he has a finger on the pulse of his own electorate because the officer concerned, First Class Constable Scott Mitchell, is one of his constituents as well as being a constable based at Casuarina Secondary College. For some time now, the police have been looking at the United States Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program which attempts to give school children the confidence to resist the temptation to experiment with illicit hard drugs and soft drugs like alcohol and tobacco. The DARE program gives students accurate information about drugs, teaches them decision-making skills and shows them how to resist peer pressure to take drugs. It is purely a preventive program aimed at kids who have not experienced drugs.

I understand that the preliminary evaluation of the DARE program by the NT police is encouraging and there is a possibility that it will be incorporated in the very successful school-based constable program which was pioneered in the Northern Territory. I am sure honourable members opposite will take note of this advantage of the school-based constable program, and some of the roles officers are performing, following the debate yesterday. The Los Angeles Police Department has invited the NT Police Force to send a representative to undergo training in the DARE program. The federal government, the NT Department of Health and Community Services and the Police Department are covering the cost of sending a police officer to Los Angeles to be trained in the program next month as part of Australia's national drug offensive.

First Class Constable Mitchell was selected because, as the member for Jingili correctly stated, he was the first Northern Territory police officer to take part in the police-in-schools program. Additionally, it is considered that he has the experience to appraise the DARE program thoroughly and to assess its suitability for introduction into the Northern Territory.

My government is strongly committed to the fight against drug abuse. There is no greater tragedy for a family than to have one of its members become addicted to alcohol or hard drugs. Drug abuse adds seriously to crime, the cost of policing and the cost of providing health care. Also, it has an immense and immeasurable cost in terms of human suffering. The tragedy is magnified when, so often, it destroys the lives of young people. Anything that we as a government can do to reduce this burden should be welcomed by all the community. I believe our comparatively minor commitment to sending First Class Constable Mitchell to Los Angeles will prove to be a valuable investment in the fight against drugs in the Territory, and I look forward to reading his report when he returns to Darwin.

Air North Settlement

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In the September sittings, he said a proposition had been put to the government by Air North in relation to settlement of any outstanding legal action over the aerial medical contract. I asked the question last week. Has the government reached an agreement with Air North over the settlement of outstanding legal action in respect of the aerial medical contract and does any settlement involve the government in payment of legal expenses or other monies to Air North?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware whether any settlement has been reached at this stage but I will have that confirmed.

Mr Smith: That is what you said at the last sittings.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, during the last sittings I said that, at that stage, no settlement had been reached. I have been asked a question today. It is not a matter which directly involves me in my ministerial role. It is a matter that has been referred to the Attorney-General for advice, and I am not even sure that the matter has been resolved at this stage.

Mr Smith: Do you want me to ask the Attorney-General?

Mr HATTON: I will check with the Attorney-General and advise the Leader of the Opposition during the course of these sittings.

Transport Link to Olgas

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he able to provide any comparisons of cost and effectiveness between a monorail system, as proposed this morning on the radio by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, and a road service to the Olgas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, quite obviously the member for Katherine, with his background in conservation matters, is very sensitive to the proposal that has been put forward, unlike the member for MacDonnell who, last night, had a bit of a lash at my response when he suggested that the federal government was not being the least bit serious. If the federal government was not being serious, I will refer him to Hansard of yesterday. Secondly, I will refer him to this morning's radio broadcast by one Professor Ovington. As a man in charge of a public service establishment, one can only take it that he means what he says. He was seriously advocating the monorail as the environmental solution.

Mr Bell: What is wrong with it environmentally?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, let me tell the honourable member what is wrong with it environmentally. Professor Ovington was advocating a 1-metre high monorail that would run along between the sand dunes.

Mr Bell: Yes.

Mr FINCH: 'Yes' says the member for MacDonnell. It must be some time since he visited that area. What has to be appreciated is that, in general terms, the sand dunes between Yulara and the Olgas run in the opposite direction. One would have to snake backwards and forwards between lines of sand dunes for some hundreds of kilometres before reaching the Olgas. The member for MacDonnell is treating this lightly. It is a serious matter when the head of the ANPWS and the honourable member, who is on the Uluru Board of Management, can treat the environmental aspects with such light-heartedness.

Let me tell him about the environmental aspects. As a consulting engineer, I had the pleasure to visit that area before there were any roadworks in the Yulara area. To construct a monorail would impose on the

environment the construction of the same width for the total length of the monorail, not just a little blob where you put down the column. The impracticality of Professor Ovington and his Minister for Tourism leave me absolutely astounded.

The second aspect of a monorail is that it can only work on a circuit or loop system. We are not talking about 1 run out to the Olgas; we are talking about 2.

Mr Bell: Why?

Mr FINCH: The honourable member asks why. To go backwards and forwards takes an hour each way. Given the number of tourists required to make this proposition viable, we would need a monorail of 2 km or 3 km. The visual impact on the environment of this long snake carrying 3000 or 4000 passengers at a time is almost beyond belief.

Aside from the environmental problems that Professor Ovington has overlooked, we have an extremely dangerous situation when people like the Minister for Tourism and Professor Ovington seriously advocate such things inside the Northern Territory and we have no say. The irresponsibility of such a project, if it stood any chance of success without input from the Northern Territory population, is very clear.

Let us come back to the financial and technical feasibility. If you were moving towards this futuristic and supposedly environmentally satisfactory solution, you would run the monorail out to Ayers Rock as well as the Olgas. Thus, you would be talking about at least 100 km at a current cost of at least \$4m a kilometre, not including the cost of the trains themselves. Even if you could repeat capital city prices in this remote area, you would be talking about \$400m-plus for a start.

All we are asking for is a safe and environmentally acceptable road. All the roads there have been constructed to take particular cognisance of the environment. There is already a prohibition on 4-wheel-drives leaving the main roads. We are talking about \$4 or \$6m. The interest component on \$500m is \$60m or \$70m per annum and \$60m or \$70m would not only provide that road but also a free helicopter service so that every tourist could land on the Rock as well. That does not include the running costs.

What we are talking about with the monorail is electricity. Maybe the member for MacDonnell is proposing that we should have a solar monorail.

Mr Bell: I hadn't thought of that. How much will that cost, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, all we want is a simple, bitumen road that will reduce the extremely high risk to travellers, tourists and the honourable member's constituents alike, and that will minimise the damage to vehicles that is occurring daily at a cost of thousands of dollars. All we are asking for is a bit of cooperation in approving an alignment. There is no great deal about this. The honourable member knows that, for the last 3 or 4 years at least, he has sat on his hands and has not provided constructive support for having that alignment accepted. Apparently, we do not need to worry about the funding if a \$500m project is being contemplated. This whole proposal is straight out of Disneyland or a Flash Gordon comic. The honourable member's federal colleagues ought to throw away their comic books and we can get back to some realistic jobs.

Deregulation of Aviation Industry

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

When will the Northern Territory government follow the lead of the federal government and deregulate the Northern Territory civil aviation industry to the extent of removing the requirements for a licence to fly over a designated RPT route?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is quite a positive question. I am pleased to say that aviation in the Northern Territory has advanced and is continuing to advance. However, we need to be a little practical and realistic about it. We put out to public tender a proposed contract for renewal of the regional airline services. We have not quite reached the stage of being able to guarantee an open, deregulated marketplace. The honourable member has to think about his own constituents and the people of Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Mr Leo: We have been carrying Katherine and Tennant Creek for 5 years.

Mr FINCH: I will answer the honourable member's interjection in a moment. Unfortunately, at this stage, to ensure that these people have a minimum level of service we still need to provide some guarantees. The only way to do that is through free competition on a single contract system which gives exclusivity to the Alice Springs to Yulara run.

Mr Ede: It is all very well to criticise the federal government, but you do exactly what you accuse it of doing.

Mr FINCH: The honourable member has to be a bit realistic about these things.

To reinforce a point, there is a need to tie the whole Territory regional package up as one because the services to Gove and Groote Eylandt do not prop up the rest of the Northern Territory air services. In fact, what does prop it up is the very lucrative Alice Springs to Yulara run which is extremely heavily loaded. Quite clearly, this government has accepted a responsible approach by acknowledging that, to maintain a minimum service to his constituents and those down the Stuart Highway, the lighter-loaded runs, we have to tie the whole thing up in one package at this stage. There is no inconsistency. We are developing and there will come a time - and it will not be a hell of a long way away - when we will be able to deregulate the regional service. However, at the moment, it would be irresponsible of me and of this government to do other than ensure an adequate service to the honourable member's constituents and others in the rest of the remote areas of the Territory.

Crocodile Meat for Restaurants

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

My question refers to the croctail party held last month at the Sheraton Hotel which I had the pleasure of attending. Has he had any advice on the results of the launch of crocodile meat as a gourmet dish at that party, and is he aware of concerns regarding the cost of that product to restaurants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the launch of crocodile meat as a gourmet dish went down very well. During the period since the launch, restaurants have seemingly sorted out their attitudes and strategies towards this new product on the market. I am aware that there is some criticism of the price being asked by the producers of crocodile meat and one large hotel, for example, has decided not to enter into the crocodile 'stakes', as it were, solely on the basis that it believes the price is far too high and, of course, that is that hotel's choice in a free market. Other consumers and retailers of the crocodile meat have certainly passed the comment that the price seems pretty high but, just the same, they are purchasing the product. As far as I am aware, most local restaurants and, indeed, interstate buyers have found that there is a market niche for top-priced crocodile dishes. An example of this is another local hotel which has placed repeated orders for crocodile meat, its main form of sale being as a small side dish of smoked crocodile.

Overall, the distributors of crocodile meat have reported reasonable levels of sales and high levels of interstate inquiries due to extensive southern media coverage. In fact, currently, they are distributing all the product as fast as they receive it. I am advised that 100 kg was consigned to Adelaide recently and it seems that the reported high price is not so high as to deter people from purchasing the product.

I was hoping that demand for crocodile meat would be so high in the Territory that we would not be exporting any outside our borders and it would be one of those specialities that people virtually had to come to the Territory to experience, with the exception, of course, of a farm in Queensland which is also producing some meat. However, that is not to be the case. Crocodile meat is going interstate, obviously to people who are prepared to pay the price.

Personally, I think that the launch of crocodile as a gourmet dish was a huge success. It really did launch the crocodile industry in the Northern Territory on a fully commercial scale. Honourable members are aware that the crocodile farms have spent a long time reaching this stage, at considerable expense to themselves as they tried to make ends meet whilst this government and others were attempting to have crocodiles appropriately placed on the international CITES lists so that captivity-bred animals could be exploited. Most members think of the tourist crocodile farm near Darwin when they think of the crocodile industry. Certainly, that farm has been able to obtain an income over the past few years from tourism, and a very good show is put on there as well. However, I remind honourable members that there are 2 other large crocodile farms in the Top End which are not tourist ventures as well. They have had to bear the costs of their industry to date and are now being able to reap some rewards through the sale of skins and crocodile flesh.

Amendments to Planning Act

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Will he give consideration to introducing amendments to the Planning Act so that third party appeals can be made to the Appeals Committee and so that the composition of the Appeals Committee will be investigated to do away with the majority numbers of developers and give majority decision to local area representatives?

ANSWER

No.

Abolition of First Class Air Fares for Government Travel

Mr EDE to TREASURER

I remind him of an economic statement delivered to this House on 11 June 1987 when he said that first-class air fares for all intra-Territory travel funded directly or indirectly by the government would be abolished. The member for MacDonnell and myself immediately entered into the spirit and the practice of using economy class air fares to Alice Springs and back. We have noticed increasing numbers of members opposite travelling first class. As a result, we realised that this decision must have been reversed at some stage and that we had not been advised. When was that decision reversed and, if it has not been, why is the decision relating to economy class travel not being honoured?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask that that question be redirected to the Chief Minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Does the honourable Chief Minister wish the question to be put again?

Mr HATTON: No, Mr Speaker. What the honourable member says is correct. In the economic statement, that was the position proposed. During the course of the budget deliberations and discussions during the public service dispute, that policy was slightly modified to the extent that all travel within Australia for government purposes is economy class, except in respect to departmental heads and ministers and 1 person travelling with a minister.

METAL Program

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has money been allocated to extend the METAL program to Alice Springs and, if so, when will it be made available?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no appropriation has been made for extending the program to Alice Springs, although the matter is being assessed by government.

As the honourable member is aware, the METAL program has been extremely successful in Darwin where it has been operating for a few years. The reason for its success is the broad, community participation that is occurring. Intending motorcyclists undergo an intensive program to obtain the different types of licence in a fairly protected environment. Not only does the program result in better trained motorcyclists but, in some cases, it convinces young or not-so-young people that they may not be suited to riding a motorcycle. In some cases, people abandon their objective of obtaining a motorcycle licence, which is good in itself.

It has been recognised in Australia that such programs can result in a reduction of up to 50% in serious motorcycle accidents. As we are all aware, motorcyclists are extremely exposed on our roads. Recently, there have been

2 very sad fatalities in Alice Springs and I imagine they have partly motivated the member to ask this question. There has been increased interest in Alice Springs in having a METAL program started there but we need to assess the costs. There is no doubt about the value to participants and I will be raising the matter with my colleagues to see whether it is possible to fund the extension of the project to Alice Springs.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Abolition of First Class Air Fares for Government Travel

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to clarify my earlier answer and provide additional details. Departmental heads are certainly entitled to first-class travel as are the Administrator, all members of the Legislative Assembly, judges and those persons who had a pre-existing contract which specifically entitled them to first-class travel. Apart from those instances, travel within Australia is economy class.

Funding for Home Loan Video Scheme

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has he received any response to his request of the federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training that funding be continued for the home loan video scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am still waiting for his response but, for the benefit of members opposite, I will point out that members of the federal government have already commented in both the press and the Senate. The loan scheme is one which provides video recorders and television monitors to all School of the Air families living in remote areas of Australia, including the Northern Territory. Through the use of this equipment, students in remote areas are able to view specially-prepared educational video programs as part of their lesson material. Both of our Schools of the Air prepare these materials and they have now become an integral part of the School of the Air teaching program. I am very surprised that the member for MacDonnell, being a member for a remote area, has no knowledge of this particular program. It has been running for a number of years and is strongly supported by the ICPA. I am sure that other members for rural electorates are aware of it.

It is important for honourable members to realise that this program provides children in remote areas with an important teaching aid which is taken for granted by children in urban schools.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart really does make some nonsensical statements. I am sure that he would want the public purse to pay for private satellite dishes but I am afraid that many people cannot afford to provide private facilities to pick up satellite pictures. I am also sure that he is aware that there are as yet no commercial television broadcasts anywhere in the Territory because the licence was given out in circumstances about which we had serious reservations. We are now waiting for that service to be provided in the knowledge that it could have been provided instantly by the Territory's existing commercial television organisation. It was another example of the federal government believing that it knows more about these

matters than Territorians. I am sure there are some people in the member for Stuart's electorate who greatly appreciate the education video service. The majority of students who benefit from it come from families which can ill-afford the high cost of providing their own educational video equipment.

I wrote to the federal minister on 16 October and I am still waiting for a reply. I note that, on 21 October, a spokesman for the federal minister was quoted in the *Centralian Advocate* as stating that 'funding for the scheme past the end of this year will not be forthcoming'. Obviously, honourable members opposite do not bother reading about what is occurring in the education area in central Australia or anywhere in the Territory. Last Friday, Senator Tambling attempted to obtain more details about the federal government's commitment to the scheme from Senator Susan Ryan, who represents the Minister for Employment, Education and Training in the Senate. The senator acknowledged the success of the scheme. If honourable members opposite did a little research, they would also recognise the success of the scheme.

Mr Ede: I was on radio about it this morning.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart suddenly has a flashback. He has selective amnesia. I am sick and tired of the cheap efforts he makes to scare people and to promote misinformation in the Territory. People in the Territory are waking up to him and members of the media are starting to become aware of the sort of rubbish that he continues to inflict on Territorians.

Senator Grant Tambling asked a question of the senator representing the minister in the Senate and she acknowledged how successful the scheme had been. However, she went on to say specific purpose funding for the scheme would not continue after 1987. She suggested that the states would now be able to fund the scheme through the general federal government capital grants program. Unfortunately, it appears that this suggestion from Senator Susan Ryan amounts to a sleight of hand. The bottom line is that, in taking away any specific funding in relation to the scheme and saying the states can secure funding under the general program, the federal government is severely jeopardising the funding of the scheme itself. Under this system, funding of the scheme would have to be prepared as a specific project which would then have to be included in all other submissions. Approval would then depend on what funds were available and on the comparable advantages of all the other projects which have been submitted for funding under that program. Most importantly, there is no indication from the federal government that the total level of funding has been increased to allow for the provision of the scheme under the general capital grants program.

Mr Ede: What priority do you give it?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, quite a high priority should be given to a service that provides to children in the outback of the Territory, who do not have access to television, the educational programs that are available to all other Australians. I put a high priority on that. Obviously, the member for Stuart does not, but I do not care because he is not responsible for trying to provide equal opportunities for all Territory students whereas, in an educational sense, I am responsible. I am sure that we all have evidence of the knocking attitude and the complete disregard that he has for anything that relates to Territory students except for promoting his own political advantage. I am getting sick of it and, as I said, so are other Territorians.

It is important that this particular scheme be continued. Under the present scenario, the Territory is unlikely to secure equivalent funding, if any at all, for the continuation of the loans scheme. I have sought support for this matter from my counterparts in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. I have written to the Territory federal members, representatives of both the ALP and the CLP, and to the ICPA. I will certainly pass on details to the member for Stuart although I am pretty sure from his attitude this morning that there will not be any support forthcoming from him. I ask all members of this House to use any influence that they have to ensure that Territory students can obtain access to the same sorts of programs that are the norm for other Australian students. The attitude of the member for Stuart in relation to education matters in remote areas is sickening. His performance is abysmal and that is something that the Leader of the Opposition should look at very seriously.

Vanderlin Drive

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will the future planning for the duplication of Vanderlin Drive from Mueller Road to the McMillans Road roundabout take account of the close proximity of houses in Karama to the road, and will consideration be given to relocating the road away from those houses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to be absolutely blunt about it, any concept of moving the road away from its existing alignment is totally impractical and uneconomic. The pertinent point in the honourable member's question is that there will be a progressive need to duplicate Vanderlin Drive from Lee Point Road through to the roundabout at the Berrimah Police Complex. The forecast for duplication at the Karama end would probably be at least 5 years away. What is proposed in the current budget is to undertake duplication from Lee Point Road to Paterson Street. That is seen as a high priority because of the large amount of traffic that uses that section and the very dangerous situation that occurs, particularly at the Lee Point Road end and the entrance to the Hibiscus Shopping Centre.

At Lee Point Road, there will be a roundabout which not only will be cost effective in itself but, as a solution to that intersection problem, it will lead to a much freer flow of traffic. There is a real problem at the entrance into Hibiscus Shopping Centre and that problem will be alleviated by the duplication which will provide acceleration-deceleration lanes into and out of the shopping centre.

The traffic at the Karama end will increase with people travelling to and from Palmerston and the rural areas and to and from the Trade Development Zone when it employs some 2000 to 3000 people in the not-too-distant future. The traffic will warrant the duplication. Unfortunately, the road alignment was located well before the houses. Hopefully, the people who bought homes there would have recognised that problem before they purchased. The problem is aggravated by the location of the council waste disposal area. I am aware of problems with pieces of paper blowing onto adjoining properties. The solution is not to dig up the existing road section or relocate it further away from the houses. It is more realistic and practical to provide some visual screen, by way of trees or whatever, and for the council to accept its responsibility in ensuring that rubbish does not blow from open trailers etc or, at least, is recovered as quickly as possible.

My information for the honourable member contains a bit of good news and a bit of bad. We will have a duplicated road at some time in the future but, unfortunately, it will not be relocated away from the boundary.

Funding for FORWAARD

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware that the organisation known as FORWAARD has had its funding withdrawn? If so, what is his government doing to provide funding to that organisation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would love to advise the House about the situation with FORWAARD and I will take a couple of minutes to run through it. FORWAARD is an Aboriginal organisation, based in Darwin, which has provided a residential rehabilitation program primarily, but not exclusively, for Aboriginal people. On 30 April 1987, as a result of a change in policy in DAA, and I stress that, a significant element of FORWAARD's funding was cut. DAA had decided, with a stroke-of-a-pen type of attitude I might add, to move from residential rehabilitation programs to preventive education programs - a nice bit of fancy footwork. The management of FORWAARD at the time believed that there was a continued need for a residential rehabilitation program in addition to the proposed preventive education programs. Funding was provided for FORWAARD, by this government, which allowed the group to continue operations until 31 August 1987, and that was after I talked with the committee of that particular organisation to try instil some common sense. This funding was intended primarily to allow for breathing space. FORWAARD needed the chance to develop new programs and to assess its future and the government needed to evaluate and assess where FORWAARD could fit into its overall drug and alcohol education and rehabilitation policy.

Unfortunately, FORWAARD has now apparently lost its principal source of funding - that is, from the federal government which is supposed to be looking after Aboriginal people. The organisation had a period of stability but it has now lost senior staff and officers to such an extent that its future now appears bleak. Aboriginal Hostels have withdrawn funding because the conditions of its funding have not been met. DAA appears likely to withdraw the remaining funding provided for outpatient preventive and education programs. In the circumstances, funding from the Department of Health and Community Services cannot be continued. Funding has been provided for cessation payments to staff.

Mr Speaker, it is important to ask ourselves why this has happened. FORWAARD has been placed constantly in a position where failure is an inevitable outcome. The people who have been involved deserve credit for having carried on for so long. FORWAARD has been asked to produce detailed planned programs, when the skills to do so have been absent; it has been asked to handle large sums of money without financial and administrative skills; it has had funding agencies impose different controls and conditions; and it has been required by funding agencies to follow different paths and to seek different aims. The organisation might be said to have been set up to fail. For instance, DAA's required change of direction in April, from residential rehabilitation to preventive education, was imposed without proper regard to the skills or experience of the management and the staff of the organisation.

What does the future hold, Mr Speaker? The Drug and Alcohol Bureau has been able to obtain the cooperation of DAA and AHL to participate in a review of drug and alcohol services to Aboriginals in the Territory. The Drug and Alcohol Bureau is doing all it can to speed up this particular process. The approach of DAA, which is now more cooperative and positive, should assist the process. All drug and alcohol programs are open to all Territorians. Nevertheless, there are programs specifically provided for Aboriginals with funding from Kalano, the Rockhole Rehabilitation Farm, family and youth workers at Maningrida, a worker among Darwin fringe camps and a substance abuse worker at Docker River.

The Northern Territory government has always taken a responsible attitude to the needs of Aboriginal people. This is yet another classic example of what this so-called ALP federal government is doing to the Northern Territory, and there are people here who stand here, on a daily basis, apologising for that federal government and its actions. It has totally disregarded 25% of the constituency of this Northern Territory in once again withdrawing funds from an area that is vital to the Aboriginal people.

Proposed Emily Lake in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to the proposed Emily Lake in Alice Springs. In the planning for such a lake is it considered that, at times, it would be necessary for water to be pumped into it to prevent it drying up and becoming unusable and, if so, where would the water come from?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently, Cabinet has made a decision which has placed the Department of Lands and Housing in the role of manager and overseeing agent for the development of all the feasibility studies necessary to determine whether the Emily Creek site can be proved up. Necessarily, an environmental impact study will be undertaken. In addition, the Department of Mines and Energy is required to do some drilling. The Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority will be required to clear the site. Part of it is a proposition that has been put before the government and has been a matter for some public discussion by McMahon Constructions. It has involved an overall strategy to develop stage 1 of Undoolya for 1250 lots, incorporating a recreation lake that represented considerable savings to the Northern Territory government. It is certainly something that I can quite proudly stand before honourable members and say that I am pursuing very actively. The report from the Department of Lands and Housing is expected to be finalised and before government prior to June 1988.

One of the aspects of the recreation lake at the Emily Creek site was the possibility, which has been investigated to the costing stage, of incorporating a pumping system and a pipeline from the town basin out to the actual dam site. It is not necessary to make the recreation lake at the Emily Creek site feasible. It was done as an option in part of the presentation to the government, because of the problems that have been experienced with the town basin and the excessive build up of the water level over recent times, as well as salt problems that occur within the existing residential area of Alice Springs. Part of the environmental impact study will be to address the issue of the salt content of that water at various times if, because of low levels in the recreation lake, it is necessary to pump water, but that is not a critical element of the proposal.

Mr Speaker, it has a reasonable way to go but Cabinet has given a very clear indication that, subject to the necessary technical and environmental aspects relating to the Emily Creek site, the government hopes to establish in the future a recreation lake for the residents of Alice Springs.

Air North Settlement

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

My question relates to questions I asked previously concerning the statement by the Chief Minister during the last sittings that a proposition had been put to the government by Air North for settlement of any legal actions outstanding over the aerial medical contract. Has the government reached an agreement with Air North over that question and does this involve the government in payment of legal expenses of Air North or any payments to Air North?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a file did go through my office yesterday regarding this matter. I am pleased to be able to say that the parties involved in the litigation apparently withdrew on the basis that the matter of costs would be settled. At this moment, Air North has been asked through its solicitors to provide details of the costs involved so the normal procedures for assessing costs can be undertaken.

Patents

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In the days when the Commonwealth was responsible for patents, a person seeking patent information could go to the State Reference Library, study the microfiche and take photocopies for the cost of a few dollars. Today, I understand the person has to go to the Patents Advisory Service where he is given the names of patent attorneys. He is told to write to them to seek information. The cost of this is between \$400 to \$1000. This is an impost on people. I ask if the former system could be reintroduced to the Patents Advisory Office.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not familiar with this matter. However, it is interesting that an almost identical question was raised with me by the member for Ludmilla yesterday. I have sought information from the department as to the public accessibility of patent information in the Northern Territory. I see no reason whatsoever why the information should not be as readily available to the public of the Northern Territory as it is to people anywhere else in Australia. I hesitate to say anything more than that at this stage because I do not understand the degree of confidentiality which might need to apply to files of patents. I will obtain this information and write to the honourable member or advise the House at the forthcoming sittings.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Oolloo Station Cattle

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, while I am on my feet I will answer a question asked of me earlier during these sittings by the member for MacDonnell relating to cattle on Oolloo Station. I have received advice from the government's law officers that the matter is before the courts at present and is the subject of a writ by the Rixons to the Northern Territory government, and that I should not speak of this matter in any way in the Assembly.

Deer Farming Project

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he give me up-to-date information on the new deer farming project that I have heard is in the process of commencement in the Adelaide River-Daly River area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, I am not a fount of information to the Assembly this morning. I will endeavour to obtain some information for the honourable member. I heard recently that there were parties interested in farming the Northern Territory deer. I am embarrassed to say that I am not even sure whether it is a native or a feral animal in the Northern Territory. I am told it is a feral animal. Certainly, my department would encourage any farming in the Northern Territory that would lead to a commercial venture of such livestock as would clearly be of benefit to the Northern Territory's economy. However, I will endeavour to find out for the honourable member if plans are firm by any particular party and known by my department and advise her of that information.

Air North

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is it a possibility that part of the settlement with Air North will be the payment of part of Air North's legal expenses incurred in the various challenges over the aerial medical contracts, and can the Attorney-General give an estimate of when this matter may be resolved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly cannot say whether it is part of a settlement or not. I can say that approval has been given for information about the litigation and Air North's costs to be forwarded. That will be assessed and I will then be in a position to advise whether or not approval has been given for payment of those costs under the normal processes of litigation.

Plumbing Inspections in Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Will he appoint a second plumbing inspector in Alice Springs? I point out that building approvals in Alice Springs have been severely limited because of the failure to appoint a second plumbing inspector.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member's information is inaccurate. I have recently had discussions with the Deputy Secretary of Lands and Housing, Southern Region, the Master Builders Association and various other people involved in technical areas in private enterprise. Some concern has been expressed that there are delays due to the large number of applications and some of the large developments taking place in Alice Springs. Internal arrangements are being made within the department to the full satisfaction of the Master Builders Association and others who have made representations to me.

One of the areas of particular concern has been the matter of engineering structural certificates in relation to certain development plans. In the past, it has been necessary, because of the size of developments and the technical expertise involved, to send the plans to Darwin. That has led to delays. Arrangements have now been made for a Darwin-based officer to make regular trips to the southern region to address that issue, expressly to ensure that the process is speeded up.

Reference to Head of Aboriginal Development Unit

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES.

I refer him to last night's debate during which he referred to the head of the Aboriginal Development Unit and stated that my arguments were based on sour grapes. He made allegations that she had, in fact, provided me with information which I used in my contribution to the debate. I ask if he is now prepared to retract those allegations and to apologise to the lady concerned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to answer that question because I made no reference to the head of the Aboriginal Development Unit. In fact, the member for Stuart made that reference in reply to jibes from members on this side of the House. I made no reference to the head of the Aboriginal Development Unit. I point out that the member for Stuart was again trying, as he and his cohorts tend to do, to create division between Aboriginal people and the rest of the Territory population. They have been trying to do this for some time and I am fed up with it. I am sure the member for Arnhem and the member for Arafura are fed up with it as well. All Aboriginal people get sick and tired of the divisions created by members opposite.

Reference to Head of Aboriginal Development Unit

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

I have a supplementary question. I will quote from Hansard to illustrate what we are talking about.

Mr HARRIS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The copy of Hansard he is reading from has been placed on our desks this morning. It has not been viewed by members who spoke yesterday and there is a period of time for corrections to be forwarded.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I refer to the page 76 of the Daily Hansard for Wednesday 28 October and the speech made by the minister.

Mr Hanrahan: Page number?

Mr EDE: Page 76, and we are talking about the division. He is stating that it has not been downgraded. I queried that, by means of interjection:

Mr Ede: It had an E4 before.

Mr MCCARTHY: There was no E4 in that role.

Mr Ede: An acting E4.

Mr McCARTHY: There was an acting E4. In fact, that is exactly why the member for Stuart has it in front of him. It has come to him because of sour grapes.

Mr Ede: I have not met the lady.

Mr McCARTHY: It has all come out. I said I could have named the person, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, very obviously the minister was referring to the head of the division and I ask him if he will now withdraw that allegation. As he had stated earlier that he could have named the person, he brought out the allegation that that was the person who gave me the information. I ask him if he will withdraw that allegation.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the inference that we are referring to the same person there is quite ludicrous. In fact, I have a very deep respect for the head of the unit. That particular person is doing a magnificent job, and I am rather dismayed that the member for Stuart would bring out the references that he brought out yesterday and make accusations in this House that really showed the Aboriginal Development Unit and some of the persons in it in a bad light. I do not think that any of them would have wished that to happen yesterday, Mr Speaker. I certainly would not have.

I am very much aware of the difficult times that we are going through in getting that particular part of my portfolio into place, but it is being put into place. It is doing a great job. The head of that unit has my deepest regard, and I expect that she will continue to go on and do wonderful things for that part of my portfolio.

Mr Speaker, as the honourable member for Darwin pointed out, we have not had time to look at yesterday's Hansard. If you will bear with me for just a minute, I will read a short piece here. I presume I can quote from the unrevised issue as it has been done by the other side this morning:

There has been no downgrading in any way, shape or form of the Aboriginal Development Division. It is strong. It is important. It is a unique division and it will retain its autonomy within the employment and training area and it will continue to do the things that we expect of it.

Mr Ede: It had an E4 before.

Mr McCARTHY: There was no E4 in that role.

Mr Ede: An acting E4.

Then I went on to say that there was an acting E4 and, in fact, that was exactly why the member for Stuart had it in front of him.

Mr Ede: Exactly, exactly.

Mr McCARTHY: The member said: 'I have not met the lady'. That is what he said: 'I have not met the lady'.

Mr Ede: Just say she is a lovely lady.

Mr McCARTHY: It has all come out. I said I could have named the person. Mr Speaker, I rest my case.

Delays in Government Payment to Contractors

Mr COLLINS to TREASURER

I have heard in many centres over the last couple of months that the government is slow in paying contractors and the like. What does the government intend to do about restoring its good name in this regard?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen is assuming, of course, that we do not have a good name if he says that we have to restore that name. The member for Sadadeen comes to this Assembly with many stories. If he could give me details of the contractors concerned immediately, I will obtain the answer for him before lunchtime today on the payment and the status of those accounts that he has heard particular stories about.

Mr Speaker, this question is raised from time to time. When I checked, I have found that the speed with which the Treasury is processing accounts is indeed very encouraging. I ask the honourable member to give me, before lunchtime, details of those contractors that he is concerned about and I will provide that answer to this Assembly immediately on receipt of those names and accounts. However, I will defend the people in Treasury. I have checked this on several occasions and I have found that the time taken to process those accounts has been very short once the paperwork has arrived on Treasury desks. I ask the member for Sadadeen to name the contractors concerned so that, on his behalf, I may expedite the processing of those particular accounts if that is necessary. However, can I inform the House that I am particularly impressed with the speed with which accounts are being processed by the Treasury officials.

Gold Find Near Tennant Creek

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he inform the House whether or not Mr Hall's gold find to the east of Tennant Creek will continue to produce by the 44-gallon drum full or has more sober and scientific evidence been produced which would suggest other levels of extraction?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is interesting to note that I stood on my feet for 3 hours in the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill discussing a range of issues that are pertinent to my portfolio areas, and the opposition spokesman on mines and energy was not even present. There was not a single question on the industry that accounts for 18% of the Territory's GDP.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! The comments of the Treasurer are irrelevant to the question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Hall's gold find has been announced right throughout the world. It was a good luck story in a world of doom and

gloom. With the indulgence of the House, I would like to relate a story in relation to Mr Hall's gold find. Yesterday, my press secretary was on the telephone and my ministerial officer responsible for mines and energy came to him and asked if he would speak to a lady from New York.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker. Obviously, the government is intent on making a mockery of this question time. We have a very specific question from the member for Nhulunbuy concerning the gold find and whether the original, optimistic projections of the honourable minister have in fact been proved up. He wants to seek the leave of this House to tell us a story about a telephone call from New York.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would ask the minister to relate his answer to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, we will tell that story at another time and another place, but it is part of the story concerning Mr Hall's gold find.

Mr Speaker, it would appear at this stage that the gold find is not as extensive as was first thought. There is need for further drilling and testing of the area. I am pleased to have questions from the opposition but, as usual, they are questions that tend towards the negative. You never hear from them when things are going well but, when matters look like turning a little sour, in comes the opposition. What a fitting name! Never has there been a more apt description for the 6 people opposite - opposition to anything.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I think we have demonstrated our point.

Gold Find Near Tennant Creek

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

On what evidence did he base his claim that gold was being produced by the 44-gallon drum full from Mr Hall's mine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was acting on advice. I understand the term was 'buckets' or something of that nature.

Mr Smith: 44-gallon buckets?

Mr COULTER: Members opposite would be experts in the use of buckets. However, people on this side of the House share the excitement and we encourage people to be productive and get on with the job of developing the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I was informed by the Department of Mines and Energy that a substantial quantity of samples was brought into the department's office in Tennant Creek. I was told that it was a 44-gallon drum. That may have been a figure of speech, but there was a considerable quantity of samples. I can assure members that it was not a tobacco tin, although even a tobacco tin of gold these days would be quite valuable. Mr Speaker, if anybody turned up at your doorstep with a bucket of gold, you would not send him away as the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues would have. They would have said: 'This is not good enough, where is the 44-gallon drum?' They would have sent him away with his tail between his legs.

We are talking about a find 200 km south-east of Tennant Creek, out behind the Devils Marbles. A lady from the Department of Mines and Energy travelled out there on the Friday, but our mines expert did not arrive there until Monday.

Members interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Here we go again, Mr Speaker. Have a listen to them. You are producing \$1200m-worth of wealth for the Territory, but you got one wrong. What characters!

We have costeamed areas of the reef and it does not appear to be as extensive as was thought at first. But, do not give up, Mr Speaker! I still believe that to be one of the most prospective areas in the Territory and the member for Barkly may even recognise that himself. Recently, we apprehended a fellow down there with a bulldozer and a mineral detector. That fellow had taken from somebody else's EL \$600 000 worth of nuggets. Unfortunately for him, one of my inspectors arrived and took him to court. That is the type of value that we are talking about in relation to this particular region.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to TREASURER

I asked this question of him during the Appropriation Bill debate and he refused to answer it then. Let us see how we go today. Will he table the advice he received in January this year as Acting Minister for Lands from the department in relation to the sale of Block H at Finnis River to Input Pty Ltd?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the honourable member likes to write to the Northern Territory Land Corporation, it may assist him in that particular regard.

Bagot Road Pedestrian Traffic Study

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question concerns the problem on Bagot Road near the Nightcliff Hotel. We heard in the last Assembly sittings that he had undertaken some investigations as to how that matter could be resolved and had set aside a sum of money for that. Could he inform the Assembly whether progress has been made, and whether final decisions have been reached?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, technical solutions for that social problem have been considered. There is no perfect solution. When people wish to cross an extremely busy road in the darkest part of the night, in a state that is not exactly conducive to their own welfare, the problem is significant and not easily solved by means of an overpass or a set of traffic lights. Those are not perfect solutions by any means. Through the member for Ludmilla, we have been able to talk to the Bagot Community from whence many of the hotel's patrons come. I understand that there may very well be a community-based solution in the form of a bus. That is a sensible, practical solution.

Pensioners and school children who need to cross further along still have a problem. A recommendation has been proposed by the Department of Transport and Works suggesting that pedestrian-activated traffic lights be installed as an interim measure to assess their effectiveness. We are waiting for comments from the police and other interested parties before finalising that decision. The real problem, unfortunately, is drunks crossing a public road. Statistics in that area and for the rest of Darwin indicate that many pedestrians who are involved in motor accidents are under the influence of alcohol. When the honourable member can produce a practical solution to that problem, I will be more than delighted to hear from him.

Maintenance of Rapid Creek Water Gardens

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question is delivered on behalf of the people of Jingili who seem to have lost their member during this question time. Some concern has been expressed by the people of Jingili and others about the change in ground maintenance contractors for the Rapid Creek Water Gardens. Can he assure this House that the water gardens are being maintained at a standard at least equivalent to that which was provided by the previous contractor?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is an indication of the absolute ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition that the water gardens has absolutely nothing to do with the Department of Transport and Works. I am certain that the member for Jingili, who is one of the most active members of this House, knows more about representing of his constituents than the Leader of the Opposition ever will.

Maintenance of Rapid Creek Water Gardens

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I address my supplementary question to the minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority. On behalf of the people of Jingili, who have expressed concern on this particular matter, can the minister assure this House that the Rapid Creek Water Gardens is being maintained at a standard equivalent to that offered by the previous contractor?

ANSWER

The answer is yes.

Local Government Involvement in Planning

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

If he will not entertain the idea of third party appeals to the Planning Appeals Committee or consider changing the composition of the Planning Appeals Committee, will he at least look at earnest appeals from local governments that attention be paid to the wishes of local residents, with special reference to the Litchfield Shire?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am always ready, willing and available to speak to any member of any local government authority in the whole of the Northern Territory about any planning issue.

Sludge Levels at Leanyer Sewage Ponds

Mr EDE to TREASURER

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Karama who has not got over his bout of lockjaw. Is the minister aware of the dangerously high sludge levels at the Leanyer sewage ponds and is he now prepared to give the answer he was not prepared to give when the member for Karama asked his 1 question in these sittings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I answered that question last week. The word 'dangerous' was actually used by the member for Karama. This is indicative of the opposition's performance in question time today. We have given members of the opposition every chance to ask questions and now they are repeating questions which were asked last week.

Cancellation of Elective Surgery at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is it true that elective surgery is being cancelled at the Royal Darwin Hospital? Why is the cancellation occurring and how long will this situation continue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am certainly honoured to be asked the first intelligent question of the day. I can assure honourable members that this particular question pains me more than some will probably realise. Negotiations have commenced with the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd to facilitate leasing of Wards 3A and 3B, together with 2 operating theatres and 3 delivery suites, for the establishment of a private hospital facility within the Royal Darwin Hospital. These negotiations are proceeding very well and rapidly, and the signing of the documents is imminent. Verbal advice is that the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd anticipates commencing operations on Monday 23 November 1987.

To achieve this stringent deadline of the lease agreement, the following timetable has been developed. Work will commence on Tuesday 27 October 1987 to give vacant possession of half the third floor by Monday 9 November 1987, and the remainder by Wednesday 11 November 1987. Elective admissions, especially for surgery, will be controlled from Thursday 29 October 1987 and, where possible, all elective admissions will cease for the period 4 to 6 November 1987 inclusive. Mr Speaker, all staff including doctors, were advised of these facts on 28 September 1987, and they were informed of the necessity to impose stringent controls over elective surgery during the periods I have mentioned.

It is expected that some inconvenience to the public and doctors will result from the possible restrictions on elective admissions. However, every endeavour has been, and will continue to be, made to ensure that inconvenience is kept to an absolute minimum. This timetable achieves the required reduction in authorised beds in the shortest possible time, whilst also minimising disruption to patients and staff of the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Mr Speaker, let me add that everybody, even those very near and dear to me, will be treated in the same way. In fact, I was due to go in to have a follow-up to my recent operation, but I am pleased to say that it is in the category of elective surgery. I received a phone call yesterday afternoon saying that, because of my decision, that has been put off until a date to be fixed.

Solar-Powered Car Race

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I believe a race for solar-powered vehicles is to be conducted between Darwin and Adelaide. What support has the government provided to the DIT entry to the world solar-powered car challenge?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to provide some information on this matter. The DIT has provided the only Territory entry in the Pentax World Solar Challenge, the car race for solar-powered vehicles from Darwin to Adelaide, which commences on Sunday 1 November from the Casuarina shopping centre. I would urge everyone who has an interest in any of those matters to be out at Casuarina shopping centre, not only for the start of the race on Sunday but also tomorrow when, I understand, there will be a display of the vehicles.

The Northern Territory government itself has supported the DIT project with a grant of \$60 000. The Power and Water Authority, the Tourist Commission and the Department of Transport and Works are the government organisations that have provided assistance. Assistance has also been provided by Sitzler Bros Pty Ltd, the RAAF, the community radio station Top FM - which also does a superb job broadcasting the question time of this Assembly - CIG, Dunlop, Radio Australia, Mr Stan Kennon, the AANT, the Institute of Engineers, Toshiba, Telecom, Bob Jane, the Computer Shop, Silent Appliance Systems, Coates Hire, Sleeman Dunkley Treacy Maunsell Pty Ltd, the Mobil Bagot, Warsash Pty Ltd and the Casuarina City Twin Cinemas. All have contributed to assist the DIT and, if I have left anyone out, I apologise. That demonstrates the large number of groups that have provided support for this entry.

I think everyone realises that the Territory is really at the sharp end of solar technology. We have been utilising solar energy for many years, for heating water, for pumping systems, for electrical illumination systems and for communication systems right throughout the Territory. It is important to realise that the DIT, with very minor resources, has provided a very competitive vehicle to enter this race. The chassis construction, the design, the body, the resistance tests and the electrical work has all been done by staff and students at the DIT.

I believe that this entry will be very competitive against entries from such giant organisations as General Motors, the Ford Motor Company, which is utilising its space technology, and a number of Japanese companies which have spent millions of dollars on developing very hi-tech vehicles. The DIT may be the mouse that roared in this particular event and I am offering all my encouragement. I would urge every member of this Assembly and every Territorian to provide a bit of assistance in terms of attending the start of the race or sending a telegram or whatever, because this particular event will put the Northern Territory on the map. The race is starting in Darwin and we

will have the eyes of the world on us. I believe the Territory entrant, designed and built by Territorian students and staff, with assistance from some RAAF personnel, will be very competitive and it will be right up there at the end of the race. I wish them all the best and I congratulate all those involved in the building, the driving and the commercial support of the venture.

Soapy Bore Water Supply

Mr EDE to TREASURER

I refer him to the debate during the last sittings of the Assembly regarding the lack of water for the school and community at Soapy Bore. I know that his people have been doing some work on it since then. What are the chances of the school receiving an adequate water supply so that it can become operational?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have spoken with the Director of the Water Authority who has been out to Soapy Bore and has assessed the situation, particularly the area where the houses have now been built, in relation to the tank and the water supply there. However, I simply took it that it was in hand, after speaking to him, and that the issues had been recognised and that we were looking at ways of addressing them. My briefing notes have not been updated recently and I have no further details than I have already supplied to the honourable member. However, I will be writing to him in the very near future to indicate what is planned for that particular area.

Darwin Private Hospital

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Will patients at the Darwin Private Hospital still have access to specialist services at the Royal Darwin Hospital following the opening of the private hospital?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there are contractual and employment arrangements which apply to specialists in the Darwin area. Firstly, there are the private specialists who make their own arrangements. They work now in the Royal Darwin Hospital on a sessional contract basis. I expect that they will be negotiating with the private hospital for visiting rights. I understand that that process is well under way. The majority of specialists at the Royal Darwin Hospital, who are employed by the department, have a contract of service which allows them to practice privately to a limited extent. These specialists will be able to make such private arrangements as their contracts allow.

For diagnostic services, particularly radiology and pathology, salaried specialists will be able to use their 35% right for private practice to provide these services to Darwin Private Hospital patients. Where a Royal Darwin Hospital specialist has an employment contract which does not allow for practice outside the hospital, at this stage, he would be precluded. However, I have asked my department to examine this matter and to report to me on the number of doctors in that category and the effect that a relaxation of their employment contracts would have on the activities of the Royal Darwin Hospital and the welfare of patients. I would point out that the private hospital

fully intends to attract to Darwin specialists in a range of fields. This would increase the overall number of specialists available to the Darwin population. I look forward with a great deal of excitement to the increase in the quality of services in the health area, particularly hospital services, that will be achieved by the opening of the private hospital.

Private patients being able to use the Royal Darwin Hospital after the Darwin Private Hospital has opened is a matter of interest to many people. It is expected that most people who are insured privately will use the Darwin Private Hospital. They will certainly be encouraged by the Royal Darwin Hospital to do so. It is not intended that privately insured people who, for one reason or another might still wish to use the Royal Darwin Hospital, will be prevented from doing so. Indeed, the Medicare agreement apparently precludes it from preventing that.

Damming of Daly River

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to TREASURER

Can he give me information regarding the damming of the Daly River for power generation, with particular reference to other river users, for example, pastoralists and recreational fishermen?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think the honourable member may be referring to a proposal that has been considered recently. I understand the minister for Industries and Development has an interest in the area as well which is largely in relation to small barramundi being able to travel up the river. That is a major concern. I understand a design has now been developed that will accommodate the movement of barramundi. Recently, I had the opportunity to look at concrete ladders that have been put in place in Canada to allow salmon to travel up and down the waterways. The ladders have dramatically increased the chances of the salmon travelling up the rivers. They no longer have to run the gauntlet of rocky boulders and grizzly bears. It has increased the salmon breeding population dramatically. Of course, the grizzly bears are not doing so well; they are buying cans of tuna.

Mr Speaker, the study is at a very preliminary stage and the barramundi problem was a major consideration. I understand that problem has now been overcome. However, there are many problems involved in the damming of any river in Australia. The member for Victoria River would be able to advise the House on some of the problems. If the honourable member would like me to keep her informed of developments in that area, I will do so.

'Land of the Lightning Brothers'

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

Did the Northern Territory government contribute financially to the production of the film 'Land of the Lightning Brothers'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would like to preface my answer with the brief comment that we have heard complaints from the opposition in the media and in this House about their inability to ask questions and lack of time. Members on this side

of the House were quite prepared to give members of the opposition a clear run today in terms of asking questions. However, all they could do was criticise the fact that no questions were coming from this side of the House. I do not refer to the crossbenchers.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister has been asked a specific question by the member for Casuarina. It does not relate in any way to an explanation of the attitude this government wanted to take in question time today.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The opposition has been allowed some latitude in prefacing its questions and the same latitude will be allowed to the Chief Minister.

Mr HATTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I simply wanted to make that point. I know that, once his front bench had blown the deal, the member for Nhulunbuy became so upset with it, he started reading a paper and then walked out of the House for a while.

I thank the honourable member for the question. The government provided a grant of \$20 000 in 1986-87 to the Australian Film Commission to produce the film called 'Land of the Lightning Brothers.' This film is set in the Gregory National Park and portrays the rich and diverse Aboriginal rock paintings in the area. The film will greatly enhance the Aboriginal cultural aspect of Northern Territory tourism promotion. The film will be screened on ABC TV on 17 November this year as part of the season of Aboriginal films. I would urge all honourable members to take the opportunity to see that film. It is yet another example of the way the Northern Territory government is active in promoting Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry.

Gold Find Near Tennant Creek

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Does he accept that, if sober and scientific evidence shows his public statements about Mr Hall's find prove to be extravagant or wild, investor confidence in the mining industry in the Northern Territory may be adversely affected?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure you that, unlike the member for Nhulunbuy, I have the utmost confidence in the intelligence of miners in the Northern Territory. They are very astute people and they understand the risks and the rewards of mining. Mr Hall's find may not prove to be as significant as was first thought. However, it is significant in that it confirms once again the potential of the area. I am not sure which extravagant claims the member for Nhulunbuy is referring to. If he could quote the specific remarks I made, I would be pleased to consider them in the context of the encouraging information that was supplied to me.

As I have said many times, I believe that Tennant Creek will become the Kalgoorlie of the Northern Territory. I believe that will happen in the very near future. I hope that the member for Nhulunbuy, the opposition spokesman on mines and energy, shares my enthusiasm. If he does not, I am prepared to make available to him a guided tour of the mines that are operating or about to commence operation in the very near future to reassure him that my confidence is not unfounded. It is not based on pub talk; it is based on hard

facts which demonstrate that the Northern Territory is about to enter into a boom period unparalleled in mining history. It was the anniversary of Al Jolson's death last Friday. He was the man who coined the phrase 'You ain't seen nothin yet' and I suggest to the member for Nhulunbuy that he ain't seen nothin yet either. We have not even scratched the surface of the potential for the development of mining in the Northern Territory. I have every confidence that my statements about the potential of the Northern Territory mining industry are echoed by every miner swinging a pick or shovel out in the hot sun, as they gouge away in their efforts to realise the potential of the Northern Territory. I congratulate them.

Benefits of the Pastoral Industry

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What benefits does the Northern derive from the pastoral industry, given allegations that the resources of the Territory are being exploited by the industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently honourable members may have heard some comments in the media about the usefulness of the pastoral industry to the Northern Territory and how it simply produces animals which are turned off from the Northern Territory for processing. I am sure honourable members will be interested to learn that, in the 1985-86 financial year, the total Northern Territory turn-off of cattle was 397 197 beasts. Of that number, 89 100 - or 22.4% of the total turn-off - were slaughtered in the Northern Territory in both domestic and export abattoirs, and 308 097 beasts were exported live either interstate or overseas. Some 43% of cattle are sent out of the Northern Territory for fattening and obviously the remainder go directly to abattoirs.

The issue reflects on the viability of abattoirs in the Northern Territory. The Leader of the Opposition's comments on this matter would seem to imply that, irrespective of the economics of an industry, one should simply require cattle property owners to turn off cattle to Northern Territory abattoirs without any consideration of whether that is profitable for them or not. Traditionally, store cattle have been sent interstate from the Northern Territory and the present situation is not significantly different. It is true that a number of Northern Territory abattoirs have closed down recently although, from memory, about 9 abattoirs, some of them quite small, are still operating.

It is unfortunate that industrial unrest has been an integral part of the abattoir industry in the Northern Territory. The member for Barkly has commented in this Assembly on how industrial unrest contributed significantly to the eventual downfall of the Tennant Creek Abattoir. No matter what the owners of the abattoir did, there was continuing industrial disruption and it reached such levels that Tennant Creek now has no abattoir at all.

Economies of scale militate against processing in the Northern Territory. Animals cannot be supplied to the abattoirs on a continuing basis throughout the year and this means that our abattoir owners are faced with a greater cost per beast than applies interstate. Most of our cattle now go to the large coastal abattoirs which can process the Northern Territory's turn-off as almost an incidental component of their annual through-put. Therefore, they can process cattle out of the Northern Territory far more cheaply than can

Northern Territory abattoirs. Obviously, whether they are from the giant companies that own large cattle properties in the Northern Territory or small individual holdings, cattlemen will sell their cattle to whomever offers them the best price. It is clearly a completely economically-driven industry, and so it should be.

The mention that the Australian Agricultural Company Organisation's properties in the Northern Territory might be taken over by the Sherwin group has been raised, and I am advised that the 3 properties of the AACO in the Northern Territory, Rockhampton Downs, Brunette Downs and Avon Downs, collectively holding about 100 000 head of cattle, have traditionally turned virtually all of their turn-off interstate anyway. Yet, in comments to the media, the Leader of the Opposition seems to be implying that, if this company is taken over, then these cattle will be sent interstate. They are already being sent interstate.

I am not pleased with the situation. As Minister for Industries and Development, one of my targets is to attempt to have processing of Territory primary products done in the Territory wherever possible. Indeed, the department is examining aspects of the abattoir industry such as how we can improve the economics of the industry by processing hides, offal and by-products from the Territory animal further than has been the case in the past. In most cases, because of the small scale, it is simply not economical to start taking all of the offal cuts and putting them in cartons. In the Northern Territory, most of those cuts are sent off to the offal plant or to the dump whereas the big southern abattoirs can take the tiniest cut of an animal and, if they have enough through-put, they can produce tonnes of the offal and sell to speciality markets. In the Territory, we are denied opportunities of that sort.

However, I will have the department examine the possibility that the government might be able to encourage some further processing of products like hides, at least, to improve the value of the animals in the Northern Territory by quite a few dollars per beast. The Pastoral Industry Study also bears clearly on this matter, and I would be interested to hear the comments of opposition members on this subject when, at a later sittings, we are able to debate that study which is really laying down a broad scenario for further development of the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. I look forward to the contribution of honourable members opposite at that time.

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