

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?

2 June 1987

1. **Prisons - Accommodation**

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Is Lot 282 Kempe Street, Alice Springs, currently being used to house prisoners from Alice Springs Prison?
2. Does the Department of Community Services propose to publish its 'Rural Venues' as an alternative to existing prison programs; if so, what are the details?
3. Will Lot 282 Kempe Street, Alice Springs, be used permanently as a prison annex; if so -
 - (a) what will be the size of the building(s) to be used;
 - (b) how many prisoners are to be housed;
 - (c) what is the security classification of the prisoners to be housed;
 - (d) what facilities are to be provided in the prison; and
 - (e) how many prison officers will be employed to operate the prison?
4. Why was Mr Devine, the former Superintendent of the Alice Springs Prison transferred from the prison?
5. Does the government have any plans to use Gunn Point Prison Farm; if so, what are the details?

ANSWER

1. No.
2. Proposals for 'Rural Venues' as alternatives to existing prison programs in the Southern Region are currently under development. One live-in community work services program in conjunction with the Ghan Preservation Society is operational at present.
3. Lot 282 Kempe Street is proposed as a temporary annexe.
 - (a) Converted 2 bedroom domestic dwelling with extensive grounds and some outbuildings.
 - (b) Normally 4 'permanent' prisoners, but able to cater for additional numbers should there be a short-term need.
 - (c) Anticipated will house all classes of prisoners. Would be able to hold maximum security prisoner/s only on a temporary basis. Disruptive prisoners would be transferred to Darwin Prison.

- (d) Usual domestic facilities (kitchen, laundry, etc); outdoor recreation and garden area; security fencing; lighting; detectors; direct communication link with main prison.
 - (e) 1 x Senior Prison Officer, 8 x Prison Officers all transferred from within existing prison establishment.
4. Mr Devine's transfer has upgraded the work performed in areas such as prisoner classification, investigation and the provision of custodian advice. His new role in Alice Springs mirrors the structure in the Darwin Region.
 5. There are no plans to alter current operations at Gunn Point Prison Farm.

Transport Study Group

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his statement during the last sittings in answer to a question on his recent trip to Japan and the formation of the Japan Australia Transport Study group and to recent press articles dealing with that same matter. Could he advise on the status of what is known as the Japan Australia Transport Study Group and the involvement in that study group of the companies that he named in the last sittings?

ANSWER

I can well understand honourable members' confusion on this matter following the barrage of misleading and confusing information and allegations that the public has been subjected to in recent weeks. The fundamental points at issue are whether there is a study group and whether the companies I named are members of that study group. I am pleased to have the opportunity of confirming my advice to the Assembly at the last sittings regarding the setting up of a study group to further a proposal to construct the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line.

Let me make it quite clear to honourable members: a study group has been set up to examine the Darwin to Alice Springs railway. The organisations mentioned by me are involved in the study group. The first formal meeting of the study group, including representatives of those companies, together with representatives of a number of other companies that I shall not name, will be held at 10.30 am next Tuesday in Tokyo. As late as yesterday, I received written reconfirmation from Tokyo of the attendance of representatives of those organisations at the meeting.

One final point I would like to make concerns the involvement of TNT in the railway project. As I said earlier, TNT has expressed an interest in being involved in the operational side of the railway and I have written confirmation that this is still the company's position. As was our experience with the Alice Springs to Darwin pipeline, I would expect that companies will move in and out of the study group as the project evolves. As I said, I do not intend to release names of any more study group participants. The lesson I have learnt from this saga is the wisdom of not providing names or details at an early stage. I do not intend to make that mistake again. Mr Speaker, I intend to put my best endeavours into seeing this dream become a reality.

Transport Study Group

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he provide this Assembly with written evidence that indicates that the Long Term Credit Bank of Japan and the Japanese Railway Freight Company have made a commitment to this government that they are prepared to be involved in the Japan Australia Study Group, as distinct from being prepared to be involved in a meeting in Tokyo next Tuesday 9 June to discuss certain railway issues?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that question is almost impossible to answer. It is like asking if you have stopped beating your wife. The meeting next Tuesday is a meeting of the study group. I have here written reconfirmation from those companies.

Mr Smith: Table them.

Mr Hanrahan: Not on your past efforts.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, those companies and a number of others ...

Mr Smith: Are you going to table them?

Mr HATTON: ... will be involved in that study group and I am happy to show the evidence to the Leader of the Opposition. I am not going to table it, but I am happy to show it to him. It reconfirms that those companies are involved in this study program and they will be at the meeting next week. I repeat that I have never given, nor will I ever give, a cast-iron guarantee that these companies will be involved in this particular project for ever and a day. At this stage, they are involved. They have been involved and I faithfully reported the facts at the last sittings of this Assembly.

Free Bus Travel

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In view of the government's stated financial constraints, why does the government, through the Department of Transport and Works, allow and in fact encourage free bus travel on private buses contracted to operate on government bus routes, in contrast to the user-pays system of payment on government buses?

ANSWER

This is a question that needs answering and I am glad the honourable member gave prior notice that she would ask it. The government does not encourage free travel on private buses operating under contract. Free travel is provided to school children if they live more than 5 km from the nearest appropriate school, if they must attend a particular school at the government's direction and it is located more than 1.6 km from their place of residence - an example would be a senior high school, if they are disabled, if they need to attend intensive migrant education programs or a special unit such as the deaf unit or if there are special circumstances approved by the director. Those are the circumstances in the Darwin rural area where members of the public do not tender a fare on boarding the bus.

Bus services from Noonamah and Humpty Doo to Palmerston primarily service the needs of school children. However, since those services are operating at a convenient time for members of the public and, to avoid duplication of service, it was decided last year to allow members of the public to travel on those buses. Since the buses are private, the driver is not permitted under the Transport Workers Passenger Vehicle Award of 1984, as defined by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, to collect a fare. Only members of the Transport Workers Union working in the public transport organisation - in this case, the Darwin Bus Service - are permitted to collect fares. To overcome this problem, the government has established period ticket outlets throughout the Darwin rural area and members of the public are required to present a current period ticket to the driver upon boarding the bus.

Beaufort Hotel Debts

Mr HARRIS to TREASURER

The minister would be aware of concerns being expressed about the outstanding debts of the Beaufort Hotel and, in particular, outstanding debts connected to electricity charges. What is the current situation regarding the outstanding debts to the Northern Territory government and what security has the Northern Territory taxpayer in relation to those debts?

ANSWER

I thank the member for Port Darwin for his question. Honourable members would be aware that I said during the last sittings of this Assembly that I would have further information within 30 days on the eventual sale of the Beaufort Hotel.

I can advise honourable members that I have been visited by a number of people during the last 30 days, including Mr Bruce Cohen from the Westpac Banking Corporation. Indeed, I was on the phone to him yesterday. Many overseas investors have also visited the Northern Territory in the last 30 days and, having included on their itinerary a review of the Burgundy Royale asset in Darwin, have subsequently gone away to put together proposals for the eventual takeover of the facility. In addition, Mr Brian Snodgrass, Chief Manager of the Loans Management Division of Westpac Banking Corporation, has been in Hong Kong negotiating with potential investors concerning the eventual sale of the Beaufort. Thus, there is action on both fronts. Westpac is certainly keen to have the matter resolved in terms of the commitment which is owed to it and, of course, this has been complicated by the liens which are now placed on the building by Jennings Industries.

I can assure honourable members that the Northern Territory government is protected in relation to the sale of the facility. As we have said, we will not be reconnecting services until the debt to the Northern Territory is paid in full. That includes the figures for outstanding amounts which I mentioned to honourable members in the last sittings: the electricity account of just over \$1m, a water and sewerage account of some \$76 000, and payroll tax of \$250 000.

There is one other complication, however, that has crept into the issue. It concerns the amount of group tax which is owed to the Commonwealth on this particular facility. I understand that quite a large sum of money is involved although the Commissioner for Taxation would not release exact details of the amount. The Northern Territory government has said it will not precipitate the closure of the hotel and throw 250 people out of work. We are looking for a walk-in, walk-out deal with the potential investors we are currently negotiating with. I can advise honourable members that negotiations are still continuing at a very senior level within the Westpac Banking Corporation and also with the directors of Burgundy Royale themselves.

The Northern Territory government, as I have said, is protected. It will not be reconnecting services until it receives full settlement. Honourable members would be aware that taxes and charges are paid out first in the case of any liquidated damages proceedings.

Exercise Sure Bet

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

A few weeks ago there was an article in the NT News concerning 2 journalists who impersonated policemen during exercise Sure Bet. I would like the Chief Minister to advise what action is to be taken in respect of those 2 journalists?

ANSWER

I am advised that a prosecution against the 2 journalists is unlikely to succeed as they claim there was implied approval for their actions by way of challenge. The 2 persons formally approached a policeman to borrow uniforms but this request was denied. At this stage, it has not been ascertained how the uniforms were obtained. I suggest it probably will never be ascertained. The question of trespass is a matter for the Commonwealth Attorney-General to consider and not a matter for the Northern Territory government.

Frankly, I found the actions of the 2 journalists rather juvenile. While they claim to have penetrated the cordoned area of the airport, the journalists attended a briefing session where the exact extent of the perimeter guard was outlined. This was on the day prior to their excursion. It is interesting that a technician involved in the exercise reported the presence of those 2 people. He considered that they were either acting irresponsibly or were intoxicated. It is a pity that the 2 journalists did not attempt their stunt on the following night, when the SAS regiment was in place, as they might have become involved to an extent that would have made them rather uncomfortable, to say the least.

I might add that, on the particular night when the breach occurred in the cordon, 5 other people were apprehended attempting breaches at locations where the cordon was in place. They were people who were deliberately sent to test the cordon where it was in place for the purpose of the exercise. It is a fact that that area was not completely cordoned off, as it would have been in the event of a genuine terrorist incident. This was simply an economic decision in terms of the allocation of resources. A cordon was in place and, for the purpose of the exercise, a cordon was presumed to be in place in other areas.

Mr Speaker, I can also confirm that, on the final night of the exercise, when I was personally observing activities in 'Sure Bet' there was at least one attempted incursion. The person was apprehended and I can assure members that I for one would not want to try to tangle with either the Northern Territory Police Task Force or the Special Air Services of the army by trying to break through cordons or carrying out other actions in those situations. I do not think anyone would find himself in a very comfortable position, particularly in a real situation.

I was debriefed by the person who spoke with the journalists and told that the impression received was that they were a couple of very irresponsible Northern Territory police officers. In fact, their behaviour had caused that person to form a low opinion of the Northern Territory police because of the way the 2 men were openly lampooning the exercise whilst approaching people. As a consequence, the person complained about the performance of the Northern Territory police. When they turned out to be journalists, the police did not have to wear that criticism.

I must say quite categorically that the Northern Territory Police Force performed quite magnificently during that exercise. From my personal observation - and I am sure the member for Ludmilla, who was actively involved, will confirm this - our police and our emergency services personnel demonstrated a high level of competence in dealing with what could be a very difficult and delicate situation. It certainly improved my confidence in our ability to handle an incident of that nature. Certainly, there were problems with the exercise and lessons have been learnt. That will only improve our ability to deal with a genuine situation if it ever arises in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I repeat my commendations to all those involved: the army, the Commonwealth people, the Northern Territory Police Force, the task force and the emergency services personnel. All performed admirably and we have learnt a great deal from the exercise. It will improve our ability to deal with this disease of the late 20th century.

Tabling of Documents

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I draw his attention to standing order 255 which reads:

A document relating to public affairs quoted from by a minister, unless stated by the minister to be of a confidential nature, or such as should more properly be obtained by address, shall, if required by any member, be laid on the Table.

Mr Speaker, as I require the documents that he referred to in a previous answer this morning to be tabled, will he table those documents?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the simple answer to that question is that I did not quote from them. I referred to them but did not quote from them. The standing order therefore does not apply.

Pastoral Industry Study

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

When will the GRM study of the Northern Territory pastoral industry be made public?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is indeed considerable interest in the pastoral industry study which has been conducted over the past 12 months in the Northern Territory. It is a very comprehensive study. At present, we are in the process of organising sufficient copies for the document to be tabled in this Assembly and for items to be made available to the many other interested parties. I am seeking Cabinet approval to table the report and I expect that that will be done next week.

Pastoral Industry Study

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Is he able to advise which public interest groups were allowed the opportunity to have input into draft stages of the GRM study?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot answer the honourable member's question specifically. I have read a very late draft of the pastoral industry study and I understand that there are only a few words changed in the final copy, which is now available for Cabinet consideration. I am sorry that I am unable to name the groups approached by the consultants who undertook the study.

Privatisation of Darwin Airport

Mr REED to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I ask him this question in his capacity as Acting Minister for Transport and Works. Could he advise the House on the possible privatisation of Darwin Airport?

ANSWER

When I first heard of the proposal to sell off Australia's international airports, I thought that possibly something might be happening with Darwin Airport at long last. However, as events unfold, it seems that, once again, the Commonwealth is about to let us down in respect of the airport because no one seems to know what is happening with the sale of international airports anywhere, let alone in Darwin. The Federal Airports Corporation, which is supposed to take over the running of our international terminals in less than 4 weeks' time and turn them into profitable concerns, has no indication of what assets there are, how much debt it will have to service or what limitations will be placed on its borrowings. That hardly augurs well for the possibility of Darwin Airport being sold off to private interests and, hopefully, being rebuilt. We are all aware of the inadequate facilities at Darwin Airport and the Territory's vital need, in relation to our tourist promotion effort, for that terminal to be rebuilt to service both domestic and tourist requirements. Until that terminal is developed, we have to put up with second-rate facilities which prevent international air carriers looking at Darwin as a possible entry point for tourists.

A number of private businesses have indicated their ability and enthusiasm to develop a terminal at the Darwin Airport in a private capacity. However, the federal government's attitude has meant that, under no circumstances, will anyone be allowed to do anything which might improve facilities there. We have already had the debacle of \$19.2m being spent on developing a new terminal at a site on the northern side of the airstrip. We saw the Prime Minister hop in a brand new bulldozer hired specifically for the occasion. What hypocrisy! He dropped the blade down and said that he had turned the first sod. After an expenditure of \$19.2m in development fees, engineering studies and works, the project was abandoned. What a waste! It is typical of the federal Labor government and the present Prime Minister whose attitude towards the Territory is one that all Territorians are well aware of. It is a great spot for a few pictures, driving a bulldozer and sightseeing at Kakadu. That is terrific, but when it comes to anything which might allow Territorians to develop our facilities and our economic base, it must not be allowed to

occur. That is what has happened with the airport. I bet that, at the end of the day, there will be a number of international terminals in private hands throughout the country while Darwin will still be stuck with a World War 2 shed which is totally inadequate now and was totally inadequate 10 years ago. That is typical.

Mr Ede: It is a defence strip.

Mr MANZIE: It is a defence strip! Mr Speaker, there we have a great example of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's attitude towards any possibility that we might be able to do something for ourselves in the Territory. Don't let development happen! The excuse is that it is a defence strip. Of course it is a defence strip. People have been living with it for years. A number of defence strips in this country have airport terminal facilities that are adequate for the use that is required of them. Townsville is a good example, and I think even in the ACT ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister was asked a very specific question. He has answered that specific question. He is now attempting to breach standing order 112(1) which quite clearly and distinctly says that questions cannot be debated. The minister has far exceeded his brief. He has far exceeded the bounds of the question that was asked of him and now he is attempting to debate a much wider issue.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would ask the minister to keep his answer as brief as possible.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, obviously there is no point of order because we are talking about development of the Darwin air terminal. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to prevent me from enlarging on the question, he will instruct his deputy to make no comments and to try not to embarrass the Labor Party any further. Members of the opposition try to stick up for their federal colleagues. The fact is that they do not want to see any development and they get touchy and twitchy when it is suggested. It is a defence airport. It already has a terminal on it which is inadequate, and \$19m has been spent on an abandoned project to build a new one. If we could privatise it, we would possibly be able to do something for the benefit of the Territory and for the benefit of young people who will need jobs in the future.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr Roger Steele and Mr Jack Doolan

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of Mr Roger Steele, the former Speaker of this Assembly, and Mr Jack Doolan, the former member for Victoria River. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome them both.

Administration of Mines Safety Control Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the Mines Safety Control Act be administered by the Work Health Authority or the Department of Mines and Energy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand the honourable member's particular concerns on that issue. I might say that the mining industry has raised the same concern

with us. It revolves around the valid desire of the mining industry to develop what it calls a one-stop-shop approach in dealings with government. Traditionally, that has been the approach with the Department of Mines and Energy concerning matters associated with industrial and mine safety. It has worked successfully over the years.

I might digress with respect to this matter because it is a fact that the mine in the member's own community of Nhulunbuy is working under a very successful program of self-regulation, and has been doing so for quite a number of years. It has worked very successfully. I know the honourable member would recognise that, particularly given the diligence of the trade union movement in the town which I can speak of from personal experience. There are a number of mines where self-regulation can work quite successfully to provide an economical and effective industrial safety management regime.

However, that is not necessarily the case throughout the Territory. The intent is to try to develop umbrella legislation in all matters associated with industrial safety, industrial health and rehabilitation, through the Work Health Authority. The administrative arrangements were made in such a way that all those areas would come under the Work Health Authority. Because of the concerns that have been raised by the mining industry, discussions are continuing between the Department of Mines and Energy and the Work Health Authority on how the administrative arrangements can work to meet both of those objectives. The matter is not resolved at this stage. Because of the fundamentally large changes that have occurred in the administrative arrangements, there is a need to tidy up areas of detail to achieve the most practical and efficient working arrangements.

I can assure honourable members that the overall aim is to ensure that the objectives of the Work Health Act, covering proper and effective industrial safety, compensation and rehabilitation programs, will be attained right across the spectrum in the Northern Territory. We want to do that in a manner which will not create unreasonable administrative difficulties and red tape for industry, workers or the community generally. Questions of day-to-day management in terms of our objectives are being addressed by the Department of Mines and Energy and the Work Health Authority. We are talking with the industry and the community in respect of that process.

Televising of National Sporting Events

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has the government undertaken appropriate measures to persuade the ABC to televise national sporting events, such as the Melbourne Cup, the VFL Grand Final, the Adelaide Grand Prix and the finals of the one-day cricket competition, to areas of the Territory which do not receive live commercial television?

ANSWER

I would have thought, as I guess many Australians do, that no lobbying would be necessary for Territorians to receive this sort of service from a national television station which receives \$400m of taxpayers' money to operate without advertisements. However, this matter has long been a sore point in the Northern Territory. The issue has been raised in this Assembly many times and I have taken it upon myself to see if the Territory can finally receive a clear resolution from the ABC regarding the broadcasting of national sporting events to which it does not hold primary rights.

The ABC has recently adopted a firm policy in relation to picking up the secondary television rights for such events. This policy states that 'in areas where no regional commercial services exists, the ABC will be willing to transmit what it regards as a suitable coverage at what it regards as a suitable time'. The ABC policy further states, with reference to broadcasting via the AUSSAT HABCSS transponders: 'Providing coverage of such events, therefore, to the remote areas, inevitably means these coverages must also be available from the ABC television regional transmitters in these states. Thus, there will be conflict with any regional commercial television stations who may hold rights to the same event'. That statement needs some interpretation. In plain English, it means that, if the ABC coverage in remote areas clashes with existing commercial coverage, there will be little possibility of the ABC taking up the secondary broadcasting rights. The ABC policy has ignored the Territory's special circumstances. Because of that, in April this year, I wrote to Mr David Hill, General Manager of the ABC, to explain these circumstances to him. I have asked him to treat the Territory's situation as a special case for the transmission of major sporting events to remote areas based on certain considerations. I use the term 'remote areas' fairly loosely because we are talking about such population centres as the capital of Centralia.

Mr Bell: Hear, hear! I've never been brave enough to say that.

Mr PERRON: These special circumstances are that the Northern Territory has only one commercial television station capable of providing live transmission and that station broadcasts to Darwin only and, secondly, according to current information, the remote television service will not be able to provide services to remote areas for perhaps 18 months. I pointed out to Mr Hill, in the light of these special circumstances, that it is easy in technical terms for the ABC to isolate Darwin for the live broadcasts of major sporting events. This has been done successfully in the past for events such as the Grand Prix, the VFL Grand Final and the Melbourne Cup. With Darwin isolated from the transmission, there is no interference with the commercial rights of the primary carrier. The ABC can then simply broadcast some prerecorded programs in Darwin for the duration of the particular event.

In most cases, the sporting events to be telecast are shown on a Saturday or Sunday and thus do not interfere with regular serialised programs or new and current affairs programs. I assured Mr Hill that the vast majority of Territorians in remote areas prefer to watch one-off national sporting events. I pointed out to him that the same issues arise every year in relation to the Grand Prix, the VFL, the Melbourne Cup and one-day cricket. The same arguments, telexes and letters ensue, with the result that there is a last minute decision by the ABC to show the first 3 events live to remote areas. The issue of one-day cricket has not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of Territory cricket fans.

Finally, I stress that it is my wish to alleviate the unnecessary middle stages of the debate and this can be achieved by the ABC making an early commitment to the broadcasting of the VFL Grand Final, the Grand Prix, the Melbourne Cup and one-day cricket finals. Other major sporting events might well occur and discussion could follow at the appropriate time. The whole issue of sports broadcasts to remote areas could be reviewed when a central zone commercial television service becomes operational across the Northern Territory. The government is hoping that the new management style of Mr Hill will enable the ABC to be more flexible and sympathetic to the needs of Territory sporting fans and that, later in 1987, we will see a departure from the ad hoc decision-making that has been noticeable in respect of this issue

in the past. I will be meeting with Mr Hill on his visit to the Northern Territory next week and will take these matters up firmly with him with a view to trying to obtain some commitment to Territorians.

Broadcast of Question Time

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the Chief Minister give the people of Alice Springs an assurance that there will be continued broadcasting of Legislative Assembly question time through the FM radio station there?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this really is a matter for you. I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has raised it. I am quite proud to advise that I took the initiative that there would be an opportunity for Legislative Assembly question time to be broadcast in Alice Springs. The objective was that the FM station would seek sponsorship in Alice Springs to continue to broadcast. It had not achieved that at the beginning of this year and I extended assistance to the FM radio station until the end of this financial year. It is the earnest desire of this government that the people of Alice Springs continue to have the opportunity to hear question time.

We find it advantageous to have question time broadcast as widely as possible so that people can hear directly the answers made by ministers and do not get half-baked stories. We are quite pleased that those broadcasts are occurring. I would certainly hope the broadcasts continue but I must say it is our desire that 8 CCC FM obtains sponsorships in Alice Springs, as it does for other broadcasts.

Mr Smith: Where do you put the sponsorship ads?

Mr HATTON: The best place to put a sponsorship ad would be during any question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, because they are so illogical and inconsequential that no one would miss them.

Mr Speaker, that is a matter that can be dealt with quite satisfactorily and I would certainly hope that sponsors can be obtained. I can assure honourable members that we will be seeking the continuation of those broadcasts in Alice Springs. It is an initiative that my government has promoted and will attempt to continue to promote.

Sadadeen Secondary College Lockers

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware that the Sadadeen Secondary College is still without the long-promised lockers? Will he undertake to find out where those lockers are and when the students will get them? Has the minister spoken to the Treasurer who promised in the last sittings to lick the barrel and find a few dollars for lockers for Year 11 students at the Sadadeen Secondary College?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am quite surprised and even shocked that the lockers have yet to arrive at Sadadeen Secondary College. At the last sittings, I informed the honourable member that the lockers were on their way and that I had been

advised that they would be installed in the very near future. Obviously, I will make inquiries to see where the lockers are.

In regard to the second part of the honourable member's question, unfortunately I have not been able to catch the Treasurer in a receptive mode. He has had a number of quite intricate financial matters pressing upon him and I considered it would have been inappropriate for me to make that specific request of him at this time. However, I assure the honourable member that I consider the provision of lockers for the students a matter of some seriousness and I will be endeavouring to follow up the matter to his satisfaction and to the satisfaction of students and parents.

Alleged Use of Commonwealth Car by Treasurer

Mr REED to TREASURER

I ask if he will indicate whether there is any truth in the story touted in the media recently that he requested the use of a Commonwealth car to take him from Canberra to Sydney after the recent Premiers Conference?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Honourable members may have watched the ABC television news program last evening and seen the Leader of the Opposition in full flight expounding on my virtues, such as arrogance etc. I have said many times in this Assembly that people who would follow the Leader of the Opposition would do so out of curiosity, simply to see where they would end up. If they do not make a decision soon, they will realise exactly where they will end up: in the political wilderness forever, under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition.

He missed some very vital points in his story and the ABC television network did not bother to give me the chance of replying or adding anything to the story. It had a story and it did not intend to mess it up with any facts. Unlike its colleagues in the radio section of the ABC, who did check with my office, the television people did not bother to check. There are 2 very crucial points that the Leader of the Opposition did not mention, and one was that there was a strike by refuellers on the evening of 25 May. Like so many of their union brethren across the country, they realised the opportunity presented by having all the Premiers in Canberra. They decided not to refuel the planes.

In addition, there was a firemen's strike predicted for the next day. This was brought to my attention by a Commonwealth driver who was driving myself and the Under Treasurer back to our hotel. He suggested that, if we wanted to travel to Sydney in order to return to Darwin - as indeed we did; we did not want to be sitting in Canberra twiddling our thumbs all day - he would obtain clearance to drive us there if we so wished. I said that we would check with the airline companies on the status of the strike and we would get back to him. We rang Australian Airlines and Ansett. They assured us that there had been trouble during the day but they were expecting all flights to be running as normal the next day. The media people may like to check with Col Krohn of 8DN Talkback who was with me and could verify that we made those telephone calls and that the matter was of real concern to us at the time.

When airline companies confirmed that the aircraft would be flying the next day, the Commonwealth driver was informed and that was the end of the story. Those are a couple of little facts and details that the Leader of the

Opposition did not bother to mention because he would not know. He expounds on my arrogance from time to time and yet he stands in front of television cameras and gives Northern Territorians yet another example of his complete ignorance. He does not bother to get the facts. The sole comment on the Premiers Conference from this apologist for the federal Labor government was the allegation that I demanded a Commonwealth car. He said nothing about the cuts and the financial situation that we are in. In 1983, we were told that the Labor Party in the Territory could talk to the Labor Party in Canberra and that is why we should all vote Labor.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister has gone far beyond the question that was asked of him. It was a very simple question which he has answered fully.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the minister to keep his reply as brief and as relevant as possible.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I think that I have made my point. In doing so, I have expounded on the ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition and his wish to stand in front of television cameras whenever he can and fabricate lies and misinformation towards ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will withdraw those remarks.

Mr COULTER: I withdraw those remarks, Mr Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition has stood in front of television cameras from time to time and fabricated stories and, in fact, made suggestions that have been proven to be untrue. Mr Speaker, I was able to leave Canberra by aircraft the following day and that was the end of the story.

Alice Springs Traffic Lights

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Have recent proposals to put more traffic lights in Alice Springs been based on any studies of present and projected traffic flows in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, they have. I believe that the question should be properly directed to the Minister for Transport and Works, who initiated the inquiry to which the Department of Lands and Housing contributed.

Very detailed studies are undertaken regarding traffic flows. I think that it has been found in practice that traffic flows are better without the control of lights until they reach a certain level of density. At that level, the statistics show that accident rates start to increase. There are particular problems relating to the time that vehicles take to navigate intersections. These studies are carried out in great detail. A company that springs to mind as having undertaken such studies in the past is Pak-Poy Lange Pty Ltd.

The purpose of studies concerning traffic lights at intersections is to determine whether such installations are actually needed. They are very expensive facilities for government or local councils - hence the need for intensive studies investigating road designs and the limitations of changing

road and intersection designs. The cheapest and most effective option regarding the control of traffic is ultimately adopted.

I can assure the honourable member that it would be ridiculous to suggest that lights are fitted at the whim of particular individuals. I can assure him that that is not the case. From my previous experience as Minister for Transport and Works, I can remember the detailed investigation and consultancies which were undertaken regarding the establishment of traffic lights.

Permit Plan Covering Exploitation of Native Fauna

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Have officers of the Conservation Commission formulated a long-awaited plan - it has been about 7 years in the making, I believe - concerning a sensible permit program for the catching, keeping, breeding and sale of protected and other native fauna of the Northern Territory, and has that plan been presented to him?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge, officers of the Conservation Commission are working on a submission to me. The government's responsibility in the area of protection of flora and fauna has been raised in several pieces of correspondence in recent times. I am not too sure of the status of any further report to government, as such, but I would be happy to take up the issue forthwith. If the member for Koolpinyah could be a little more specific about her concerns, I would find it much easier to address the matter.

Protection for Police Officers from Hepatitis B

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

He may be aware that police force strike action was threatened in South Australia last week over the handling of prisoners suffering from hepatitis B, and that that situation was eventually resolved when fairly expensive injections were given to the police officers involved. Are Territory police officers, who deal very frequently with members of the public and prisoners who suffer with hepatitis B, being given injections to prevent their catching that disease?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must say this is the first time an issue of this nature has been raised with me. I am aware of the hepatitis B issue. I am advised that hepatitis B vaccines are available but this is not an issue that has been brought to my attention directly as minister with responsibility for the police. I will check with the Minister for Health and Community Services and will advise in due course.

Cole Report on Channel Island Power Station

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

When does he intend to table the report into the Channel Island Power Station and its operations, the so-called Cole Report?

ANSWER

I intend to table the report during the course of these sittings. The report is presently before me and I have made copies available to a number of people, including all persons named in it. I have given those people the opportunity to answer criticisms or questions raised in the report. I think it is only fair for me to receive their comments before the tabling of the report. Equipment manufacturers have also received copies of the report. Those copies are now being examined very closely by the people concerned and, as soon as I have them back, I will table the report. I can assure honourable members that I have received various comments from the people I have mentioned and that I will table the report during the course of these sittings.

Frances Bay Mooring Facility

Mr PALMER to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Could the Attorney-General, in his capacity as Acting Minister for Transport and Works, advise the House on the outlook for the future use of the Frances Bay mooring facility?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is certainly a most timely and relevant question. I am very pleased to advise the House that the number of bookings that have been received for the use of the facility has totally vindicated the government's decision to construct it.

Mr Smith: You should finish it and then sell it.

Mr MANZIE: I hear a little bit of a murmur from the Leader of the Opposition. He cannot stand to see a successful development taking place in the Territory, especially when his party president stood up on television and said what a disaster it all was and what a waste of money. The opposition has no inkling of what is required to manage the Territory, let alone to accelerate the economy to create employment.

Mr Speaker, everyone saw what happened when there was a danger of Cyclone Kay coming across to Darwin. The basin was full. Obviously, the whole idea of accelerating the construction of the basin was to provide the protection that it did provide when it was needed. It is also important to know that bookings for use of the basin are currently running at 109%. In other words, we are turning boats away. We have more people who want to book berths than we have berths available. We did not build it big enough. We have 93 applications for 85 berths. Of those, 75 are fishing vessels, 10 are commercial and the remainder are private yachts. Even more importantly, 41 of the 85 berths - nearly half - have been booked on an annual ongoing basis. I think it also should be borne in mind that the basin was constructed primarily with the fishing industry in mind.

Mr Smith: You should sell it.

Mr MANZIE: I am glad to see that the Leader of the Opposition is starting to get the concept of privatisation. He seems to have embraced it with all sorts of enthusiasm, but he must learn to temper his enthusiasm with a little bit of common sense. It is good to see that he has realised some of the benefits that can be obtained if we privatise certain functions of government. We have a duty to guide the Leader of the Opposition in the manner of carrying out privatisation so it is of benefit to all Territorians and contributes to our aim of creating employment for our young people.

The government knows that the mooring basin is an important step in making Darwin the centre of the north Australian fishing industry and, given the success of the Frances Bay mooring basin to date, it is definitely clear that we are moving in the right direction to achieve that goal.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Protection for Police Officers from Hepatitis B

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, may I take this opportunity to provide a response to the member for Sadadeen's question concerning hepatitis B vaccinations for the police force. I am advised that hepatitis B vaccination shots are available to all members of the Northern Territory Public Service, including the police, on request and at no cost to those people. My advice is that it costs our government \$126 per shot for those vaccinations, but they are available on request to members of the public service who may find themselves in an exposed situation. Of course, that does include the police force.

Trade with Indonesia

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Following the recent participation by Nortrade in the Indobuild trade exhibition in Jakarta, could he advise the Assembly of the success or otherwise of our delegation and any prospects identified for developing future trading relationships with Indonesia?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government, through its trade and marketing division Nortrade, participated in an exhibition called Indobuild 87. Our participation in Indobuild, which was held in Jakarta from 12 to 16 May, was the first major trade exhibition undertaken in Indonesia by the Northern Territory. 10 companies were represented and early results are already in evidence.

I am sure the companies which participated in such a significant event would not mind me naming them. They were: Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd, Peter Morgan Refrigeration of Alice Springs, Woods Bagot Architects, V & R Carusi, Darwin Plant Wholesalers, Diamond & Watts, Island Constructions, Perkins Shipping, Bunnings, and Northbrick Industries. As a result of the trip to Indobuild, 2 companies - Hungerford Refrigeration, the first manufacturing company in the Trade Development Zone, and Peter Morgan Refrigeration of Alice Springs - are negotiating agency arrangements right now with excellent sale prospects.

The Northern Territory delegation was very well received by the Indonesians and it is possible that reciprocal visits to the Northern Territory will be made by some of the business contacts made. The Indonesian State Minister for Public Housing, Dr Cosmas Batubara, visited the Northern Territory's stand during the exhibition and later had private talks with the delegate leader.

During the visit to Jakarta, the Trade and Marketing Division carried out a preliminary market survey to identify other trading opportunities. Indonesia's rapidly developing mining industry offers companies involved in the industry, especially those with a base in the Northern Territory, an opportunity for the supply and maintenance of mining equipment, parts, trucks and the like. Other opportunities have been identified in the supply of low-cost housing; foodstuffs including groceries, vegetables, meat and fish; and communications technology and equipment. Honourable members will find it interesting that sliced bread is currently being flown from Melbourne to Jakarta. One would think that, if Darwin could not get in on such an act, there would have to be something wrong. I do not know how big the market is for sliced bread in Jakarta, particularly Melbourne sliced bread, but perhaps we could break in and get a piece of the action.

It is timely that the Northern Territory delegation visited Indonesia, as the Indonesian government is implementing some fundamental changes to its economy in order to reduce reliance on oil and gas as its principal revenue earners. Development programs which are being given high priority include agriculture and irrigation, mining and energy, communications, tourism and education. Recent changes by the Indonesian government include the 25 October reduction of tariffs on 150 items and the abolition of import monopolies for 165 products. Non-tariff barriers to imports were eliminated on more than 100 items and quota restrictions were removed on 140 categories of textiles

and steel products. Other reforms included a devaluation of the currency in September last year. The Department of Industries and Development is now developing strategies with Northern Territory companies to follow up on the information gathered during the mission to Indonesia. One could only describe it as a success and a sign of things to come in the future.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I ask the minister this question in his capacity as minister responsible for the Territory Insurance Office. It is in 4 parts. Is the minister aware that notice has been served under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act on Hungerford Refrigeration by Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd, for the discharge of a debt awarded against Hungerford by a district court on 26 November 1986? Secondly, is the minister further aware that, if this matter is not resolved promptly, Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd has instructed its solicitors to begin action to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration? Thirdly, what guarantees can the minister give, in the case of such an action, that the investment made by the Territory government in Hungerford Refrigeration is secure and will not be lost? Finally, will he give an assurance that the Northern Territory government will not provide more funds to bail out Hungerford Refrigeration?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is easy to see how one can develop a negative mentality. The Leader of the Opposition used the term 'to bail out'. To bail Hungerford out of what? It is very easy for a person to talk himself into a position of doom and gloom, as the Leader of the Opposition obviously does in the bathroom each morning as he is shaving and wondering whether to cut his throat or not. The issue of bailing Hungerford out simply does not exist, as I have said in this Assembly on many occasions. However, I will undertake to give the Leader of the Opposition detailed information during the course of these sittings in answer to his question.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Could he confirm that a firm called Hall Chadwick, a group of accountants in Queensland, has also lodged a notice under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask that that question be placed on notice.

Commonwealth Employment Program

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is the effect on the Northern Territory of the recent federal government announcement to discontinue the Commonwealth Employment Program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is an interesting one. The Commonwealth Employment Program has been operating in the Territory for 3 or 4 years, as in

other parts of Australia, and has been of great benefit to the whole of the Northern Territory. On 13 May, the federal Treasurer made a number of announcements in his mini-budget. One of these, the closure of the CEP program, will have a dramatic effect on the Northern Territory. That program has had more effect in the Northern Territory than many of the programs that the federal government has put in place.

The CEP program is to be abolished from 30 June 1987 but it will continue to fund all projects that have been approved to that date. It is anticipated that a number of CEP projects will continue into the 1987-88 financial year. The maximum duration of any project is 52 weeks and therefore it is obvious that anything that is approved before June 1987 will continue until June-July 1988. Of course, in that time, there will have to be a winding down. Currently, there are 7 Commonwealth employees employed in the CEP program in the Northern Territory and the joint secretariat also includes 2 Territory employees. The federal government is currently entering into discussions with the Northern Territory in relation to the winding down of those positions over that period and the level of funding that will be required to continue the program into 1988.

There would be little dissent from anybody in this Assembly with the view that the CEP program has had great benefits for the Northern Territory, particularly in Aboriginal communities but also in communities like Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine, where it has been used to employ people for varying terms to provide footpaths and other facilities. In a number of Aboriginal communities, it has kept a large number of people employed. It is rather disappointing to the Northern Territory to find that the program will be abolished. Its winding-down will involve the abolition of a number of positions that the federal government currently provides. Obviously, by the end of 1988, the CEP program will have ceased. I am hopeful that we can find other means of keeping people employed in remote communities. However, at this time, there is not a great deal of light at the end of the tunnel as far as a program to replace this one is concerned.

Resignation of Mr Roger Watters

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I refer to an item in 'Bushranger' in last Sunday's Sunday Territorian headed 'Roger Resigns'. It relates to Roger Watters, the uranium adviser, and the honourable minister. Is the story true?

ANSWER

'Bushranger', you say? I vaguely remember an item on the back page of the Sunday Territorian referring to Roger Watters' decision to leave the Northern Territory. Mr Watters has not advised me of any disagreement with myself. The last time I spoke to him was at the Department of Mines and Energy stand at Fred's Pass Show. I believe that Mr Watters' wife entered into employment in Queensland some time ago. Indeed, Mr Watters gave me his business card at Fred's Pass Show some 2 or 3 weeks before the item appeared in the press. I remember that the card had a logo depicting 2 crocodiles. He gave me notice that he intended to move back to Cairns. In fact, he recited a little bit of poetry about the beauty of the hills around Cairns and told me he wanted to return home. As far as I am concerned, Mr Watters has made a decision about his career and his commercial future. He now intends to open up a consultancy business in Queensland and I guess that he may wish to live with his wife as well. Those are all options that Mr Watters has carefully considered in deciding to relocate himself to Queensland.

DDT Levels in Northern Territory Meat

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Bearing in mind the high levels of DDT recently discovered in Australian meat exported to the United States, would the minister advise whether DDT has been found in Northern Territory meat?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, intolerable residues of DDT were recently detected in meat exported from Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia to United States markets. Although I understand that the amount of contamination was very small, this matter is extremely serious to the Australian industry. The levels detected varied from 6.7 parts per million to 103 parts per million. The allowable limit in both the United States and Australia is 5 parts per million. This discovery has the potential to place in jeopardy Australia's entire meat trade to the United States. Sales of Australian meat to the United States are already suffering and, if significant residues are found in future consignments of Australian meat, US officials are likely to totally ban further imports.

DDT is not legally banned from sale or use in the Northern Territory. It is listed in schedules 5 and 6 of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act as a substance which may be sold and used under prescribed conditions. When this matter came to its attention, the department checked around the Territory. It found one retail outlet that had a small amount of DDT in stock and that has now been taken out of circulation and is being held by the Department of Industries and Development. The Department of Health and Community Services is looking at the possibility of rescheduling DDT under the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act to effectively ban its use in the Northern Territory.

DDT was once used to control external parasites of plants and animals including cattle ticks, lice and buffalo flies. I am advised that investigations by the Department of Industries and Development have indicated that DDT has not been used on Northern Territory livestock for many years. These investigations have indicated that DDT has not been used to any significant degree, if at all, in the Northern Territory commercial plant industry.

To remove any doubt that DDT is not to be used, I intend that it be banned under section 41A of the Northern Territory Stock Diseases Act. This action has the support of the cattle industry. I will be attending a meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council in Canberra tomorrow where this matter will be discussed, in particular the reviewing of existing legislation, methods of tracing livestock to the property of origin and the programs for advising industry on the proper use of agricultural chemicals.

To answer the honourable member's question specifically, no residues have been detected in any Northern Territory meat.

Electricity Installations in Rural Communities

Mr EDE to TREASURER

When is the installation of electricity meters in rural communities expected to be completed? When will charging commence and what advice will he be giving to his department for procedures to handle billing, collection,

disconnections, reconnections and so on? Can he assure residents in rural communities that they will be charged the same rates as Territorians in urban centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in December 1984, as agent for the Local Government Division and the NT Treasury, NTEC assumed responsibility for the provision of electricity supplies on Aboriginal communities. As honourable members would be aware, before that time, consumers in these communities received electricity supplies free of charge.

I have given detailed accounts in this Assembly in relation to the cost of supplying electricity to Aboriginal communities. Honourable members will remember my suggestion that the cost of fuel alone is \$6.5m. This is just one of the costs of supplying electricity, free of charge, to Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory. The user-pays principle was very much in vogue when the government made its 1984 decision. The ramifications of that principle have been brought home to us even more strongly as a result of the recent Premiers Conference and the May economic statement of the federal Treasurer, Mr Keating.

In 1984, in applying the user-pays principle, this government set up a mechanism whereby it would take back, as a gesture of good faith and goodwill, \$1m of the cost of providing electricity services to Aboriginal communities. That \$1m goes toward the cost of fuel only and does not relate to any other costs involved in servicing the communities involved. I believe the member for Fannie Bay was the minister responsible for NTEC at the time the program to meter Aboriginal communities began, and that program has now almost reached completion. It cost about \$1m to establish metering facilities right throughout the Territory. For the first time, the Northern Territory government has a means of accurately measuring the amount of electricity that is consumed by various communities throughout the Northern Territory. That has given us an indication of what is needed to develop correct utilisation of electricity in Aboriginal communities.

We have now to look at the costs and the various facilities that burn up considerable amounts of electricity. That includes facilities such as stores, hospitals, police stations and schools. Those decisions are before me now as the minister responsible and we are negotiating agreements on how to charge for electricity utilisation within Aboriginal communities throughout the Territory. Those decisions have not been put to Cabinet at this stage.

I can assure the member for Stuart that the government is looking at raising revenue that has been forgone in the past because there was a free-electricity mentality in Aboriginal communities. I can assure him that that has now come to an end. We will no longer supply free electricity to those communities throughout the Territory. The cost of providing an electricity service will be met by the people utilising it. I will bring the manner of billing and collection to the attention of this Assembly after the it has been determined by Cabinet.

Electricity Installations in Rural Communities

Mr EDE to TREASURER

As I asked in my original question, can he give any assurance to residents that they will be charged at a rate no higher than is charged to Territorians in urban centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unlike the member for Stuart's federal colleagues, I do not have any intention of making those charges retrospective for the years when we supplied free electricity to those communities. He can rest assured of that, even though his federal counterparts charged the Territory recently for the return of money by means of what they called a 'negative special grant'. The federal government took \$14.4m from us.

I have no intention of trying to recoup those costs. The cost of providing electricity to those areas is the matter under consideration. It includes the cost of installing and maintaining generators and other infrastructure costs involved in the provision of electricity. A whole range of items has not yet been fully clarified in cost terms. The cost of getting diesel into those communities and the fluctuations in diesel prices are among the issues that are being identified at the moment and they will be taken into consideration when levels of rates are determined.

High-temperature Incinerator

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware of revitalised interest by the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian governments in the construction and operation of a national high-temperature incinerator in either New South Wales or Victoria, and does the Northern Territory government still harbour ambitions for such a project in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a timely question. Indeed, the federal government has renewed its interest. Of course, it was very supportive of the study the Northern Territory was carrying out for the establishment of such an incinerator. In fact, the Minister for Conservation contacted the federal minister. The federal government is aware that it has a problem. There is some 10 000 t of waste that needs to be disposed of. Recently, the progressive Labor governments of Victoria and New South Wales entered into an agreement with the federal government to become involved in research for the development of such a facility. They are currently trying to identify a suitable area of land down there - and one wonders exactly where that will be - for the development of such a facility. This problem is not going to go away. We cannot bury our heads in the sand. We are producing these chemicals at the rate of almost 1000 t a year.

Another progressive Labor state, Western Australia, announced recently in the latest edition of May 1987 ...

Mr Ede: They are all progressive.

Mr COULTER: I use the word 'progressive' to delineate the difference between the Labor Party in the Northern Territory and the Labor Party throughout the rest of Australia. That is the only reason that I used the word 'progressive'.

Mr Ede: I thought you compared them with yourselves.

Mr COULTER: The Western Australian government has identified an area some 460 km east of Perth. It is a ghost town called Koolyanobbing, and it was an old BHP ...

Mr Ede: If it wasn't, it soon will be.

Mr COULTER: It was probably the Labor Party headquarters in earlier days.

In fact it was a BHP smelting area. The member for Barkly would be interested in this. He was one of the early proponents for the development of such a facility which would put to good use mining infrastructure which was no longer being used. The BHP smelter at Koolyanobbing was set up to service the nearby iron ore mine which eventually closed down. Except for 2 caretakers, everybody left.

The Western Australian government intends to develop an incinerator at the Koolyanobbing smelter site. I think that is a good use of facilities that are available, and it is a pity that the Northern Territory proposal got so bogged down in political issues. There was a real need at stake, but people simply became hysterical and emotional about the subject and canned the project before it really got off the ground. However, it goes to show what can happen and what needs to happen, and that is the important thing.

We cannot just put our heads in the sand and leave this waste lying about. We have to do something with it, and it is interesting to see the southern states and the Western Australian government getting involved with the federal government on this particular proposal. I hope there is a lesson in it for us. We in the Northern Territory should not lose opportunities because of people who cannot see the forest for the trees.

Health and Community Services in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH

I ask the minister if he can assure the Assembly that there will be no reduction in health or community services in Nhulunbuy. If he cannot provide that assurance, can he at least inform the Assembly of the extent of cuts proposed by his department to services in the electorate of Nhulunbuy? The matter is causing considerable concern in my community.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is very interesting to note that the member for Nhulunbuy has once again woken up. We call him Rip Van Winkle. I wonder if he has asked his federal mates the same question. Nhulunbuy is part of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory has just had its budget slashed, even to the extent of having to pay back previous grants, yet the member for Nhulunbuy has the audacity to ask me whether I am going to consider cuts in the services of my department in the Nhulunbuy area. Suffice it to say that this Northern Territory government has the people of the Northern Territory at heart, and only the people of the Northern Territory at heart. The CLP is the only party that considers the needs of the people of the Northern Territory in a sensible and rational way, no matter what the Canberra headquarters of the Territory ALP opposition tries to do to us. We have to address very serious financial implications over the next few weeks and come down with a budget that will work for the next 12 months in the Northern Territory, in the best interests of all Northern Territorians.

I now have responsibility for a department that employs something like a third of the Northern Territory Public Service and a budget that represents a significant percentage of the total Northern Territory budget. Of course I will be looking in every nook and cranny of my responsibilities to ensure that

the burden is shared throughout the Northern Territory, even by the people of Nhulunbuy. I hope that the member for Nhulunbuy has a supplementary question to the one he has just asked me, and that he directs that to the federal Treasurer.

Implementation of Australian Traineeship Scheme

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

A number of employees in the Alice Springs area and, no doubt, the Top End, have expressed concern about the implementation of the Australian Traineeship Scheme. Will the minister advise on current developments in the implementation of this scheme in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Australian Traineeship Scheme is, of course, an opportunity for young Territorians and all Australian young people to receive formal off-the-job and on-the-job training. These things are naturally very important to us in the Northern Territory. This is a growing area of Australia without many facilities for training and providing skilled labour for the work force. The Australian Traineeship Scheme has made an important contribution in that area. As elsewhere in Australia, the initial commencement of the traineeship scheme in the Territory was impeded by difficulties in gaining agreement from the unions on such issues as rates of pay for trainees and whether or not the number of trainees would be in addition to the establishment work force of an organisation in which trainees were to be employed. The problem with the issue of compulsory union membership of trainees applied mainly in relation to the public service. It was ridiculous to put those sorts of obstacles in the way of employing trainees, but I am pleased to advise that, by and large, those problems have been overcome and the unions have relaxed their demands.

The most recent developments have been the commencement of another traineeship in the hospitality industry within the Beaufort Hotel in Darwin, and a group traineeship scheme coordinated by the Master Builders Association for some 14 trainees in the building industry. The building industry is one where traineeships have a great deal of relevance and I suspect that will be a very successful scheme. It is partially funded by the Northern Territory government, and is being conducted in a similar manner to previous group apprenticeship schemes run by the Master Builders Association. I commend the association for its initiatives. It has done an excellent job in getting trainees into the building trades which are of great importance to the Territory.

Synroc Process

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is the honourable minister aware that synroc, an Australian product invented by Professor Ringwood, has been sold off to a company called Nuclear Waste Management and is in danger of being taken overseas because of the attitude of the Australian federal government?

ANSWER

I am not aware of the information that the member for Sadadeen has advised us of this morning. I am extremely interested ...

Mr Collins: And concerned, I hope.

Mr COULTER: ... and concerned about such a problem. I had the opportunity, when I was in France last November, of looking at a similar process that was being used there. However, I understand that it is inferior to the synroc process. I know that the French were very interested and the rest of the world envied the synroc process. It has been proven to be a very safe way of storing radio-active material. I would be grateful if the member for Sadadeen could provide me with any further details that suggest that we are now selling off the process overseas as a result of the attitude of the federal government. The federal government does not do very much at all when it comes to mining of uranium. When you do not recognise that you have a uranium industry on your back doorstep, why worry about a process that could make you billions of dollars a year for the storage of radio-active material? I guess the federal government considers it to be an asset that it no longer requires.

Lameroo Lodge

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The future of Lameroo Lodge, which is situated between Mitchell Street and the Esplanade, has been under discussion by the government for some time. Has the government made a decision in relation to the future of Lameroo Lodge and, if so, when will that information be made available to the public?

ANSWER

The government has not made a decision but I am able to advise honourable members that a decision is imminent. After calling for tenders and considering the various submissions made to the government, the applicants have been reduced to 2. Subject to further negotiations, which are a matter of current correspondence between myself, the department and the applicants, I would expect to make a decision within the next month on the future operation of Lameroo Lodge. I would be quite happy to advise honourable members as soon as I make that decision.

Health and Community Services in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

This follows on from the question I asked earlier. I ask the minister to be more specific this time, in his most eloquent manner. Could he provide details of which services he proposes to cut - the Community Health Service, the dental service, the hospital service, the Aboriginal Health Worker Service? Which services are to be cut within the Department of Health and Community Services? It is a most distressing matter for my electorate.

ANSWER

After this morning's 2 questions, I would imagine that the most distressing thing for the people of Nhulunbuy is the representation they are receiving. The other honourable members of this Assembly do not need educating but, obviously, the member for Nhulunbuy does. There is a process which we will have to go through to decide how we can properly and responsibly handle the situation placed before this government by the opposition's Canberra bosses. We are going to do that in a very reasonable and responsible way. I am sure that we will have to make cuts in various service areas within

my departmental responsibilities. Those matters will be discussed in detail with my colleagues in Cabinet and we will bring down a responsible budget.

Burgundy Royale Accounts Outstanding

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Are the debts for electricity, payroll tax, water and sewerage held against the Beaufort Hotel or Burgundy Royale and will the news released this morning, that the Burgundy Royale group has been placed in liquidation, have any effect on the repayment of those debts to the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Officers of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission met with the receiver last evening and will be speaking with him again this morning regarding those particular issues. This morning, I have again been in contact with the bankers, Westpac, to further advance our position with regard to the facility. The Northern Territory government faces a number of issues at this stage, including matters relating to the Burgundy Royale investment on the Esplanade. May I have the first part of the question again?

Mr Smith: Who has the debt, Burgundy Royale or the Beaufort Hotel?

Mr COULTER: The debt is in the name of Burgundy Royale. I have been advised that it may be the federal government which will precipitate the actual closure of the facility. It is owed almost \$1m in group tax and has taken action to have the money paid out in full. In fact, Westpac moved in response to the fact that the federal government intended to take that action. As yet, I am not sure if the federal government will be taking any further action to have the group tax paid in full.

Obviously, this is a very sensitive issue which has to be worked in full consultation with the people appointed to carry out discussions on behalf of the banking organisation. I will be continuing discussions over the next week or so. Let us hope that, in the interests of the Northern Territory, particularly the tourist industry, this issue can be resolved as quickly as possible. I understand that there are a number of people who are still waiting in the wings to purchase the facility. Let us hope that we can get it up and running again in the near future. It is a shame that this has happened with the largest-ever private investment project in the Northern Territory. The \$60m invested in the facility rates even higher than the Vestey's Meatworks back in the early days. It is a sorry day indeed when we see the position that Burgundy Royale finds itself in and let us hope that the facility will be up and running again in the near future.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that officers of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission were carrying out discussions with the receiver until about 6.30 last night, and they will be talking to him again this morning.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr Rod Oliver

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of Mr Rod Oliver, a former member of the Legislative Assembly in the then electorate of Alice Springs. On behalf of all honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to Mr Oliver.

Members: Hear, hear!

Identification of Crocodiles

Mr REED to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Can the Conservation Commission make some aids available to assist in the identification of crocodiles?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I suspect that the member has his tongue in his cheek. Recent events have led me to make sure that I am never without an identikit, which I have with me somewhere, to help me tell the difference between the 2 crocodile species found in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory.

I might take this opportunity to congratulate the cartoonist at the NT News who captured the moment in a very clear picture. It is going to take some time to live it down. I am happy to blame the incident on the member for Katherine. He is a man who has had 14 years of experience dealing with and identifying crocodile species in the Territory. Another tongue-in-cheek gesture was made in my weekly briefing paper from officers of the Conservation Commission. One of the opening paragraphs in this week's briefing was the usual report on sighting and capture of various nuisance crocodiles in the greater Darwin area. The commission took time out to enclose the crocodile identikit with a little notation saying it was to assist those who have difficulty in telling the difference between a salt-water and a fresh-water crocodile.

The incident on the Katherine River certainly surprised me. While checking out a major development in the Katherine River area, the member for Katherine and I came upon a very large fresh-water crocodile. At the time, we suspected it of being a salt-water crocodile. We had to decide whether to report the incident and we realised that, in saying we suspected that there was a large salt-water crocodile in the Katherine region, we would start a series of events that we could not stop. We had to decide whether it was responsible to do that or to let it go and do nothing. When we reported it to Conservation Commission officers in the Katherine region, about 12 people were aware of the incident. Of course, the officers headed out that night to check the area.

Katherine is a small town where everybody talks to everybody. I knew that 12 people already knew of the report and I did not want the people of Katherine suddenly to become aware by word of mouth or rumour that Conservation Commission officers were patrolling the Katherine River looking for a salt-water crocodile. I made the issue public in the knowledge that I could possibly have a large amount of egg on my face at some future date. As I remarked earlier, the cartoon in the NT News said it all! I have subsequently made it known to the member for Katherine that he owes me a few favours.

Statements of Mr Peter Paroulakis

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What action has the minister taken in relation to the statement made by the Country Liberal Party candidate for the House of Representatives, Mr Peter Paroulakis, to the effect that he supports the call of the National

Farmers' Federation boss, Mr Ian McLachlan, for the introduction of tertiary fees of \$5000 per annum?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question is again typical of the member for Stuart. He has demonstrated to this Assembly time and time again his propensity for picking up rumours ...

Mr Ede: I am concerned for students in the Territory!

Mr MANZIE: ... misquotes and incorrect statements and issuing them in this Assembly as facts. On many occasions, I have detailed in this House the problems caused in outlying communities by the actions of the member for Stuart. He likes spreading dishonest statements or sometimes straight-out lies.

Mr Ede: Paroulakis did not deny it.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Peter Paroulakis, the CLP candidate who will be the Territory member of the House of Representatives very soon, did not make any such statement.

The member for Stuart has shown, time and time again, in instances such as this ...

Mr Ede: He said he backed Ian McLachlan.

Mr MANZIE: ... in his statements last year about Yirara and Kormilda colleges, and in the telegrams which I often receive from him that he not only lacks knowledge but in fact takes actions which create problems. We had the instance of the cyanide spill near Tennant Creek and another occasion where \$1m was spent following his allegations that the gas pipeline was going to blow up in Alice Springs.

Mr Ede: You had to dig it up and replace a lot of it!

Mr MANZIE: We all know the story about Chicken Licken, and there he is, Mr Speaker. The sky is going to fall in! I think we should get it straight here and now. Mr Peter Paroulakis did not make the statement which the member for Stuart is attributing to him. I think we should all realise that ...

Mr Ede: Why didn't he deny it? That is what was quoted in the paper.

Mr MANZIE: ... every time the member for Stuart opens his mouth and says anything regarding any matter, it is not factual. It is made up. He dreams things up in the middle of the night. People should be aware of that and treat anything he says accordingly, as I do and as many other members on this side of the Assembly do.

Hepatitis B

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I realise that hepatitis B is a threat to people such as dentists working the field, but what threat is the disease to people such as prison officers and police, and are any programs in place to educate or inform officers of the public service, as well as the public generally, about how hepatitis B is transmitted?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question, which in some ways follows on from an adjournment debate speech given by the member for Sadadeen yesterday evening. I was keen to put before the Assembly a little more detail than was offered by the member for Sadadeen so that it becomes quite clear that the Northern Territory government is well aware of the problems with hepatitis B and, as I have said many times with regard to the handling of AIDS in the Northern Territory, is in fact leading the way in Australia in terms of the responsible approach we are adopting.

First, hepatitis B is transmitted by means similar to AIDS. It certainly is transmitted by sexual contact, be it heterosexual or homosexual. It can be contracted or transmitted by way of transfer of infected blood to a person who has an open wound or by some other method of transferring infected blood into another person's system. The disease is commonly transmitted from mother to baby around about the time of birth. That seems to be a very significant period of transmission.

The disease has been particularly widespread in the Aboriginal communities, as was pointed out by the member for Sadadeen yesterday. In fact, some 80% of Northern Territory Aboriginals have shown evidence of previous - I stress 'previous' - infection, as against 5% of non-Aboriginals. There is a point to take in that statistic, and I again stress the word 'previous'. It is obvious that some people are building up an immunity to this particular virus and that is giving us some comfort, although we have a long way to go.

Carriers can spread the disease and the carrier rate among Northern Territory Aboriginals is something like 10% in the Top End, but a rather startling 25% in some communities, particularly in central Australia. Obviously we have programs in place to try to combat the spread of this particular disease and, unlike the AIDS situation, we are very fortunate in having a vaccine available. As the Chief Minister pointed out in response to a question from the member for Sadadeen the other day, the vaccination costs \$126 per course. It is given to people who are in the highest risk groups and to Aboriginal infants in particular. As I pointed out, there is a perceived spread of the virus from mother to baby at or around the time of birth. We have been addressing that fact for some 12 months.

Public servants such as health staff, police and prison officers may have the vaccine administered if they so request, and the cost of those vaccinations is borne by the Northern Territory government. It should be also pointed out that all persons admitted to Territory prisons are tested for AIDS and hepatitis B. We are aware of prisoners who have those viruses when they enter our prison system and the Territory is leading Australia in that respect.

I wish that people did not see this as presenting a monumental threat to the population of the Northern Territory. It is a concern. It is not as big a concern as the AIDS virus but, nonetheless, we have responsible programs in place and we are addressing the problem as best we can. I would say to the member for Sadadeen and other honourable members of this Assembly that, if they wish for information on any matters that fall within my area of responsibility, particularly in the area of AIDS and other transmissible diseases, I will be only too pleased to arrange a full and comprehensive briefings on the subject. I have said all along that, as minister, I will not stand back from the responsibility which the government has of making sure

that every person who resides in the Northern Territory is fully aware of the problems associated with the AIDS virus and hepatitis B.

Forfeiture of Vehicle Under Liquor Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

My question is directed to the minister in his capacity as minister responsible for the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. I refer him to my comments during previous sittings about a bus from Santa Teresa which was forfeited and later ordered to be auctioned by the chairman of the commission. That order was overturned subsequently by the Treasurer himself, leading to a situation where people are unsure what the government's policy is. What is the government's policy in this regard and will it return to the courts the power to decide the forfeiture or otherwise of vehicles so seized?

ANSWER

We will not be returning the power to the courts. The matter of forfeiture of vehicles has occupied a great deal of time in this Assembly. The commission has sought views and ideas, particularly from Aboriginal people, about this issue. In respect of the Santa Teresa vehicle, I overturned the decision because of the extenuating circumstances, the impact on the community and the number of representations that were made to me. I can assure the member for MacDonnell that, as a result of that action, I intend to adhere strenuously in future to rules as laid down. We will not be returning such vehicles in future under any circumstances because of the concern that is being created as a result of this particular incident.

Forfeiture of Vehicle Under Liquor Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

Will he inform the House of exactly what extenuating circumstances caused him to overturn his chairman's decision in this case?

ANSWER

I do not have the exact details in my head. I am sure he is well aware of the hardship created in the community by the irresponsible attitude ...

Mr Bell: Wherever there is hardship, then?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member sought the information. The least he can do is listen to the answer in silence.

Mr COULTER: The honourable member will remember the incident of the cans being thrown out the window as the police car was approaching the bus. The driver was eventually apprehended by the police. I am sure the member does not need me to go into the details of how the vehicle was seized by the police in that particular incident. I have been to Santa Teresa Mission on many occasions and I have heard the concerns, particularly of the women, about the problem of grog-running and the number of vehicles being used to bring alcohol into the area. We took a decision in this particular case based on the track record of the vehicle's driver and his history in this area. That decision was taken and it will be adhered to.

Yulara and Alice Springs Sheratons

Mr FIRMIN to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, during past Assembly debates the Leader of the Opposition has proposed a simple formula for solving the Territory's financial difficulties brought on by the loss of \$104m in funds from the Commonwealth: to sell the Yulara and Alice Springs Sheratons. Can the Treasurer tell me whether that is actually a viable proposition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a simple formula to get us out of trouble. Unfortunately, it is also the brainchild of a simpleton. Without disclosing the full details of the commercial agreements, I can answer the honourable member's question very quickly. The answer is that it is not a viable proposition.

The Northern Territory government under the then Chief Minister, Paul Everingham, undertook a great commercial risk based on the sound information and forecasts that had been obtained, to develop tourism infrastructure in the Northern Territory. That decision has enabled the Northern Territory to capitalise on the tourist boom that has been generated over the last 5 years. The Northern Territory government has taken a considerable amount of criticism for developing our contingent assets such as the Sheratons at Yulara and Alice Springs. Having taken that risk and absorbed the criticism that has been made over the years, we are not in a position simply to sell and get out. If the Northern Territory government altered the agreements it has entered into with respect to those 2 developments, it would suffer a considerable loss. We are not prepared to do it. It is for us to decide, as it is for anybody who makes a commercial decision. There is a time frame governing when support for those facilities can be withdrawn and they can be sold.

Honourable members will be aware that we put \$10m into the Alice Springs Sheraton last year and that the financial models showed that there would be a time when the operation would be sufficiently well-developed to allow us to recoup that money. We will not be selling the hotels at this stage. We will only do so when their full potential is recognised. That is the short answer to the member for Ludmilla's question. There is a 30% growth in tourism predicted for this year, and the financial models indicate that it will only be a short period before the Northern Territory government's position in relation to those facilities is vindicated.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he confirm that, on top of the \$750 000 loaned to Hungerford Refrigeration by TIO, the Trade Development Zone Authority advanced Hungerford \$150 000 in March this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that the amount of \$750 000 made available to Hungerford by TIO was a loan. No doubt the Treasurer will clarify that for the Leader of the Opposition in due course. Indeed, I believe it was clarified at the previous sittings. As the minister responsible for arrangements between the Trade Development Zone Authority and Hungerford

Refrigeration in order to consummate the deal to bring Hungerford's total operations to the Northern Territory, I advise that my position is the same as my predecessor's: the government considers it quite inappropriate to detail the various incentives or components of incentives which are negotiated ...

Mr Smith: That is great.

Mr PERRON: ... by the Trade Development Zone Authority. Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants an answer perhaps he might ...

Mr Smith: I am not getting an answer. That is the problem.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Rural Electricity Reticulation Scheme

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to TREASURER

I am asking this question of the Treasurer in his role as minister responsible for NTEC. In view of several anomalies that have arisen in its implementation of the scheme, can the minister advise whether NTEC has plans to vary the provisions of what is called the \$5000 electricity reticulation scheme in the rural area? If so, have the interested people been consulted and when can we expect to have these changes presented to us?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question of alteration to the distribution system extension policy, or DSEP, has been before me now for some time. A number of matters are under consideration. The system was introduced in January 1985 to provide the mechanism for negotiating financial contributions for new systems and consumer extensions throughout the Northern Territory. The introduction of the DSEP followed the rural distribution funding scheme, or RDFS, introduced in July 1984. I think the member for Barkly was the minister responsible for NTEC at that particular time. The RDFS is due for completion in July 1987, at which time 580 lots will have been serviced at a cost of \$2.125m. At this point, 173 consumers have paid contributions or have entered repayment schemes. NTEC will ultimately recover the total cost of the RDFS. The distribution system extension policy encompasses 3 broad areas: major consumers, minor consumers and subdivisions.

Mr Speaker, I bring this information to your attention because the policy has worked to date and there has been tremendous development as a result of it. 53 major consumers have been serviced at a cost of \$1.193m. DSEP recoveries have amounted to \$725 000 which is 61% of the program. In addition, 13 private subdivisions have been connected to the system at a cost of \$192 500, with DSEP recoveries amounting to \$190 000 or 99% of the cost of the program. 171 minor consumer lots have been serviced at a cost of \$527 000 or 70%. At this point, 73 consumers have paid contributions or have entered repayment schemes. However, certain problems have emerged as the scheme has developed over the years.

One problem over which the honourable member no doubt receives considerable representation is the subdivision of lots that have been provided with electricity. That is probably one of the biggest bones of contention in the system at the moment. The system has been in force now for a number of years and there has been considerable development in the rural area as a result of the policy. However, there is now a need to review the DSEP policy.

Changes have been proposed to assist in a more equitable recovery of costs from consumers and to promote connections of new consumers. I will be making an announcement on that particular policy before the end of this financial year.

Darwin Bus Service Dispute

Mr SETTER To ATTORNEY-GENERAL

My question is directed to the Acting Minister for Transport and Works. It refers to the present dispute with drivers in the Darwin Bus Service. I note that it has been reported that the action is in response to disciplinary action taken against drivers who have been stealing bus fares. What action has the minister taken to rectify the situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the present industrial action by drivers in the Darwin Bus Service is certainly only one of a long list of similar activities in recent months. There have now been 7 stopwork meetings this year, one of which was extended to a 24-hour strike. Two of these meetings were sanctioned by the Department of Transport and Works to discuss the introduction of the split roster system. I think that all members will agree that that still leaves a record of industrial action which certainly cannot be condoned.

I find it very curious that this recent industrial action has taken place at a time when it will certainly cause the maximum possible disruption to the Bougainvillea Festival. It would not be difficult to describe such action as a blatant attempt at blackmail. Certainly, anyone who was in Darwin at the weekend could not have failed to notice the problems which were caused by the disruption to the bus service.

The union claims to be upset about disciplinary action taken against drivers who have allegedly been caught with their hands in the till. Those drivers fall into 2 categories: those whose monetary returns at the end of the shift fell short of the amount indicated by ticket sales, and those who allegedly have not been giving tickets to passengers and have pocketed the fare themselves. I believe the alleged number of drivers in both categories is very small. The drivers who are allegedly short in their returns have refused to pay back the difference. I also have been led to understand that one of the drivers who has been apprehended by inspectors for failing to issue tickets has actually been reported twice before for the same offence. We are now given to understand that the Transport Workers' Union has taken industrial action because its executive members object to disciplinary action being taken against its members. I can assure the Transport Workers' Union that I find the situation most objectionable to say the least. I certainly will not allow the Darwin public to be held to ransom in such a cynical fashion.

I advise honourable members that this matter has not been left to the Department of Transport and Works. I have instructed that the police be brought into the matter to investigate the alleged theft and alleged fraudulent practice. I believe that the police are the appropriate people to carry out such an investigation. Any allegations of theft are serious indeed and they must be investigated by the most competent people available. If it is found that offences have occurred, appropriate action has to be taken.

I would like to advise the Assembly that, as well as the allegations that have been made in relation to the alleged pocketing of money or failure to

issue tickets, I have also asked that the police be involved in an investigation of the use of forged bus passes by Darwin school students. I would also like to advise that arrangements have been made to provide off-peak services through private contractors. Honourable members would be aware that the union has banned the operation of overtime runs.

I want to point out also that this is not a case of victimisation of certain individuals. It is worth while pointing out that it has been estimated that some of the irregularities that are alleged to be taking place may be costing the taxpayers between \$80 000 and \$100 000 a year. It is also worth pointing out that since transport inspectors began a campaign of spot inspections and checks, the number of tickets sold has increased markedly.

Mr Speaker, I find it very hard to see how the TWU can justify the stance it is taking. The role the union has played in this dispute should be brought to the attention of this Assembly and to the notice of the public. It has been reported to me that, at last week's stop-work meeting, a TWU official actually addressed the drivers and told them: 'You belong to the most powerful union in Australia because you are responsible for the transportation of school children. That means you can get anything you want'. That is what he told them. Mr Speaker, let me put it on notice that the Northern Territory government will not tolerate any action that would place our services to school children in jeopardy. The government received a commitment from the union that services to school children would not be threatened if there was any dispute.

Mr Leo: This is depressing, Daryl. It is hearsay.

Mr MANZIE: I hear the member for Nhulunbuy making some comments over there. We know that he is an ex-member of the Transport Workers' Union and ...

Mr Leo: I am still an official of the Transport Workers' Union.

Mr MANZIE: I think that even he will have to look seriously at an instance where, when there is to be an investigation of reports of dishonesty, a union decides that its members are above reproach and therefore should not be investigated. I think even he would find that situation intolerable.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much chatter across the Chamber. The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, as I was saying, I would certainly like to hear whether the member for Nhulunbuy condones the union's behaviour. I do not think he would do so when he looked at the facts.

I do not think we should miss the most important point. A number of bus drivers working for the Darwin Bus Service do an excellent job and are people beyond reproach. These people are now being cast in the same mould as a number of allegedly dishonest persons and, until such time as this matter can be cleared up, all bus drivers are under a cloud. I think the union's actions are despicable and I would ask all Darwin bus drivers to think very carefully about what this irresponsible union is doing and to consider whether they should even be members of it. They could possibly transfer their allegiances to the ACOA or some other union or even form their own association. They certainly have been ill-served by the Transport Workers' Union which, during

the last couple of years, has carried out a number of actions against the Northern Territory community, deliberately antagonised and tried to ruin our tourist trade, and is now threatening the transportation of school children.

We know that the bus service costs the community money and we know that it runs at a loss, but we realise that it provides a service. That is why we provide top-up money to allow it to operate. We cannot tolerate the Transport Workers' Union using the bus service in an attempt to destroy services to the Territory community. During the last 12 months, the government has spent vast amounts in the development of terminals in the Darwin city centre at Casuarina. This has been done to enable our bus service to operate even more effectively and efficiently. However, people should remember that we now have an operational integration between private contractors and the government bus service. We have found that this works quite well. If we have to move the whole operation of the bus service into the private sector to get an operational bus service, that is what we will do.

If the Transport Workers' Union continues its disruptive practices, we will take action to ensure that the Darwin community has an operational bus service. That is the job we have to do, and we will not hesitate to do it. I therefore ask the drivers to consider leaving the Transport Workers' Union and either forming their own union or joining another union because, if they sat down for 30 seconds, they would realise that the Transport Workers' Union is looking to destroy their jobs and their future in the Territory. It is seeking to destroy the operation of the tourist industry in the Territory and to prevent school children from going to our schools. That is a despicable action and I would like to hear what the member for Nhulunbuy, an ex-Transport Workers' Union member, has to say about this matter.

Mr Leo: I am still a member!

Hungerford Refrigeration Warehouse

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

A recent newspaper advertisement placed by the Trade Development Zone Authority called for tenders for the construction at the zone of a 1000 m² warehouse for Hungerford Refrigeration. Who is paying for the construction of this warehouse, the Trade Development Zone Authority or Hungerford Refrigeration?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as a result of the efforts of the Trade Development Zone and others in encouraging Hungerford Refrigeration to bring its complete operation from Brisbane to the Northern Territory and, in time, employ some 40 or 50 Territorians rather than Queenslanders, the program of the Trade Development Zone Authority for the construction of warehouses and factories for occupants was thrown out of kilter. At present, the Hungerford Refrigeration operation is in a factory destined for another user. That action was taken in order to meet a timetable for bringing Hungerford to the Territory as early as possible. However, it meant that the construction of permanent factory space for the Hungerford operation would have to be considered. That led to the advertisement that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to.

The Trade Development Zone Authority and the government, through Treasury officers, have been holding talks of late to develop the most effective means of coping with the expansion of the trade zone by way of additional factory

space, taking into consideration that the zone authority's success indicates a need for several more factories each year for some years to come. The ultimate aim of the government and the authority is, where possible, to encourage occupiers in the zone to construct their own buildings or to have other third parties construct factories in the zone and rent them to businesses in the zone. I do not have before me at the moment exact details of arrangements that are being undertaken to finance the factory for which expressions of interest have been called. However, I will obtain this information and provide it to the Leader of the Opposition during these sittings.

Dairy Industry Levy

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Following meetings he attended in Canberra last week, is he able to provide any information on the Commonwealth government's dairy industry levy and how this levy affects the 2 Northern Territory dairy producers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was somewhat enlightening for me to go to the meeting of Ministers for Primary Production held in Canberra last Friday. Amongst other things, we discussed the matter of the DDT recently found in Australian meat shipments to the US and what should be done about that, and the subject of inequities which have arisen as a result of the levies by the federal government on the Australian dairy industry. I say 'enlightening' because it appears that what we have here is a simple case of taxation under another name inasmuch as every consumer of milk in Australia is required to pay a levy of 1.5¢ and 2¢ per litre in order to fund a scheme which provides assistance to farmers who are manufacturing dairy products. This is milk which is set aside in order to make cheese and butter and other dairy products for export as well as for the domestic market.

It seems that the whole dilemma has come about because Australia has a massive over-capacity in milk production, principally in Victoria. Because some governments have not been able to come to grips with the problems of reducing that massive over-production, all milk consumers in Australia have been required to pay more for their milk in order to fund it. It is an insane system because it is almost irrelevant whether we have local dairies or not. Any person who drinks milk in the Northern Territory pays a levy, primarily so that Victorian milk producers are able to stay in business. The total levy amounts to about \$91m per year.

The levy system is based on an uneasy truce, principally between New South Wales and Victorian dairy producers, under which each group agrees not to enter the other's markets. It has been demonstrated that Victorian farmers can produce milk for several cents a litre cheaper than New South Wales dairy farmers. Thus, New South Wales is vulnerable to milk from Victoria. The problem with this uneasy truce is that, under the Australian constitution, no government can prevent sales of goods from another state. The matter came to a head recently when a Victorian company reached an agreement with a chain of New South Wales supermarkets to provide milk at about 5¢ per litre less than that available from the New South Wales sources of supply. This is what caused the bunfight which led to the ministerial meeting to discuss the issue.

At the meeting, I argued that the whole scheme was preposterous as far as all milk consumers in Australia are concerned. I said that, in my opinion,

the politics of interstate milk trading seems to have totally overlooked the consumers. No one in the room appeared to be interested in consumers' views and that was very disappointing to me, particularly because I would have thought that at least 2 states would have had more concern in that direction. I argued that it was outrageous for the Northern Territory's 2 fledgling, struggling dairy producers to be expected to bear the burden of the 2¢ per litre levy. Northern Territorian consumers are now paying something like 95¢ per litre for a carton of milk. It is something like half that price in southern states. Why should we have to pay this 2¢ per litre so that it can flow into the pockets of dairy farmers in Victoria?

I also pointed out that the federal Department of Primary Industry had taken the trouble to send an officer from South Australia to the Northern Territory to collect production records from our 2 farmers. When he went on to the farms, that officer had the company of a Commonwealth policeman. The ministerial council thought that was all a bit of a joke. I think the federal minister was somewhat embarrassed at the actions of his department in spending quite a sum of taxpayers' dollars in order to collect \$1300 of outstanding levy payments from one farmer. Indeed, I understand the levies have not been paid to date. I argued that, under any rational consideration of this national scheme, Territory dairy producers should certainly be exempt from such a levy. The federal minister indicated that, whilst he was sympathetic to the plight of Territory dairy farmers, he really could not do much about it at present. He was only going to be a minister for a couple more days as the federal government moved into the election phase. His powers as a minister would be restricted to a mere caretaker capacity until the election, as is normal at such times.

Generally the Northern Territory's plight was set aside. Given that the Territory has only 2 dairy farmers, I guess we did not rate a great deal of consideration as far as the meeting's time was concerned. However, I did put the Territory's position and it was listened to. I do not think we gained very much ground at all but the subject has been rescheduled for a meeting next August of the Australian Agricultural Council. It will be further discussed because the peace which has been achieved between New South Wales and Victoria is certainly a very uneasy one. Both those Labor states have gone to enormous lengths to try to keep the peace with their industry, particularly during an election campaign. The last thing they want now is a bunfight. That is the situation. It is sad for Territory producers, but it is indicative of the sort of treatment we get from the federal government on so many fronts. As far as it is concerned, we are irrelevant and insignificant.

Swedish Geological Company

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is the minister aware that a wholly owned subsidiary of the Swedish government, the Swedish Geological Company, has become incensed by the unauthorised usage of its name and logo by the Northern Territory Open College and the assertion contained in college documents that a joint venture exists between the company and the college? Is he also aware that the company has now advised that it intends taking legal action against the Northern Territory government over the matter and has suspended all negotiations over its entry into the Trade Development Zone, following what it sees as a gross breach of faith on the part of the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I like the way the member for Stuart phrased that question. It is all fact. It is all true. It would probably be more appropriate if he asked what was the basis for all the allegations and carry-on.

Mr Bell: It is like your answer on the Darwin Bus Service, isn't it?

Mr MANZIE: The member for MacDonnell does not want to listen to anything. He just likes to throw in comments. People who hear him on the radio must get a great idea of the intelligent contribution he makes to this Assembly. I will endeavour to answer the question, regardless of attempts by the member for MacDonnell to create a disturbance and prevent me from doing so.

Mr Speaker, I am informed that representatives of this company made contact with Aborigines from the Borroloola community in February this year and discussed an initiative regarding a training program. There was further contact between that group from Borroloola and a company called Abcon, an Aboriginal construction company in Katherine. That led to a proposal for a 15-week training program to be conducted in Sweden.

At this stage, there was no involvement with the Northern Territory Open College, the Department of Education or the government. Dr Flint, who was the head of TAFE in the Department of Education, was contacted by phone in April and offered 6 scholarships for Aborigines to be trained in geological survey methods in Sweden. The inference given was that these were scholarships that the company was offering at its expense. Apparently, it is common practice for some companies to do this. The Open College's role at that stage was to assist in the selection of participants and in drawing up a joint venture proposal to go to the federal Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

Mr Ede: Who said it was to go to it?

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart now likes to throw his two bob in. If he would like to be quiet, I will explain it to him slowly.

This particular proposal was drawn up in conjunction with the Swedish company. At all times, the development of the submission was discussed as a joint concept. The submission was proof read and the original draft was returned with some suggestions for minor alterations. These were undertaken. Furthermore, a telex was received from Sweden supporting the open college's assistance on the submission seeking funds from the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. Not only that, the representative of this particular company appeared on ABC television holding the submission with the twin logos printed on it, saying what a great effort it was and how we were all going to do well.

Nevertheless, we have the member for Stuart accusing us of all sorts of disastrous things. I will give an example of how professionally this particular company operates in the Territory. The first I knew about the matter was a couple of days ago when I was walking down the street. A gentleman tapped me on the shoulder and said: 'Excuse me, I am Mr X and I represent company Y'. I had not heard of this company at that stage. He explained what he was doing and said that he was looking for support for a training program for Aboriginal people. It sounded to me like a reasonably good idea, and I asked him if he had written to us. He explained that he had had consultation with the Department of Education. I asked to be made aware

of these proposals and was then informed that the actual bottom line was that the Northern Territory government make a grant of \$84 000 to provide assistance for 5 Aboriginal people to go to Sweden to do a training course in geological survey. I thought that this was an expensive form of training and that the same amount of money or less in our local education system could provide training for more people. However, I kept my thoughts to myself and asked the company to send the information.

Not long afterwards, my secretary approached me and said that she had received a most abusive phone call from the gentleman involved. He had phoned and wanted to see me immediately and, because I was not in the office, roundly abused my secretary and accused her of trying to prevent him getting access to me. I contacted him by phone and explained in no uncertain terms that I would not tolerate my staff being spoken to in such a way. If he was so keen about his proposal, I wanted to see the written details of it in an envelope. The details were facsimiled through to my office. That was the first and last I heard of the matter before I started to receive telexes about legal action and so on.

All I can say is that the approach by the Swedish company's representative in the Territory has been most unprofessional. It has been incorrect. One minute he was assisting, providing, correcting and supporting an application to the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and the next minute he was threatening this government with legal action. I certainly believe the company's representative is the wrong man for the job. Some of the proposals that have been put forward are obviously good. However, I certainly would not be involved in any dealings with a person of the calibre of this gentleman. He clearly does not know how to operate in the sphere of relations with government.

Mr Ede: Would you say that outside the Assembly?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I really get sick of this. The member for Stuart asked me the other day whether I knew anything about this matter, and I said I would be very happy to ...

Mr Ede: You have destroyed his professional reputation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his chair. The member for Stuart will cease interjecting. To make 1 interjection is possibly permissible, to make 2 is skating on thin ice, but if he makes another one I will name him.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I said, the member asked me if I knew anything about this particular matter and I explained to him that I would be very pleased to give him a comprehensive briefing. Obviously, it then occurred to him that the facts might spoil a good story and we now have another Chicken Licken scenario: the sky is falling down and we all have to duck.

The Department of Education has acted with the utmost integrity and at all times has treated this as a serious matter which may have benefits for the Territory. I find it very hard to understand why this particular company representative has a problem with regard to what has happened. Perhaps he has been given an ultimatum by his company and has been told that he has to get results to keep his job. The circumstances are very strange but I am satisfied that all matters have been handled competently and properly. If the particular gentleman wishes to take legal action, that is obviously his right.

Because of those threats, I do not intend to make any further comments regarding the matter.

Alice Springs Structure Plan

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Could he explain the recent announcement on the Alice Springs Structure Plan?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, although the actual decision has been reported, a few points need clarification. When it endorsed the Undoolya option, Cabinet took various matters into consideration and I will briefly deal with 3 of them. They will need further comment and, possibly, support from all honourable members, including those opposite.

One of the matters considered was the removal of the seismic array which is currently located in the eastern area of Alice Springs and used for defence purposes by both the American and Australian governments. Cabinet has taken the view that residents of the Northern Territory should not be liable in any way for the \$3m cost of removing the seismic array. I intend to take up the issue today by writing to the Commonwealth minister, as well as to Her Worship the Mayor of Alice Springs to seek her support in this course of action. Undoolya would ultimately have been developed, regardless of whether it was now or 20 years hence. Our information indicates that the seismic array is already being interfered with by surrounding developments and passing traffic. The government was of the view, prior to making this decision, that we would assist with its removal. I am advising honourable members and the people of Alice Springs that that is not the case at the moment. In the view of this government, the \$3m cost of the removal of the seismic array should be and will be borne by the Commonwealth or American governments.

The second matter considered relates to future negotiations involving MacMahon Construction Pty Ltd which has made a very innovative submission to the government. It involves the building of a recreation lake, the provision of stage 1 of Undoolya consisting of 1250 lots, as well as a rural subdivision and certain commercial land elements adjacent to the recreation lake. The total up-front cost, in today's dollars, for the development of a recreation lake at the Emily Creek site as set out in the MacMahon proposal is approximately \$9.7m. It would be no secret that the Northern Territory is going through some rather serious reviews of its economic position. I would think that even the people of Alice Springs would recognise that, although the government is ultimately desirous of seeing a recreation lake built in Alice Springs, it would certainly be unwise at this time to commit that amount of money for that purpose. However, because of all of the elements in the proposition from MacMahon Construction, it is possible to look at various alternatives. Although that company does not have a monopoly over future development at Undoolya, there will be further negotiations. It took the initiative and presented an excellent proposal which the government will consider very seriously.

I am quite pleased that the decision on the future development of Alice Springs has been made. During the recent election campaign, the government gave an undertaking that the decision would be made within a certain time frame. That time frame has been met. In the interests of the future development of the town and taking all of the issues into consideration, the best decision has been made.

The third point that I wish to clarify relates to the development in the Emily Hills area. A proposition was put forward to the government some years ago and it has been under very serious consideration. There are a number of possibilities for the future use of the land, including tourist development and, certainly, rural subdivision. As a government, we are not prepared at this time to act as judge and jury concerning the use of that land. We have referred it to the newly-structured Joint Planning Group as a priority matter to be considered as a matter of urgency. I suspect that the developers involved with that particular land will probably make a further submission to the Planning Authority.

Those are the 3 points that I thought needed further clarification. I look forward to seeing the first blocks in Undoolya being turned off at approximately the end of 1989-90, depending on demand. I hope that we will not be faced with another shortage of land in Alice Springs if the town keeps on growing.

Spirit of the Northern Territory

Mr LEO to Minister for TOURISM

Is the Northern Territory government sponsoring a vessel named the 'Spirit of the Northern Territory' in an ocean race and, if so, what is the size of the sponsorship and will the Northern Territory government sponsor other boat owners for the same amount of money should they be interested in participating in ocean racing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is an issue which cuts across several departments, and I have been involved with it in at least 2 of them. To clarify the situation, the ocean-going yacht has been the subject of considerable publicity and several press reports over recent months. As to the involvement of the Northern Territory government, the total grant for the yacht to compete in the round-Australia race is \$80 000. That commitment is 2 years old and, as I said, has been subject to much publicity. The grant has come from 3 areas: the Departments of Education and Tourism, and the former Department of Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs have each contributed one third. In addition, the government has assisted with the purchase of a spinnaker that will be flown on the yacht. This, I think, will be tested for the first time in this year's Ambon race. Ultimately, the yacht will be housed at the Darwin Sailing Club where it will be used for training purposes.

I think that it is an excellent move by the government to provide this funding and to help the Darwin Sailing Club. The cost of the sailing vessel is very significant and has received the backing and sponsorship of many local businesses in the Darwin area. The total cost escapes me at the moment, but it is significant. Certainly it is over \$200 000. I would think that Territorians could be rightly proud that, when that around-Australia race takes place, there will be a yacht competing from the Northern Territory, named and sailed by Territorians.

Mr Speaker, I might advise the member for Nhulunbuy that I am sure the Nhulunbuy Sailing Club will participate in the race, because there are several stages around Australia and yachtsmen from the Territory will have the opportunity to compete. One of the important elements that I think is relevant is the fact that the yacht will be used in the Darwin area to train young sailors. I think it is a wise decision to assist the Darwin Sailing

Club to be able to participate. It is evidence that all sporting bodies in the Territory are encouraged by the government to develop. Such development has a cost attached. No member on this side of the Assembly would be prepared to see our young people suffer because of the high costs of participating in sport and the development of sporting facilities in the Northern Territory. Certainly, there seems to be a tendency for members opposite to laugh at the continual disadvantage faced by Territorians in such participation. This is another example of the cost involved for Territorians to be able to compete on the same basis as their fellow Australians. The Northern Territory government stands proud of the fact that it was able to assist in this small way.

Future Funding of the Northern Territory

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

At the recent Premiers Conference was any comment made regarding future funding arrangements for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I can advise the member for Jingili that there were some statements made by the Commonwealth in respect of the future funding of the Northern Territory. All Territorians are becoming increasingly and painfully aware of the continuous, carping criticism of the Northern Territory government and attacks on the Northern Territory people by members opposite. They have spent the last 7 years carping about and criticising the amount of funding that has come to the Northern Territory and saying that we were being overfunded to blazes. They have been pushing that line for years, but particularly over the last 3 years. As we all know, they gained the ear of at least one minister in Canberra, Senator Walsh, the Minister for Finance, who took their call up with glee and has been raiding the Territory purse now for 3 years.

Members opposite, including the current Leader of the Opposition, the former member for the Northern Territory, Mr John Reeves, and a Senator for the Northern Territory, Senator Ted Robertson, all spent years squawking about how much money had been paid to the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth and how over-generous the Commonwealth government had been. Their carry-on has finally come home to roost on Territory people because their mates in Canberra have viciously raided the Territory purse for 3 years in a row. This year, they have raided it more viciously than ever.

They have taken \$104m away from what we should have received, excluding the legislatively guaranteed 2% real growth in funding. Members opposite can thank themselves for that because they promoted this cause for some short-term political gain in 1983, 1984 and 1985. If they go back and read their comments, their press releases and their carping criticism of every attempt by the Territory to develop over that period, they can blame only themselves for what is happening now.

Our government is working very hard to manage this situation. In the election campaign this year, we put much before the people in terms of our plans to handle this environment. We will handle it and we will keep the Territory growing, despite these savage cuts and these raids by the socialists in Canberra at the behest of the opposition in the Northern Territory. Later this week, we will deal with the details of how we are going to handle it. I ask honourable members to remember that tourists are still coming to the Northern Territory, mines are still opening, the Trade Development Zone is still developing, manufacturing and horticultural industries are growing and

other sections of the economy generally are continuing to grow. It is equally true that, according to ABS statistics, the Northern Territory work force grew by 4100 in the first 4 months of this year. It is true that we are in a recovery phase and we will be able to develop with private enterprise money. This is a pro-enterprise government which is gearing the economy so that it can grow without ultimate reliance on government dollars. That is what we have put to the people and that is what we will deliver to the people. That is how we will keep the Territory going, despite the attacks from the Opposition.

Last year, when I was raising another important issue for Territorians - the issue of statehood - the Leader of the Opposition and others said: 'We do not know what the financial implications of statehood are. How much is it going to cost us? Can we afford statehood?' Nervousness about these questions has been bubbling through the economy.

Just before the Premiers Conference, between 7.30 and 8 am, the Commonwealth delivers what is called an 'offer document'. I have a copy of the offer document given to me at the last Premiers Conference and I will quote from the illuminating section which deals with what is cutely termed a 'negative special grant'. It says:

This partial recoupment is on the understanding that general revenue funding for the Northern Territory will be fully adjusted onto a state-like basis from 1 July 1988.

That is unequivocal. The prelude to that statement spells out the discriminatory and unprecedented raids which the Commonwealth has made on our budget. It says:

The Commonwealth also proposes to recover, by way of a negative special grant in 1987-88, \$14.4m of the total \$27.6m assessed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission as over-funding of the Northern Territory in 1983-84 and 1984-85. The Commonwealth has decided, however, to recoup, in 1987-88, the over-funding only in respect of 1983-84, partly because it would be unreasonable to recoup in one year over-funding in respect of 2 years, and partly because this will be in addition to the general reductions in payments to the Northern Territory.

I can advise honourable members that we at least obtained a commitment from the federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister that they would not take the other \$13.2m from future funding of the Northern Territory. The fact is that they should not have touched the \$14.4m. It is a clear and unequivocal breach of the Memorandum of Understanding and an unprecedented action in Australia to provide money to states and then to take it back in subsequent years. It is an unbelievable step.

There are 2 points I want to make. Firstly, honourable members opposite should wear the principal responsibility for the attitudes in Canberra that have led to the dramatic cuts in Territory funding and the clear breaches of the Memorandum of Understanding. Secondly, I ask members opposite to accept, from this day forward at least, that, from next financial year, we will be funded on a totally state-like basis and that there is therefore no financial argument against the move towards statehood.

Reference to Public Accounts Committee

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Would the Chief Minister explain to honourable members what the new reference is for the Public Accounts Committee?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I remind honourable members of debates that occurred last evening in respect of identifying areas for cutting the cost of government services. I am pleased to advise that, last week, I issued a reference to the Public Accounts Committee. I thank the members of the Public Accounts Committee, in particular its chairman, the member for Karama, for their positive approach and the assistance they have offered in relation to the very difficult task of trying to remove inefficiencies and identify administrative costs that can be alleviated. A principal role of the Public Accounts Committee is to identify areas where expenditure by government can be as effective as possible.

As a consequence, I have widened the ability of the Public Accounts Committee to investigate the efficiency of public expenditure by government departments. I signed a reference which directed the Public Accounts Committee to investigate and report on levels, patterns and efficiency of expenditure in all government departments, statutory corporations and instrumentalities. I particularly asked that the attention of the committee be directed to salaries, administrative expenses, capital items, repairs and maintenance and property management.

The intention of this is not in any way to be seen as a sort of witch-hunt in the public service nor is it working on the assumption that there are problems in all areas of government. A public service of 15 000 may be small by government standards but it is still a large organisation in the perception of the community. In any large organisation, practices inevitably develop, consciously or otherwise, which can be more effectively or efficiently carried out. In view of the very savage cuts made to our funds by the Commonwealth government, it is essential that we use every available avenue to reduce our expenditure and maximise the effective use of the government dollar. In that respect, I am quite grateful for some of the suggestions that arose in the debate last night. I look forward to the active cooperation of the Public Accounts Committee in what inevitably will be an onerous task but one which, carried out effectively, will serve the interests of the Northern Territory by enabling us to use government dollars in the best interests of the community and to ensure they are applied as directly as possible towards the tasks and objectives that we set. I look forward to the support of the Public Accounts Committee in that endeavour.

Alice Springs Police Communications Centre

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the minister give the House an assurance that Alice Springs will have a reliable 24-hour police communications centre manned by at least 2 people?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very conscious of the difficulties faced by the police in Alice Springs. They have to deliver a range of services and these have peaks

and troughs. For example, time spent in court can severely affect other aspects of day-to-day work. We are addressing the problems of police workload in Alice Springs and in other towns like Katherine. The member for Katherine could readily provide information about the impact of a fast-growing community on the demand for police services. That was one of the major reasons for the government announcement during the election campaign that we will be increasing the size of the police force by 53 over the next 2 years. That decision represents a rational approach to increasing the size of the police force. It will be done in a way that will result in extra police being available to work on the streets in direct contact with the community rather than in administrative and backroom areas. The 53 extra positions will cover the number of police force members who are training as cadets or undergoing in-service training for promotion. They will make a very effective input into the direct provision of police services.

I am sure the honourable member will find that this recruitment will improve police capacity to provide services like the complete communications program in Alice Springs. The problem will not be solved quickly but we are addressing it through the recruitment program in accordance with the plans we put in place during the election campaign.

Lake Amadeus Land Claim

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can the minister advise what is happening with the Lake Amadeus land claim?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question because I think it is important that I advise the House of what I consider to be some rather disturbing news. Although it is only on the basis of verbal advice received from Central Land Council personnel on 9 June, we have been informed that the traditional owners have rejected the final draft of settlement that was being negotiated. We thought an agreement was imminent and we have no information as to why these lengthy discussions have been brought to a rather abrupt conclusion. It was the view of this government that, after prolonged discussions entered into by the Chief Minister in his former capacity as Minister for Conservation, the Aboriginal people were more than happy with the views expressed by the Northern Territory government and the settlement conditions offered. This latest decision therefore comes as a surprise.

It is interesting to note that certain elements of the claim involving the establishment of the Kings Canyon National Park and Messrs Conway and Lander at Kings Creek Station have now been going on for several years. One must wonder why the traditional owners turned their backs abruptly, without any forewarning, and advised the commissioner that the negotiated settlement that was about to be agreed upon - and all our advice up until 2 days ago was that it was almost agreed upon ...

Mr Bell: Don't you accuse the land councils and traditional owners of bad faith.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will maintain silence. The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I advise honourable members and the people of the Territory that the government is seeking to continue negotiations for the settlement of the Lake Amadeus claim to the benefit of all people involved. I say that for the member for MacDonnell's edification. I cannot understand why the Luritja people are now deciding to resort to the inquisitorial and adversary machinations of the Aboriginal Land Commission. The member for MacDonnell may not be aware of all the finer points involved in the negotiations or of the various parties affected, but I would be surprised if this was the case. I am also rather surprised that he seeks to comment in this Assembly. That would go against the efforts of the Northern Territory government in relation to the traditional owners, the Central Land Council, Mr Conway and Mr Lander in reaching an equitable conclusion to this outstanding claim.

I would take this opportunity to appeal to the traditional owners to at least give some reason as to why they have stepped away from these lengthy negotiations and gone back to the machinations of the land commission. I do not think it is to anybody's benefit and it would have been an instance where relationships between the Aboriginal people and the Northern Territory government could have been greatly improved. The sad thing about all of this is that Mr Conway and Mr Lander, who are involved in the Kings Creek Station, are once again at a loose end with no future, certainly no future of ...

Mr Bell: And your mates put them there!

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, the honourable member for MacDonnell simply does not know what he is talking about but it is interesting to hear his views, however biased they may be.

The point to be made, and I will make it quite clearly in this particular instance, is that the government's efforts to resolve the land claim satisfactorily through negotiations with the traditional owners have been hindered all along by one simple obstacle: the provision of the Land Rights Act that precludes the Northern Territory government from negotiating directly with traditional owners. We have always had to negotiate through the Central Land Council, and one would say that our past efforts have been frustrated to the greatest possible degree. I look forward to the day when the Northern Territory government can sit down and negotiate directly with traditional owners and the best way to achieve that is through the abolition of the land councils in the Northern Territory, established under the federal Land Rights Act.

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer some questions concerning Hungerford Refrigeration which were asked of me by the Leader of the Opposition during the course of these sittings. The text containing the answers was written yesterday. This particular episode is changing from day to day as the opposition increases its knowledge about the operation. I will read the answers exactly as they were written yesterday so that all honourable members will know just how things are changing.

First, the Leader of the Opposition recently asked whether the \$750 000 debt included the stated \$125 000 investment. The truth is, as I advised him in the Assembly last month, that the loan from the TIO secured by a floating charge over the company's assets is for \$627 500. In fact, the document which he produced from the National Companies and Securities Office

contained a mistake which has been admitted to by the people who tendered that particular document. He may say it is not a mistake and that I am covering up or offer some other scenario, but the simple fact is this is an example of the problem with creating or negotiating commercial agreements in this particular forum. Things change and people do make mistakes. Indeed, there was a mistake. As I told him last month, it was in fact \$627 500.

Mr Smith: A pretty significant mistake.

Mr COULTER: Maybe it was, but the problem with negotiating commercial deals in this Assembly is that sometimes things go wrong.

Mr Smith: It is a formal document that you have lodged to the National Securities Commission.

Mr COULTER: It is a mistake. The same as you are a mistake.

Mr Smith: It is a pretty important mistake.

Mr COULTER: The Leader of the Opposition's checks with the Queensland Companies Office showed that the 1984 return is still the last one lodged and there is still no record of the TIO now being major shareholders in the company. The Leader of the Opposition has already been advised that the company returns for 1985-86 have been lodged. In fact, they were lodged on 29 April 1987 and the other required documentation was lodged in May 1987. If whoever is supplying him with information in his role as debt collector for Soane Sheet Metal cannot find out whether returns were lodged, the Leader of the Opposition has a problem.

It is interesting that there is a private business in Darwin which has been trying since 26 February to get the Leader of the Opposition to pay a bill which he ran up during the election campaign. He is never available on the phone to discuss the matter with the gentleman involved, and I am sure the he knows whom I am talking about. It appalls me that he uses the 'I cannot come to the phone' tactic with a local businessman in connection with a sum of \$1080 whilst complaining about Hungerford. That is the sort of double standard we have become used to in this Assembly. No doubt the gentleman might get his \$1080 this afternoon. Let's hope so.

Mr Smith: Has Mr Soane got his money yet?

Mr COULTER: I would also like to point out that the Leader of the Opposition is a more powerful man than I could have imagined. He even has the editor of the NT News saying, in last night's editorial, that the TIO is using taxpayers' money, not policy-holders' money. If the TIO collapses, which is the worst-case scenario that the Opposition Leader paints for everybody, this doom and gloom will reign supreme. He has the editor believing it. If the TIO collapses, with its \$100m assets, the government will have to prop it up. That just goes to show that, if you peddle gloom and doom all the time, a little of it rubs off.

In question time on June 4 of this sittings, the Leader of the Opposition asked: 'Is the minister aware that notice has been served under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act on Hungerford Refrigeration by Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd for the discharge of a debt awarded against Hungerford by a District Court on 26 November 1986?' Events have progressed somewhat since the answer to that question was written, but I will be reading directly from its text as I proceed.

The Leader of the Opposition is obviously continuing his campaign against Hungerford. I told honourable members when he asked his first question about the company that he was intent on doing whatever he could to damage its business prospects in the Northern Territory itself. The question he raises relates to an award against the company. The amount of the award was being paid according to an agreed schedule. Due to the relocation of the company from Brisbane to Darwin, the May payment was late. That has now been rectified. This appears to be the sole reason for the notice being served.

The Leader of the Opposition's second question was: 'Secondly, is the minister further aware that, if this matter is not resolved promptly, Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd has instructed its solicitors to begin action to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration?' By the nature of the question, it would appear that the Leader of the Opposition has been in contact with Soane Sheet Metal or its legal representatives. I will say something about that in a moment; we know he is acting as a debt collector for them now.

It is also clear that he knows very little about the significance of section 364 notices. I suggest that one may be served on the Northern Territory branch of the Labor Party if he does not pay his \$1080 debt pretty soon. In the business world, they are cast around like confetti. They are used as little more than letters of demand. They are the sort of thing the Leader of the Opposition has no doubt received once or twice or will receive in the future. Through his lack of knowledge, he has been led into believing that this particular notice is far more significant than it really is. He seems to think that Hungerford is about to go into liquidation. He received a letter about that yesterday and he stood up in the adjournment debate and spoke about it. I am sorry to disappoint him, but Hungerford is alive and well and is not facing liquidation.

His third question was: 'What guarantees can the minister give, in the case of such an action, that the investment made by the Territory government in Hungerford Refrigeration is secure and will not be lost?' The answer is simple. In view of the fact that Hungerford is not facing liquidation, the question is irrelevant. In his fourth question, he asked: 'Will the minister give an assurance that the Northern Territory government will not provide more funds to bail out Hungerford Refrigeration?' The Leader of the Opposition has great difficulty in understanding that it is the TIO which has invested in Hungerford and it has done so as a commercial decision. The TIO was established in 1979 without any injection of funds at all from the Northern Territory government. The government holds no shares in the TIO. It started off with nothing and today it is a \$100m organisation. However, the level of TIO's investment in Hungerford is a matter for its commercial judgment and I am sure that the TIO board will not allow itself to be influenced by the prejudicial comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition asked also whether I could confirm that 'a firm called Hall Chadwick, a group of accountants in Queensland, has also lodged a notice under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd'. The answer relates to a dispute between Hungerford and this company for work performed. Hall Chadwick served a notice under section 364 and Hungerford obtained a Supreme Court injunction against Hall Chadwick proceeding under the notice. Hungerford won the case and costs were awarded against Hall Chadwick. The matter is still in the hands of the solicitors for both parties. Hungerford in fact won the case.

I believe that the Leader of the Opposition has launched a vendetta against Hungerford Refrigeration. I have information that he made interstate

calls in order to pump creditors and others for any adverse information he could find. Only 2 weeks ago, he rang the former managing director of Hungerford and asked numerous questions clearly designed to gather whatever adverse information he could find. The former managing director told the Opposition Leader that he had no adverse comment to make and that he considered the company had done remarkably well in the short period of its existence. The Leader of the Opposition did not tell us that. He might like to stand up now and tell us that the company's sales had grown from nil to over \$2m in the space of a little over 2 years. He also indicated that this rapid growth had placed strains on the company's finances, which presented serious problems for it. This did not mean, however, that the company was inherently weak and he advised Mr Smith that its commercial prospects were, in fact, very good.

The Leader of the Opposition is also known to have phoned a businessman in Darwin about the company, again clearly seeking adverse comment. The conversation was promptly reported back to Hungerford Refrigeration. I believe that it is demeaning for the Leader of the Opposition to be caught red-handed trying to dig for dirt. It lowers the status of his office when he and his staff are found to be acting like sleazy investigators, but perhaps he is enjoying his new role as an investigative politician.

Of more concern is information that has emerged in the last day or 2 concerning the opposition's phone calls. There are implications of possible misuse of parliamentary privilege. It has come to my attention that on Wednesday 3 June, when the Opposition Leader asked his question about the section 364 notice served on Hungerford, the company itself had not received the notice. In view of the contacts that the Leader of the Opposition has made with creditors of Hungerford, this raises the question of who informed him so promptly that the notice had been issued. In particular, it raises the question of whether the Leader of the Opposition or his staff were informed by a Brisbane solicitor, Mrs Justine Wlodarczyk, who is handling the collection of this debt on behalf of the creditor or by Mr Soane of Soane Sheet Metal. If that is so, and in view of the fact that he has mentioned the company by name in this Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition may be furthering the interests of this particular creditor by using the Legislative Assembly as a form of debt collection agency. There is even the possibility the whole thing has been a set-up. Alternatively, the Leader of the Opposition has fallen victim to the tactics of an aggressive interstate debt collection agent to assist her in exerting pressure on the debtor.

What a wonderful thing it must be for creditors to find that the Leader of the Opposition is willing to take up their case and provide a free debt collection service for them through this Assembly. Creditors of the Territory's thousands of companies will flock to him for his generous assistance. Or maybe he only acts for Queensland creditors.

I also advise this Assembly that senior partners of Hall Chadwick, the other company named by the Leader of the Opposition, are expressing concern that, through no wish of their own, he is embroiling them in what is essentially a political matter. They acknowledge that there is a dispute with Hungerford involving claim and counter-claim, but this will be resolved through the normal commercial channels available in such circumstances. They do not desire to have their business affairs made the subject of questions in this Assembly.

The fact is that, by innuendo and half truths, the Leader of the Opposition is threatening to undo much of the good work being done to

restructure Hungerford and re-establish its lines of credit. Because of this and because of his questionable contacts with creditors, I do not intend to answer further questions dealing with the commercial affairs of this company. I put the opposition on notice of that last month but it has kept at me. Mark my words, Mr Speaker, I do not intend to answer further questions dealing with the commercial affairs of the company.

Hungerford Refrigeration has shown the kind of enterprise and 'get up and go' which is so badly needed in Australia under the oppressive policies of the present federal Labor government. It can be readily understood, therefore, why such companies are a target of attack for the Leader of the Opposition. Certainly, their very success strains their finances sometimes. But it is such companies that help to produce growth and employment. It is a great pity that the Leader of the Opposition has chosen to criticise this company even before it has completely established its operations in the Northern Territory. It would have been far better to have judged it on performance over the next couple of years.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to answer a question asked of me on Tuesday by the Leader of the Opposition as part of his campaign of denigration of the Hungerford Refrigeration group. He asked me who is paying for the construction of a warehouse at the Trade Development Zone for which advertisements recently appeared in the press. I can advise him that, if he had read the advertisement, clearly he would have seen that it was headed: 'Design, Construct and Finance a 1000 m² factory for Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd'. I advise him that the developer is paying for the warehouse. It is being built for Hungerford Refrigeration.

Staffing of Hospitals

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

Will the minister undertake to investigate the imbalance in hospital staff numbers in social welfare and paediatric services between the Alice Springs and Royal Darwin Hospitals, with a view to redressing that imbalance?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would have to take the member for Sadadeen at his word that there is such an imbalance. Let me inform him and all other honourable members that, unfortunately, because of the actions of the federal government in slashing the budget of the Northern Territory to the degree that it has, I have to address a great number of things in health and various other services throughout the Northern Territory. Whilst he has not presented any petitions to this House relating to these matters, I am sure we could gather a great number of petitions to this Northern Territory government from people who are living in absolute fear of how their services might be cut.

I hope that people listened to what Mr Howard had to say to the people of the Northern Territory and Australia last night, because there is only one bright light on the horizon for the Northern Territory and that is to get the Australian Labor Party out of Canberra and the Northern Territory. However, getting them out of the Northern Territory would not really make all that much difference because their influence is nil. They are only interested in the guttersnipe tactics that we have been hearing about this morning.

Mr Bell: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I would imagine that 'guttersnipe' would register as being unparliamentary.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark relating to the opposition.

Mr DALE: I withdraw the remark unreservedly, Mr Speaker.

The task we have in front of us, particularly in my portfolio of Health and Community Services, gives me no joy whatsoever. On a personal basis, I have to make some decisions within those areas of responsibility. As I say, that gives me no joy whatsoever because every single one of them impacts on some person in the Northern Territory. However, I will certainly have a look at what the member for Sadadeen has put to me today in the total review of services offered by the Department of Health and Community Services.

Job Creation in Business and Industry

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

During the recent election campaign, the Chief Minister said that the Country Liberal Party would create 1000 jobs for business and industry in the next year in the Northern Territory. What progress has been made on those plans?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to advise the member for Casuarina that we set in train a series of plans designed to see the growth of the Northern Territory through to the year 2000. In those plans, we set ourselves an objective of 1000 new jobs each year for the Northern Territory. In preparing those plans, we were conscious of the inevitable need to be able to meet those objectives with less money available than we have had in the past. We did not quite realise the extent of the cut that we would incur this year as a consequence of the discriminatory attacks on our finances from Canberra. I say that quite deliberately because I do not and I never have objected to the fact that the federal government intended to cut finances to the Northern Territory. What I do object to violently is the fact that the Northern Territory community is being asked, yet again, to pay a proportionately much higher share of those cuts than other Australians. If the burden of recovery is to be borne by the community, it is essential that that burden be spread evenly around Australia. We would accept our share if the burden was fairly distributed.

However, given that there would be some restraint on our finances, we had to set our plans on the premise that we would not be able to build the community through pumping large amounts of government money directly into job-creation programs. We needed to set an environment that would encourage investment by the private sector and in the genuine wealth-creating sector of the community. Whilst I know that the member for MacDonnell believes that school teachers are part of the productive sector of the community, and they certainly play a productive role, I would not define them in this context as being part of the immediate wealth generation of the community. They are a secondary and essential infrastructural support system for wealth generation.

Mr Speaker, without being diverted on that particular point, there are already early signs that this program is working. Whilst the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for May are not yet available - actually they are

due out today - I can advise the Assembly that already there is a sound indication that my government will easily be able to meet its target of creating 1000 new jobs this year. In December last year, 67 400 people were in full or part-time employment in the Northern Territory. In April this year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that employment had risen to 71 400. That represents an increase of some 4000 people in employment in the Northern Territory. Significantly, this has come about at the same time as the bulk of 1986 school-leavers entered the job market.

I do not intend to raise any particular comments about the opposition in this debate because I think it is important that the community receives a very clear message. Members will agree that there are obvious dangers in relying on short-term statistics, and I accept that, but even members opposite would have to agree that an increase of 4000 in employment, in the first 4 months of this year, is an achievement of some merit. For their benefit, I shall look to the longer-term figures for employment growth.

Using ABS figures again, we have seen almost a 20% increase in the number of people with jobs between December 1982 and December 1986: the number has risen from 56 400 to 67 400. At the same time, the number of people unemployed in December has remained fairly steady at between 4000 and 5000. The NT continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Australia. If we look at the preliminary statistics for April 1987, they show the NT with an unemployment rate of 6.9% which compares very favourably with the Australian figure of 8.4%. It should also be noted by honourable members that the NT has the highest work force participation rate in the whole of Australia: 73.3%. That is 17.5% higher than the Australian figure of 62.3%.

If one combines the high participation rate - and, for the benefit of honourable members, the participation rate represents the proportion of people within the 15 to 65 age group that are actually participating and regard themselves as being in the work force - with the lower unemployment rate in the NT, and then proceed to calculate the actual number of jobs as a percentage of the civilian population, it can be said that for every 100 people aged 15 years and over, 68.2 are employed in the NT compared with 57 in the rest of Australia. This equals 19.6% higher employment rates in the Northern Territory.

That is quite a clear indication that we are back on track. May I say that plans that we have put in place are progressing and job creation is occurring. There was a hiccup in our population and employment growth in 1986. I must advise honourable members that the analysis of employment figures shows that, in the March and June quarters of 1986, net interstate migration was negative. In other words, more people were leaving the Northern Territory and going interstate than were coming into the Northern Territory. That was offset significantly by natural growth as more people were born in the Northern Territory and people came from overseas. In the last 2 quarters of last year and the first quarter of this year, net interstate migration has again become positive and the population growth is continuing. Early figures show, as at December 1986, a total population growth of 2.4%. The indications are that the population turnaround is increasing together with employment growth.

One of the most significant elements of the renewed activity is the work that has been put in to encourage building and construction in the non-residential building area. Honourable members can see the results of those efforts in Darwin with the new building that is being erected at the bottom of Bennett Street, the Harbour View Building. There is a new hotel

under construction now on the Esplanade and Peel Street and construction has commenced at the new private hospital adjacent to the Royal Darwin Hospital at Tiwi. Other developments are coming into the Trade Development Zone. All of these developments are bringing employment back into the building and construction industry and starting to turn around the decline experienced during the first half of last year as a consequence of the close-down of many major construction jobs at a time when there was nothing else coming through the system.

It has taken us time to get new projects up and going. The work force is now returning and, over the next 6 to 12 months, we will see a resurgence of activity. It may not reach the boom levels of previous years but we will certainly see a return to a healthy economic situation for much of the business community in the Winnellie and Berrimah areas and the CBD as workers come back into town for construction purposes. Business cash flows will increase and provide some relief over the next 6 months.

Maintaining our economy on a construction basis cannot be seen as a long-term aim. That is why there is so much emphasis now on the marketing and promotion of tourism development, along with the activities of the Minister for Industries and Development in building up our manufacturing, fishing and related industry base in Darwin. These developments will provide a further underpinning to our economy, to pick up and continue the growth created by the initial impetus the economy has received through our considerable efforts over the last 12 months to turn the situation around.

I am very confident that the restructuring of the economy on a sounder basis is progressing and that we will meet our targets. The Northern Territory will continue to grow in a positive direction. We will be able to do that by the freeing up of private enterprise resources, without the necessity of pumping in vast amounts of government money which, quite frankly, we do not have available to us now.

Finniss River Land Claim

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can he advise what is happening with respect to the Finniss River land claim?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unlike members opposite, I become rather nervous at times of federal elections because they are usually give-away times and another piece of Territory is gone. Recently, I received advice from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that he intends to grant the land in areas 1 and 2 of the Finniss River land claim to a single land trust. I have already enlightened honourable members on the fact that the Northern Territory government has gone to great lengths in recent times to negotiate various packages with Aboriginal traditional owners. In this particular instance, and bearing in mind that once again it is a federal election, I find the timing of this decision curiously coincidental.

For the benefit of honourable members, Mr Justice Toohey made his recommendations on 22 May 1981 - 6 years ago. For the last 6 years, the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has been grappling with the question of detriment. It is strangely coincidental that, on the eve of an election, the minister proposes to hand over only 57 km² out of a total area of 275 km²

recommended by Justice Toohey. The federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has not reached a decision on detriment relating to the other 3 areas of the claim, although we are advised that officers in his department are actively working on the matter at the moment.

It is election time. The Labor Party has an airy-fairy, left-wing, trendy, 'let's give the Territory away' candidate. His alias is Warren Snowdon, Central Land Council employee and ALP candidate for the House of Representatives. He has some very clear and concise views on Aboriginal land rights in the Territory. Let us hope that the people of the Territory are listening because here is the big chance for honourable members opposite.

I have sat in a room on 3 separate occasions with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Clyde Holding, and we have negotiated various packages involving certain amendments to the federal Northern Territory Land Rights Act, the only one in its existence in Australia. I want to know from the honourable members opposite if they support their House of Representatives candidate. Which of them over there has the guts to stand up and back him on this particular issue?

Four of the issues we have been trying to negotiate in the terms of the Northern Territory Land Rights Act - and members opposite raised this, not me - have involved claims to public purpose land ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister was asked a quite specific question about the progress of the Finnis River land claim. I thought he answered it admirably, but he has not touched on that specific question during the last 2 or 3 minutes of his current address.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I would ask the minister to restrict his reply to the question.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I will be as brief as possible in concluding my remarks.

It is important to note that the Northern Territory government has gone all the way down the line to agree to all the elements put forward by the federal government and the land councils, particularly in relation to excisions, yet the federal government still holds the gun at our head and refuses to pass amendments in the federal parliament. These are amendments it has guaranteed us, on 3 separate occasions, that it would pass.

Going back to the Finnis River claim, it is apparent that Mr Holding's grandstanding is likely to backfire. I will simply say that I am sure that, like me, honourable members of this Assembly have received various representations from the 3 Aboriginal groups involved in the claim, concerning their internal disputes over Wagait and their disputes with the Northern Land Council. It borders on being sickening that, after 6 years of waiting and grappling with the facts and problems associated with this particular land claim, on the eve of a federal election, the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs suddenly decides that he can only grant certain areas which he knows full well will bring about maximum political advantage for him and a minimum for everybody else involved. As I said, I fully expect the decision to backfire on him in a mammoth way.

Alleged Liquor Purchases on Departmental Order Numbers

Mr SMITH TO CHIEF MINISTER

What action is he taking to examine allegations made in a letter to the editor of the NT News that large amounts of alcohol have been ordered on public service department order numbers? The specific order numbers given were: CM0337 for a sum of \$2500, CM0524 for a sum of \$4000 and CM0192 for a sum of \$2000.

ANSWER

I am aware of the allegations to which the honourable member refers. Off the top of my head, I cannot confirm the details of the specific order numbers that he is quoting now. I will work on the presumption that they are the order numbers that were quoted in the newspaper. As CM order numbers relate to the Department of the Chief Minister, they were Department of the Chief Minister's order numbers and, as such, I did have the matter investigated.

Mr Speaker, those orders were for alcohol. Honourable members may like to know that those orders were filled for the Administrator's residence, and that is where the alcohol went. All items ordered against those order numbers went to the Administrator's residence, and that is not to suggest in any way that that was improper. I make that very clear because the fact is that the Administrator performs a very important role. As well as being the titular head of state in the Northern Territory, he also has a very significant protocol role. As recently as Monday of this week, a significant function was held at Government House which, of course, was the annual cocktail party celebrating the Queen's birthday. His Honour happens to be the Queen's representative in the Northern Territory. I know the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were there, and I am sure they enjoyed themselves, as did other people.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would again remind honourable members that the question session of the Assembly is broadcast live by 2 radio stations and, in courtesy to people who are listening, I ask all members to cease their interjections.

Mr HATTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point I am making is that the Administrator has a significant and important protocol role and I know the Leader of the Opposition would not deny the propriety of that function, the way in which it is carried out and the importance in the overall function of government of the Administrator's role as the titular head of state. Some part of those beverages were probably enjoyed by the Leader of the Opposition, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other people. I make that point, and I hope that answers the Leader of the Opposition's question.

Mr Speaker, there is a danger of all sorts of wild assumptions coming from these campaigns of half-baked allegations that often appear, without any basis in fact, in the newspapers.

Food Stalls

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

There has been considerable comment regarding the operation of food stalls in open areas in places such as Smith Street Mall. These comments have related particularly to policing of health regulations. Is he aware of the concerns of people regarding hygiene in these situations and what inspections are carried out to make sure health requirements are adhered to in these circumstances?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the circumstances of the various food outlets in the Mall and other places, such as the Parap market and Rapid Creek markets on a Sunday. Quite frankly, I believe that they are a colourful innovation to the Darwin way of life and are playing a major role as tourist attractions and that many local people enjoy the services that these people provide. They operate under permit from the Darwin City Council and, in fact, are inspected regularly by the health inspectors of the Department of Health and Community Services, usually on a 2-weekly basis.

The people who operate the stalls have been given advice by members of my department on ways in which they should, first of all, handle the food, cook the food and, of course, distribute the food to the customers. Given the advice that these people have been given, the conditions under which they operate and the continual inspections that they are subject to, it is very unlikely that anybody who eats the food provided by these people will suffer any ill effects.

Lake Amadeus Land Claim

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I preface my question by referring him to his previous answer to a question concerning what he referred to as the Lake Amadeus land claim. I will further preface my question by reminding him of a little of the history of this subject concerning events which took place in advance of the fairly short time frame within which he appears to be operating.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will ask his question.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, with due respect, I am prefacing a question. I believe I have done so shortly. I believe it is important information for the honourable minister ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will obey the instructions of the Chair and ask his question.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, with due respect, I prefaced my question. I used the appropriate form of words. I believed I was doing so as briefly as possible.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member has no right whatsoever to preface questions. He must simply ask the question.

Mr BELL: Why did the Country Liberal Party government alienate part of the Lake Amadeus land claim in 1981? Is he aware that, as a result of the

problems created by previous Country Liberal Party governments, that is exactly the problem that he is purporting to solve?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government takes various actions in the interests of all Territorians and reserves the right to do so.

Work Skill Australia Program

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, will he advise this Assembly of the Northern Territory's involvement in the Work Skill Australia Program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I am sure you would be aware, the Work Skill Australia Program is a good news story and it involves contestants from the Northern Territory. The program was launched in 1982 with the goal of establishing a national system of Work Skill competitions in an effort to provide an incentive for young people to attain high skill levels. That is something that is lacking in some education systems and the Work Skill Australia Program was set up to combat it. The competition is based on regional competitions held every 2 years. These are followed by national finals with finalists competing in the International Skill Olympics. In Adelaide later this month, 10 young Territorians, including 5 from Darwin and 5 from Alice Springs, from a wide cross-section of trades, including cabinet-making, hairdressing and cooking, will compete against winners from 30 Australian regions. Finalists from the competition will meet in Sydney in February 1988 to compete in the 29th International Skill Olympics.

I am sure that all members of the Assembly will join with me in wishing every success to the 10 young competitors from the Territory. I will be meeting with the 5 Darwin contestants shortly and I believe the Deputy Chief Minister will be meeting with the Alice Springs contestants before they leave for Adelaide. We wish them well.

Composition of Planning Appeals Committee

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In view of the fact that the composition of the Appeals Committee set up under the Planning Act is less than fair to local interests when it hears appeals from decisions of the different planning authorities, and considering that a proposed change is supported by the Local Government Association as an initiative of the Litchfield Shire, can the minister tell me if he would consider amending the Planning Act so that 1 of the 3 members of the Appeals Committee is a local person nominated by the relevant local government authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that ministers of the government are always more than willing to consider any matter. I have not as yet been briefed on nor received any proposition from the Department of Lands or the Chairman of the Planning Authority to change the composition of the Appeals Committee.

I am aware of moves by local government authorities to ensure that there is at least some form of local representation on appeals committees. However, I can equally see much advantage in having a non-local person on an appeals committee, provided the person is properly qualified to deal with the issues at hand, albeit that most of them are architectural or engineering ones. It could be argued that a local person would bring in an element of bias that would not otherwise exist. However, I am happy to advise the member for Kooldpinyah that I will take up the issue and ensure that I am properly briefed. If there is a recommendation on its way to me, I will endeavour to deal with it in the shortest possible time so that I can advise the member for Kooldpinyah of my decision.

Fringe Benefits Tax

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition inferred that John Howard would not be removing the fringe benefit tax. Is the Chief Minister aware of the comments to which I refer and, if so, is he able to confirm the accuracy of the Leader of the Opposition's remarks?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during last night's debate, the Leader of the Opposition took great pains to imply that the impending Howard-Sinclair government would retain the fringe benefits tax. I can advise that I have made the effort to double-check the facts because the implication was so contrary to everything that I know about of the policies of the Liberal and National Parties. I can advise the honourable member quite emphatically that the fringe benefits tax legislation will be abolished under a coalition government after 11 July. It will be abolished along with the capital gains tax, the assets test on pensioners and the cessation of other negative gearing, as part of overall policies to improve the investment climate to create some wealth and some real jobs instead of the short-term, make-work jobs that have flowed from this country's biggest-spending government ever.

I just want to clarify one point about fringe benefits tax. Fringe benefits tax means that, where a non-cash benefit such as housing rental, a vehicle or air fare is provided to an employee, the employer is required to pay tax over and above the expense of providing the benefit itself. Prior to this legislation being enacted, going right back to before 1920, the Taxation Act provided that those non-cash benefits were assessable income for employees and were taxable. The fact is that successive governments had never been prepared to take on the task of trying to collect that tax from employees. I have memories of the 1970s when the Fraser government sought to collect those taxes and was blocked by the coalminers over housing provisions. Obviously, Mr Howard has learned his lesson from that. Equally, he has recognised the total inequity of making the employer pay tax on what is often a legally enforceable condition of employment. It is absolutely inequitable to charge the employer a tax on that.

Yesterday, on the Ray Martin program, Mr Howard said that there were some justifiable cases such as housing in remote communities or cars which are essential for employment which will not be subject to tax paid by the employee. However, he said that abuse of the system would not be tolerated. He used the example of an employee with a Potts Point house, a holiday house or a luxury Rolls Royce as an employee benefit and said that that person would have to pay tax on those things. I do not object to the employee receiving

those benefits and paying income tax on them. I know the Leader of the Opposition would not object either because I remember a debate in this House last year when he made the point that these are benefits and should be taxed.

Mr Howard, unlike Mr Keating in his raid on the Northern Territory, does not intend to tax the provision of essential services to people working in remote communities. He is focusing on frills and rip-offs in the system and he has said that he will tax the employee for those. This option has always been available to governments and it is about time somebody took it up. The Labor government did not need to apply its nonsensical, inequitable and unjust fringe benefits tax which has done so much to destroy business confidence and investment, particularly in the remote areas of Australia. I look forward to a new government that will not be big-taxing and big-spending.

Mr Smith: Do you support the taxing of air fares?

Mr HATTON: The Leader of the Opposition is interjecting. I will tell him a few things.

Mr Keating continually takes the opportunity to talk about the Fraser government being a big spender. Let me say that the Fraser government's expenditure growth averaged 2.1% per year.

Mr Smith: Is John Howard going to tax air fares?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, that compares with 3.9% per year under this current Hawke-Keating government. If the Labor government's expenditure growth in the last 4 years had equated to the average of the Fraser years, total government expenditure over the period would have been \$20 000m less and the budget would have been in surplus for the last 2 financial years.

The Keating government is, without doubt, Australia's biggest taxing government of all time. Listen to this list of little taxes it has sneaked in: July 1983, lump sum superannuation tax; August 1983, automatic biannual indexation of traditional excises of beer, cigarettes and petroleum; February 1984, the introduction of a 1% medicare levy; July 1984, resource rent tax and a new excise on oil production; August 1984, 10% wine tax; July 1985, abolition of concessional expenditure rebates, abolition of negative gearing and removal of medicare levy limits; September 1985, disallowance of entertainment expenditure and capital gains tax introduced; July 1986, fringe benefits tax, bureaucratic substantiation provisions introduced; August 1986, new sales tax, 20% wine tax and large increase in excise on petrol; December 1986, increase in medicare levy to 1.25%; July 1987, increase in corporate tax rate from 46% to 49% and foreign tax credit system introduced. That is why this country is being strangled to death. This high-taxing, high-spending government totally refuses to recognise the necessity of cutting back on its own nonsensical expenditure programs and taking its foot off the throat of business and allowing it to get on with investment.

Darwin Rifle Club

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Can he confirm that the 1988 Queen's Shoot and the Australian Titles will be able to be conducted on the Winnellie Rifle Range or is it intended to complete the new range in time for these events?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am able to assure members of the Assembly and the shooting fraternity at large that the Darwin Rifle Club Range will not be expected to relocate until December 1988. Of course, that is well after the scheduled time for the Queen's Shoot.

Compulsory Transferees to NTPS

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is the position, in relation to the cuts to public service conditions announced yesterday, of compulsory transferees from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Public Service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have looked fairly closely at that question. I can inform the Leader of the Opposition and all honourable members that compulsory transferees who are not covered by awards will be picked up in the overall proposals. People who are covered by awards will have to be treated differently in so far as we would have to go to the Arbitration Commission to seek a variation to awards which cover them.

Frances Bay Mooring Facility

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In March, the Labor candidate for Casuarina stated that the Frances Bay Mooring Facility was a disgrace and a white elephant. Can the minister give this Assembly a report regarding its current status?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware of the statements made by members of the Labor Party in the past about how the sheltered berth in Darwin would be a financial disaster. I am pleased to advise that, at present, all 85 berths in the facility are booked. If any berths are vacant, it is not because they have not been booked; it is either because the vessels have not arrived or are still unloading prior to going to their berths.

The reason why the facility is full now, in mid-year, is because this is the first year in which the northern prawn fishery has been closed for the second time in a season. This is a result of low catches over recent years. Many experts believe that over-fishing has occurred and both industry and government have agreed that, for the time being, there will be 2 closures of the northern prawn fishery each year. This means that, in addition to the sheltered mooring facility being occupied during the closed season from December to April each year, which is the period when we all expect it to be very much occupied, it will also be occupied from about 22 June to 30 July.

This will obviously provide a boost to some Darwin businesses which may have been experiencing difficulties recently. I am pleased to say that a group of Darwin businesses has had the initiative, together with the Port Authority, to offer a range of services to vessel owners whilst they are in port. It is a testing period for the Darwin service industry which has the opportunity to show vessel owners that it is prepared to respond quickly to their needs while they are in port. We hope it all goes well.

The mid-year prawn season closure has been a boost to our original plans because the original projections stated that we would probably get just over 30 vessels in the facility during the first closed season. As honourable members were advised during the last sittings, the period from December to April was fully booked, as it will be next year, and the same now applies in this mid-year period. My good wishes go to the Darwin business fraternity which is offering services to vessel owners as a demonstration that the Northern Territory has the capacity to keep vessels from travelling south each year for refitting and servicing. I am sure that local businesses will welcome this opportunity with open arms.

Air Fare Proposals

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Will NTEC and DIT employees be subject to the government proposals concerning air fares and conditions of service? Will nurses lose their annual air fare entitlement under the proposed air fare deal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will be making a detailed statement later in the day answering all of those questions. People with specific existing provisions will retain those provisions. The only difference with air fares is that they will be paid in cash each fortnight.

Education Standards

Mr REED to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What impact will the recently-announced cost cutting measures, which are expected to generate savings of \$6.5m, have on the standard of education in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is very relevant at this time. It is important that people be aware of exactly what the impact will be. Most people in the Territory are aware that the Territory's finances suffered an appalling cut at the recent Premiers Conference, where \$101m was removed.

Mr Bell: That is not true.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is interesting that we have members of the opposition saying that it is not true. They have a mental fixation which deludes them into believing that, if they say something long enough, the problem will go away or people will believe it did not happen. All Territorians are aware of the fact that we now have to operate with \$101m less than we require. It is very unfortunate that this savage cut will affect all Territorians in all aspects of our daily lives and employment.

To overcome the economic problems caused by these cuts, we would have to raise our taxes and charges by 43% to 45%. By comparison, to cover the cost of its cuts, New South Wales would have to raise its charges by 7%. As a responsible government, we cannot raise taxes and charges by those amounts. There is only one other option, and that is to cut services. We are talking about a very large amount of money. If, for example, we closed down the Department of Law, we would make a saving of \$15m. We would still have to find savings of \$85m. That gives an idea of the scope of the impact of the cuts.

As was laid down in the Treasurer's economic statement, the Department of Education will be required to operate with \$6.5m less. A great deal of work has gone into determining how those cuts could be made with minimal effects. Nobody could say that there will be no effects; that would be stupid. Obviously, we have to look at ways and means of trying to ensure the cuts will not affect the quality of education to Territory children.

I would like to talk first about staff-student ratios. For many years, student-staff ratios in the Territory have been well in front of those in the rest of the country, especially at secondary level.

Mr Bell: Prove it.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I find that the interruptions from the member for MacDonnell ...

Mr Bell: Table a document. You have an army of people to do it for you. I don't believe you.

Mr MANZIE: Whether the member for MacDonnell believes me or not is not the point. He has been elected to represent people and he does not like to face facts. He likes to close his eyes to the problems ...

Mr Bell: You have not presented any facts.

Mr MANZIE: ... caused by his federal colleagues. The 2 areas in Australia which are closest to the Territory in staff-student ratios make an interesting comparison, but I will first point out what has happened here. Originally we had ...

Mr Bell: This should be a statement, Daryl.

Mr MANZIE: ... a ratio of 1 student to 16 staff ...

Mr Bell: Let us all have a bite of the cherry.

Mr MANZIE: ... at the junior high school level and 1 student to 13 staff at the senior secondary level. That does not include auxiliary staff. We have changed the basis of measuring the staff-student ratio so that it includes auxiliary staff and promotion positions. It is now 1 to 15.8 for junior high schools and 1 to 12.8 at the senior secondary level. Using the same baseline, the states with ratios closest to ours are ACT and Tasmania. Their ratios are 1 to 13 and 1 to 16 respectively. So we are still slightly in front.

I do not deny that the change in the ratio will cause a greater workload for teachers. It is obvious that class sizes will have to increase slightly, but I also have no hesitation in stating that I believe Territory teachers are

as capable as their interstate colleagues. I also believe Territory students are as capable as their interstate colleagues. Nobody would deny that the federal government cuts will make us all roll up our sleeves and work a little bit harder. We cannot make any exceptions. Our teachers are as capable as their interstate colleagues and, as such, can provide the same high standards that are supplied in the rest of the country.

That ratio will affect 50 positions in terms of staffing. I would like to assure people, as I have assured the Teachers' Federation - although it has refused to inform its members - that nobody will be sacked. It may take some time to reach the optimum level because, obviously, if a science or maths teacher leaves, a science or maths teacher has to be recruited. The information given to people has been absolutely ridiculous. Yesterday, the President of the Teachers Federation told people that 50 teachers would be sacked with another 100 to go afterwards. There is no basis for that statement except his desire to cause unrest.

Mr Bell: You have said it.

Mr MANZIE: I will say here and now that I have never said that. The member for MacDonnell is again displaying his ignorance. The sort of things that he has been saying around the Territory have obviously been ...

Mr Bell: Read a copy of the advertisement which you put in every newspaper around the place.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: Obviously, the member for MacDonnell has not taken the time to read the advertisement in detail. Maybe he cannot read. Possibly he has a mental block and has trouble understanding, but I think it is very important that the correct information is provided to people.

Mr Bell: I know of a school that is going to suffer a 20% cut.

Mr MANZIE: Another instance of the sort of misinformation being put out is the case where students at a school in Darwin were told that their school's staff would be cut by 19. That has no basis in fact, but it has caused a tremendous problem in people's homes. I think it is very important that everybody understands that the teacher-student ratio will still be marginally better than anywhere else in Australia. I do not deny that teachers will have to work a little harder, but I am sure that everybody will agree that they are at least as capable as their colleagues in some of the better-served states.

We will need to make a cutback in the area of over-entitlement staff. According to the staffing formula, some schools are over-staffed and we have to make sure ...

Mr Bell: This is outrageous. It has been going for 10 minutes, Daryl. This should have been a statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will cease interjecting and that is the last warning I will give.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I would like to be very brief with this answer, but I think the matter is very important. I really believe that people like the member for MacDonnell should listen to the facts so that they are in a position to ...

Mr Bell: You are being provocative ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I name the honourable member for MacDonnell.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the services of the member for MacDonnell be suspended from this Assembly.

The Assembly divided:

| Ayes 14 | Noes 9 |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Mr Coulter | Mr Bell |
| Mr Dale | Mr Collins |
| Mr Dondas | Mr Ede |
| Mr Firmin | Mr Lanhupuy |
| Mr Hanrahan | Mr Leo |
| Mr Harris | Mrs Padgham-Purich |
| Mr Hatton | Mr Smith |
| Mr McCarthy | Mr Tipiloura |
| Mr Manzie | Mr Tuxworth |
| Mr Palmer | |
| Mr Perron | |
| Mr Poole | |
| Mr Reed | |
| Mr Setter | |

Mr SPEAKER: As a result of the division, there being 14 ayes and 9 noes, the question is resolved in the affirmative. The member for MacDonnell is suspended from the services of the Assembly for 24 hours.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is rather disappointing that this has occurred ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister is being unnecessarily provocative. He has a specific question to answer. He has taken 15 minutes to answer already. He could at least ensure that the remainder of his answer is relevant.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but the honourable minister will confine his remarks to the question.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I am trying to provide some factual information for members and my reason for saying that I was disappointed was that I am aware that the member for MacDonnell has addressed some public meetings and his facts have not been correct. I hope he reads Hansard so that his public addresses will be closer to the facts.

Mr Speaker, disappointingly, we will have to bring over-entitlement staff back to the levels specified in the school staffing formula. As I said, some schools have been staffed in excess of their requirements but we now have to come back to the baseline. There will be cutbacks in some programs relating to the teaching of English as a second language. Most of us will recall that the federal Labor government reduced its funding in that area last year and all states were affected very badly. In the Territory, we managed to divert some of our very scarce financial resources to keep the program going. However, following the most recent cuts to our funding, we are no longer able to maintain our funding of the program which we believe is a very important one. Funding reductions will mean an increase in the size of some withdrawal

classes. We will not be cutting them out, but the teachers involved will have to carry a slightly heavier workload than before.

Special education is quite a large area and annual expenditure is normally around \$3m. That will be cut by 5% which will mean extra effort for the people involved. Again, I would like to ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I draw your attention to order of the day No 3, the economic statement presented by the Treasurer on the last sitting day. That economic statement is quite clearly a matter of debate before this Assembly. Its contents include specific mention of cuts of \$6.5m to education. Mr Speaker, I put it to you that the appropriate place for the minister's remarks is in the context of that economic statement, as provided for in standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, we will continue to give as much support as possible in the area of special education. There has been a tremendous amount of misinformation put about. I believe this is because of people's genuine fear that there will be a great decline in the quality of education. That will not occur.

There will have to be some cuts in services provided by literature production centres for bilingual schools. As all members know, we have the largest number of bilingual schools in the country, far more than any other state. Considerable resources are put into these schools which perform an important role. No one here would suggest that they should be phased out. I think the opposite is the order of the day. However, we must rationalise the way we are expending money there. For example, when we have several centres producing literature in the same language, we will reduce those to 1 centre. Some language groups have up to 3 separate production centres in 3 separate areas and we will have to move those back to 1 area.

Mr Ede: That is one of the few areas of Aboriginal employment that is really needed and he wants to cut it out.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart's comment has some truth in it. It is an area of Aboriginal employment and we are going to keep the majority of the literacy workers in local communities on our payroll. I must reiterate that it is not something this government is proud about having to do, but the bottom line is that the federal government has taken a tremendous amount of money away from the Northern Territory. As I said, that is going to affect everybody in the Territory.

I must stress again that the cuts to education do not mean that we are dropping below standards elsewhere in the country. We will still be slightly in front. I do not resile from the fact that it means that people are going to be working harder than before, but we must accept that we are all being affected by what the federal Labor government does. I think it is important that the community realises that money does not grow on trees. The way we have been treated means that we have to transfer those costs.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing order 112(1) quite clearly says that questions cannot be debated. The minister was asked a question which, in my view, he has comprehensively answered. It concerned the effects of the \$6.5m cuts in education. He has gone beyond that and he is now debating the matter in answer to a question, where we cannot respond to it.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would suggest that the honourable minister keeps his remarks as brief as possible.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am keeping my remarks quite brief because it is a very complex subject and it is very important. It relates to people throughout the Territory.

We have also looked at Aboriginal attendance at pre-schools. At present, children using pre-schools in outlying areas are able attend for the full day whereas, in the urban areas, attendance at pre-schools has been for half-day sessions. We are requiring pre-schools in Aboriginal communities to allow attendance for half-days only which is the same as for urban pre-schools.

I will mention pre-schools fees very briefly. At present, attendance at pre-schools is not compulsory. We build the pre-schools and staff them and we are asking parents to contribute \$3 per attending child. We do not like doing that but I think honourable members will remember that the federal government cut out funding to pre-schools 2 years ago and that we picked it up. However, we cannot continue to carry on funding services to an extent which is greater than that in the states. We have been cut very heavily.

In summary, while there are imposts, they will not affect the quality of education. Both students and teachers will probably have to put in slightly more effort but, and it is very important that people are aware of this, education is one of this government's highest priorities. It is the young people of the Territory who will take over and keep the Territory going in the years to come. It is a very important aspect of government and we are making sure that the quality of education will not decrease. However, we must remember that the Hawke-Keating mini-budget cuts have really affected the Northern Territory and that every area of the Territory has to shoulder some responsibility.

Bed Tax

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

I refer to the tourist industry's reaction to the proposed bed tax and the losses that will be incurred in trying to maintain good faith with those who have booked or prepaid their holidays. Is he aware of any industry plans to retaliate by charging travelling government officers the full commercial rate and would he confirm that, if that occurred, the government would lose most of the savings that it could realistically expect to gain through the imposition of the tax?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for the honourable member's benefit, I will answer the question on behalf of the Treasurer who has carriage of the legislation in this Assembly. It is normal practice in question time for questions concerning legislation to be answered by the minister responsible for that legislation.

The Stamp Duty Amendment Bill is on the Notice Paper under order of the day No 1. Subject to anything alarming happening in this Assembly, it will come forth at about 11.20 am or 11.30 am today. It will be debated following the second-reading speech. All of the issues addressed by the member for Stuart will be dealt with. I have had some discussion with the industry, but I will address all the pertinent facts ...

Interjection from the public gallery.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will tolerate no disturbances whatsoever in the public gallery. If there is a repeat of that performance, I will have no hesitation in clearing the entire gallery.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, it is my intention to further address all relevant facts relating to the industry's concerns in the second-reading debate of the bill today.

Territory Allowance

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is the justification for public servants receiving amounts of Territory allowance that exceeds those in the private sector?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is a question that many people in the private sector have been asking for a long time. I do not know if honourable members are aware of the different basis of calculating Territory allowance throughout the Territory. In fact, there is quite a significant difference.

In the private sector, people north of the 20th parallel receive \$866 and people south of the 20th parallel receive \$350 as a Territory or district allowance. In the public sector, people with dependants receive \$2237 per annum as an allowance and people without dependants receive \$1277. For many years, the private sector has had a problem in attracting people to the Territory when people in the public sector were receiving a much greater allowance. It meant that people would drift away from the private sector into the public sector.

Obviously, people will take an allowance if it is offered. In 1982, the Arbitration Commission decided that the Territory allowance was no longer justified in the public sector. It froze it at the then current figure and that is what has been paid ever since. It was stated quite clearly that the allowance was no longer justified. That is my belief and it is the belief of this government.

Land and Fire Services Tax

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to TREASURER

Can the Treasurer give me details of the proposed land tax and fire services tax? Despite making extensive inquiries, I cannot find out a single solitary detail.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is indeed heartening that the member for Koolpinyah cannot find any details of that particular proposal at this stage. As I said in my economic statement, it was a matter that was under consideration and we did not intend to move on it at this stage. They are additional revenue-raising measures for implementation in the event of other measures not being successful.

The member for Jingili returned from Brisbane recently. He brought back a copy of the Brisbane Sun with a front page headline indicating that there would be an increase of 50% in the fire service levy in Queensland, taking it from \$42 per year to \$72 per year. Fire service levies are implemented right throughout Australia. Indeed, the member for Koolpinyah recently attended a meeting I held with the combined rural volunteer fire brigades where there was discussion about the possibility of levying local landholders to cover the cost of running rural volunteer fire brigades. It is not a new tax in Australia. Indeed, it was the original means of funding fire stations. Honourable members may recall that some buildings used to have signs indicating the name of the company which insured them.

There is nothing new in a fire services levy. The government is giving consideration to its implementation. At this stage, our budget negotiations are continuing and we have no intention of implementing levies at the moment.

Kakadu National Park

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In the past, the minister has advocated multiple uses for Kakadu National Park and has been rebuffed by ANPWS. Have there been any developments that might cause him to believe that there might be a change of heart on the part of ANPWS in the future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. There have indeed been some rather startling happenings but, unfortunately, they are geographically based. They occur only in states where a Labor government is in power. I refer honourable members to that magnificent Labor state of South Australia where, in contrast to the Northern Territory, uranium can be mined.

Honourable members will be aware that I have advocated multiple land use for national parks in the Territory, such as Kakadu, for a long time. Indeed, I have made representations to various federal ministers and I recently had the opportunity to address the UNESCO World Heritage Committee where I suggested that it should consider multiple land use rather than just closing up parks in the Northern Territory.

Negotiations in South Australia on a station owned by the Kidman family show where we have gone wrong. The South Australians have recognised the shortcomings of Derek Ovington. They have gone to the Deputy Director of ANPWS, whose name is Mr Nicholas Newland. I will read from page 3 of the Adelaide Advertiser of 22 June in order to show what Labor states can get way with in contrast to the more conservative side of politics. The federal government is willing to bend the rules for South Australia but not for the Northern Territory. The Adelaide Advertiser article is headed: 'Unique Reserve Plan for the Cooper Basin Region'. Remember, the Labor Party in the Northern Territory does not even have a mining policy so I would expect opposition members to be just a little bit quiet during my answer. They have demonstrated in this Assembly, time and time again, that they have nothing to contribute in terms of providing meaningful full-time employment to Territorians.

Under the heading, 'Unique Reserve Plan for the Cooper Basin Region' the article says: 'In what was a first in Australia in conservation, the reserve will cater for multiple-use interests: tourism, conservation and the mining

of natural resources'. It goes on to say that the reserve will be protected under the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act. Here in the Northern Territory, with the same Sydney-based ANPWS and the same act, we are not allowed to get out there and realise the potential of Kakadu. There is no problem in the Cooper Basin area of South Australia. We read that the 'region's reserve concept is a uniquely South Australian solution to achieving a balance between interests of conservation, tourism and the use of natural resources'. Here in the Territory, we are told that that cannot happen and that we cannot have that balance of different interests.

Of course, the difference is that South Australia has control over its own land and has its own act. Here in the Territory, we have the Leader of the Opposition's federal colleagues looking after us. The party which he represents here in the Northern Territory is in control of our national parks. It does not control parks in South Australia where his other colleague, Hon John Bannon, is in charge. There, uranium can be mined and there can be multiple land use in national parks. The Prime Minister of Australia, the Leader of the Opposition's colleague, controls national parks and mining in the Territory. How long can Australians put up with that type of justice being meted out by the federal government? It is a complete nonsense. The mine at Jabiru has now produced \$1200m of wealth from an area of 4 km², and that is just scratching the surface.

Opportunities are available to us if the federal government would get its foot off our neck. We could go ahead and be the richest 150 000 people in Australia today. Instead, we see the nonsensical policies of the federal Labor government as it prepares for the election on 11 July. Mr Speaker, it is time we got rid of this disparity between what can be done in one part of Australia and what can be done in another.

Payment of Committee Members

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In these times of severe economic restraint, why is the Chief Minister promoting to the Remuneration Tribunal that members of this Assembly should receive extra payment for their duties on parliamentary committees?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have referred the position of Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to the Remuneration Tribunal for consideration. It is up to the tribunal itself to determine whether or not there is any justification for an allowance. It seems quite appropriate to me, given that people like the Opposition Whip and Deputy Leader of the Opposition receive special allowances, that the position of Chairman of one of the most time-consuming committees of this House should be considered by the Remuneration Tribunal.

Territory Abattoirs

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Could the minister provide advice on the current operating status of Northern Territory abattoirs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am sure honourable members will be pleased to know that 9 abattoirs are currently operating in the Northern Territory. The big abattoir at Mt Isa is not in operation this year and that is somewhat unusual. That abattoir traditionally has processed a very large number of Northern Territory cattle. At present, we have 5 abattoirs licensed for export meat: Mudginberri, Point Stuart, Meneling, Katherine and Achilles. The Achilles abattoir in Tennant Creek is a horse meat abattoir. The total throughput for the export abattoirs is a little over 800 head per day.

Honourable members will be aware that the Katherine abattoir opened up this year for the first time in 3 years. That has been very good news for Katherine because it has provided more economic activity in the vicinity of the town than was there a little while ago. There were some initial problems with the plant and equipment, as can be expected from a meatworks which has not operated for 2 years. Management seems to have overcome those problems and I am advised that the slaughter rate is approximately 200 head per day. It is aiming for a kill of 300 head per day during the course of the season. There are an additional 4 abattoirs in the Territory processing for the domestic market: Angliss abattoirs in Darwin which is running at very low capacity, Marshall's at Tennant Creek, Victoria Valley and Nelson Springs. Another 4 abattoirs are not expected to open this season: Urapunga, Curtin Springs, Alice Springs and Amoonguna.

With these export and domestic abattoirs opening, there is an opportunity for the cattleman in the Northern Territory to obtain the best possible price as a result of the competition among buyers. It is a little sad that Mt Isa has had to close because that would have provided a little more competition. We trust that the pastoral industry will get maximum benefit out of this processing during the course of 1987.

Beaufort Hotel Debts

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

What agreement, if any, has been entered into with the liquidator of the Beaufort Hotel for the repayment of debts owing to the Territory for electricity, water and sewerage, and payroll tax? Is the electricity payment a first-order payment or is it to be made after a number of other creditors with higher priority have been paid?

ANSWER

As I have advised honourable members before, the Northern Territory government is in a very good position in terms of having its money returned in full. There is a section in the Northern Territory Electricity Commission Act which stipulates that we decide who will become a customer. I have made it quite clear to the bankers and the liquidator that it is the intention of the government that, unless we are paid in full, we will not be reconnecting ...

Mr Smith: You will not be able to do that.

Mr COULTER: Have you ever heard a more negative attitude than that of the member for Millner? We are well aware of what the Labor policy has been on this. The Leader of the Opposition said on many occasions that he would have put money into it to keep it open.

Mr Smith: I also would have taken more security.

Mr COULTER: That is the position of the Labor Party, unless it has changed and unless the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is making a takeover bid as spokesman on this particular issue. That is what it wanted to do.

In conjunction with the other creditors, the banks decided to sell it to another operator. There are many potential operators who are now vying for the Beaufort Hotel and the complete centre. I believe that it will be sold in a very short time and be back in operation. The negativism from the benches opposite never fails to amaze me. I will have to tolerate that. We have spoken about that on many occasions. I would have thought that, as a result of the censure motion, the Leader of the Opposition would have woken up by now. Apparently he has learnt nothing, and that is to be expected.

The point is that there is a section in the act which can be used in this situation. I have told the liquidator that he should make that known to any potential buyer of the Beaufort. Indeed, I mentioned that to many of the people who have approached me regarding the purchase of the facility. We will be paid.

Beaufort Hotel Debts

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, my supplementary question requires a simple yes or no answer. Has the government or officers of the government been able to enter into an arrangement with the liquidator for the repayment of those debts?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have had discussions. The liquidator and the major creditor are aware of the Northern Territory government's position.

Mr Ede: What is the ranking?

Mr COULTER: When you have the power not to reconnect until the bill is paid, what does it matter what the ranking is? We are in a very good position to recover the debt and we will recover the debt.

Government Negotiations with Trades and Labor Council

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Would he tell the Assembly why the negotiations with the Trades and Labor Council broke down?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to answer the question because I think it is important that the reasons for the breakdown in negotiations with the TLC are made clear. There is a whole range of things being said in terms of our not really caring about making any agreements with the TLC. That was not the case.

I called for a meeting with the TLC well over 2 weeks ago and put to it a range of options that the Territory government was considering as a means of picking up \$21.5m from public service conditions. That amount of money was

considered to be fair and reasonable considering that, in toto, we were trying to pick up \$92m out of costs to the Territory government in this financial year. That \$92m has been taken from a whole range of areas. The private sector is suffering because we have had to make cuts in the capital works program and housing. That will mean the loss of jobs in the private sector, Mr Speaker. I am not saying that to frighten people. People are aware of it. The fact is that we had to find the money. The money had been ripped off us and we had to get that money back.

\$21.5m out of conditions which are valued at more than \$100m above those received by the private sector is not a big deal. It is absolutely essential that we get that money. I called for a meeting with the TLC. I put to it the options of this government and it went away with them. I gave it the opportunity to consider a range of options. I gave it space in a building. I provided a telephone and desks and government employees to assist it. The TLC used that time to frustrate negotiations with the government. It would not come back and talk to me on a one-for-one basis. It would not come back and put to me the options that it proposed. It wanted to take a whole 2 weeks and come back to me, 24 hours before we had to make a decision, with a range of options that just did not stand up. Out of its range of options, we identified about \$1.8m worth of cuts because the figures do not stand up. No way in the world do the figures stand up, and that can be adequately demonstrated.

The night before last, I met with the TLC. The meeting lasted for 6½ hours and I put up with 6½ hours of personal abuse. I put up with that because I was determined to get an agreement out of the TLC. But I do not have to stand for that, and I knew that I was going back there last night to face the same thing again. The meeting opened with personal abuse, and I would not care to repeat the things that those people said. I would not be prepared to repeat them. They knew that we had to reach a decision on 24 June because, if decisions were delayed until September, October or November, we would have to pick up a damn sight more than \$21.5m.

Mr Speaker, there is no way that the TLC representatives were prepared to discuss any of the government options with me. They were determined to speak about every one of their options and we spent 6½ hours being diverted back to those options. They made no attempt to speak about ours and, if we tried to bring them in, there was just a continuing overriding discussion. The TLC representatives had no intention of reaching an agreement which included any of our options. It had to include only theirs. They had the government's options and they were not prepared to put them to their members. The options which the government announced last night were given to the TLC the night before last. They did not mention them at their meeting yesterday, which they say 5000 people attended. They did not put them to those people.

Mr Speaker, I have tried everything to get an agreement out of the TLC that picked up \$21.5m worth of conditions. They say that are going to give up conditions. But what do they give up? They want to give up some of their own work practices - work practices which are costing us dollars because they have become entrenched and cannot be aborted by means of this government's budget. The government has an absolute and total resolve to pick up \$21.5m in this area. I did not think this 2 weeks ago, as my Cabinet colleagues and party members could tell you. I believed then that we could resolve this issue by negotiation because I had some faith then in the ability of the TLC to come to such a settlement. However, its representatives' approach to the negotiations was to talk about their options but forget about ours. That was not satisfactory to me. It was not satisfactory to my government colleagues and

it was not satisfactory to the people of the Northern Territory. The choice is between cuts to conditions or cuts to jobs. I have settled for conditions that will keep people in jobs in this Territory.

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