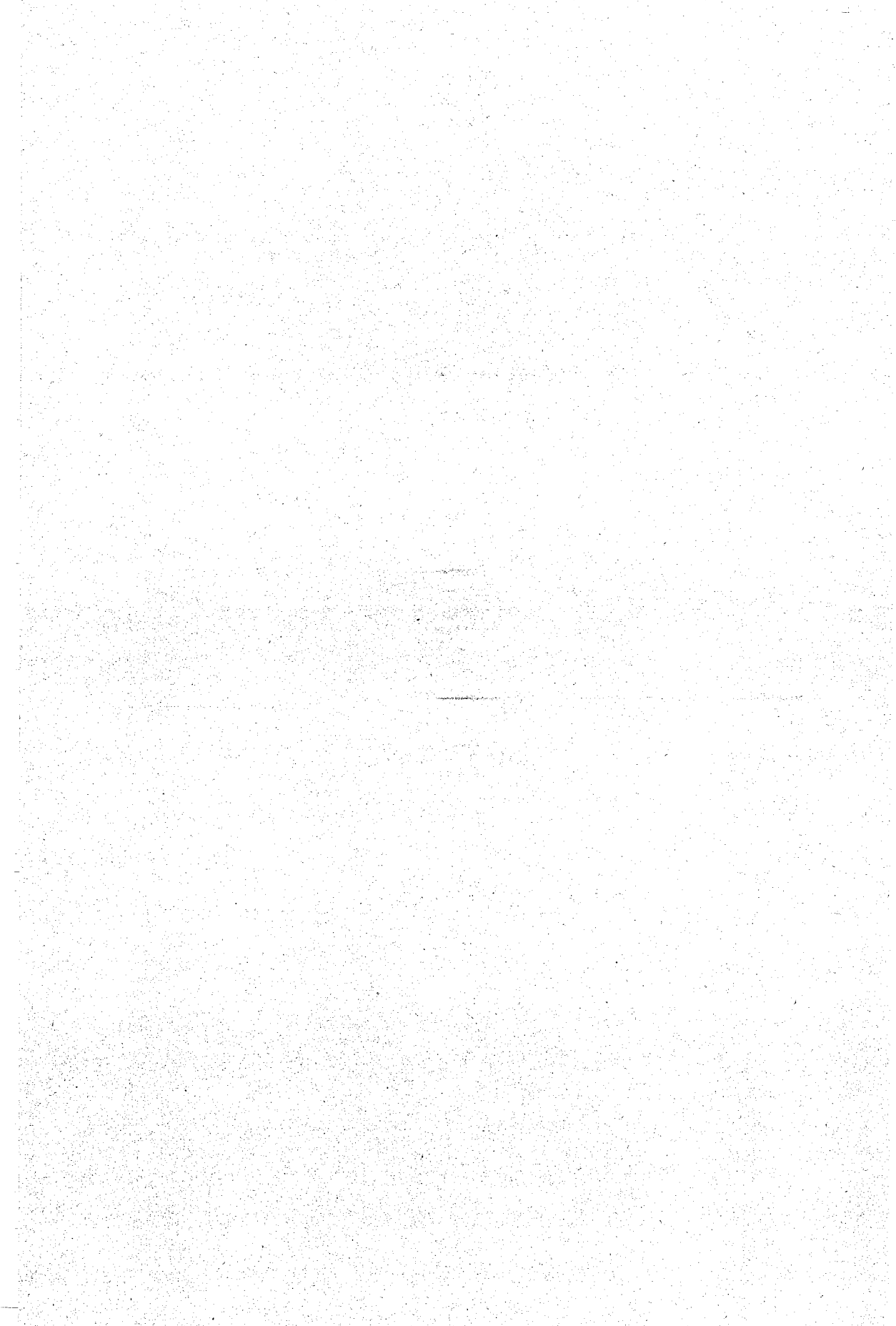


PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed in numerical order

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II



1120A Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

1. Is the honourable Member aware that the Australian National Railway will not offer new leases in the Alice Springs Rail reserve for commercial purposes pending their decision as to the location of the new railway reserve and associated commercial sidings; and is he further aware that when this decision has been made the site will be subject to an environmental impact study?
2. Does he concede that this whole project may take 10 years to complete and, if so, would he ask the Australian National Railway Commissioner to offer alternatives to the present negative attitude to permit some badly needed commercial growth in Alice Springs now and within the next 10 years?

ANSWER

1. In 1974 Messrs. Ashton & Wilson, Transportation and Urban Planners were commissioned to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on four proposed sites for standard gauge rail terminal facilities at Alice Springs. The scope of the statement followed guidelines recommended by the Department of Environment and Conservation. The Consultants report was released for public comment on 31.7.75 and interested parties were required to submit their comments in writing to the Department of Environment and Conservation, Canberra, by 1.9.75. Consideration of the replies by the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development and related investigations are still proceeding. Until finality is reached on the question of terminal location, which is expected in six months, Australian National Railways are not entering into any new lease arrangements in the Alice Springs area.
2. The original construction plan provided for the Tarcoola-Alice Springs Railway to be substantially completed within five years of commencing earthworks. The actual period of construction could be extended as a result of the Government's policy of restricted capital expenditure and its appointment of a Review Committee to examine the construction standards and costs of this project.

1121. Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

In view of the fact that the ABC is to be subjected to cutbacks and within the NT this may be reflected by demands to rationalise radio programmes would he be prepared to recommend that the programme "Col Chuck Chunder" be removed from broadcast programmes?

ANSWER

No. I do not believe that I am competent to determine the relative merits of particular ABC programmes, nor do I believe that other members of the Legislative Assembly have this competence. It is also my belief that personal prejudices should not replace objective assessment.

1122 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN -

1. What was the cost 1974-75 and 1975-76 of the re-sleepering programme for the North Australian Railways?
2. What was the cost of post-Cyclone Tracy benefits to employees of the North Australia Railways including R & R fares, R & R paid leave,

hard living allowances, lost time whilst on railway pay, but not in productive work for the North Australian Railways?

3. What is the cost to date of post-Cyclone Tracy repair work for the North Australia Railways?

ANSWER

1. North Australia Railway re-sleeping expenditure:

1974/75	\$435,000
1975/76	\$190,000

2. Post cyclone Tracy payments to North Australia Railway employees for rest and recreation leave, fares, hard living allowances etc. \$152,000.
3. Post cyclone Tracy repair costs \$449,000.

1192 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK -

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Can he advise me from where comes the funding of this Council and the annual amount for such funds?
2. What are the names of the current officers of the Regional Council of Social Development?

ANSWER

1. Funding for Regional Council of Social Development is by allocation of funds by the Australian Government and is administered by the Department of Social Security.

Each Regional Council receives \$40,000 per annum for social planning and administrative costs and to enable the Council to provide welfare information within the region.

Council also receives \$12,000 per annum for the employment of a Community Development Officer, but this may be varied.

2. The current officers of the Regional Council for Social Development:

Senator Robertson,	Chairman
Mrs. N. Polishuk,	Secretary
Mr. J. Lawrie,	Treasurer

1193 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN -

1. Is there a maintenance program operating for the Commonwealth houses at Nhulunbuy and if not, will a plan be implemented in the near future?
2. Will he seek to have all the houses fitted with air conditioning units in this year's budget appropriation?

ANSWER

1. There is a cyclical maintenance program operating at Nhulunbuy. It

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

is expected that \$7,000 will be available for 1976/77. Urgent minor maintenance funds are also available.

2. It is not intended as a general rule that Departmental dwellings at Nhulunbuy be airconditioned. They are fitted with ceiling fans and the window treatment permits good ventilation.

1195 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

Out of the \$2.5m loss recorded by the North Australia Railway last financial year, what was the amount of money spent specifically on reconstruction necessitated by cyclone damage?

ANSWER

No actual reconstruction work carried out. Efforts were directed towards the repair of damaged buildings to render them habitable and to enable staff to resume normal living and working conditions. The costs involved are reflected in the answer to question no. 1122(3).

1196 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

What funds were expended on salaries and wages by the North Australia Railway in the 1975-76 financial year and what savings will result from retrenchment of staff and employees with the suspension of the railway's operations?

ANSWER

1. North Australia salary and wages expenditure in -

1975/76	\$2,100,000.
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2. Estimated salary and wages savings to the North Australia Railway section in 1976/77 following cessation of rail traffic is \$1 million.



1200 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTS -

Mr Isaacs said on radio yesterday that executive members attended conferences at the taxpayers' expense for little or no return to the Territory. Perhaps the Majority Leader could answer that?

ANSWER

I presume that the spokesman for the ALP was referring to Commonwealth and state ministers councils which executive members of this Assembly have been attending for the past 12 months. I regard the attendance of our executive members at these councils as the most important development in our progress towards greater political responsibility for the Northern Territory. It is at these meetings that policies are made for the whole of Australia and individual regions.

I was at two such meetings last week. One was the Australian Agricultural Council. There was a move made by the states at that Australian Agricultural Council meeting to impose a complete baggage search for passengers leaving the Darwin Airport as part of a program to control the spread of fruit fly in Australia. The proposal was not based on logical local knowledge and I successfully averted it. At a subsequent meeting of the environment ministers held late last week, there was a proposal that other parts of Australia including the Northern Territory should follow the lead that New South Wales and Victoria have given in bringing regulations to reduce the lead content of petrol. This matter is causing concern in inner city areas in Sydney and Melbourne. The effect of bringing in such regulations in the Territory would have been to increase the price of petrol to the consumer of several cents a gallon and it would have achieved no useful purpose at this time as far as environmental control was concerned. By argument at that meeting, I was able to avert that imposition on Territory people at this time.

I am sure that other Executive Members could illustrate the value to Territorians of their participation in these councils and I regard it as a break through. At the last council, I actually attended in the place of the Minister for the Northern Territory and that is the first time that that has been achieved.

1201 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

Is he aware of the report in the Adelaide Advertiser of Wednesday 4 August which suggested possible deferral of the continuing works on the Tarcoola to Alice Springs standard gauge railway link? Can he say whether the Federal Minister for Transport has indicated to him the Government's intention to continue with planned works?

ANSWER

I did not see the particular article mentioned by the member for Alice Springs. However, I had sent a telegram to the Minister for Transport as a result of the rumours which have been bandied around the town. In his answer, he said "A review into construction standards and cost of this project announced by the Treasurer late in May is nearing completion. In the meantime, work is continuing on the project and a major contract was recently let for construction of earth works, bridges and culverts from Robin Rise to Mahler Bore. It is not intended to stop work on the project and no decision to slow down the work has been made."

1202 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING -

Is he in a position to state clearly the position with the Home Finance Trustee?

ANSWER

Members will be aware that over the past 2 days the Minister for the Northern Territory has been in Darwin reviewing the situation that has received considerable press comment over the last 2 weeks. The Minister has issued a statement this morning, and I feel it would clarify the position best if I read that statement:

The Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Evan Adermann, held talks over the past two days with the Master Builders Association, the Chamber of Industries and Northern Territory representatives of Darwin bankers. These talks were arranged by the Northern Territory Executive Member for Finance and Community Development, Mr Grant Tambling. The Minister also had separate talks with the Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission, the Chairman of the Northern Territory Housing Commission and the Home Finance Trustee. The Minister also met with representatives of the ACOA at their request.

Mr Adermann said that a variety of issues were canvassed in the course of the talks but the single main matter was the Home Finance Trustee concessional home loan scheme. The Minister said this scheme obviously enjoyed the full support of the Federal Government, the Legislative Assembly and all sections of the Darwin community. Mr Adermann explained that his recent press statement on this subject was designed to draw attention to the appropriation provision of \$11.5m for 1976/77 an increase in excess of 26% over the expenditure of last year. He also indicated that, if present trends continue, this cash allocation would be exceeded and he had instructed his department to prepare, as a matter of urgency, proposals which would achieve the most equitable distribution of available funds for Northern Territory housing. Moreover, the statement also reiterated the Government's clear commitment that the scheme would continue and eligible borrowers could utilise funds advanced under the scheme at any time up to 31 December 1980.

If additional funds were wanted to finance the home loan scheme this financial year there would need to be some redistribution of the total funds allocation for the reconstruction of Darwin. In the course of the talks this week, it was made quite clear that the Government's complete integrity in its statement that the highest priority would continue to be given to the reconstruction of Darwin was very evident in the provision of \$172.2m an increase of \$39m or 30% over actual expenditure last year.

Additional assistance provided to the Northern Territory's hard pressed beef industry, the needs of the ailing tourist industry, and the urgency of civil work outside Darwin meant that no money could be taken from those other areas of the Territory.

Answering his critics Mr Adermann said that any reallocation could not be responsibly done after only one month of the financial year had elapsed and most of the funds were untouched. Additionally, not until all applications were received by 31 December this year, could anyone assess the final cash requirement of the fund this year and for subsequent years. This will provide reliable statistics on which decisions could be taken and these would be taken well before cash

funds were depleted. Then and only then could he be satisfied that it would be most equitable to undertake some redistribution of funds giving full consideration to the whole range in each sector of housing requirements in Darwin.

Mr Adermann said that the situation would be kept under close review and, if events required some adjustment of existing cash appropriations, this would be done quickly and announced publicly. The Minister said he welcomed the opportunity to meet with so many representatives of the local community and he found the exchange of views both rewarding and stimulating. Some positive suggestions were advanced and he was prepared to consider these carefully and, if necessary, discuss them with his ministerial colleagues in Canberra.

I can only say that, in the talks in which I participated, I found the Minister most cooperative and receptive to the submissions made by politicians and by the community leaders. I am confident that the statement he has now made stresses the point quite adequately that there will be redistribution if necessary between the public and private sectors in Darwin and that therefore the confidence should be restored fully to those people who feel they are still under threat.

1203 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN -

Is he aware of the form of inquiry into the Northern Territory transport needs being undertaken by the Bureau of Transport Economics and does he agree that this inquiry is a satisfactory alternative to the Royal Commission requested by this Assembly?

ANSWER

I have been in touch with the Department of Transport on this matter and I am waiting further information from them at which time I expect to make a statement to the House.

1204 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING -

Can he confirm that the sewer line in Doctors Gully is and has been for some time broken just beyond the low tide marks so that raw sewage is discharged a matter of feet from the edge of the water at low spring tides? If he can confirm the facts, what steps have been and will be taken to avert the threat to health which is posed by this situation?

ANSWER

I am not in a position to confirm the information sought by the Honourable Member. I would ask that he place the question on notice to the Executive Member for Municipal and Consumer Affairs.

1205 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN -

Is there any truth in the rumour that the bus services in the Darwin area are to be curtailed?

ANSWER

I was in touch with the Department of the Northern Territory concerning bus services several days ago on a matter relating to another area. I have arranged to have discussions with them. At this stage no decis-

ion has been made to curtail any of the bus services in the Darwin area. I will be discussing these matters with the department, bearing in mind that the Darwin bus services do run at a rather large deficit. I do not expect any decision will be made without thorough discussions between the parties concerned.

1206 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

I address my question without notice to the honourable member for Finance and Community Development in his capacity as a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission,

I have a letter from the Minister for the Northern Territory dated 19 May 1976 stating clearly and unequivocally that the 2 facilities to be provided for juvenile delinquents are on the works program for 1976-77 and that they should be available in 1978. Can the honourable member confirm that these 2 facilities are indeed on the works program for 1976-77?

ANSWER

The consideration with regard to the civil works program and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission will be announced publicly next Tuesday night in the annual budget. From my recollection of the preliminary budget talks of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, I am of the understanding that both facilities were on the estimates submitted at that time. I will pursue this matter further and make additional information available to the honourable member,

1207 Mr STEELE to Miss ANDREW -

Is it true that the Darwin Gun-Club has been closed down for 3 months; what is the reason for the closure; and when can we expect the gun club to be reopened?

ANSWER

Whilst I normally would answer questions on the subject of sport and recreation, the honourable Majority Leader, because of his long association with the rifle club, which is the club to which I think the member for Ludmilla alludes, has been more directly involved in this issue.

Dr LETTS: The Darwin Rifle Club is suffering this problem. It is a matter, I believe, of some foolishness that from time to time the Army in Darwin, which has the responsibility for the rifle range, decides, when it has a change of personnel or something of this sort, that there are safety problems at the Darwin Rifle Club and seeks to bring about its closure. This is not the first time that this has happened; the club was closed about 4 years ago but only for a short period of 3 or 4 weeks until the Minister for the Army looked into it and satisfied himself that there was no substance in the complaint that the Army had made. It has been threatened on various other occasions during the past 10 or 15 years and now we are at the stage where, for some 3 or 4 months, the main range has been closed to shooting, depriving the public of Darwin of an important and constructive recreational facility. The reason appears to be that the Army requires some kind of a man-proof safety fence to be constructed around the range, this would make the situation quite different to anywhere else in Australia, there are virtually no rifle ranges that require a complete man-proof safety fence. There are safety pre-

cautions laid down and exercised by rifle clubs which adequately prevent accidents from happening. The Darwin Rifle Club has been very assiduous in observing these procedures and, of course, has had an accident-free record over the past 20 years or so. I believe that the step taken by the Army locally was extreme; I have made representations to the Minister for Defence and the Minister for the Northern Territory. I hope that the situation can be corrected in the near future.

1208 Mr WITHNALL to Mr POLLOCK -

Has the Department of Health taken counts of E coli at various points in the Darwin Harbour during the last 12 months and, if so will he have the results of such counts over the last 12 months tabled in this Assembly?

ANSWER

Yes, I understand that the Department of Health has these counts taken at various places within the Darwin Harbour and I will endeavour to have the information made available for him.

1209 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING -

What has happened to the proposal the Northern Territory Housing Commission had to establish a permanent caravan park in Darwin to the value of \$1.5m?

ANSWER

I am not acquainted with the statistical information that the honourable member for Casuarina obviously has. I am aware that the Northern Territory Housing Commission has requested a site for the establishment of a caravan park from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I am also aware that the Darwin City Corporation has indicated a similar interest and that the Reconstruction Commission has invited interested public tenderers also to indicate development type proposals should several blocks at Leanyer, in Vanderlin Drive, be made available for the establishment of caravan parks. When those development proposals have been considered by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, the Housing Commission's proposal will be considered at the same time.

1210 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW -

Can the honourable member inform me if Pidgin English, politely called Creole, is taught as the first language at some Northern Territory schools, and whether the disease is spreading?

ANSWER

I believe that Creole is taught at Bamyili. That is the only place in the Territory at the moment.

1211 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS -

A press report in yesterday's NT News concerning a conference held in Sydney on land rights states that this Assembly had opposed any form of land rights bill and that Country Party and National Party bodies in other states had supported this attitude. Is this report the true stance taken by this Assembly and the majority party?

ANSWER

No. The conference referred to in the NT News was an anonymous conference as far as the report was concerned; it did not say who organised it or sponsored it or was present at the conference, and I am not sure who was involved there. The statement is not true and it is an unwarranted slur on this legislature which was one of the first legislatures in Australia, going back to the days of the Legislative Council, to move by a committee and subsequently by legislation towards setting up Aboriginal land rights legislation, and in fact did set up such legislation as far back as 1968. We have repeatedly tried in the more recent times of this Assembly to get to the heart of what is the best form of land rights legislation for Aborigines in the Northern Territory and are continuing to do so.

As far as the party in the Territory is concerned, there is a public document available - which I would be happy to send to the organisers of this conference if I am able to establish their identity - which states the policy quite clearly. It is that Aboriginal land tenure in the Northern Territory be granted under Territory legislation with the Federal Government bringing in complementary legislation to guarantee our laws, that land designated as reserved land - including Hermannsburg, Santa Teresa and Daly River leases - be declared as inalienable Aboriginal land under perpetual title, that Aboriginal landowners apply direct to the Government for the title to their land and receive a title to their land direct from Government, that a council be established, supported by advisers, to assist Aboriginal landholders on any matters on which they may require advice and assistance, that Aboriginal landholders may determine who may enter their land - and it goes on to develop the policy in some further detail. It is quite clear to all members of this Assembly that we have a very keen and continuing interest in seeing that Aborigines do get land justice. We believe that this Assembly has a role to play in this matter and the policy of the majority party is consistent with that stand.

1212 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS -

Is it a fact that public servants who were transferred to Brisbane after the cyclone have been placed on the housing list with the same priority point system as those public servants who have put up with crude and uncomfortable conditions in Darwin since the cyclone? Will he agree that the Government should recognise that the people who stayed deserve better treatment, and will he seek amendment of the points system to give them some priority over those who have enjoyed far better conditions in Brisbane for the last 20 months?

ANSWER

I am not sure whether the first part of the question is a fact and I will need to establish that first. I will inquire into the points raised by the honourable member in his question and provide a comprehensive answer later in these sittings.

1213 Mr MANUELL to Miss ANDREW -

Is it a fact that the Australian Legal Aid Office in Alice Springs is openly competing with private solicitors in that town? Is it true that when the Australian Legal Aid Office commenced operation in Alice Springs the chief officer outlined to private practitioners that up to 50% of briefs received by that office were to be passed

to private practitioners? Is it a fact that this policy is now discontinued and the Australian Legal Aid Office is handling all its own briefs to the detriment of existing private practitioners in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

I am not prepared to answer that question now. I will endeavour to find out facts and figures about the situation and report them later in the Assembly.

1214 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS -

I ask this question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. At the last sittings I asked the honourable member when somebody would reach for the switch to turn the lights on for the cattle industry. Since then the Katherine meatworks has opened and the Minister has made an announcement that \$600,000 carry-on finance has been made available. Can the honourable member say whether any of this money has actually reached the pockets of any cattlemen?

ANSWER

The short answer to the question, I believe, is no. But to leave it at that would not be a fair statement of the position. The Cattlemen's Association of North Australia, indeed the Northern Territory Cattle Producers' Council, put up a 4-point program to the Government earlier this year in which they sought the opening of the Katherine meatworks: they sought some assistance with freight, they sought additional money for carry-on finance and they sought some money for reconstruction funding. The first 3 of those points have in fact been dealt with by the Government. The meatworks has been opened. The question omitted to refer to the fact that a freight assistance scheme has been established for the Northern Territory and an additional sum for carry-on finance has been appropriated. Funds have been made available to producers from earlier appropriations in relation to that \$600,000, the funds are available. There are a number of applications in hand from producers; 5 of these have already been approved and are in the final stages of the money being advanced. This should take place within the next week or so allowing for the fact that the final claims have to go down to Brisbane for cheques to be drawn and this sort of thing. But there is no problem other than the normal time taken to process an application in the Primary Producers Board to meet the requirements for carry-on finance. The money is there and available.

1215 Mr STEELE to Mr RYAN -

The Executive Member is probably aware of the senseless slaughter and maiming of pedestrians taking place along the main thoroughfares around Darwin and I ask him if he would urgently exhort the Department of the Northern Territory to get stop lights established on the main thoroughfares, such as the Stuart Highway at Stuart Park the 2 pedestrian crossings on Bagot Road and the pedestrian crossing on Trower Road?

ANSWER

I agree wholeheartedly with the honourable member for Ludmilla. This particular problem has been raised by the Northern Territory Road Safety Council and in fact I brought the matter up at the last meet-

ing. I cannot say that the possibility of installing stop lights was received unanimously because I think we also must realise that the installation of lights can create havoc with the flow of traffic, and that is a serious problem on Bagot Road. Whilst I agree that something has to be done with the pedestrian crossings, whether it is practical to put in stop lights, I do not know, but the matter is being looked at and, hopefully, we can come up with a satisfactory solution.

1216 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS -

In view of the fact that the Government has some millions invested in the Katherine meatworks, would the terms of rationalisation between Northmeat, Northwest and the Government be made public?

ANSWER

I do not know whether it is possible to make public the terms of the agreement between Northwest, Northmeat and the Government. As the Government has a large stake, as the honourable member has said, in the future of the Katherine meatworks, I imagine that they would in a responsible way have had some conditions applying to the opening of the works. If that information is available, I will seek it and produce it in the Assembly during these sittings.

1217 Mr STEELE to Miss ANDREW -

This question concerns the subject I mentioned in the previous question to the Executive Member for Transport. Will it assist the problem of pedestrians being run over on main thoroughfares if there are police patrols at pedestrian crossings, and would there have to be an intake of more policemen to cater for this need?

ANSWER

The police are hampered in performing their duties as far as patrols are concerned, and certainly most other of their duties around the Territory, as a result of the ceilings which have been imposed. A new group of recruits will be going into their training in early September, but that is really only putting band-aids on the problem and certainly not solving it. Bagot Road would have more police cars going up and down it per day than probably any other road in Darwin because the Traffic Division is at Casuarina and there is general commuting between the northern suburbs and the central city area as a result of the day-to-day business by the patrols. I am certain that if the police could afford the luxury of a patrol per pedestrian crossing the number of deaths and injuries would drop, but unfortunately that is a bit of a pipe dream and the police are to be commended because they are doing their best at the moment.

1218 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK -

The Country Women's Association at Groote Eylandt and others have expressed concern at the lack of a full-time doctor in the community. What action is the Department of Health taking to remedy this situation?

ANSWER

The Department of Health is concerned about the absence of a full-time doctor at Groote Eylandt. There has been a bit of an impasse in

relation to the matter for some time. The situation has been advertised on a number of occasions but to date they have not been able to gain an applicant for the position. The recent increase in salaries may assist in recruiting somebody in the near future, but in the meantime a doctor at Gove is making regular visits to Groote Eylandt and of course the aerial medical plane at Gove can commute. There is a difficulty over flying at night time and this does cause some problems. It is the earnest desire of the Department of Health to have a full-time doctor at Groote Eylandt but a medical practitioner who is prepared to operate in isolation like that is not easy to find. Unfortunately, at the moment, the department is in a bit of a bind.

1219 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK -

My question concerns a proposal to purchase a Nomad aircraft for the Northern Territory Aero Medical Service. In view of the recent fatal air crash and other crashes concerning this Nomad aircraft will he use his position to seek a review of the decision to purchase this particular type of aircraft?

ANSWER

It is true that there has recently been a fatal air crash involving the Nomad aircraft. It would be improper of me to go into the ramifications of that because an inquiry is being conducted and the aircraft was on an experimental flight. The problem of replacement of the aerial medical planes is twofold in that the present Dove aircraft have been in service for a long time and have to be retired. The service will lose one of the aircraft in November and another one about April-May next year, depending on its flying hours. I believe 6 Nomad aircraft are to go into service in about November this year. At the moment, that program is firm. However, I have sought further information today and hopefully later in the sittings I might be able to tell the honourable member a little more.

1220 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS -

In view of the undertaking given by the Minister for the Northern Territory on taking office that his permanent head would reside in the Northern Territory, when is it expected that Mr Livingston will reside permanently in the Territory?

ANSWER

I am unable to satisfy her with a firm date in this matter. I can tell her that the permanent head is following energetically inquiries for accommodation in Darwin and I heard yesterday that he was on the track of a flat which could be in the electorate of Nightcliff. The honourable member may have a new vote in her electorate within a reasonable time if everything goes according to plan.

1221 Mr MANUELL to Mr POLLOCK -

Is he aware of the concern expressed by residents in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs at the lack of orthodontist services? What action is being taken by the Department of Health to institute orthodontist services?

ANSWER

I am aware of the concern that has been expressed. At present, the department has recruited a second orthodontist for the Territory. Thus, there are now two orthodontists for the Territory, both domiciled in Darwin. The department has also applied through the necessary channels for the creation of a position of orthodontist in Alice Springs. Should this position be made available and a person recruited, he would service both Alice Springs and Tennant Creek on a regular basis. I have written to the Minister of Health about the concern of the people in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs of the absence of this service on a full-time basis. I am hopeful that he and the department can successfully argue with the Public Service Board on the need for that appointment.

1222 Dr DONDAS to Mr PERRON -

The honourable member was reported in the press last week as being concerned about the activities of a Darwin building company. Can he supply details of his concern?

ANSWER

The organisation I was speaking of was a firm called Bako Building Constructions. The firm has been registered with the Companies Office in Darwin since last November and it was recently learned that partners involved have left the Northern Territory, leaving behind numerous creditors and also a number of people who have paid deposits to have their houses reconstructed. Unfortunately, the total amount involved is not known at this stage. However, there is evidence to show that it is many thousands of dollars and investigations into the activities of the two partners involved are continuing. That is all the information I can supply to the House at this stage.

1223 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

When is it expected that the Government home sale scheme for public service housing will be reintroduced? Will he give an undertaking that the full details of any such scheme will be discussed in this Assembly? Can he advise if he has been privy to any discussions with the department as to the details of the scheme?

ANSWER

I am aware that the Minister for the Northern Territory called for a departmental review of the Government homes rental and sales situation in the Northern Territory. He was to expect that report some time in August. I have not been involved personally in any discussions with regard to the scheme but I will certainly pursue the details of the scheme and seek to make the information available.

1224 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK -

My question concerns the supply of water to the Yuendumu population north west of Alice Springs. Is he aware that one bore only supplies this population of 1,200 people? In fact, provisions have been made by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to evacuate the entire community this summer should that bore fail. Will he undertake to arrange with the department alternative and backup supplies of water for emergency use?

ANSWER

I do know that water at Yuendumu has been a long-standing problem but I have been out there twice in the last three weeks and no concern was expressed to me whilst I was there. However, I will undertake to go to the department and see what plans they do have in hand for an adequate supply of water.

1225 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW -

I have been told that the high schools in the northern suburbs, Casuarina and Nightcliff, expect to have an overflow next year. What steps are being taken, if any, to establish the Dripstone High School or a high school in that area?

ANSWER

Building of the Dripstone High School is at the moment not planned to commence before July 1977, which would mean that the school would not be ready until 1979. Representations have been made by parent-teacher groups and myself, and indeed the Northern Territory Branch of the Department of Education, strongly supporting an earlier commencement date for Dripstone High School in light of the overflow situation at Nightcliff and Casuarina. However, it is unlikely to be commenced before July 1977.

1226 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

Is he aware that the chief test pilot who met his untimely death in the Nomad incident the other day had experienced on two previous occasions jamming of the elevator controls on the aircraft? I was wondering whether the Executive Member could ascertain the reasons for these incidents and provide the House with the information before the House rises.

ANSWER

Quite obviously the sort of information the honourable member for Alice Springs is after would be subject to some sort of investigation by the Department of Transport. I would therefore be completely at their mercy as to access to this information. Certainly I could not give any guarantee that I would be able to get the information and whether or not, if I could get hold of the information, it would be during these sittings. However, as I will be in touch with the department and the Minister on other matters, I will seek to get this information.

1227 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW -

Very recently I noticed a press release or statement by the Attorney-General, Mr Ellicott QC, indicating that the Commonwealth Government would now be proceeding with the setting up of a Commonwealth Superior Court. Would there be any benefits in the proposed court, of which I have very little detail, for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Like the honourable member for Jingili, I have very little detail so I am really unable to answer his question. However, to give him some reassurance, the reason I have very little detail, in spite of undertakings given to me by the Attorney-General that the matter

would be discussed with representation from the Northern Territory, this press statement suddenly appeared in interstate papers, not even local papers, that such a court was to be established. There is a possibility that the Attorney-General may be arriving in Darwin later this week and I am awaiting confirmation of that. If this is the case and he does appear, lengthy discussions will take place between himself and interested parties as to the matter. However, if he is unable to come to the Northern Territory, I have been assured of some preview of the legislation and discussions with him before it proceeds.

1228 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN -

Can he now advise the House when and where the next Rural Roads Conference will be held?

ANSWER

The advice that I have from the Department of the Northern Territory is that, subject to possible monetary restrictions, the conference is hoped to be held in September in Katherine.

1229 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING -

Can he advise if there will be another residential land auction in Darwin this year?

ANSWER

I am unaware of any further proposals to hold a Government land auction in Darwin this year. From my understanding of the number of available residential sites, I would be extremely doubtful that such an auction could be held.

1230 Mr MANUELL to Mr TUXWORTH -

Is he aware of any continuing negotiations between the Magellan Oil group of companies and the Government in relation to the establishment of an oil refinery in Alice Springs and, if so have there been any further developments towards the establishment of that refinery?

ANSWER

I am aware that the company and the Department of National Resources in Canberra have held discussions over the past six to eight weeks to overcome problems of well-head price for their product and the distribution of the product from the Mereenie fields and the Palm Valley fields at Alice Springs. The last information I had was several days ago from the Department of National Resources who said that there are no problems so far as the Government is concerned holding back the development of the refinery. It is now a matter of pure economics as to whether the company can go ahead.

1231 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON -

Can he advise me when the street lighting in the northern suburbs area will be restored - to be more specific, in Jingili, Moil, Wagaman, Alawa, Nakara, Wanguri and Tiwi?

ANSWER

I have made some inquiries relating to the upgrading of street lighting in the northern suburbs. The situation has been quite unsatisfactory. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has a sizeable budget to be spent on upgrading the street lighting in Darwin this financial year and I understand that the major roads have a high priority in that spending. I hope to have a more detailed statement to present to the House later on in the week relating to priorities in the upgrading of street lighting in the northern suburbs.

1232 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING -

The honourable Executive Member indicated that so far as he was aware no further auctions of land by the Government could be expected in Darwin for the rest of this year and I would therefore ask him whether he or the Government is doing anything to encourage the L.J. Hooker Development Corporation to get on with the subdivision of the Brinkin area which has been held up now for the last 5 or 6 years.

ANSWER

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has taken an active line in pursuing with the Department of the Northern Territory discussions with the Hooker Corporation for the recommencement of their lease development. I am aware that the Chairman of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has made personal representations to the Hooker Corporation and I believe that we should see the fruits of their efforts in the near future.

1233 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK -

At the sittings held on 24 February I directed a question without notice to the Executive Member regarding the Tiwi Mothers' Home. At that time he replied that the various authorities were experiencing construction problems mainly in airconditioning. Would the honourable member please tell me what the situation is regarding the Tiwi Mothers' Home as the airconditioning should have been repaired by now.

ANSWER

I can tell the honourable member quite a deal about the Tiwi Mothers' Home and I refer him to pages 403 and 404 of Hansard for Thursday 3 June 1976 which details what has happened at the Tiwi Mothers' Home. My understanding now is that it should be operational as a hostel run by Aboriginal Hostels Limited.

1234 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN -

Honourable members will recall that at the last sittings of this Assembly we were somewhat concerned at the regrettable closure of the North Australia Railway. The Executive Member for Transport then indicated to us that he held some hopes that the taking of the "Darwin Trader" off the shipping route from the east coast to Darwin might be averted; there were rumours at that time that we were also to loose our one sea link to the east coast. I would like to ask the honourable member whether he can give this House any definite assurance as to the retention of the "Darwin Trader" on the shipping route from Sydney and Brisbane.

ANSWER

Rumours have persisted on this particular shipping run. I do not know where the rumours are coming from. We have had the Shadow Minister for Transport state that the ship is definitely going to be taken off the run. However, irrespective of what these people seem to think is going to happen, the Minister for Transport told me that there has been no decision whatsoever made to take the "Darwin Trader" off the run, and that any decision affecting east coast shipping will be made after the inquiry which is being conducted by the Bureau of Transport Economics, on which, as I said yesterday, I hope to make a statement later in these sittings. The situation at present is that the Minister for Transport has said that the "Darwin Trader" will be retained, pending this inquiry. Just for the record, from my own personal point of view - I believe I could be considered in some quarters to be sticking my neck out - I do not consider that the Government would leave the Northern Territory without a shipping service from the east coast.

1235 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

What is the state of the strata titles legislation which was passed through this House some time ago and when is it likely that it will be commenced?

ANSWER

Amongst the ordinances awaiting action are the Unit Titles Ordinance, the Real Property Ordinance and the Freehold Titles Ordinance and I have been advised that recommendations for assent are in motion. That is an official advice from the Department of the Northern Territory on 6 August. I have had discussions with officers of the Department of the Northern Territory with regard to the early commencement of this ordinance and I know that they are in the process of preparing the regulations that are required and the administrative system that has to be established in the Lands Branch, the Registrar-General's office and a number of other government departments. I have seen a list of bureaucratic desk passing that the applications will have to flow through and I hope to be able to influence some rationalisation of that in the next few weeks. I have been informed that it is hoped that the regulations will be presented to this Assembly at the October session and I know that members from the commercial groups that have made representation to the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory have been informed that it is hoped to see the legislation commence shortly thereafter.

1236 Mr MANUELL to Mr POLLOCK -

My question is on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Does the Acoustics Laboratory in the Darwin Hospital cater for all sections of the community or do people other than pensioners and Aborigines have to travel interstate for the fitting of hearing aids?

ANSWER

There are some administrative difficulties in relation to the provision of hearing aids to persons other than pensioners and children. This matter is one which I have been pursuing in recent weeks and I hope that, before the end of this current sittings, I should be able to give the House a full reply on the matter.

1237 Mr DONDAS to Mr SPEAKER -

Are you in a position to give information regarding the Assembly's application to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for land at Larrakeyah to be used for a new parliament house?

ANSWER

I have had some fair warning of this question. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has confirmed that the site sought for a new parliament house at Elliot Point on the Larrakeyah Peninsula is outside the Aboriginal land claim area and that he has no objection to the use of the land for any other purpose. However, the site in question is still part of a defence reserve and I have written to the Minister for Defence asking which parts of the reserve not required by his department will be excised from the reserve and when. On assent of these details, it will then be possible for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to proceed with initial siting investigations.

1238 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

When is it expected that Housing Commission homes sales will recommence and has he any indication as to whether the Housing Commission intends to sell partially destroyed homes if the would-be purchaser can satisfy the commission that he can rebuild them in a satisfactory manner?

ANSWER

At the last session of this Assembly, I advised that the Majority Party has prepared draft legislation to enable the Northern Territory Housing Commission to institute a new home sales scheme. The Commonwealth Government and the state governments are currently renegotiating the terms and conditions that apply to the sale of housing commission homes Australia-wide. New rules have to be established with regard to the low interest funds that are made available to housing commissions and any subsequent sale of houses are naturally affected by the availability of this finance. I have discussed the matter with both the Minister for the Northern Territory and the Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development. The Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development has promised a reply by next Monday with regard to the implications of my draft bill and hopefully I will then be in a position either to introduce it or to announce the areas in which amendment will be necessary.

With regard to the sale of homes in a substandard condition, I have discussed this with the Chairman of the Housing Commission and I know that commission proposes to look at this after the legislation has been agreed to. There are implications here because most of the home purchasers will be buying the homes with considerable mortgages to the Housing Commission and, if the properties were sold in a substandard state, there could be equity problems and subsequent covenants required to get them up to some form of cyclone proof standard. However, the commission is receptive to looking at the idea and they have promised that they will give it thorough investigation.

1239 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr TAMBLING -

Is it a fact that certain people renting housing accommodation from the Department of the Northern Territory at the 13-mile have been asked for large amounts of back rent even though the officers of the department have previously advised that the rent would only be charged from dates after tenancy agreements were finalised?

ANSWER

I am aware of one instance where a large account has been rendered for back rent with regard to a property previously occupied by a person even before the cyclone, taking the levy for rent back to July 1975, even though the notification for that rent was not issued till April 1976. The tenants were under the impression that departmental officers had stated that their rent would become due from the date of notification and are therefore embarrassed by the sizeable accounts they have received. I have discussed this matter with officers of the Department of the Northern Territory and have been advised that it will be necessary for the back rent to be paid. However, they have indicated that the Finance Branch of the department would be prepared to discuss suitable terms and conditions for the repayment of those funds.

1240 Mr VALE to Mr PERRON -

Can he advise when water and electricity will be connected to the school at Tea Tree?

ANSWER

The upgrading of power and water supplies at Tea Tree was deferred from the 1975-76 works program during the cut-back period. Funds will be made available this year and the water supply is expected to be completed by the end of next year. Permanent electricity should be connected to the school at Tea Tree - I believe the question is mainly concerned with the school itself - before the commencement of the 1977 school year. In light of the fact that the new school at Tea Tree is due for completion later this year and may in actual fact take pupils this year, funds have been made available to install a temporary water supply and temporary power to the school as soon as it opens. The temporary water supply would be available to the town later as an emergency fire fighting facility.

1241 Mr MANUELL to Mr POLLOCK -

Is it a fact that no resident psychiatrist is in attendance at the Alice Springs Hospital at present nor has there been one this year and, if so, what steps are being taken to make provision for a psychiatrist resident at the Alice Springs Hospital?

ANSWER

It is correct that there is no resident psychiatrist at the Alice Springs Hospital at the present time. Arrangements have been made by the Department of Health to have a visiting psychiatric service from Adelaide on about three days a month. This is a temporary measure but the department has been able to gain a position in the establishment for a psychiatrist and also an understudy and it is endeavouring to recruit persons for those positions. They are not easy to get but, when they are available, they will be engaged.

1242 Mr WITHNALL to Miss ANDREW -

I bring to the honourable member's notice the existence of a noisy, riotous and disruptive camping group on Kahlín beach and I ask if she will take steps to see that there are regular police patrols with a view to keeping the peace in this area?

ANSWER

I shall draw it to the attention of the Commissioner.

1243 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING -

How many sited vacant caravans does the Northern Territory Housing Commission and the Department of the Northern Territory have and also is he able to tell me how many caravans do they have in their various stores?

ANSWER

I will seek the information and make it available to the honourable member.

1244 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW -

Could she advise why some students at Casuarina High School have been told to sit as external students for the matriculation examination?

ANSWER

I am unable to answer that question at the moment; I will obtain the information later in the day.

1245 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS -

Is he aware that a further case of alleged illegal branding of cattle has occurred in the Finnis River Station and the Wagait Reserve area and can he advise me if there are any positive steps being taken to establish a fenced boundary between these two areas or does any other solution to the problem exist?

ANSWER

I am aware that there are some allegations concerning misuse of brands in the Wagait area but whether it is actually illegal or not has not been established and it would probably take a court case to establish it. It should be borne in mind that at least one Aboriginal group who have been carrying out certain activities with buffalo on the Wagait Reserve have a brand registered for that area. This Wagait problem has been with us for many years and I have spoken on

it in this chamber on many occasions. As far as trying to reach a solution to the problem, it is a very complicated matter. There are several cattle stations adjoining the reserve which claim to have an interest in livestock on the reserve and no doubt some of the populations of unbranded cattle on that reserve emanated from those adjoining stations. There is a large herd of buffalo also throughout the reserve and there are 3 Aboriginal groups now who lay claim to some part of the reserve.

The situation is not unlike that which occurred on the Daly River several years ago when there was a conflict between Aboriginal groups with rights on the Daly Reserve and Tipperary and Elizabeth Downs Station. That situation was resolved that time by a meeting chaired by the Department of the Northern Territory between the interested parties and their legal advisers and agreement was reached and it was set down on paper. It seems that the same kind of treatment is needed in this case which is even slightly more complicated because the boundary between the reserve and Finnis River Station is the Finnis River for quite a length of that boundary. This river is agreed by all parties to be unfenceable. Therefore some adjustment to the boundary either by agreement or by some means would be necessary to get a satisfactory resolution of the problem. I can inform the Assembly that a meeting of interested parties took place on Monday this week at the initiative of a police sergeant who has some responsibilities in this area. My understanding of that meeting was that the Department of the Northern Territory and the lands administration did not take a sufficient role in that meeting by chairing it and bringing the parties together and trying to find a positive solution. I believe that the department needs to do more in this regard and I will be using my best efforts see that they continue with these negotiations, that the department does take its proper role and that a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

1246 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS -

Can he tell the Assembly whether at the recent meeting of federal and state ministers for Primary Industry rural reconstruction was discussed and, if so, what was the outcome of these discussions?

ANSWER

The recent meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council of Commonwealth and State Ministers threw no new light on the rural reconstruction finance situation. As I mentioned in an answer to a question yesterday, this is the one point of the 4 main points raised by the Cattlemen's Association which has not yet been satisfactorily resolved. The position briefly is that rural reconstruction finance, which is a particular segment of the financial support area has been established at levels which will apply up until the end of this calendar year. As far as the states are concerned, I understand that those levels are satisfactory. It is only in the case of the Northern Territory where I believe that the level is not satisfactory. We will not know exactly what the final level of assistance will be until after the Budget, so we will know as of Wednesday next week what the final figure for rural reconstruction is. Then we will know for sure whether it is unsatisfactory, but I envisage that interested people will have to continue pressing the Government for additional funds to make sure that all the needs are covered.

1247 Mr WITHNALL to Miss ANDREW -

In view of many complaints about delays experienced in the Territory by members of the public in having legal services rendered without undue delay, can the honourable member say to whom any official complaints should be directed?

ANSWER

The Attorney-General.

1248 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING -

Can he indicate to me the policy that the Department of the Northern Territory will adopt to dispose of the caravans that are no longer required for temporary accommodation?

ANSWER

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission have requested information of the Department of the Northern Territory, as the client department, to advise what its continuing requirement is for the necessity to maintain transient or temporary type accommodation for Darwin. It is hoped that the Department of the Northern Territory, either at the next DRC meeting or the one following, will be in a position to advise its continuing requirement with regard to demountables and caravans. At that stage the DRC will advise the Minister on future implications about ownership of these assets.

1249 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK -

Has there been any discussion on charging Aborigines on settlements for electricity and water rates, taking into consideration that a form of revenue could be forthcoming knowing that the majority are now on award wages?

ANSWER

The manner of charging all persons living on Aboriginal reserves for service charges such as water and electricity has been under consideration by the Government for some time. This matter goes back some 18 months ago and was under quite active consideration before the change of government. The whole matter is still unresolved. There are many problems as to the reliability of the supply and in Darwin at Bagot and in Alice Springs at Amoonguna, European staff members are at present charged for electricity from the town supplies. The matter is being considered.

1250 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr TAMBLING -

I refer to the Town Planning Board's revised plans in respect of the Araluen residential subdivision. Is he aware that there is widespread and angrily expressed dissatisfaction to that plan by the people of Alice Springs, its community leaders and by the committee of the Araluen Foundation for Arts and Cultural Conservation? If he is so aware, what is his present personal policy to that subdivisional proposal? Will he give an undertaking that the Administrator's Council will not deal with the matter until he personally has discussed the matter with the people of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

I am aware that there is considerable electoral and community response to the proposals at the Araluen area. I have received representation in this regard. It is not proper for me to talk about the course of action that will be taken by the Administrator's Council but I can assure the honourable member that I will be speaking with leaders in the Alice Springs community myself and pursuing the matter further before final decisions are taken.

1251 Mr WITHNALL to Mr POLLOCK -

I bring to the honourable member's attention the existence of an unauthorised camping area on the old golf course at East Point and the complete inadequacy of the 2 toilets there to service the people who are there. Will the Government, including the Department of Health, take steps to protect the public from any disease which such overcrowding may create?

ANSWER

Another term for this particular place other than "unauthorised camping ground" is a temporary caravan park initiated through other channels in Darwin. The Department of Health is extremely concerned about the matter. The director has had Government representatives there and expressed his concern. At times, I do think that that concern in certain areas falls on deaf ears but it is a matter which is under constant review by the department. It is taking all action it can to cover the matter.

1252 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW -

Are there any plans for the establishment of a police station on the Roper River Settlement?

ANSWER

I am unable to answer that question. I will endeavour to obtain the information later in the day.

1253 Mr MANUELL to Mr TUXWORTH -

Is it a fact that the proposed establishment of an oil refinery in Alice Springs and the associated oil field development from which it would be supplied is delayed pending the clarification of the proposed Aboriginal land rights legislation?

ANSWER

Yes, this is one of the inhibiting factors in the development in the Magellan oil refinery and oil and gas field, and it depends entirely on whether the Aboriginal Land Bill provisions will have a retrospective effect on existing mining titles in the Northern Territory. This is yet to be decided by Federal Cabinet.

1254 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN -

What steps are being taken to upgrade the repair to the Casuarina Fire Station?

ANSWER

About 6 months ago, an amount of \$8,000 was spent to tidy up the Casuarina Fire Station and I have been advised by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission that they expect to let a contract for the rehabilitation of the Casuarina Fire Station towards the end of September, I believe the amount of money involved is about \$80,000.

1255 Mr VALE to Mr PERRON -

Can he advise when another date has been set that all premises in Katherine are to be connected to sewerage and, if so, what is that date?

ANSWER

There has been no particular date set when all premises in Katherine should be connected to the sewerage system. The situation as it applies generally throughout the Territory is that, when an area is sewered, the blocks serviced by the main trunks from then on are charged sewerage rates. Persons having septic systems at that time can continue to maintain their septic systems until such time as the Department of Health declares that the system has been overloaded or is unhealthy in any way. The Department of Health can condemn a septic system with an order which is issued under the Sewerage Regulations that a person must connect to the sewerage system and that order specifies the particular time - usually 6 months or so - that that connection must be made.

1256 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING -

How many loans have the Home Finance Trustee approved to the end of July? What is the total value of those approvals? How many loans does the Home Finance Trustee have yet to approve and what is the waiting time for a loan to be approved?

ANSWER

As at the end of July, 603 loans had been approved with a commitment value of just over \$18m. As at 6 August, there were 449 applications on hand and not yet to the approval stage. With regard to the time delay for approval, the current time from the stage when all requirements have been lodged with the Home Finance Trustee to the date of approval is between 4 to 5 weeks.

1257 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN -

Can he advise us of the legal requirement for taxi drivers and passengers to wear seat belts and also has the taxi driver the right to enforce passengers to wear seat belts?

ANSWER

I am not too sure how I should answer this question. There appears to be some sort of problem with regard to making a legal statement or a legal opinion contrary to Standing Orders. I will speak to the honourable member for Stuart later.

1258 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW -

Is it true that children from Moil Primary School will be unable to attend that school till the middle of next year?

ANSWER

I believe that Moil School has to be upgraded to meet cyclone requirements and, in fact, the roof has to come off and certain other repairs have to take place. I believe that in the last 3 weeks of this year the lower classes in the school will be using classrooms at Wagaman School and that for the first term of next year grades 3 to 7 will be bussed daily to Nakara School.

1259 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH -

Honourable members may be aware that the Premier of South Australia, Mr Don Dunstan, whilst he adopts a strong conservationist attitude is nevertheless a man with a shrewd business sense. I understand that he has been approaching overseas cartels with a view to financing the establishment in South Australia of a uranium enrichment plant. What is being done to ensure that any uranium enrichment plant is established in the Northern Territory to treat Northern Territory uranium? If we are to suffer as some would call it the rape of our resources we might as well get all the benefits of the violation,

ANSWER

Honourable members would be aware that earlier this year the Minister for National Resources, Mr Anthony, asked private enterprise in Australia to make bids for the treatment of the uranium oxide into the stage of uranium hexafluoride so that the benefit of processing this product could be kept in Australia. I am aware that the Premier of South Australia has been making overtures so that this enrichment plant may be placed in his state. Inquiries that I have made would indicate that any such processing plant would require enormous amounts of electricity, up to 500 megawatts, for its operation and that such a plant would most likely be situated adjacent to a coal field or an enormous oil and gas reserve, neither of which we seem to have in the Northern Territory. It would appear that Queensland and Western Australia would be in the front running. The decision on where it will be put is entirely up to the Federal Government. Unless the economics of the situation indicate that the Northern Territory could provide the enormous amount of electricity required at the right price, there would be little likelihood of our getting such a facility in the Territory.

1260 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN -

What steps are being taken to provide reasonable radio reception to isolated areas in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Over the last 12 or 18 months, I have received quite a lot of information concerning the installation of 200 kilowatt shortwave transmitters for the ABC. I wrote to Senator Bishop when he was the Minister and received conflicting answers about the location and the actual whereabouts of the transmitters. Some people seemed to think they were already in Australia and the Minister said that they had not arrived. I made a similar representation to the present Minister who has advised me that they have not been delivered as yet but they should be delivered shortly.

They have not decided where these transmitters will be installed. The original idea was to install them on Cox Peninsula but Cox Peninsula has been a bit of a dead duck since the cyclone although they would be operational if somebody gave them some aerials. That is a matter I have also taken up with the Minister. They are not too sure that they could use Cox Peninsula and I have heard that the possibility is that one could be placed in Darwin to look after the northern area and another one in Alice Springs. With the installation of these particular transmitters, the local ABC programs should be beamed to all parts of the Northern Territory and I am quite hopeful that this will be undertaken in the near future, although there has been a lot of procrastination to date.

1261 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK -

Is it a fact that the lady dealing with adoption procedures in the Northern Territory on behalf of the relevant department is presently based in Adelaide? If so, when is she expected to return to the Northern Territory? Does her residence in Adelaide place an unfair burden on people wishing to adopt children in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The statements which the honourable member for Nightcliff has made are news to me as my understanding is that adoptions are basically handled here in Darwin, and from my association with the department this has been the case. There is an officer of the department here in Darwin - I will not name her - handling these matters because I have been assisting her in some ways.

1262 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING -

Is it true that the DRC has rejected offers from private people to use private land as temporary caravan parks? If so, how many offers have been rejected and on what basis have they been rejected? Also, what is the cost difference between establishing temporary caravan parks on public land such as the Tiwi Oval and the old East Point Golf Course and private allotments of the same size? If the answer to my first question is no, will he immediately make representations to the DRC to advertise urgently that the DRC is prepared to look at offers from the private sector to alleviate the problem of insufficient sites for caravans?

ANSWER

I have had forewarning of the question but have not been able to obtain the total information sought by the honourable member for Ludmilla. However, I am in a position to give him an indication of some facts that may be of assistance to him. The only areas of private land that have been considered by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for use as temporary caravan parks are sites that were raised by commissioners at a meeting, private land such as the Sea Breeze Hotel, the Fannie Bay Hotel and similar sites. I am not aware of any applications by private residential owners to the Reconstruction Commission to use their own sites for temporary caravan parks. However I will have this matter investigated and advise the honourable member further.

1263 Mr MANUELL to Miss ANDREW -

Is it a fact that the construction of the new school at Tea Tree represents a gross departmental error in that the capacity provided by the new school far exceeds the need of students in the foreseeable future? What plans, if any, exist to utilise the facility beyond what is needed for schooling purposes?

ANSWER

I will seek further information regarding this question and inform the House at a later date.

1264 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr POLLOCK -

Recently there has been quite a deal of controversy, as all honourable members would be aware, in relation to proposed changes to the Medibank system. I ask the honourable Executive Member whether he has any information which may be of benefit to people in the Territory in relation to the proposed new Medibank system for the Territory?

ANSWER

The matter of Medibank for the Northern Territory is a relatively simple matter as is, I believe, the whole new arrangement. All persons in the Northern Territory are covered by Medibank until such times as they decide, for personal or economical reasons, that they want to opt out and join a private fund or join the Medibank private scheme. Later today, I am hopeful of introducing legislation which will amend the Hospital and Medical Services Ordinance to accommodate the new provisions of Medibank as they will affect the Northern Territory. Basically, as I said, all persons will be covered under the standard Medibank coverage which is the 2.5% tax levy on persons up to \$300 for a married couple or \$150 for a single person. This will entitle all persons to free medical attention in hospitals as a standard patient; they will be able to receive free treatment by a doctor at a government hospital or, if they attend a private practitioner, 85% of the set fee for medical services provided by a doctor. If, of course, a doctor bulk-bills, they do not really have to pay anything. If however a person decides he wants to be treated in hospital by a private practitioner or wants intermediate or private ward facilities provided by those doctors, they will then need to take out private insurance either through the Medibank scheme or with a private insurance company, whichever they chose. There will be a charge made against those persons through their funds for an intermediate coverage of \$40 per day for a hospital bed or \$60 for private.

In addition, for persons who are insured but are treated as standard patients in a hospital, there will be a \$20 a day charge made against their fund.

It also has been proposed that persons who have taken out private insurance who attend at government hospitals or clinics be charged \$5 per day a visit. However, I have made representations to the Minister to have this particular fee not proceeded with in the Northern Territory. He has made certain recommendations to the Prime Minister and I am quite confident that that fee will not be imposed in the Northern Territory.

1265 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK -

How will Medibank affect 2 income families?

ANSWER

I thought I had covered that but I will make it quite clear that under Medibank no family can pay more than \$300 for a standard coverage. For 2 income families, there is a limit of \$300, for a single person \$150. It can be less than \$300 depending on your income. Of course, a 2 income family would be above \$300 in the 2.5% levy but \$300 is the limit.

1266 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK -

Does the department intend to proceed with the purchase of the Nomad aircraft and, if so, when is the first delivery expected? Is he also aware of press reports that the individual cost of this aircraft is now in the order of \$0.5m?

ANSWER

I am unaware of press reports in relation to the cost structure of the aircraft. The Government has decided that it will buy the Nomad aircraft for the Department of Health and this much against the grain of the department, I might add. It has fought this tooth and nail but unfortunately Cabinet has decided on 2 occasions that the Department of Health Aerial Medical Service in the Northern Territory will have the Nomad aircraft and at this stage that is what the decision is. It is a decision which has been imposed upon the department. In relation to the delivery, I am advised that the delivery of the aircraft is now indefinite in view of recent events and the department is taking appropriate measures to ensure that aircraft are available for the continuance of the service. As I mentioned the other day, some of the Dove aircraft which are in service at the moment are due to be retired later this year - November, I think, one and about April-May for another - because they will be just out of hours and beyond economic reconditioning; the department is looking around and seeing what other aircraft it can either hire or lease to ensure that the service is properly and adequately maintained.

1267 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS -

Has the Australian Government completed the task of cooperating with the Indonesian Government in eradicating foot and mouth disease on the island of Bali?

ANSWER

I understand that the problem of foot and mouth disease in the Bali area has been overcome but I will check the facts with my departmental advisers and confirm that to the honourable member later in the sittings.

1268 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

Is he aware that in the last week the South Australian Government is reputed to have received a grant from the Federal Government of \$20m for national highway development including upgrading of the Stuart Highway? If so is the honourable member aware of what proportion of that \$20m does the South Australian Government intend placing towards the Stuart Highway development?

ANSWER

I have been in touch with the Federal Minister for Transport on this matter and this morning received a call from the secretary of the department and he advised me that the money had been granted to South Australia. However, unfortunately for the Northern Territory, the amount of money contained in the grant relating to the Stuart Highway is only for maintenance, so it appears that this financial year nothing will be done for the improvement of the Stuart Highway south of the border. He also added that there has been some investigation into the possible route of the new road when and if it finally starts; there are several options as to which course the road will follow. One is through the defence base at Woomera; this would cut about 60 miles off the length of the road which would be a quite significant saving in money. However, the analysing of these options is now under way and, hopefully, they will decide where the road can go and then possibly some money will be made available, hopefully in the next financial year, to enable them to begin the construction of that road to bring it up to an all-weather highway.

1269 Mr STEELE to Mr RYAN -

When will the dirt heaps at the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile depot be shifted? Has the work commenced and, if so, when will it be completed?

ANSWER

This inquiry has been placed upon me apart from the question that the honourable member for Ludmilla has asked. Several weeks ago I had a letter from some people asking me the same question and I contacted the DRC and was advised that they were going to cease stockpiling of material. I did notice that within the next week that trucks were still dumping material there. I will take the matter up again with the DRC. I did speak to them about the fact that they were still dumping material there and there seems to be a little bit of confusion as to exactly what is going to take place out there. But I think it is important that it ceases to be used as a dump because quite obviously the dust and rubbish that is being blown onto the people living just behind the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile depot is rather inconvenient.

1270 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr PERRON -

Could it be advantageous for Katherine and Tennant Creek to engage their own local government experts and advise the Department of the Northern Territory of the terms and conditions under which these towns would accept local government?

ANSWER

I believe that the question related to the town management boards in Katherine and Tennant Creek engaging their own consultants although the words "town management board" were not used. No doubt it would be advantageous if the town management boards did engage a consultant to advise them on the aspects of local government in those small centres. However, the constitution of the town management boards under the ordinance forbids them from engaging anyone at all because they have no financial status whatsoever. The boards are purely advisory boards to the Administrator and cannot engage any staff whatsoever. They have no budget at all.

I believe that the Government would be responsive to an application from either of the town management boards to supply an expert on local government to advise on any questions pertaining to the transfer of local authority to the area. It is a matter for negotiation between the town management boards and the Government and I think that the Government would recognise its responsibility to give every assistance possible to the boards and to answer any questions they would have as to the effect of any proposals that they might put forward.

1271 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW -

At present, there is only one person engaged in serving process and executing process and warrants out of the Supreme Court and local courts of Darwin. When will appointments of up to 4 bailiffs be made to the Supreme Court and local courts?

ANSWER

Whilst the department is most concerned with the matter, I am unable to give any definite dates.

1272 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK -

Is it correct, as indicated in the NT News, that it is the action of this Assembly that has put the future of the regional councils in doubt?

ANSWER

Quite definitely no. The future role of the regional councils in the Australian Assistance Plan was put in doubt some couple of months ago when the Minister for Social Security announced that the Commonwealth would no longer fund these organisations beyond the 30 June 1977. In consequence, the states and the Territory have to decide what future role these organisations have to play in the community. If anything, it is the setting up of the select committee which will possibly secure the future of these organisations, rather than wipe them off the books. I think that in some ways yesterday's reports were inaccurate, inaccurately presented at least to the public, and that aspect of our decision has been lost in a mire of other big letters.

1273 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK -

I ask a series of questions relating to a reply to a question in 1974 which is going back a way. I refer to an intention by the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to purchase an Aboriginal interest in the Perkins Shipping and Mining Corporation. Can the honourable member

inform me if this interest has been purchased and to what extent; whether the services as a result have been improved; whether the Darwin terminal is improved and landing facilities at outstations have been improved; and how many Aboriginal people are employed on the barge side of the enterprise? The Minister said that he felt the concept of a partnership in which skilled non-Aboriginals provide expertise in the early stages of such projects should guarantee their success. Can the honourable member advise me whether the Aboriginals have assumed full control by now of all operations and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

The situation is at the moment, as I understand it, that a holding company, known as the Arnhem Transport Company which is Aboriginal owned, has a 75 per cent interest in the Perkins Company - the full title eludes my memory. With relation to the upgrading of facilities and so forth, I do not know what has happened in relation to the Darwin wharf area but with relation to Aboriginal communities and settlements I believe that a program to upgrade these facilities is suffering from financial restraints. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has prepared a program, but apart from the planning stages of that program at this stage nothing material has arisen to improve the facilities at outstations. There are 5 Aboriginal persons employed in the company; 2 as apprentice mechanics, 2 deck boys and 1 plant operator. Beyond that at this stage I am unable to provide the member with further information.

1274 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW -

My question concerns yesterday's press report concerning trouble at Rabbit Flat. Can she advise if she has any further information concerning what caused the police to be flown out to that remote area?

ANSWER

I am sorry, I have been unable to get any further information other than what has come over the press. However, I am liaising with the Commissioner and I hope to be able to provide the information later in the day.

1275 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr RYAN -

Edmund Road opposite Skewes' store at Humpty Doo needs rebuilding. Has the work started on this road and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

I have been in touch with the department about Edmund Road, I was asked this question by the honourable member for Tiwi I think at the last sittings and I thought I had obtained an answer. I spoke to the Department of Construction and they advised me that the road was damaged rather badly during the wet and some maintenance had taken place already; this is relating to grading the road to fill in the holes left from vehicles that were bogged. There has been some patching done on the more serious areas after the grading and further general patching and maintenance of the road is expected to begin in about another month.

1276 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH -

This question follows on a question I asked of the honourable member yesterday. He said that it would be unlikely that the Northern Territory would see the setting up of a uranium enrichment plant here to process uranium, if it is in fact mined in the Northern Territory, because of a likely shortage of power to run such a plant which apparently requires huge reserves of electricity. Has any consideration been given by him or by the Mines or Resources Branch to the establishment of an atomic power station, not only to operate the uranium enrichment plant but to supply the requirements of Darwin for the future, particularly when consideration is now apparently being given to a coal-fired power station on Quarantine Island in East Arm?

ANSWER

The concept of an atomic power station has been considered in some quarters but it is highly unlikely that it could operate in an area and environment such as Darwin because an atomic power station as such would turn out much more power than the whole of the Northern Territory and a uranium processing plant could consume, and it would not be economic from that point of view. The economics relating to setting up a processing plant here will not be a decision of ourselves or the Atomic Energy Commission but primarily of business; it is a matter of whether you take 500,000 tons of coal to Darwin to treat 3,000 tons of uranium oxide or take 3,000 tons of uranium oxide to the coal basin, and it is highly probable that the latter would be the most attractive procedure.

1277 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN -

Will he direct me to that part of the law which will explain whether it is the responsibility of a taxi driver to ensure that his passengers wear seat belts?

ANSWER

I will direct him to that part of the law; it is in the library, Mr Speaker, in the ordinance.

1278 Mr KENTISH to Mr PERRON -

For a considerable time, I have asked questions about the erection of a light on the Stuart Highway at the entrance to Farrell Crescent and I was pleased that on the last sitting day in June to notice that a lamp had been erected on a pole. When is the lamp likely to be lit or activated?

ANSWER

I will seek the information and supply an answer during these sittings.

1279 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS -

Has the honourable member any idea if and when his National Parks and Wildlife Ordinance passed through this Assembly will receive assent?

ANSWER

The nearest I could get to that would be in the near future. The Minister for the Environment was in Darwin recently and discussions were

held with him by 2 of our executive members. I subsequently saw him in Sydney. There appears to be no conflict as far as the Department of Environment is concerned between our ordinance and the national act to prevent the commencement of this ordinance. There are some Treasury and financial considerations which will have to be finalised in discussion. I would hope that it will be assented to and commenced in the near future.

1280 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN -

There is a shortage of police in the Territory. Has the Motor Vehicle Registry considered setting up a motor vehicles registration branch at Nhulunbuy to relieve the police work in that area?

ANSWER

I do not know whether it has been considered; I will find out and advise the Assembly in the sittings.

1281 - 1284 See Questions on Notice

1285 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr POLLOCK -

Has his attention been drawn to the remarks of the honourable Mr Justice Foster in the Supreme Court concerning the lack of psychiatric services at Alice Springs?

ANSWER

I did hear the remarks of the Judge of the Supreme Court. As I did mention yesterday, the Department of Health has made application to the Public Service Board for a position of psychiatrist at Alice Springs. This application was made last month. There is a position of psychiatric registrar at Alice Springs but this is vacant at the moment. I am advised that it is difficult to fill that position without the more senior position of psychiatrist being filled at the hospital. The psychiatric registrar position arose because a person from Melbourne University did come to Alice Springs for 12 months during a training period but it is quite difficult to get him replaced without the more senior position being available. The absence of these services at Alice Springs is causing the department some concern and it is hopeful of having the position created and filled.

1286 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

Can he advise me whether the two juvenile facilities promised by the Minister are in fact on the capital works program for 1976-77?

ANSWER

Design work is in progress for the repair and construction of Essington House for use as a juvenile training facility. Further study is being carried out in conjunction with the Department of the Northern Territory in relation to the juvenile security centre and provision has been made in the works program for 1976-77 for both of these works. I would also indicate that the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory has indicated in the DRC that there may possibly need to be some review of the actual use to which Essington House is put.

1287 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

Can he advise if the Deputy Secretary in his position with the DRC is aware that I have a firm undertaking from the Minister for the Northern Territory that the two juvenile facilities, one at Berrimah and one at Anula or Wulagi, will be commenced? There was no suggestion that Essington House was to be reconstructed for the purpose which it served so poorly.

ANSWER

There is no way in the world that I would endeavour to speak for Mr Dwyer. However, I will bring the honourable member's remarks to his attention.

1288 Mr MANUELL to Mr PERRON -

Are the bylaw making powers under the Local Government Ordinance defective in their present form and, secondly, has the Municipality of Alice Springs any right to the claim that it is unable to adopt any bylaws under this ordinance?

ANSWER

The section of the Local Government Ordinance relating to bylaw making powers requires considerable consolidation and refinement of expression to ensure that bylaws are valid and suitable to the needs of any council concerned. Officers of the Department of the Northern Territory in conjunction with the Corporation of the City of Darwin and the Municipality of Alice Springs are investigating various proposals for revision of this section of the ordinance. The corporation in Alice Springs' claim that they cannot introduce any bylaws under the ordinance is incorrect. Although there are no model bylaws set out in the current Local Government Ordinance, any bylaw proposed by a corporation will be checked by Crown Law to ensure that it is within the powers and consistent with the ordinance and any other ordinance in the Northern Territory.

1289 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK -

Is he able to indicate when the Block 8 cafeteria will be opened?

ANSWER

I am losing faith that it ever will be but I will endeavour to find out.

1290 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN -

The honourable member may have heard reports some few days ago that the Minister for Defence had issued an edict requiring the use for defence purposes of the present Darwin Airport terminal area within 5 years. Are planning steps now being taken to provide an alternative civilian terminal adjacent to the Darwin Airport?

ANSWER

I do not know exactly what is happening. I know that it has been planned for some time to establish a new terminal at another point on the airfield. The information reported in the media was that

the Air Force will require the present terminal area. I would like to add that where the terminal is situated at the moment is pretty unsatisfactory because it is cramped up. I do not know where they plan to shift it; there have been several suggestions as to where it might be put but I assume that this will happen in due course.

1291 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH -

What development has taken place in the Mount Isa Mines McArthur River lease?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge, there has been no further progress on those leases and there is not likely to be any until Mount Isa Mines gets title to its grounds.

1292 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr POLLOCK (by leave): The honourable member for Port Darwin asked a question the other day in relation to E coli counts at Doctors Gully. The detailed information of counts taken weekly from 22 January 1975 to 30 June 1976 is available and I ask that the answer to the question be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

BACTERIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WATER : 1975/76

DOCTORS GULLY	Coliforms /100 ml	Faecal Strep. /100 ml	Faecal Coli /100 ml
3 December	2,000	380	240
10 December	2,500	430	100
17 December	1,400	280	650
24 December (nil report)			
31 December (nil report)			
7 January	650	130	210
14 January	170	180	140
21 January	27,000	2,800	500
28 January	430	150	80
4 February	280	70	50
11 February	960	154	150
18 February	290	630	250
25 February	28,000	2,800	1,400
3 March	3,600	1,100	170
10 March	440	70	20
17 March	4,500	170	tmtc
24 March	400	580	30
31 March	380	1,160	60
7 April	40	8	14
14 April	280	n/t	90
21 April	160	2	140
28 April	560	130	58
5 May	4	10	0
12 May	300	70	42
19 May	720	620	110
26 May	370	66	66
2 June	350	20	42
9 June	900	96	160
16 June	300	110	50

23 June	1,100	52	60
30 June	186	14	24

tmtc = too many to count

n/t = not tested

BACTERIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WATER : 1975

DOCTORS GULLY	Coliforms /100 ml	Faecal Strep. /100 ml	Faecal Coli /100ml	Temp.
22 January 1975	320	70	150	30°C
5 February	250	650	70	32°C
12 February	900	250	30	31°C
19 February	640	180	140	28°C
27 February	50	0	0	30°C
5 March	180	90	70	30°C
12 March	3,400	1,000	760	29°C
19 March	500	80	8	30°C
2 April	560	88	90	29°C
9 April	800	160	280	29°C
16 April	770	90	28	28°C
24 April	110	26	32	30°C
30 April	140	16	22	29.5°C
7 May	110	32	10	30°C
14 May	110	12	16	28°C
21 May	80	76	10	28°C
28 May	94	10	16	26°C
4 June	40	0	0	25°C
11 June	420	24	60	25°C
18 June	92	36	28	25°C
25 June	108	40	28	25°C
2 July	2	8	2	25°C
9 July	150	18	48	25°C
16 July	990	200	32	25°C
23 July	28	4	28	26°C
30 July	100	8	10	27°C
6 August	280	120	-	26.5°C
13 August	150	130	14	26.5°C
20 August	90	130	14	25.5°C
27 August	0	8	0	27°C
3 September	94	34	48	28°C
10 September	20	230	6	27.5°C
17 September	220	200	190	28.5°C
24 September	26	120	10	29°C
1 October	150	54	32	29°C
8 October	2,000	300	2,000	30°C
15 October	42	560	36	30°C
6 November	310	-	80	30°C
12 November	20	14	14	31°C
19 November	140	26	28	30°C
26 November	8	12	2	30°C

Bacteriological Quality of Recreational Waters *

Faecal coliform level
(organisms /100 ml)

Classification

2,000

Heavily polluted, water objectionable

200 - 2,000
50 - 200
50

Distinct pollution
Slight pollution
Satisfactory water

* modified from "A compilation of Australian Water Quality Criteria"
Australian Water Resources Council Technical Paper No. 7.

1293 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr PERRON (by leave): The honourable member for Port Darwin asked if I could confirm that the outfall at Doctors Gully was in fact damaged and in a most unsatisfactory condition and what steps would be taken to avert any threat to health. The restoration of Doctors Gully outfall is included in the Darwin Reconstruction Commission's 1976-77 works program; an amount of \$400,000 has been authorised and the project is to replace sections of the outfall which had been damaged by ships' anchors during cyclone Tracy.

1294 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): I wish to answer a question asked by the honourable member for Alice Springs concerning the recent air crash of the Nomad. Whilst I was speaking to the Secretary of the Department of Transport this morning I mentioned to him that I had been asked this question and he advised me that the aircraft was an experimental aircraft. It did not relate particularly to the aircraft which are being delivered in Darwin. He told me that they are presently investigating the causes of the crash. He did not intend to advise me specially when the investigation was completed but when it is completed, the findings will be released to the press.

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