

## **PART II**

### **THE QUESTION PAPER**

Questions are printed in numerical order.

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

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

758 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

- (a) Is he aware of the fact that due to Nabalco's operations at Nhulunbuy there has been irreversible damage to Drimmie Arm and extensive damage to Melville Bay?
- (b) If he is not aware of the fact, will he appraise himself of it?
- (c) If he is aware of the fact, would he advise this Assembly what measures the Department of Northern Australia is taking so that there is no further pollution?
- (d) What officers of the Department of Northern Australia are stationed at Nhulunbuy to monitor pollution? If there are any, how long have they been stationed there and what is their status?

### ANSWER

The following information was supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

- (a) Technical advice provided by the Department of the Northern Territory indicates that, due to accidental causes, some pollution has occurred. However, it could not be described as irreversible damage.

(b) See above

- (c) The Department of the Northern Territory, through its Mines Branch, has had extensive discussions with Nabalco, resulting in measures being taken by the Company to contain any caustic spillage and to ensure the security of the red mud ponds. In addition, the Department has four branches charged with monitoring responsibilities in the area. They are Forestry, Fisheries, Wildlife, Environment and National Parks Branch, Water Resources Branch, Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch and Mines Branch.

Fisheries Section of the Forestry, Fisheries, Wildlife and National Parks Branch monitors caustic levels in the cooling drain discharge on a twice daily basis, and once a month monitors the magnesium levels of inshore waters, as well as the condition of mud fauna and the characteristics of mud in the discharge from the red mud ponds. It also checks sea floor sediments.

Water Resources will operate a station that will shortly be constructed for the continuous monitoring of all effluent discharge. In the meantime it conducts water quality tests on the cooling drain effluent on a monthly basis.

Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch, per medium of the Mines Inspector, monitors soil and sand use as well as sand dune erosion.

The Mines Branch, apart from its own mining inspection responsibilities, which include checking on rehabilitation of mined land, co-ordinates the monitoring duties of the other branches.

- (d) Mines Branch has had an Inspector of Mines, who is a Mining Engineer Class 3, engaged on monitoring the whole Gove operation since January 1973. He has been permanently stationed at Gove since September 1974. This senior officer is responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring activities of all Branches.

The Fisheries Section monitoring program began in November 1970, conducted from Darwin under the direction of a Biologist Class 2. Since early 1975 officers of Fisheries have been permanently stationed at Gove and one of these, a Technical Officer Class 1, has continued to conduct the monitoring program.

Both Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch and Water Resources Branch have senior officers available to visit Gove for monitoring purposes on request from the Inspector of Mines. Officers of Water Resources have been permanently stationed at Gove since early 1975 and they will operate the monitoring station when completed.

759 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

1. With reference to beach and dune erosion at Wallaby Beach Nhulunbuy, what steps have been taken to revegetate or otherwise reinforce the Beach end of the Wallaby Beach drain?
2. With reference to the quarry at Drimmie Head (Gove), what steps have been taken to make the walls of this quarry safe?

### ANSWER

The following information was supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

1. Areas of sand behind the Wallaby Beach dunes were mined during the period of construction of the Gove plant complex and town. Mining no longer takes place there and the area is rapidly being restored by filling with dry industrial waste and replanting with chosen species of vegetation. An additional replanting was undertaken there late in 1975 to take advantage of the Wet Season rains. Nothing has been done to reinforce the beach end of the Wallaby Beach stormwater drain as, after careful monitoring, nothing has been found necessary. No erosion of either the dunes or the beach has been observed and no action to divert the stormwater drain is seen to be necessary at this time.
2. The Drimmie Head quarry was brought into a safe condition during the latter part of 1974 by Nabalco. Under the supervision of the Department of the Northern Territory's resident Inspector of Mines, the quarry walls were terraced and large rocks were removed as necessary. The quarry is now being used permanently for swimming and other recreational activities.

761 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

In relation to Melville Bay, has the Australian Government Department of Environment been advised that major pollution of the Bay has occurred from pollution from the cooling water drain because attempts to control and contain spills of highly polluting and expensive effluent at the source have proved at best only partially successful?

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### ANSWER

The following information was supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

As the Commonwealth Department of Environment has no direct legislation or control on matters of pollution and as the area is not at present subject to an Environmental Impact Statement under the provisions of the Environmental Protection (Impact of Proposals) Legislation 1974-75, that Department has not been advised on any matter relating to the potential pollution of Melville Bay.

There has been instances of caustic spills in the past and the matter has been receiving priority attention from both Nabalco and the Department of the Northern Territory. Approximately \$400,000 has already been spent and further plant modifications costing well over \$1,000,000 are being examined with a view to eliminating any further loss of caustic solution to the environment. The modifications are designed to achieve this by total containment of spent solutions within the treatment plant and tailing dam circuits.

The new dam design allows for all spent caustic solution to be pumped to the treatment plant for re-use to obtain the full benefit of expensive treatment chemicals. The pumping lines will be monitored for breaks using low-pressure sensors and automatic pump cut-outs.

### 764 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK—

What action has been taken or is being planned for the future in regard to Industrial Health referred to in the Report on the Requirements of Hospital and Medical Facilities for the Northern Territory?

### ANSWER

The following information is supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

"It is assumed that this question related to the recommendation at paragraph 7.93 of the Report of the Industry of the Inquiry into the Northern Territory Health Services prepared for the Legislative Council in August, 1972.

That recommendation related to:

- (a) Amendments to the Silicosis and Tuberculosis (Mineworkers & Prospectors) Ordinance to extend its provisions to cover pneumoconiosis;
- (b) the provisions in the Workmens Compensation Ordinance making 7B fully compensatable; and
- (c) the need for adequate legislation for control of dust diseases and compensation for such diseases.

The Department of Health is not directly concerned with workmen's compensation and these comments are therefore restricted to the occupational health aspects of the recommendation.

Amendments to the Silicosis and Tuberculosis (Mineworkers and Prospectors) Ordinance extending the provisions of that Ordinance to all forms of pneumoconiosis were, in fact, approved by the then Minister of Health and instructions issued to the Legislative Draftsman as long ago as 1970. There were delays in drafting the amendments, however, and in the meantime our investigations into the need for legislation covering all occupational dust hazards indicated that little purpose would be served by the essentially stop-gap measures which those amendments represented—particularly as the Federal Government had announced its intention to introduce a national "no-fault" compensation scheme within the near future.

In February, 1974 the Legislative Draftsman was asked to disregard the instructions for the amendments to the Silicosis and Tuberculosis (Mineworkers and Prospectors) Ordinance and forewarned of the intention to proceed with more comprehensive legislation covering all occupational dust hazards. Unfortunately, since then, little progress has been made with this proposed new legislation.

This is primarily due to the need to concentrate on legislative proposals of a more urgent nature, however it is also partly due to the need to correlate the legislation to compensation provisions in other legislation and this has been made difficult pending final acceptance of the national compensation scheme proposal.

The present situation then is proposals for new legislation imposing controls over occupational dust hazards are being prepared, however because of other demands on our resources and the need to relate the proposals to the possible basic change in the compensation system, it is unlikely that the proposals will be finalised for some time."

### 770 Mr PERRON to Mr RYAN—

1. Where does the Darwin Fire Brigade get its self-contained breathing apparatus cylinders recharged?
2. What standard does the air have to meet and how often is it tested?
3. Are there any Government facilities in Darwin where the public can have compressed air analysed?

### ANSWER

The following information was supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

1. The Darwin Fire Brigade recharges their own portable breathing apparatus cylinders from three large cylinders coupled together. The compressed air is obtained from C.I.G.
2. The standard is that set by the Australian Department of Health—mainly water content. The Fire Brigade does not test the quality of the air but accepts C.I.G. products as meeting the Health requirements.
3. There are currently no Government of Commercial facilities in Darwin for the analysis of compressed air for the public. Samples would be sent south for analysis.

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803 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr TUXWORTH—

At what stage are plans for the development of the proposed new Ayer's Rock Village?

### ANSWER

The following information is supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

"On 21 August 1975 six selected town planning consultants were engaged by the Department to undertake the development of preliminary proposals for Ayers Rock Tourist Village.

A sub-committee of the Ayers Rock Advisory Committee will be analysing these six preliminary proposals on 4-6 February 1976 and their recommendation on selection of the final consultant will be considered for endorsement by the full Ayers Rock Advisory Committee at its next meeting, currently scheduled for 18 February 1976.

It is envisaged that selected town planning consultants will be engaged to undertake the full brief in March 1976 and the final report, including the Environment Impact Statement and Town Planning Scheme should be completed by the end of January 1977."

804 Mr ROBERTSON to Dr LETTS—

Recently, a study was undertaken to locate an area near Alice Springs suitable for market gardening. Has this study been completed, if so, what were the findings; if the study is not yet complete, when is it expected to be completed, and the results announced?

### ANSWER

The following information is supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

The Water Resources Branch is engaged on two separate projects aimed at providing water for irrigated agriculture at Alice Springs.

One seeks to prove a supply having the high water quality necessary for horticulture. This market-garden type activity desirably should be close to markets and the labour supply. The study is not complete. The final report will not be available until 1977.

The other aims at defining an area of suitable soils having access to water adequate for the irrigation of fodder crops. Three possible areas have been examined. A fourth area in the vicinity of James Range south of Alice Springs is on the draft investigation programme for 1976-77. A report would be available mid 1977.

805 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

There is a telephone service connected to Iwupataka (Jay Creek):—

- When was this service connected?
- At what cost and at whose cost was this service installed?
- Since January 1975, on how many occasions has the service been unserviceable?
- Is the Telecommunication Commission taking any action to improve the reliability of the service?

### ANSWER

The following information is supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

- The telephone service to Jay Creek was connected on 7.12.74. The cost for the connection of this service was \$1,820.00 and the cost was borne by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
- Since January, 1975 the telephone has been unserviceable during the following periods:  
5.8.75 to 22.8.75; 21.10.75 to 12.11.75; 13.12.75 to date.
- The Telecommunication Commission has advised that they are doing everything in their power to improve the reliability of the service, but it is not known when the service will be restored.

806 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

- Does the Department of Northern Territory intend proceeding with the Brinkin Sub-division?
- Has the Department of Northern Territory issued a Lease to the developers?
- If so, what area is involved and what are the conditions of such lease?

### ANSWER

The following information is supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

Parts 1 and 2

After negotiations with the Department and consideration of applications for a Town Lands subdivision lease advertised on 14 July 1971, the Minister for the Northern Territory granted a lease to Hooker Estates in May 1974.

Part 3

The area of the lease is 188.6 hectares and the conditions are as set out in the brief below—

- The company will use the land only for the purpose for which it was leased, viz, for the purpose of subdividing Lot 6247 Town of Nightcliff in accordance with plans and specifications as may be approved by the Administrator.

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- (ii) That it shall complete the works specified below within five years of the commencement of the lease or for such further period as may be allowed by the Administrator.
  - (iii) The company shall construct
    - all roads and drainage works within the subdivision in accordance with Plan No. UD15/36 previously approved by the Administrator
    - all water and sewerage reticulation works within the subdivision in accordance with a plan approved by the Administrator
    - a lake on the site delineated in Plan No. UD15/36 previously approved by the Administrator
    - the lake and the revetment wall and other lake edge treatment which works shall meet structural, aesthetic and maintenance standards that are satisfactory to the Administrator in all respects
    - a bridge and weir at a location approved by the Administrator
    - develop parklands, playing fields and lakeside recreation areas on the sites delineated in Plan No. UD15/36 previously approved by the Administrator
    - and provide a site for a kindergarten (pre-school) on the location delineated in Plan No. UD15/36 previously approved by the Administrator.
- The lease also contains conditions regarding the construction of internal roads and parts of external roads as well as for the handover of the item above to the Commonwealth on completion.

807 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

With reference to the Renal Dialysis machine located at the Darwin Hospital—

- (a) when was this machine installed at the hospital;
- (b) what was the cost of the acquisition and installation of this machine;
- (c) were all costs incurred met by the Commonwealth Department of Health;
- (d) how many people have used this machine;
- (e) how many people are presently using this machine;
- (f) has the Department of Health made the existence of this machine known to private medical practitioners?

### ANSWER

It should be clarified at the outset that the Renal Dialysis machine located at the Darwin Hospital is a unit designed for home dialysis and would normally be installed in the home of the patient and would be serviced and the dialysis procedures carried out by the patient and the patient's family.

This home dialysis unit was located at the Darwin Hospital because of special medical circumstances of the patient concerned. Such patients require a prolonged period of training in a major southern hospital before they are assessed as suitable for home dialysis and it was with great reluctance that the southern hospital concerned agreed to the location of the unit in the Darwin Hospital setting.

Such home dialysis units are provided for the exclusive use of an individual patient.

Specific answers to the questions are—

- (a) The machine was installed at the hospital in August 1974.
- (b) The machine was purchased for \$4,000.00; installation costs were \$1,770.00.
- (c) All costs were met by the Commonwealth Department of Health. It should be noted that the provision of home dialysis units is heavily subsidised by the Commonwealth Government in the States and solutions used are available under the Pharmaceutical Benefits scheme.
- (d) One person has used the machine. This is the principle involved in the provision of the home dialysis unit.
- (e) The machine is not presently in use as the patient for whom it was provided died during the first week of February 1976.
- (f) The existence of the machine was not advised to private medical practitioners as it was provided for the use of one patient. It is not suitable for use by other patients at the same time.

808 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

In evidence given by a Mr J. C. McDonnell, Department of Northern Territory to the House Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on 5 February 1974, Mr McDonnell mentioned a report compiled by the Department of Northern Territory which he described as an "environmental study on the disposal of red mud waste from alumina production at Gove".

Would the Honourable Member table a copy of that report in this Assembly?

### ANSWER

The following information was supplied in answer to the Member's question:—

Yes—a copy of the report, which is known as "Gove Land Use—Study of the Conservation Aspects" by Professor J. S. Turner, is made available to the Honourable Member. The report may be treated as a public document.

It is pointed out that according to official records a copy was made available to the Honourable Member as well as a copy being provided for the Legislative Assembly Library.

827 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

Why were children admitted to Wagaman Primary School on 2 February when virtually no repairs had been effected and no telephone installed? When will the school be repaired?

ANSWER

I am advised that the children were admitted to Wagaman School because the department felt it best that children attend school in their own area and judged it better for them to remain in one location throughout the term even with some initial inconvenience. The structure was proved to be sound and not in any way dangerous and the principal and staff were willing to open. A grounds contract was unable to be carried out before the opening of the school because of wet weather. However, the grounds have now been mowed and are acceptable. The parents are assisting in the establishment of the school through working bees. During the months from April to September inclusive, there is a proposed program of total restoration and upgrading of the school and preschool. This program may be reviewed, however, subject to government policy.

828 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

My question concerns the 307 housing loans applications approved. What was the date on which further approval ceased to be given; in other words, what was the cut-off date after the 307 had been approved?

ANSWER

I am unable to give an answer on the specific date since which approvals have not been granted. The first date on which it was brought to my attention was 14 January.

829 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

What happened to the money donated by the Australian waterside workers to the Darwin waterside workers after the cyclone?

ANSWER

So far as I know, nothing has been done with the money that was donated to the Darwin waterside workers from the other waterside workers' organisations around the country. I believe an amount in excess of \$100,000 was involved. To my knowledge, no wharfie in Darwin has received any benefit from this fund.

830 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

What post-election promises has the member had from the present Federal Government that the promise of statehood for this part of Australia in five years will be honoured?

ANSWER

I have a statement prepared to deliver to the Assembly following question time and the answer to the honourable member's question will be in part covered by that statement.

831 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN—

Is it a fact that Commonwealth Railways are intending to close the northern section of the north Australia line from Larrimah to Darwin?

ANSWER

I will attempt to find out the information and clarify the situation in an answer later in these sittings.

832 Mr KENTISH to Mr PERRON—

Can he advise me concerning the progress of light installation on section 462, Hundred of Strangways, Humpty Doo?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to get the information during these sittings.

833 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

Has the Minister administering the Darwin Reconstruction Act ever approved any scheme pursuant to section 9(1) of the act?

ANSWER

No.

834 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

What proposals for the development and construction of any part of Darwin have been advertised by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission under section 8 of the Darwin Reconstruction Act?

ANSWER

I became the Assembly's delegate to the DRC in September but I believe that the information sought by the honourable member for Port Darwin is that the town planning guidelines and proposals that were prepared by the DRC in the early days of February and March were in fact put up for public planning exhibition and discussion in March, and accepted in the terms of section 8(1) of the Darwin Reconstruction Act.

835 Mr KENTISH to Mr PERRON—

Can you advise me when lights will be established at the intersection of Stuart Highway and Farrell Crescent?

ANSWER

The problem of the lights being installed at the Stuart Highway and Farrell Crescent intersection has been one of concern to me for some time, and I have been endeavouring to get the relevant departments to have the job executed as soon as possible. The last I heard, some three months ago, was that it was to be done within a fortnight, that finance had been allocated, that the job had actually been put on a program. The department seems to express surprise at the moment as to why it has not been done. The fact is that it has not been done, and this passing the buck, as it were, by some departments doesn't seem to be helping the situation very much. The corner of Farrell Crescent and the Stuart Highway is very dangerous at night unlit and it has never been lit. It has been the scene of many accidents. I will continue my endeavours to have the lights installed as soon as possible.

836 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

Can he state that the attitude of the last government, that laws governing the Northern Territory and many non-federal areas ought to be made in the Federal Parliament, will be reversed by the present government so that laws for the government of the Northern Territory and non-federal affairs may be made in the Territory by the elected members of this Assembly and not in Canberra by Ministers who try to gain their understanding of the people and the problems of the Northern Territory by one-day flying visits.

ANSWER

The honourable member is well aware that I cannot state exactly what any Australian Government or Federal Government will do, nor can I be held to account for their actions, but I can assure him that I will continue to join him, as we have over many years, in exhortation and pressures on the present government to refrain from legislating in fields which are properly the fields of this legislature. I anticipate that we will have much more success with the present government than we had with the previous one.

837 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

Is it a fact that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has announced his intention to proceed with the Aboriginal Land Bill in the Federal Parliament with minor amendments only, and has the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs expressed the view that laws relating to Aboriginal land rights should be made by the Federal Parliament and not by this Assembly?

ANSWER

Certain words were used in the phrasing of the question and I cannot be quite sure that they were the words actually used by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Viner. I think he did make it public in the early days of his ministry and during his tour of the Northern Territory that he was anxious to proceed with Aboriginal land legislation as quickly as possible, and that it was his view at the time that the legislation would be along similar lines to that proposed by Mr Justice Woodward and framed in legislation by the Labor Government. How soon the Minister will be able to proceed in the matter and in what form he will proceed is probably not his choice alone; I would believe that it is a matter that Federal Cabinet will decide. Although Mr Viner may have certain personal views they will have to be qualified in the light of what his Cabinet colleagues think.

As to where the legislation will be processed, Cabinet has not yet made any final commitment to the best of my knowledge. Mr Viner did give an indication on his visit to the Northern Territory that his thinking was that it would be processed, as before, in the Federal Parliament but he did also indicate that he was listening to suggestions and open to suggestions and that he would take those into account. Well, he certainly has plenty of suggestions since then, from all sides, not only to him but to some of his federal colleagues. I will still continue to press for the legislation to be made in the Northern Territory and I will press as firmly and as constantly in that direction as I can.

838 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

What recent discussions have taken place concerning the proposed Alice Springs refinery?

ANSWER

Although I have not been included in any discussion, I am aware that the Minister for the Northern Territory has had discussions with the chairman of Oilmin, Mr Bill Siller, and the chairman of Magellan Petroleum, Mr Roy Hopkins, in Brisbane of recent weeks to discuss the feasibility of the Alice Springs oil refinery going ahead. Further to that, I am aware that, on the Minister's visit to Alice Springs early in February, he visited the proposed refinery site and had discussions in the town with the Alice Springs Corporation and the MLAs who are pressing very heavily for this project to go ahead.

839 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

There has been an announcement that \$5m worth of capital works will not be now commenced this year owing to budget cutbacks instituted by the Prime Minister. Will the relevant Executive Member table a precise list of exactly what capital works will be affected and will not now be commenced.

ANSWER

I have not been acquainted with the details of the expenditure cuts; I will endeavour to obtain them and I will make a submission to the Minister to see if they can be tabled in this House.

840 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

How many applications under the Trespassers (Temporary Provisions) Ordinance have been instituted through the magistrates court of Darwin for the eviction of trespassers?

ANSWER

I am advised that one case is proceeding at the moment and one other case will be commencing on the 18th of this month.

841 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

She will be aware that there was an incident at the Paspalis Drive-in during which a thirteen-year-old boy was seriously wounded. Have any charges been laid as a result of this incident?

ANSWER

I don't have precise information but I will endeavour to obtain it for the honourable member later today.

842 Mr WITHNALL to Mr POLLOCK—

Has he any—and, if so, what—information as to action taken to secure wage justice to the medical and nursing staff at the Darwin Hospital? Will he take steps to have the Minister for Health intervene at the highest level to secure that the hospital staff, who in the interests of humanity are deprived of the strike weapon, be given at least wage levels equal to those paid in other states.

ANSWER

I can assure him that I have already on many occasions over the last 6 to 9 months taken this matter up with the Minister for Health and in particular the former Minister for Health who had many thoughts on the matter but did little. The present Minister for Health has taken the matter up with the highest authorities—

Mrs Lawrie: What has he done?

Mr POLLOCK: I was assured as recently as this morning that the matter is at the moment in the hands of the Prime Minister who has given directions that the matter be treated with urgency. There is a hearing to be had before the full bench of the Arbitration Commission as a matter of urgency—

Mr Withnall: It does not need to go to the commission.

Mr POLLOCK: . . . and the Prime Minister and the Minister for Industry and Employment are also negotiating other measures that might be taken outside of the commission to alleviate the situation in areas other than salaries.

843 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW—

Can the honourable member procure for me the total enrolment at Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory for the years 1972-1976 inclusive?

ANSWER

I ask that the question be put on notice please.

844 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

What is the present status of the unit titles legislation passed through this house after about 10 years of waiting?

ANSWER

I believe the unit titles legislation has been reserved. I have had discussions with departmental officers in the last couple of days in an attempt to have assent granted to these bills as quickly as possible. I have indicated my party's stand that, if there are any administrative or procedural amendments that would be required, we would be happy to process them in this Assembly.

845 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

Upon what date was the Strata Titles Ordinance reserved by the Administrator?

ANSWER

I am unable to give an answer. However, I was informed this morning that it appeared in the latest Gazette.



846 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN—

What firm and positive arrangements have been made by the Postal Commission for the conveyance of surface mails into Alice Springs and other centres from southern and eastern states during the present disruption to service transport into the Territory?

ANSWER

I do not have the answer to that question. I will attempt to find out and inform the Assembly at a later stage of the sittings.

847 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

Is the police stock squad still in operation? What are the qualifications required for the issue of the cattle brands in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

As far as I know, the police stock squad is still in operation, to the limited extent that it ever was in operation. The last information I had was that it was a one man unit and it did not have a bush vehicle. I do not think it has reached very far and wide in its effects. I will check that it is still in operation and on the state of its equipment and activities.

As far as the issue of brands in the Northern Territory are concerned, the person who applies for a brand has to be the holder of a suitable portion of land—a pastoral lease or an agricultural lease—or have the permission of somebody who does hold such land to register and use a brand on that area.

848 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

With respect to order of the day number 4 standing on the order of business for today, the Land Acquisition Bill of 1975, has he sought from the Government approval for an amendment to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act so that a bill in the terms of this bill or a similar bill may pass this Assembly?

ANSWER

Orders of the day numbers 3 and 4 are linked together—the Stabilisation of Land Prices Bill and the Land Acquisition Bill. I can foreshadow to the Assembly that it is my intention to seek the withdrawal of this legislation. I do not believe it would be the intention of the present government to proceed with that kind of legislation that was introduced into the House of Representatives by the previous government. On that assumption, I don't see the need for us to have this legislation or to seek an amendment to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act which would have been required to make—

Mr Withnall: I do.

Dr LETTS . . . . . these laws operable. If the honourable member for Port Darwin has a different view, I would be happy to discuss the matter with him.

849 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

When will work commence on the Newcastle Waters causeway and when will such work be finished?

ANSWER

The Newcastle Waters causeway work is tied in with the second three-year road program for the upgrading of the Stuart and Barkly Highways. This program has not yet been started. It was planned to go ahead about September this year and, if that is still the case, Newcastle Waters causeway will be finished early in 1978. I would like to point out that I am trying to get the program committed earlier if possible. It is fairly difficult under the present situation but the importance of the upgrading of these particular sections of the Stuart Highway justifies attempting to get an early commitment for this job to go ahead.

850 Mr WITHNALL to Mr RYAN—

When will that atrocious mile of road on the other side of the light aircraft entrance at the airport be brought to a condition in which it is usable without the result of broken bones or broken goods carried in vehicles or is it the intention of the Department of Works to try for the Guinness Book of Records for the slowest piece of road construction in the world?

ANSWER

This is the fourth meeting that I have been asked that question. I do not know whether I should stick my neck out again and say when it is going to be finished. So far as I know, the holdup is due to the non-availability of the hotmix machine. The road was open for a short period of time; unfortunately, it was not completed with hotmix. In an attempt to get the road open early, the Department of Construction just used a bitumen and metal surface. Unfortunately, due to the amount of moisture, it immediately started to break up. They closed the road and now they intend to put a surface on it with the hotmix machine which would solve the problem. I was told about a week ago that this could be expected to be finished in a month.

851 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

My question concerns order of the day number 1, the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Bill 1975. Has he been able to discuss this legislation with Senator Ivor Greenwood and, if so, has he any indication whether the legislation would be assented to?

ANSWER

I do not want to pre-empt discussion in debate and information which I will be giving the Assembly when we come to this item. Discussions have not yet been held with the Minister for the Environment. I have asked the Minister for the Northern Territory to arrange that discussion as early as possible and I have separately written to Senator Greenwood explaining the situation and asking for a discussion to be held. I hope to have some response in the near future.

852 Mr KENTISH to Mrs LAWRIE—

Has she made provision for any amendment to her Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bill concerning the exercising of bitches on heat? This refers to the stipulated one hour in 24 for exercising dogs? There is another problem that has confronted a person who has had 30 to 40 stray dogs dumped on him; he is wondering if there would be any exemption for him?

ANSWER

I have had a series of discussions with the Majority Leader and representatives of various canine associations. We are still in the second reading and I have the right of reply closing the debate in which I intend to answer all his queries.

853 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

When will the Darwin Community College buildings lying idle since the cyclone be repaired?

ANSWER

I am aware that the rehabilitation of the Darwin Community College is on the financial program of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the major proportion of that work will be carried out in the next financial year.

854 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): Yesterday a question was asked about the railway from Larrimah to Darwin. I have been in touch with the Minister's office and he has denied that there is any intention at this stage to close down the Australian Railways link from Larrimah to Darwin. There is an in-depth study being done at the moment by the Railways Commission into rail and road transport in the Northern Territory and when this is completed it will be laid before the Minister. Thus, the rumour had no foundation whatsoever.

855 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING—

Is the executive member aware that a swamp-type bulldozer registered number ZTS-135 was clearing on Lot 1785 Fannie Bay? Did the DRC authorise this action and, if not, who owns the bulldozer?

ANSWER

The matter of the bulldozing on this lot at Fannie Bay was brought to my attention yesterday. I sought information from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and was informed that no authority or permission was requested of officers of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. The bulldozer is owned by the parks and maintenance section of the Department of the Northern Territory.

856 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Dr LETTS—

What steps are the government taking to control noxious weeds such as hyptis on crown land?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Tiwi has asked me a difficult question by making specific reference to hyptis. The problem of controlling hyptis in the Top End would be something like the problem of controlling white ants; I think it is going to be with us for a long while to come. However, more generally, the Government has the responsibility for controlling weeds on crown land. I haven't got any detailed information on their program at the moment but I will endeavour to obtain it and provide the information to the honourable member later this sittings.

857 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

In line with the priorities placed on completion of the mothers' home in the suburb of Tiwi, could he give any indication as to when this facility will be operational?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to give an answer later today.

858 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

My question concerns a report in the NT News that there has been a recommendation from the DRC for core-units to be placed in an area adjacent to the East Point reserve. Was this an agenda item at the last Commission meeting when the decision was taken?

ANSWER

The last meeting of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission's agenda was a very comprehensive one which basically centred around the 1976-77 Civil Works Program. The general items of that agenda included an item with regard to caravan and camping grounds.

859 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK—

What is the present stage of the nursing training school in the Northern Territory, what future plans have been formulated to streamline the training school and will training schools be set up at all major hospital centres in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Nursing training is currently undertaken only at Darwin Hospital. This hospital has been approved as a school of nursing for general nurses. A course is provided leading to a general nursing certificate and at present there are some 49 student nurses attending this school.

It is intended that in April of this year nurses aide training will commence at the Alice Springs Hospital. The matter of training of nurses in other areas of that profession is one which is constantly before the department and of concern to myself as facilities such as the new Alice Springs Hospital and the Casuarina Hospital come to fruition. I am certain that nursing training will expand and legislation for this has in fact recently been processed through this House.

860 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Has the Darwin Reconstruction Commission considered the alternative of selling the 80 core-units perhaps by auction at suitable reserve prices immediately for mining companies?

ANSWER

The question suggested a fine alternative to what may be done with these core units. In answer specifically to his question, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has not at this stage considered the sale of those units.

I personally did discuss the matter yesterday with the General Manager, and asked him to look into the implications of such a proposal.

861 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON—

How many electrical inspectors does the ESU have and what is the waiting period for electricity installation?

ANSWER

The current waiting period for electrical connections in Darwin is about 15 days. This is an average period because there are items which receive priority and these tend to throw the program out a little bit as far as connections to domestic premises are concerned. Those type of items are concerned with things like the school year starting.

The current establishment for inspectors is 11 and 9 of these positions are filled. Three positions have only been filled within the last week or so and those 3 men will have a period of training to go through. I would like to point out that some of the problems the ESU are experiencing in getting electrical inspectors is the fact that the salary determinations are below that of the electrical organisations elsewhere in Australia. This creates some difficulty in getting staff. However, they are permanent positions and conditions such as housing can make the offer a little more attractive. This is not so with linesmen who are also directly involved in the delays in connecting electricity to houses. The linesman situation is much worse than that of inspectors. They are considerably short on establishment staff; the positions are day labour positions only, the salaries are much lower than elsewhere in Australia and there is no public service housing permanently available to these people. Until something can be done about salaries and conditions, we are going to experience problems for some time.

862 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

Does he intend to press, at the next Australian transport minister's conference, for the upgrading of the Bruce and Flinders Highways in Queensland, especially between Rockhampton and Mackay and Hughenden and Cloncurry so that the Territory's communications with the east coast can be kept open during the wet season?

ANSWER

Yes, I intend to take this matter up wherever I can, not only the ATAC conference. There was an announcement made which, I think, is relevant to the question asked by the honourable member for Jingili. On Monday this week, an announcement was made by the Highways Minister in Queensland that they were going to seal the final sections of the Flinders Highway which will give the Northern Territory a sealed link with the eastern states. It is not as yet an all-weather road but with the continued up-grading of the Stuart and Barkly Highways, which we hope to get under way shortly, together with, I am sure, the up-grading of the Flinders and Bruce Highways in Queensland, it will eventually give the Territory an all-weather road link. I will be taking every opportunity I get to press anybody concerned so that this goes ahead as quickly as possible.

863 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Is he aware that there has been a press release stating that the Acting Administrator for the Northern Territory, Mr Dwyer, has laid down new conditions regarding leases? I quote it: "Under these arrangements, all present lessees of Darwin Town Area leases who have not yet started to build on their land and whose improvements are incapable of satisfactory restoration, have until April 1977 to commence building. The lessees will then have 15 months in which to complete building so that the target date for completion of all private buildings will be 1 July 1978". Is he aware of this? If he is, and there is no finance, how are people expected to comply with this ridiculous condition?

ANSWER

I am aware of this press release having received one on Monday. I am unable to provide the specific answers requested by the honourable member. I do share her concern and indicate that there was no consultation with the Darwin Reconstruction Commission or myself with regard to the timetable proposed in this press release.

864 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

In the light of that reply, would he take this matter up with the Minister at the earliest possible opportunity, and would he assure this Assembly that he will appraise the Minister of the difficulties facing the people in Darwin at the moment?

ANSWER

The answer is yes. I believe some of the reserves sought by the honourable member are inherent in the latter parts of that press release. However, I will pursue the matter fully.

865 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK—

An Alice Springs group met on 9 February to seek funding for the care of drunks and the establishment of rehabilitation and remedial centres. Have they approached the breweries, distilleries, and hoteliers on the assumption that these people sell the poison and should partly finance the cure?

ANSWER

I don't know if they have done that. In defence of the breweries, I point out that there is a considerable amount of excise paid by these people to the Government and I suppose it is reasonable that the breweries expect that some of that be used in this field.

866 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

Mr Speaker I direct this question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey.

Realising that the first 14 miles from the Stuart Highway to Maranboy is the bottle neck affecting the lives of 2,000 people who live in the area served by the main road, has any representation been made for urgent action to improve this section to all-weather standard?

ANSWER

I have not made any representation although I believe some representation has been made to the Minister on this particular matter. I have no doubt that the road in question does cause problems. However, with regard to any up-grading or repair of that section, it would have to be examined in the light of priorities that now exist in view of the shortage of money for expenditure on the road program. Certainly, the point is noted that this area does cause concern to the people there and I will be taking what opportunity I can, particularly at any future rural road conference, to raise the matter as forcefully as possible.

867 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

Is he aware of the provisions of the new government's policy on federalism and is he taking steps to arrive at an approach to the policy on behalf of the Territory?

ANSWER

I am aware that the policy is currently being determined by the Government on its new federalism policy. Through the newly formed consultative committee, I will be pursuing the Northern Territory issues strongly. I also hope within the next month to make a trip to Canberra to speak with the Treasurer and the Minister assisting the Prime Minister on federal affairs and with various state treasurers on the implications of this new federalism policy.

868 Mr WITHNALL to Mr SPEAKER—

Has your attention been drawn to the front page story on yesterday's Northern Territory News containing certain allegations in regard to the recent Alice Springs by-election? In the interests of the member concerned and in order to protect the reputation of this Assembly, are you able to initiate action to confirm or deny these and other allegations which are being made concerning this by-election?

ANSWER

I am aware of the newspaper article and the allegations. I doubt that the Speaker of this Assembly has any authority in this case but I will make inquiries and report back to the Assembly later today.

869 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTS—

Has any progress been made in appointing someone to inquire into lottery and gaming legislation and its administration in the Northern Territory as a result of the resolution of this Assembly last year?

ANSWER

The matter has been actively pursued by the Administrator's Council ever since the resolution was carried by the Assembly. The progress was somewhat interrupted by the events surrounding the federal election and the change of government because it required a government to approach. I now have the authority of the Administrator and the Administrator's Council to inform the Assembly that persons have been selected for appointment and will be appointed subject to the necessary formal arrangements being made through the office of the Prime Minister. It is hoped that the inquiry can be got underway in the near future. A person has been selected to act as secretary to the inquiry and necessary arrangements will be made with the Attorney-General's Department to assist if the person appointed to the inquiry deems that desirable. Present thinking is that the cost of the inquiry will be in the region of \$20,000 to \$30,000.

870 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr PERRON—

Can he inform me when work will be undertaken to get into operation adequate street lighting along Trower and Rothdale roads?

ANSWER

I have some information relating particularly to Rothdale Road in Jingili. I believe the honourable member's question referred to Trower Road as well but I do not have that specifically; I can perhaps follow that through for him. But as far as Rothdale Road goes, the proposition to install highway-standard street lighting along the median strip in Rothdale Road was put to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission last November and appeared, I believe, on the 1975-76 DRC works program. To date the Electricity Supply Undertaking people have not received a design order from the DRC for them to carry on and design the works completely so the work can be executed. Because of that it appears the work will not commence in this financial year.

871 Mr KENTISH to Mr TAMBLING—

Will he make representation to obtain additional funds for rural reconstruction? The original allocation is now exhausted and I understand many applications for this assistance remain undecided through lack of funds. Can he also ascertain why the Territory's allocation on a comparative basis is so much lower than the state allocations?

ANSWER

In answer to the first part of the question, I will certainly make representations if the honourable member would like to supply me with full details of the matters where he considers I should make representations to the Minister. With regard to the second part of the question, I am unable to give an answer as to any difference in proportions of grants as they are made; I will endeavour to seek full information on this for him.

872 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

I address a further question concerning the press release to which I alluded earlier. Under the terms of the Darwin Reconstruction Act, it appears that the Crown has five years in which to rebuild its part of Darwin. Why is this term not extended to bona fide private residents?

ANSWER

I am unable to give the honourable member an answer as I was not privy to any of the deliberations or considerations concerned.

873 MR DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

When will the police receive their issue of uniforms? Is it correct that some police have been issued with army trousers and shirts as an interim measure? If and when uniforms are issued, will firm arrangements be made for members, particularly outside Darwin, to have alterations made to their uniforms?

ANSWER

In the continuing saga of police uniforms, the issue was last year destroyed by Cyclone Tracy. The delay has been due to a lack of materials. However, part of the uniform has been completed; trousers have been cut out from the first batch of material but as yet there is no delivery date. It is true that army trousers and shirts were issued as an interim measure because these were found to be the closest to the police uniform. No firm arrangements have been made for alterations because uniforms are made to measure and should not require them.

874 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

Can he give an indication when alterations and renewals and additions to agricultural type leases, which have been virtually suspended by the previous Minister, will again receive normal processing?

ANSWER

I will ask the honourable member to place that question on notice. He has not given me any forewarning on it otherwise I might have been able to make some enquiries and provide some information for him. The only light I can throw on it, off the cuff, is that I understand that some of the additions he refers to were in cases where agricultural leases were judged to be of uneconomic size, and the Crown Lands Ordinance of the Northern Territory provides for additions to those leases from adjoining crown land, where it is available and where it would bring the lease up to an economic size. We are all aware that there was a complete administrative freeze on vacant crown land imposed by the previous Government at the time the Woodward Report was tabled. That freeze was to last until January 1976 and did, in fact, do so. I have heard that in the last days of the previous Government a further directive was issued to extend the freeze on vacant crown land further into 1976. If that is so, it would still be the policy governing the activities of the department until it is changed by the new Government. If the honourable member will place the question on notice, I will try and find out what exactly the position is and advise him in the usual way.

875 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

The honourable member will recall the passage through this Chamber last year of the free-beach legislation. The implementation of this legislation, whilst not of the first priority, could obviously be carried out without any great degree of funding being necessary. When will a free area be declared in the Darwin region? Can he give any indication in what area it will be declared?

ANSWER

I am authorized by the Administrator to indicate that the advice tendered by the Administrator's Council has now been accepted and I believe a press statement will be issued later today that a free area will be declared. The proposed area is that area of Casuarina beach on the Nightcliff side of Sandy Creek through which the road traffic entry point is—the road that goes behind the Lions Club park and up a mile or so, roughly in that area. Signs, we hope, will be put up in accordance with the provision of the ordinance as soon as possible.

876 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

It is well known that work had been done within the DRC on the location of the contentious core units in the area of Dripstone. Could the honourable member indicate to this Assembly the amount of time and money spent by the DRC in formulating that recommendation? That was the Dripstone recommendation.

ANSWER

I do not believe that I could obtain that information without a special request to the General Manager who, in turn, would have to look at the administrative arrangements made by his staff. Judging from the detailed submissions that were put before the commission on the actual proposals by very senior staff, I would envisage that it took some considerable time of senior professional staff to prepare that proposal.

877 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr SPEAKER—

Whilst it is a matter of notorious fact the honourable member for Port Darwin is not partial to water unless it is mixed with the most famous product of Scotland, has there been some discrimination against him in that he has not been provided with a thermos of water in this Chamber?

ANSWER

I understand the honourable member for Port Darwin likes ice in his water.

878 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

What detailed submissions were put to the commission when they were considering the new proposal to locate the core-units at East Point?

ANSWER

The answer is none.

879 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

For how long did the discussions ensue on that particular agenda item which, apparently, was not an agenda item in its own right?

ANSWER

It would not be proper for me to talk about the timetabling and normal arrangements of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission other than those items which are classified normally as general agenda items. Fortunately for the honourable member, this particular item was considered part of the general agenda of the last meeting of the Reconstruction Commission. There was considerable debate and discussions with regard to the Fannie Bay proposal once the matter was raised. However, it was certainly at a very late stage of that meeting.

880 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Is the honourable member prepared to tell this House at what time the last Darwin Reconstruction Commission meeting commenced and what time it finished?

ANSWER

The last meeting of the DRC commenced at 9.30 am. There were breaks for lunch and an evening meal and I think it finished shortly before midnight.

881 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

A contract for \$20,900 has been let to Jackson and Spring Pty Ltd, Rocklea, Queensland for the transport of donated timber for cyclone relief. What does the Department of the Northern Territory intend doing with this timber and is it in Darwin?

ANSWER

I ask him to place the question on notice.

882 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

What amount of insurance was paid to the Commonwealth as a result of claims for damage to Commonwealth housing, whether as owner or mortgagee, as a result of Cyclone Tracy?

ANSWER

I ask him to place the question on notice.

883 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Is it a fact that proposals for the location of core-units at Dripstone were circulated to community groups who then gave advice to the Commission and this was considered?

ANSWER

I am not aware how many groups were consulted with regard to the proposals of a Dripstone location. I am aware that, attached to the submission considered by the commission, there was an indication of support for that site by the Northern Territory Environment Council.

884 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

At what stage are plans for the extension of the Darwin Community College? Are negotiations being continued to acquire further land in the area of the Brinkin subdivision and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

I believe that this matter has now left the Darwin Reconstruction Commission; they decided to continue the original lease arrangements of both the Community College and the Hooker lease. Negotiations could be opened between the Darwin Community College and representatives of the Hooker Company and I am advised that an emergency meeting of the Community College Council will be called in the next week to discuss those negotiations.

885 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

What is the future of the Legal Aid Office in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I am advised by the Attorney-General that as yet no decision has been made on this subject. However, there is a meeting on Friday of state Attorneys-General to discuss the law society scheme, the Legal Aid Office, and various other state legal assistance schemes.

886 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Would she attempt to obtain and table in this House precise schedules showing the areas and amounts in cut-backs of expenditure to be experienced by the Department of Education for this financial year.

ANSWER

I will attempt to table that information.

887 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS—

As the oriental fruit fly has been found to be widespread and apparently well-established in the top of the Territory, what active and positive measures have been or are being taken to ensure it is not allowed to spread to the southern areas of the Territory and the rest of Australia. And, for the well-being of the multi-million dollar fruit industry of southern and eastern Australia, does not he think it reasonable that persons leaving the Top End should be subjected to reasonable checks to ensure fruit and vegetables are not removed from the quarantine area?

ANSWER

The question of the oriental fruit fly which has been raised in this Chamber before is indeed a very serious one from the economic point of view for the whole of Australia and for the Northern Territory's future. I will not go on at any length in answer to this question because it is my intention to make a statement at greater length, probably on the next sitting day or the day after. But, very briefly, precise steps to restrict the spread of the fruit fly and to protect the southern part of the Territory and the rest of Australia are difficult to take at the moment because we have no real idea of the distribution and spread of this pest. One might put up a road block, say, at Katherine only to find that a week later the pest was at Elliott. The first most essential task of any program is to attempt to define the limits of its present spread. That will be given high priority. It can be done even in the wet season by trapping with some difficulty and at greater expense. Extended trapping has been arranged on the periphery of the known area and beyond to attempt to better define and map the limits of the pest.

As far as the second part of the question is concerned, I guess it all depends on the interpretation of the word "reasonable". What might be reasonable will depend on having a greater knowledge of this pest. One must take into account a number of factors including the fact that the fruit being produced in Darwin from backyard trees and the like at the moment is only a very small percentage of what the backyard grower of pawpaws, bananas and mangoes would normally be producing. It is probably about 51% of the normal Darwin situation, so the possibility of an outflow of fruit is accordingly reduced. Some people in some other states seem to think that we should have gone direct to a series of road blocks and to the examination of all baggage at the airport of all passengers leaving Darwin. My personal belief is that those kinds of extreme measures are not warranted. Certainly not until we know about this pest, its habits, its distribution and the nature of the problem.

888 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

How many houses has the DRC handed over so far?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to obtain the answer for the honourable member.

889 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

How many enrolments has the Education Department in Darwin received for school children for the school year beginning 1976?

ANSWER

The total enrolment is 8,681 students, 827 of whom are preschool, 5,407 primary and 2,447 secondary students.



890 Mr MANUELL to Mr TUXWORTH—

Does the Australian Atomic Energy Commission currently hold any exploration licences in the Northern Territory? If so, does the Australian Atomic Energy Commission plan to dispose of these licences in accordance with Deputy Prime Minister's indication that the Atomic Energy Commission will cease exploration activities within the Northern Territory? Thirdly, if the AAEC do plan to dispose of these exploration licences, how do they plan to relinquish them?

ANSWER

The Atomic Energy Commission does not hold any exploration licences within the Northern Territory. The exploration activities of the commission have been conducted under section 39 of the Atomic Energy Act which gives it the right to explore for prescribed substances anywhere in Australia. As it does not hold any exploration licences, there is no necessity for the Atomic Energy Commission to dispose of them but the areas they have been operating in within the Northern Territory are still reserved by the Crown. That answer would also answer the third part of the member's question.

There is also an additional part to that question. The areas that are still under reserve have yet to be disposed of by the Crown for exploration and discussions are currently being held within the department. The department is also seeking expressions from the industry on the most satisfactory method of relinquishing the areas from the reserve of the Crown and making the land available for private exploration.

891 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr PERRON—

Will he please supply me with details of the systems of raising bonds for the supply of electricity in city and rural areas around Darwin?

ANSWER

The system of raising bonds for the supply of electricity in rural areas, or "guarantee accounts" as they are called by the Department of the Northern Territory, exists because prior to supplying electrical reticulation to a subdivision, the Department of the Northern Territory wishes to ensure that there will be sufficient revenue from such a service to make the line viable. What is normally done is that an estimate of the size of the subdivision is carried out when reticulation is planned and the number of applicants who have applied for electricity is taken into account. If the costs of the reticulation is over \$2,000 per applicant, there is a request for a bond issued. If the number of applicants in the area means that the cost of reticulation would be under \$2,000 per applicant, no bond is raised. The bond which the honourable member for Tiwi particularly questioning is one in the Valhalla Estate and the consumers there are being asked to sign a guarantee of \$400 per annum for 5 years. The department is currently looking at the situation, which they consider unfair in some aspects because consumers who move into the area after those who are already there have signed bonds, are not subject to any of the provisions of having to pay an extra amount above their consumption should the electricity in the area not be consumed at the rate anticipated. People who move into an area after the bonds have been signed and electricity is on do not have to provide any guarantee to the department as to minimum consumption.

892 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

I preface my question by reading section 58 of the Darwin Reconstruction Act: "The commission shall, as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, prepare and furnish to the Minister a report on the operations of the commission during that year, together with financial statements in respect of that year in such forms as the Treasurer approves. The report shall set out all exercise of the powers of the commission given by the Minister to the commission during the year to which the report relates". Has such a report been made? Has the Treasurer approved any form for the financial statements? In view of the importance of the people knowing what has been done by the commission under this extraordinary act, can we expect that such a report will be forwarded to the Minister to be published in the near future?

ANSWER

I perused a draft copy of the annual report of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission some months ago, which I believe satisfied all the requirements as to its form and nature. I am not aware of the reasons why it has not yet been made available, but will endeavour to find out when it is to come off the printing press and to be made available for the honourable member.

893 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mrs LAWRIE—

I have a question directed to the honourable member for Nightcliff in her capacity as the member in charge of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bill 1975. In her second-reading speech, the honourable member stated, and I quote: "The Administrator has given certain guidelines on the appointment of inspectors and I can assure honourable members that unreliable and unskilled people will not be liable for appointment". Can the honourable member indicate where in her bill, or the principal ordinance, this assurance of guidelines is given?

ANSWER

It is in section 15(1) of the principal ordinance.

894 Mr VALE to Mrs LAWRIE—

Her Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bill 1975 proposes to make all police officers inspectors under the ordinance. Has she checked this point with the Commissioner of Police to discover whether he sees any impediment to it? As the police will then be concerned with the bill as a whole, has she had any discussions with the Commissioner about the bill generally?

ANSWER

I find it a little unusual that these matters are being raised when the second reading of the bill has not yet concluded. As I remarked in reply to a question earlier, my main discussions have been with the Majority Leader. If they checked with him as to what discussions have ensued, then they would be better informed.

895 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

Can he give me any information regarding the fence construction around the Fannie Bay Gaol?

ANSWER

A contract of about \$52,000 has been let for the construction of a fence at Fannie Bay Gaol. The project is under way, all the footings have been dug and the holes drilled. I was there the other day and I saw that section of the work was completed. I am advised that the contractor hopes the work will be completed in 2 or 3 weeks time.

896 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

Can she advise me whether counsellors have been appointed under the Family Law Act of 1975 to act in the Northern Territory jurisdiction of the Family Law Court and if not, why not? Is there any indication as to when they may be appointed?

ANSWER

I am advised by the Attorney-General's Department that no establishment is fixed for the Northern Territory. The head of counselling for the welfare service and family court has been in touch with the marriage guidance people here. The volume of work has not warranted the employment of an establishment. As in Tasmania, they are having great difficulty in filling any vacancies. In April, a workshop will be held with the marriage guidance council in Darwin by the head of counselling of welfare services and family courts. Some decisions will emanate from that workshop as to the employment of counsellors.

897 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS—

Can he make a statement on what assistance the beef industry in the Northern Territory can expect towards debt reconstruction, carry on finance, freight subsidy and cattle price stabilization schemes?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to make a statement available during the course of these sittings.

898 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

I ask this question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Did the causeway across the MacArthur River giving access to Bessie Springs Abattoirs function as planned?

ANSWER

I will attempt to find out the answer.

899 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

Can he obtain from the DRC a list of the assistance which it has given to the Australian Government in determining the desirable extent, nature and purposes of the use and development of the Darwin area under section 6A of the act?

ANSWER

I am not aware that such a list exists. However, I will endeavour to seek the information sought by the honourable member from the General Manager of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

900 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

Is it correct that the time for processing applications for incorporation of companies is taking about 3 months and, if so, why? What is being done to shorten the time being taken?

ANSWER

I can neither confirm nor deny whether these applications are taking 3 months. I will endeavour to give that information by the end of the day.

901 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

Can he give any information on the appointment of a Director of Correctional Services?

ANSWER

As from last Monday Mr Jack Larcombe was appointed Acting Director of Correctional Services. The position has been advertised throughout Australia and New Zealand and interviews are to be held shortly. An Assistant Director Controller of Prisons has also been appointed and he commences duty in Darwin next Monday. An administrative officer has also been secured for that branch and it is hoped that he will start within a month.

902 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS—

Is it the policy of the Northern Territory Reserves Board to encourage only fauna and flora natives to a particular national park or reserve area? Is it correct that the board has adopted a policy for the Katherine gorge reserve to remove certain flora and fauna including some baobab trees from that reserve?

ANSWER

I can't be absolutely certain about the present policy of the Reserves Board as far as having non-indigenous flora and fauna on their reserves. I can tell the honourable member that that was not always so. Indeed, I did hear a discussion of certain members of the Reserves Board some years ago when they were talking about introducing some tigers to the old telegraph station at Alice Springs. I hope that what the honourable member says is generally true. On a national park or reserve of the type that the Reserves Board manages, there is not a great place, in some cases there is not any place, for introduced species. The areas are set aside particularly for indigenous fauna and flora.

I do not know the answer to the question about the so-called baobab tree. While that is not exactly native to the Katherine area itself, it certainly is to the Victoria River district, coming as far as the gorge of the Victoria River and extending across into the Kimberleys. In other words, it grows to within a distance of probably some 100 miles of Katherine and it probably has more right to be there than some exotic species. I do not think anybody would quibble much about having a baobab there as a specimen tree. I certainly would not.

903 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH—

Firstly, what was the cost of operation of the Northern Territory Tourist Bureau's interstate offices for the last complete financial year ended 1974-75? What was the actual amount of total sales through these offices for the same period? Thirdly, what was the actual profit on sales through these offices for that period?

ANSWER

The bureau's office in Sydney had an operating cost of \$76,000, Melbourne had an operating cost of \$85,000, Adelaide's operating cost was \$34,000. Sydney sold \$190,000 worth of tickets, Melbourne sold \$344,000 worth of tickets and Adelaide sold \$115,000 worth of tickets. The commission from Sydney was \$13,000, the commission from Melbourne was \$26,000 and from Adelaide \$8,000. As the figures indicate, there is a discrepancy in each office of cost over income of a very large amount of money. The Northern Territory Tourist Board is most concerned at the costs of running these offices in return for the revenue they receive. The board is currently re-assessing its position in regard to the present operation and at present deciding whether they should be in wholesale travel or retail travel.

904 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

When will a decision be made to permit persons in the now non-existent surge area to receive loans from the home finance scheme?

ANSWER

I am aware that the Department of Northern Territory and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and a number of members of this Assembly have all made separate submissions to the Minister asking for a relaxation of the loan conditions to enable loans to be granted in the primary surge area. I have not yet been informed as to the Minister's decision or a likely date for the adoption of such a policy.

905 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

This follows on questions I have asked at each sitting concerning the operation of the Parole Board. Has the Parole Board yet commended operations? If not, why not and when is it expected that it will be so?

ANSWER

The Parole Board has not got under way yet. There have been some problems in association with finance. The secretary of the Parole Board has been appointed. The Secretary is Mr Donnelly who has been appointed the Controller of Prisons and he will be in Darwin next week. With the appointment also of an acting Director of Correctional Services, we hope that work will be done towards implementing what we desire in this field of correctional services. I too will be keeping an eye on those moves.

906 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr RYAN—

This follows on from discussions I have had with the honourable member for Elsey and I would preface my question by saying that, as a result of certain innuendoes made by union organisers that the present Government has instigated an economic review into the North Australia Railway, the public seemed to have formed the opinion that it is the policy of that Government to abandon the railway. Could he advise me whether or not it is a fact that the economic survey of the North Australia Railway was commenced on or about the middle of 1975 by the previous Labor Government?

ANSWER

I am not aware as yet whether the investigation started by the last Government is still continuing or whether in fact there has been a new investigation instigated by the present Government. I intend to take the matter further and approach the federal Minister for Transport and get a full report if possible as to what the exact situation is with regard to the future of the line from Darwin to Larrimah.

907 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW—

Can she give any details concerning the attack last week on the manager of Montejinni Station?

ANSWER

I do not have any details at the moment but I have asked the Commissioner of Police to forward me further information which I will present to the House when I receive it.

908 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN—

Is he aware that there are some Taiwanese nationals working in Darwin for a dollar per hour? If this is so, what can be done about it?

ANSWER

I believe that this situation does exist. I was approached by the vigilance officer of the Waterside Workers Federation with this information and I intend to follow it up with the firms that have been indicated to me as utilising Taiwanese labour. I feel it is definitely not a situation that we would encourage in view of the number of unemployed in our own town. I will, therefore, make investigations and give an answer to this.

909 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

When will work commence on the widening of Trower Road between Nightcliff Road and the Rapid Creek Bridge? The funds for this were allocated in the last budget.

ANSWER

I am not sure whether, in fact, funds were allocated in the last budget. However, I am sure the job concerned was on a program to be carried out. I will make enquiries of the Department of Construction, or possibly the DRC, and find out what has happened with this matter and see if something can be done to repair or fix up this section of the road which does constitute a traffic hazard.

910 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Can he tell me if the copper smelter at Tennant Creek is going to reopen? If so, has there been a date fixed for the opening?

ANSWER

I will have to say that no one can ever be sure whether the smelter will reopen. I can just say that the smelter closed as a result of increased costs compounded by a fall in the price of copper. Costs have continued to increase and it is my understanding that copper will have to return to at least \$2,000 per ton before the smelter will be a viable proposition. It is also my understanding that the projection of copper price in the next 18 months to 2 years is that it will not obtain that level. The only thing that would force copper back to a price of \$2,000 a ton is a war, and I don't think anybody wants to see a war, although everybody would like to see the \$30m smelter reopen. In short, the answer is, hopefully in 2 years' time.

911 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

Has the Australian Government made any determination in relation to the development, construction and land use in the Darwin area as is provided for in section 6(b) of the Act?

ANSWER

Since my membership of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission in September, I am not aware that specific requirements have been met in accordance with section 6(b).

912 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Is it a fact that the NT Housing Commission is experiencing problems in obtaining additional staff to assist in their rebuilding program?

ANSWER

It is obvious that the Northern Territory Housing Commission is experiencing problems of a similar nature to those mentioned yesterday by the Majority Leader with regard to staff for the executive members of the Legislative Assembly. The Northern Territory Housing Commission, I believe, has made probably more than 8 approaches to the department for a review of its establishment in the last 12 months. It has not had a satisfactory answer with regard to its increased establishment, particularly for those additional officers that it requires to assist in its building program.

913 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

What action is being taken to erect signs on public beaches saying that motor vehicle traffic is prohibited?

ANSWER

I have not been informed of the department's action in this regard since the last session but we may now be able to get an opportunity to have these signs erected. They may like to add them to the signs declaring the free beach. It may be one way that we will get the signwriting done and save the department a bit of money.

914 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

Is it a fact that the Attorney-General's Department has continued to allow the fishing vessel "Mariana" to rot in Doctor's Gully since the disposal of the appeals against conviction by the persons involved in the offences which occurred in connection with that vessel well over twelve months ago? Secondly, does the Attorney-General's Department or the Customs Department have any information as to its value as at the date of seizure? Thirdly, does either of those departments have any information as to its value today? Fourthly, do either of those departments have any information as to the cost of the vessel's reinstatement as at the present time?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to get that information before the end of the sittings for the Honourable Member for Jingili.

915 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON—

Will all aspects of the electricity supply in the Northern Territory be brought under a single authority to stop the absurd situation which exists at present with all the different departments involved?

ANSWER

Arrangements were being made last year to investigate the formation of an electricity supply authority to cover all aspects of the generation and distribution and charging for electricity in the Northern Territory. My information is that the investigation was shelved just prior to the last federal elections. I have written to the Minister for the Northern Territory asking him to arrange for the inquiry to go ahead as soon as possible. The subject of a single electricity authority in the Northern Territory will no doubt be discussed further when the consultative committee is founded as recommended by the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report.

916 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

Is he aware of the cuts in air services by TAA and Ansett between Adelaide, Alice Springs and Darwin? If so, what is he going to do about this?

ANSWER

I am not aware that there have been any cuts to scheduled flights to Alice Springs. If this is the case, I will be making every effort to find out why the cuts were instigated, whether they were justified and, if not, to have them reinstated immediately.

917 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN: The honourable member for Alice Springs asked a question about the handling of surface mail when rail and road transport into the Northern Territory is held up. I have been assured by the District Postal Manager that, under these circumstances, it is the Postal Communication's method to transfer mail to the airlines. They do not necessarily do this immediately the road closes. Anybody who sends mail by surface mail is not necessarily in any great hurry for it. They try to assess how long the rail or road system is going to be cut and, if it looks like it is going to be extended, they do air freight the mail. This is happening at the moment from both Mt Isa and Adelaide.

918 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON—

Will he advise the House when new consumer protection legislation will be introduced in accordance with the 1972 select committee report on this subject?

ANSWER

I understand that legislation similar to that existing in other states of Australia has been prepared by the Prices and Consumer Affairs Department, but I have not seen a copy of the bill as yet. I hope that it will be available shortly for introduction in this House. The Consumer Protection Council, which exists under present legislation, has been pressing for this legislation for some years now and it is probably well overdue.

919 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Will she attempt to obtain and table in this House, precise details of the areas and amount of cutbacks in expenditure to be suffered this financial year by the Attorney-General's Department so far as it relates to the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

I will endeavour to do that.

920 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Following on a question I asked last week, I asked the cut-off time for approval of loans under the 6% home finance scheme. The honourable member advised me that he believed it was about January. Has he more specific information?

ANSWER

I do not have any additional information. I will endeavour to seek it today.

921 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTS—

I ask a question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Realising that Northmeat require firm bookings of cattle in mid-April, will carry-on finance be available to enable mustering camps to be organised in the intervening 6 weeks?

ANSWER

It is beyond my power to give the Assembly an assurance that finance that comes from the Commonwealth Treasury will be available for any particular purpose within a particular time. I do recognise the need to which the honourable member for Ludmilla has drawn my attention on your behalf and I will reactivate requests which I have made to the Australian Government to have a clear announcement made about the carry-on finance position.

922 Mr MANUELL to Mr TAMBLING—

Is he aware that the Central Australian Racing Club have received a grant of \$75,000 to assist that club in its transfer from its existing site north of the township to a site south of the township? Is he also aware that, despite several applications for settlement of progress payments amounting to \$32,000 to date no moneys have been received? If he is aware of this, can he explain why and what length of delay in receiving future payments and settlements can be expected by that club?

ANSWER

I am aware of the financial arrangements between the Department of Northern Territory and the Central Australian Racing Club and that the total amount is in the order of \$75,000. I have had representations made to me with regard to the progress settlements and was informed by the finance officer of the Department that the progressive payments lodged up to 31 January had all been endorsed and had gone to Brisbane for the cheques to be issued. Therefore, they ought to be received by that club very shortly. The finance officer also informed me that it would be normal to expect delays of 3 to 4 weeks from the time of receipt of invoicing to the time of the cheque being dispatched to the club if all things are in order.

923 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Has the Treasurer actually advanced the extra \$4.8 million needed to cut the outstanding approved loan applications or is the advance only covering month by month progress payments due?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to seek clarification from the Minister with regard to the supply of funds for the Home Finance Trustee.

924 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

Is she able to advise me of the position in relation to assent to the Justices Ordinance 1975 which related to the trial of indictable offences by magistrates with the consent of the accused?

ANSWER

The Justices Ordinance was reserved on 13 August 1975 on advice from the Attorney-General's Department. Discussion has since been held between the Attorney-General's Department and the Executive Member for Law to consider problems and to determine whether amendment is necessary and negotiations between the two departments are taking place.

925 Mr MANUELL to Mr PERRON—

Is he aware that the Alice Springs sewerage ponds are exhibiting seepage, particularly into the swamp at the foot of the McDonell Range and so endangering the health of the inhabitants close by?

ANSWER

The sewerage treatment ponds at Alice Springs are designed to discharge treated effluent onto the ground nearby for evaporation. The discharge of effluent is intermittent so that evaporation occurs before the mosquito breeding cycle is complete. Unfortunately, the weather pattern in Alice Springs over the last 3 or 4 years has been somewhat unusual and evaporation has not occurred as expected. The sewerage system in Alice Springs is operating as designed but the weather is just not cooperating.

926 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

Can the honourable member advise me whether an auction of residential and commercial land will shortly be held in Darwin and, if so, approximately when?

ANSWER

I am informed by the Department of the Northern Territory that auctions are proposed both for industrial land and residential land and it is hoped to hold the auctions either in late March or early April. I believe that at the first auction approximately 100 residential lots will be offered and that there will be subsequent auctions before 30 June.

927 Mr BALLANTYNE to Dr LETTIS—

I ask this question on behalf of the Honourable Member for Elsey. What assistance can peanut growers in the Katherine District expect this season?

ANSWER

I will need to obtain the information from other sources. I will endeavour to do so rather than ask the honourable member to place the question on notice. I will try to find out the answer and advise him during these sittings.

928 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Can he advise when an announcement will be made as to whether or not additional funds will be made this financial year for the 6% home loan scheme? I am not talking about the \$4.8m loans already approved, I am now talking about loans which have been processed but not yet approved—where applications have been made.

ANSWER

I have made representation to the Minister but I am not able to give an answer to the honourable member.

929 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr TAMBLING—

My question concerns the Aboriginal camp set up at Knuckeys Lagoon after the cyclone. Do the camp buildings meet Building Board and DRC requirements? Is it a fact that the camp is expanding mainly due to government grants? Has a decision been reached as to whether this will become a permanent settlement or will another site be chosen? If the Knuckeys Lagoon camp or some other site becomes part of the town plan, what steps will be taken to ensure that all buildings and layout conform to acceptable town plan standards?

ANSWER

I am aware that certain camp structures have been built since the cyclone but I am not able to say whether they have been built in conformity with Building Board or DRC requirements. I will endeavour to ascertain what applications for building approvals have been lodged. I am not aware that the camp is expanding mainly due to government grants. In fact I was not aware in the 1975-76 Budget of any appropriations either to the DRC or to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for this particular area. The 1976-77 Budget is still in the process of being determined and I do not know what provision will be made for any expansion. I believe that whether the site becomes a permanent settlement or not depends largely on an application that was made to the Interim Aboriginal Lands Commissioner. That matter, I assume, will be in abeyance until such time as the Aboriginal land legislation question is determined and a determination is finally made about any land grant in the area. I would assume that all buildings built with government funds would be designed and checked by the appropriate government authorities and would be in conformity with building standards.

930 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Would she be able to advise later this sittings whether as at this date, 24 February, it is the intention of both the Department of Education and the Department of Housing and Construction to build a new Nightcliff Primary School on the present site?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to furnish that information later this sittings.

931 Mr ROBERTSON to Miss ANDREW—

Is she aware that the third Queen's Counsel to be appointed to the Northern Territory is in fact a Victorian barrister?

ANSWER

Yes, I am aware that a Mr McLelland has been appointed Her Majesty's Counsel for the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, there seems to be no one in the Northern Territory who was aware of this prior to the appointment, which was made by Sir Roden Cutler on 20 January.

932 Mr KENTISH to Mr TAMBLING—

Can he advise me what legislative actions followed the recommendations of the Nimmo Report?

ANSWER

I have had considerable discussions with officers of the Department of the Northern Territory with regard to possible amendments to the Town Planning Ordinance, and these discussions are continuing. I hope, at a later session of the Assembly to be able to introduce legislation that will implement the recommendations of the Nimmo Report.

933 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr TAMBLING—

Why is Block 3, the building next to this Assembly, vacant and when will it be rehabilitated and occupied?

ANSWER

The information sought by the honourable member will have to be obtained from other sources and I would, therefore, ask him to place the question on notice; I will then refer it to the Department of Administrative Services.

934 Mr MANUEL to Dr LETTS—

In view of the substantial damage being done to the soil and earth surface in the Alice Springs area, particularly the MacDonnell Ranges and including some reserves and pastoral leases, will the Majority Leader undertake to have reports from appropriate authorities to substantiate my argument that limitations should be placed on the activities of trail bike riders and other off-road vehicles capable of seriously damaging the environment and soil conservation in the area discussed?

ANSWER

I accept that question even though I believe that it should more properly have been directed to the Executive Member for Resource Development who has an established liaison with the soil conservation people in regard to his portfolio; there is some overlap between his interests and my interests there. The question referred to reserves and pastoral leases. In the case of reserves, if they include, as I suspect they do, the reserves under the control of the Northern Territory Reserves Board such as the Simpson's Gap Reserve, then the matter should be catered for, the authority to control such activities should be there in the form of the bylaws of the Reserves Board. In the case of pastoral leases, the authority is already present in the Crown Lands Ordinance and the Soil Conservation Ordinance. If the problem is of a general nature, then I will draw it to the attention of those authorities so that they may examine it and see whether they can apply the enforcement powers that they already have. If there are any specific instances that the honourable member can bring to my attention, I will also pass them on to the authorities concerned.

935 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

I refer to a stock squad action in the Finiss River area during the past year where a person was to be charged with unlawfully branding calves which were not his property. Why was the case withdrawn and who ordered the withdrawal?

ANSWER

I cannot inform the honourable member on either of those counts. Once again, the question is one that might more properly have been directed to the Executive Member for Education and Law. I shall make sure that she receives a text of the question and see if she can obtain some information from the appropriate authorities.

936 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

My question concerns statements which have been made quite properly concerning a single housing authority for the Territory. Is such an authority to be set up and will economic rents be charged for the houses?

ANSWER

I believe the question is perhaps a little premature. The consideration with regard to a single housing authority is merely at the discussion stages. The Minister is certainly looking at it with regard to the future activities of the Public Utilities Branch and the Housing Commission of the Northern Territory and my party is certainly looking at such legislation. For these reasons, I am unable to give a satisfactory answer to the honourable member at this time.

937 Mr STEELE to Mr SPEAKER—

Can you inform the Assembly of the result of the Assembly's application to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for the reservation of land at Larrakeyah for the purpose of building a future parliament house?

ANSWER

Two letters have been sent to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission on this subject, the first in August last year, and the latest in December last year. The latest advice was that the matter was still waiting to be considered and I will be informed in due course.



938 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN—

Could he advise whether the present standard of road construction accepted as a minimum in the Alice Springs region is a 15 year replacement? In view of the change of seasons in the Central Australia region, could the method of construction and the specification standard be upgraded?

ANSWER

I will contact the Department of Construction and attempt to get that information for tomorrow's sittings.

939 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Many moons ago, legislation was passed to allow tenants of 5 years standing to purchase their Housing Commission homes. Could he advise of the status of this legislation and whether it is ever likely to receive assent?

ANSWER

I am unable to give an answer about the specific bill the honourable member refers to which must have been passed in the previous Legislative Council. I am able to inform her that my party is currently proposing to introduce legislation for an unrestricted sale of houses to people who have had a qualifying period of five years. I hope to introduce that legislation at the next sittings of the Assembly and I will certainly have discussions with the honourable member before I do so.

940 Mr ROBERTSON to Miss ANDREW—

What action is being taken by the police in Katherine, following representation by Aboriginal leader, Mr Smiler Major, that the police were ignoring drunken people making nuisances of themselves in public places?

ANSWER

I am advised by the Commissioner of Police that there is no record of any written representation having been made by Mr Smiler Major regarding police ignoring drunken people in Katherine. Two weeks ago, Mr Smiler Major spoke to Sergeant Gilroy and informed him that he had spoken to an ABC representative in Katherine. Mr Major said he knew the police were hampered with the lack of legislation regarding drunkenness, vagrants and moving people on and would have to take the matter up to have the legislation amended and new legislation passed regarding drunkenness. I am assured by the commissioner that the police are doing all they can under present legislation.

941 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TAMBLING (by leave): The honourable member for Port Darwin asked how many houses had been handed over by the DRC. I am informed that as at close of business on 23 February 1976, 14 new houses had been handed over, 8 had been handed over with power connected and there were 6 completed but awaiting power connection. Of the rebuilding housing program, some 80 houses were satisfactorily completed, 61 had been handed over with power and 19 were completed but awaiting power connection. That is a total of 94 houses.

942 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TAMBLING: The honourable member for Port Darwin also asked about activities of the Reconstruction Commission under Section 6 (a) of the Act. I am informed that the commission came into being with assent of the Act on 28 February 1975. The commission has determined from 28 February the extent, nature and purpose of land use and development of the Darwin area in the formulation of planning proposals for the area of its 40 kilometre responsibility.

943 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TAMBLING: The honourable member for Port Darwin also asked a question relating to the function of the DRC under section 6 (b) of the Act. I am informed that the commission determines planning proposals on drawings DRC/32 (a) 75, DRC/32 (2a)/75, DRC/32 (3)/75 and DRC/32 (3b)/75. The scheme was forwarded to the Minister in 1975 but never ratified.

944 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Miss ANDREW (by leave): A question was asked about the Montejinni incident. I am advised by the Police Commissioner that, on Tuesday evening 10 February, Mr William Tapp of Killarney Station contacted Katherine police by radio telephone. He stated that he had been informed by Mr James Robertson, station hand at Montejinni, that he and another station hand had been threatened by Aborigines at the station and requested police assistance. Robertson was contacted and he advised that 6 Hooker Creek Aborigines, three male and three female, had arrived at the station in a drunken condition and threatened to take over the station and do injury to himself and his companion. Stones were thrown striking Robertson on the head. The Aborigines claimed to have a firearm but it was not produced. At that time, the Aborigines were quiet and camping away from the homestead. On 11 February, Sergeant Brooks and Constable Rowe went to Montejinni to inquire. An Aboriginal, Nugget Robertson, aged 32 years, was arrested for common

assault and taken to Katherine. Evidence indicates that Nugget Robertson was the cause of the trouble and the ring leader. There was no evidence that other Aborigines took part in the assault. The Aborigines had no firearms. Nugget Robertson appeared in the court on Friday 14 February. Bail was set and no plea taken. The matter has been adjourned until 27 February.

945 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr PERRON (by leave): The honourable member for Arnhem asked if I could advise him regarding the progress of the electrical reticulation to residences in Section 462 Hundred of Strangways. I have been advised that the Electricity Supply Undertaking have a design order from the DRC to proceed with the electrical reticulation in this section. When the design has been completed, a decision will be made as to whether the ESU have the resources to do the job themselves or whether it should be put to tender.

946 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Dr LETTS (by leave): The honourable member for Arnhem asked whether I could give an indication when alterations, renewals and additions to agricultural type leases, which have been virtually suspended by the previous Minister, will again receive normal processing. I have now received further information from the Lands Branch. The processing of applications for lease renewals and alterations in rural areas are still proceeding normally. As the embargo on alienation of vacant Crown land proposed following the former government's acceptance of the Woodward Report refers specifically to vacant Crown land, the existing interests or rights of individuals under the Crown Lands Ordinance were not affected by the embargo of alienation of Crown land. It will be recalled that the press statement in July 1974 by Dr Patterson indicated that, despite the downturn in the rural economy of the Northern Territory and especially for beef producers, normal lease administration would continue but special consideration would be given in default situations depending on circumstances. Thus, there has been no suspension of processing applications, the subject of the question.

I must say that the answer itself raises new questions in my mind. From my knowledge of the time that some people have been waiting for progress on applications, if processing of applications is proceeding normally, it is time that the normality was changed and something a bit abnormal was brought into the system.

947 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr POLLOCK (by leave): In reply to a question asked by the honourable member for Casuarina in relation to the Tiwi Mothers Home, I have to advise him that this building is still in the hands of the contractors. It was originally constructed under contract for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. There are problems associated with the construction of the building, particularly in relation to the airconditioning, and until these are rectified, the Department of Construction will not accept the building from the contractors.

948 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Is he able to indicate when or if an Administrator is to be appointed to the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I am able to indicate that an Administrator is to be appointed to the Northern Territory. I am unable to indicate when but I can advise her that the matter is under very active consideration.

949 Mr MANUELL to Dr LETTS—

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. Will the Primary Industry Branch animal health staff be rendered inefficient on programs already committed to disease eradication by restrictions on travel?

ANSWER

I ask him to place that question on notice.

950 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

In view of the increased numbers to be accommodated at the Fannie Bay Gaol through the closing down of Gunn Point Prison Farm, does he feel that present security at Fannie Bay Gaol is adequate?

ANSWER

The present security at Fannie Bay is barely adequate. There are, unfortunately, a number of maximum security prisoners who should be in another place in more secure circumstances. There are also quite a large number of prisoners who would be in the trusted class and would be normally at Gunn Point but unfortunately that institution is temporarily closed. I should perhaps explain that all prisoners are at the moment being accommodated at Fannie Bay; they are not being returned to the police cells but are remaining overnight in cell accommodation which is available at Fannie Bay. Extra officers have been rostered on duty at night for security reasons and, with the completion of the fence around the jail in the next couple of weeks, the security will be increased. However, the security of other prisoners is a matter of concern. Unfortunately, at the moment, there are no funds to transfer any maximum security prisoners elsewhere.

951 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN—

Can he give me any assurance that the commencement of the construction of the bridge over the Todd River will not be delayed by Government restrictions in expenditure?

ANSWER

I am unable to give any assurance as to whether or not that particular job will be affected by the cuts. I have made some approaches to the department—and the whole position with the construction of the Todd River bridge is related to funds. The Department of Construction anticipate that they will be ready to go to tender by the end of March. Under the present situation, whether this will in fact take place, has yet to be ascertained due to the funding position.

952 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

My question refers to a question I asked on the first sitting day which was: "Will he obtain and table a precise account of the capital works cuts to be experienced by the Department of the Northern Territory". Has he been able to obtain the information and, if not, when will it become available?

ANSWER

I telexed the Minister with a request along the lines sought on 19 February. I have had no acknowledgment and therefore I am not in a position to table the information.

953 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

When does the Education Department expect to have the Nakara Primary School operational?

ANSWER

The roof has to be removed and replaced because it is unsafe. Nakara is expected to open in early 1977.

954 Mr MANUELL to Dr LETTS—

I would like to ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. Will he investigate the problems being experienced by the Primary Producers Board where some members have received no remuneration for many months and some new members are unable to travel because of financial restrictions?

ANSWER

I will investigate that. Yesterday, I arranged to have a meeting with the board members next week to discuss a number of matters of concern to them.

955 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr TAMBLING—

How many houses have been built at Snake Bay on Melville Island in the last financial year.

ANSWER

I will endeavour to obtain some sort of reply for him today.

956 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

Is it true that the Wagaman School is without a telephone?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, it is true that Wagaman School does not have a telephone. The Education Department did not see fit to apply for an installation until 30 January of this year although the school was occupied on 2 February. This is a disgusting oversight although I know that there was some doubt as to whether the school would be occupied. I consider a telephone of great importance to any organisation especially with children concerned.

957 Mr MANUELL to Dr LETTS—

I ask another question on behalf of the member for Elsey. What are the intentions of the consortium which propose taking over the Alice Springs Abattoirs and will they be in a position to process all grades of meat?

ANSWER

I ask him to place that question on notice.

958 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

In previous sittings I asked him if he would table in the Assembly or make public a report on the new jail which is being presented to the Minister. He undertook to approach the Minister. What was the result of his approach and does he intend to table the report?

ANSWER

I am unable to recall the member actually asking in the House for the tabling of the report. A report has been received from the Correctional Facilities Committee and it is with the Minister.

959 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Does the Department of the Northern Territory intend re-introducing the sale of government homes to government employees?

ANSWER

I cannot speak for the Department of the Northern Territory on this matter; it is a matter of policy for the Minister to determine. However, I can indicate that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has recommended that the sale scheme for both government and Housing Commission homes be reintroduced and that the construction status of any home ought not to be a disqualifying factor to any eligible purchaser.

960 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

Can he advise what steps will be taken by the Post Office to re-establish mail services to isolated areas?

ANSWER

I will contact the department concerned and endeavour to get an answer for the honourable member for Stuart and pass it on to him as soon as it is available.

961 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW—

Can she tell me whether any moves are being made to ensure that English is made a compulsory subject in all Northern Territory schools.

ANSWER

I am unable to answer the question. I would have my doubts but I will do some research and I ask him to place that question on notice.

962 Mr MANUELL to Mr POLLOCK—

In the light of the information supplied to me yesterday by the Executive Member for Municipal and Consumer Affairs that nothing can be done about the seepage from the Alice Springs sewerage ponds, can he assure me that those people in whose charge the ponds are, are concerned and involved in preventing damage to the environment? Can he also assure me that adequate precautions are being taken to limit health risks created by the sewerage seepage into the swamp?

ANSWER

In relation to the environment, perhaps the question might be more suitably answered by the Executive Member responsible for that area. This particular problem is in my electorate and also has some concern to me in relation to the health aspect and other aspects. Frankly, I do not accept that there is seepage from the sewerage ponds; there is deliberate overflowing from the sewerage ponds into the swamp and the departments responsible for this seem to be running around in circles to try and get around the situation instead of tackling the situation properly and getting on with the job of overcoming the deliberate discharge of

effluent into the pond near Ilpapa. The people in that area do face a serious health risk as a result of this overflow of sewerage waste. In fact the area is more like an airport with a fleet of Concordes coming in, with the number of mosquitoes there at the moment.

963 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

Can he give me further information on whether a person who received a registered brand in the Finnis River area did in fact qualify as a landholder to have such a brand? If he received the brand with the permission of another landholder, does the brand section of the AIB currently hold this written permission?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Arnhem did give me some notice that he would be following this matter up and I have been able to get some information for him. It is rather a tricky situation. As I advised before, in order for somebody to register a brand on a particular property or area, the person registering the brand has to either be the owner of the land or have permission in writing from the owner of the land. In this case, the land concerned is an Aboriginal reserve under the control of the Director of Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory. Part of the property was to be run by permission by an Aboriginal company as a pastoral exercise and written permission was received from the Director of Aboriginal Affairs for the person concerned to register this brand, in other words from the landholder to the person who made the application, and the brand section of the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch does hold a copy of this written permission.

964 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK—

Can he tell me if there are any funds allocated to the Family Planning Association? If there are, how much money could be allocated to this association, and are the medicos working in that group paid for their services, along with the assistance of nursing staff?

ANSWER

I do not know. I ask that the question be placed on notice.

965 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Is it a fact that the present chairman of the DRC has resigned?

ANSWER

I am aware only of a report in yesterday's Australian newspaper, in which it was said that the present chairman of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, Mr Clem Jones, is considering resignation.

966 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Dr LETTS (by leave): I was asked a question on behalf of the member for Elsey about the assistance that would be available for peanut growers at Katherine. The information I have received is that Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch staff are working in close cooperation with growers to provide an active extension effort and specialised branch machinery is to be made available to growers on hire. The Primary Producers Board is considering providing a loan to the Northern Territory Producers Cooperative Limited for the purpose of minor repairs to processing machinery and for harvest advances on the peanut crop. This loan has not been formally approved; it depends on the submission of a formal application and further information on the size and marketing of the crop.

967 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Dr LETTS (by leave): The second question related to assistance available to the beef industry. The information provided is, firstly, under the heading "Carry-on assistance to the beef industry": the Primary Producers Board has approved in excess of 50 applications from producers for carry-on loans for the 1975-76 financial year, fully committing the allocation. Payment under these loans is progressing and will continue for the rest of the financial year although in some cases payments cannot be completed until security documents are finalised. The Government has approved in principle the continuation of the Commonwealth-states carry-on finance scheme for the 1976-77 financial year. Details of funds available to the Northern Territory have still to be decided following discussions between the state governments and the Federal Government. Under the heading "Rural reconstruction", the information is as follows. Several early applications for rural reconstruction have been recommended by the Primary Producers Board for ministerial approval. These applications will fully commit the 1975-76 allocation. A further number of applications have been received and investigation of these is continuing, but at a slow rate because of their complexity. Priority of the limited board staff resources is being given to consideration of producers' immediate needs for carry-on finance. The present rural reconstruction scheme expires on 30 June 1976 and no decision has yet been made as to its continuation.

968 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Dr LETTS (by leave): I was asked a question in relation to the oriental fruitfly. The information which I provide in relation to that matter is, first of all, under the heading of "Monitoring". That is to do with the establishment of the distribution of the fly in the Northern Territory and Northern Australia. During January 1976, the northern island and coastal areas and the Darwin, Daly River, and South Alligator and

Roper River areas were being trapped and the oriental fruitfly was found at most sites. During February 1976 the trapping programme was intensified in the original areas and extended south to Tennant Creek, east to cover the Gulf and Barkly Tableland district and west to Kununurra. Traps have also been forwarded to Alice Springs to set up a survey grid in that area.

The second heading is "Host collection", which refers to the fruit which the fruitfly might live and breed in. In order to obtain information on the host range of the oriental fruitfly periodic collections of fruit have been made in the Darwin area and on Melville Island. Oriental fruitfly has not to this point in time been reared from cultivated or commercial fruits and has been reared from only one native host, *Opilia amentaceae*, a creeper in all forests on Melville Island.

Finally, under "Quarantine", which was one of the main areas of concern in the question the information is as follows. It was recommended by the Exotic Fruit Fly Working Party (Entomology Committee) and the Standing Committee on Agriculture—that is a Commonwealth-states body—that there was a need for some sort of quarantine at the airports of Darwin, Nhulunbuy, Groote Eylandt and Katherine, and on the highways which lead to Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Since oriental fruitfly has been gazetted as a notifiable disease under the Northern Territory Plant Disease Control Ordinance, it is an offence to take fruit or vegetables which can be infested from areas in which the fly occurs. Recommendations for the implementation of quarantine procedures are currently being investigated. A publicity campaign, including the erection of warning signs at the airports and the handing out of warning notices with the issue of airline tickets, is already in progress.

969 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): The honourable member for Nhulunbuy asked a question concerning a causeway on the McArthur River. I may or may not have the right answer here, Mr Speaker, but I have an answer referring to the culverts installed near the McArthur River Station. I do not know whether this was the area which was concerned; I believe the question originated from you, Sir. The answer which I received concerns that particular causeway. The culverts which were installed before this weather are to a height above the stream bed of 3 metres, and cost approximately \$40,000. The river in the area has been known to run to a depth of about 20 metres. This does indicate that there is a possibility that flooding is still very likely. I am not familiar with the area myself, but during this wet season the approaches to the culverts have been washed out and temporary repairs have been made to restore the access. The Department of the Northern Territory is being approached to make permanent repairs at a cost of \$5,500 and these repairs will be carried out after the wet.

970 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): The honourable member for Gillen asked me a question concerning the closure of the railway and whether or not an investigation had been instigated by the present Government or the last Government. I can inform him that there is no investigation being instigated by the present Government into the railways.

Mr Robertson: Was there one by the previous Government?

Mr RYAN: I have not been able to ascertain that. I think it is more important that it was not done by this Government.

971 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): A question was asked whether Taiwanese nationals were working on fishing vessels in the harbour. This was, in fact right; they were employed, unbeknown by a fisherman. However, the immigration people have been notified and have approached the Taiwanese fishermen and told them they were unable to work owing to their status in the town. Steps have also been taken to ensure that they have sufficient food on their own vessels; supplies will be made available so that they do not have any excuse for having to work to make money to buy food.

972 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): Another question from the honourable member for Jingili concerned the widening of Trower Road to Rapid Creek. This is another area affected by the allocation of funds at present and until such time we get some clarification as to what the road programme will be, I am unable to give an answer.

973 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): A question was asked by the honourable member for Alice Springs concerning the design of roads in Alice Springs. The roads are designed for the traffic that would be expected in 20 years. They do not design the roads, as was suggested, for a 15-year replacement; the roads are designed to carry traffic over the next 20 years. The actual design of the road, with regard to the weather does not change. The main change relative to the weather conditions is in the drainage, taking into consideration, not so much the rainfall over a period, but just how intense the rain is when it comes. The roads are designed to handle traffic that would occur over the next 20 years, and the drainage is sorted out by the amount of weather that occurs. There could be some variation if the weather continues to maintain its present pattern in Alice Springs.

974 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TAMBLING (by leave): The honourable member for Tiwi sought certain information regarding building in the Knuckeyes Lagoon area in relation to an Aboriginal camp. Further information has been supplied to me by the DRC with regard to his question whether the buildings at that site meet the DRC or Building Board requirements. The answer is no. He also asked whether a decision had been reached as to whether this will be a permanent camp. The information I am given is no. He also sought information as to whether moneys had been sought for development of this particular area in either the 1975-1976 or 1976-1977 years and again, the answer supplied is no.

975 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Miss ANDREW (by leave): The honourable member for Nighcliff asked whether it was the intention of the Department of Education and the Treasury to build a new Nighcliff Primary School on the present site. I am advised by the department that it is their intention to build a new primary school, but whether government finance will permit it in the immediate future is unknown; it is on their 1976-1977 capital works proposal. Had financial restrictions not been imposed recently, work would have gone ahead. I also seek leave to table the precise schedule of allocations for the 1975-1976 financial year indicating the cut-backs in expenditure for education. This schedule was provided for me by the Department of Education.

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