

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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

Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

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

From 5 June 1984

Gas Turbine - Alice Springs

11 Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In regard to the gas powered turbine at Alice Springs power station which has recently failed in operation, (a) how long has this turbine been out of service, and (b) what arrangements have been made with the supplier and NTEC while gas is not being consumed?

From 21 August 1984

Aboriginal Communities - Trade Based Training

37 Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Given that a Vocational Training Commission working party started meeting in December 1982 to examine and plan the introduction of trade based training to Aboriginal communities, what trade based training is currently being carried out and what is planned for 1985?

Admiralty House

5 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. Given that expressions of interest for leasing of Admiralty House were called for on 24 December 1983, has the government yet made a decision regarding the occupancy of Admiralty House?
2. Who is responsible for the maintenance of Admiralty House, has any maintenance been carried out on the house and or garden since Christmas 1983?

ANSWER

The Minister for Lands is the responsible Minister. The questions should be redirected to the Minister for Lands.

Connellan Airport - Funding

7 Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. Did the Northern Territory government obtain funds for the Connelan Airport at Yulara through the federal government's Aerodrome Local Ownership Plan?
2. If so, (a) how much was made available by the federal government, and (b) how much was contributed by the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

The Aerodrome Local Ownership Plan is a Commonwealth scheme which provides for the cost for the development and maintenance of aerodromes to be reimbursed on a \$1 for \$1 basis by the Commonwealth.

The answer, therefore, will need to be provided in 2 parts, namely, relating to the development and the maintenance.

- Development - Construction of the Connelan airstrip was commenced in 1979-80 and eventually cost approximately \$3.4m. No special funds were sought under the Aerodrome Local Ownership Plan for construction.
- Maintenance - Since 1982 the Northern Territory government has been claiming, on a \$1 for \$1 basis, reimbursement for the costs of maintenance work carried out at Connelan Airport.
- For the period 1 July 1982 to 30 June 1983 the Commonwealth has reimbursed the Northern Territory government \$61 172.84 under this scheme. This represents 50% of the total cost of \$122 345.68 of maintenance undertaken at the airport.

Alice Springs - Rural Tourist Development

9 I refer to budget paper No. 5 for the financial year 1983-84, the Capital Works Program, page 25, which contains an authorization of \$98 109 for "Alice Springs - external services to rural tourist development", and ask which rural tourist development does this item refer?

ANSWER

The rural tourist development referred to is the general area in Emily Gap Road specifically zoned R5 (for tourist development). The area contains several caravan parks and a camel farm. The \$98 109 identified in Budget Paper No. 5 for financial year 1983-84 was the balance of works in progress, totalling \$250 000, to provide external services to the area.

Ilpiye-Ilpiye - Lease

10 Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

When will he make a decision in relation to the lease application made by the Ilpiye-Ilpiye Housing Association in Central Australia?

ANSWER

Officers from the Department of Lands are currently discussing this matter with representatives of the Ilpiye-Ilpiye Aboriginal Corporation and the Tangentyere Council. However, I am unable to provide the honourable member with the specific information he seeks.

The question of the lease is one of several matters under consideration in planning for future developments to the east and south-east of Alice Springs. None of these matters can be considered in isolation.

Criminally Insane Offenders

12 Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

How many offenders have been deemed to be criminally insane during (a) 1983, (b) 1982, and (c) 1981?

ANSWER

The questions may be directed to either or both of 2 different classes of persons as follows:

- (a) Cases where persons have been found upon their trial to be insane at the time of the commission of the offence and declared by a jury to be acquitted on that basis (s. 381 of the Criminal Law and Consolidation Act), (i) 1981, nil; (ii) 1982, nil; and (iii) 1983, 1.
- (b) Cases where persons who, charged with an offence, for want of comprehension of the nature of the circumstances alleged or of the proceedings are found by the court before whom they are charged to be unfit to plead, and that court has made appropriate orders (s.382 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act), (i) 1981, 1; (ii) 1982, nil; and (iii) 1983, nil.

Special Educational Services - School of the Air

13 Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

How many parents of children enrolled with the School of the Air have indicated that their children are in need of special educational services?

SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER

There are currently 11 children enrolled with the Alice Springs School of the Air who have been identified as being in need of some special education services and the Katherine School of the Air has identified 7 children in similar need.

In addition, 6 parents requested that their pre-school children be tested to assess whether special education programs were required. This testing has been carried out and, where appropriate, special programs have been provided.

Guidance Officers do periodically visit isolated students with learning difficulties at which time parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress.

NT Development Corporation - Overdue Loans

18 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

1. What action has been taken to recover money owed by firms and individuals mentioned in Schedule C of the Northern Territory Development Corporation Annual Report for 1982-83? (Schedule C being loans with instalments more than 60 days overdue).
2. Which of the firms and individuals mentioned in Schedule 2 still have overdue loan instalments to pay?

ANSWER

The corporation manages its overdue instalments not unlike any other financial institution, using follow-up procedures which provide -

- an initial opportunity for the borrower in default to identify a remedial course of action to the satisfaction of the corporation; and
- for recovery action, including realization under its securities, if the corporation is not satisfied that proper arrangements are in place which will lead to settlement of the debt.

Specific recovery action may differ in each case depending on the particular circumstances.

The corporation has provided disclosure of its financial assistance activities in the 1982-83 annual report.

Frequent public disclosures are likely to impede the corporation's recovery prospects.

I am not prepared to place the corporation's efforts at risk by providing update information on individual clients other than in the corporation's annual report.

Housing Act - Waiving of Interest Payments

20 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING and CONSERVATION

How many times has the Minister's discretion been exercised under section 29(3) of the Housing Act to waive interest payment requirements as outlined in section 29; and in each case where the Minister's discretion was exercised, what were the particular circumstances that justified the use of this discretion?

ANSWER

Section 29(3) of the Housing Act came into operation on 15 April 1983. From that date to the present time, 70 borrowers have been exempted from the repayment of the interest subsidy following sale of their properties.

The circumstances for the waiver of the penalty interest charges have been as follows:

- 43 - Impact of charging penalty would have caused financial loss to be sustained by borrower.
- 8 - Transfer of employment.
- 4 - Irretrievable marital breakdown.
- 5 - Medical grounds.
- 1 - Repurchase by NT Housing Commission.
- 1 - Further education requirements.
- 2 - Bankruptcy.
- 6 - Transfer of mortgage under Portability of Mortgage Scheme.

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 15 APRIL TO 31 JULY 1983

Name	Location	Date - Purchase Price	Date - Sale Price	Agents Legal Fees	10% p.a. Return on Owners Equity	Value Owners Improvements and Chattels	Nett Gain + Loss -	Penalty Effect Gain + Loss -	Reason for Sale
Robertson	Katherine	11/81 - \$50 000	6/83 - \$64 000	\$3 000	\$ 750	\$ 8 500	\$1 750 +	\$2 650 -	Transfer employ. to Darwin & repurchase
Staples	Nakara	3/81 - \$75 000	5/83 - \$85 000	\$3 500	\$6 700	Nil claimed	\$ 200 -	\$1 600 -	Transfer employment
Bottari	A/Springs	1/81 - \$45 800	No details recorded						Deceased - sold by estate
Campbell	Nightcliff	1/81 - \$47 000	4/83 - \$65 000	\$3 000	\$1 420	\$10 000 equity trans- ferred spouse	\$3 580 +	\$2 380 +	Marital breakdown
Forrest	A/Springs	4/81 - \$52 000	5/83 - \$63 250	\$2 900	\$ 400	Nil claimed	\$7 950 +	\$ 450 +	Marital breakdown
Wilson	A/Springs	1/81 - \$40 000	7/83 - \$48 200	\$2 500	\$ 500	Nil claimed	\$5 200 +	\$1 900 -	Marital breakdown
Benson	A/Springs	6/81 - \$50 000	6/83 - \$51 000	\$2 550	\$ 400	Nil claimed	\$1 950 -	\$7 650 -	Further education
Sheehan	Leanyer	4/81 - \$62 500	6/83 - \$76 500	\$3 300	\$2 560	Nil claimed	\$8 140 +	\$ 660 +	Family illness
Wigg	Leanyer	7/82 - \$63 620	7/83 - \$76 000	\$3 300	\$1 370	Nil claimed	\$7 710 +	\$3 460 +	Family illness
Black	Malak	12/81 - \$63 050	7/83 - \$79 000	\$3 300	\$2 000	\$11 500	\$ 850 -	\$5 750 -	Family illness
Pithie	Malak	4/81 - \$53 800	4/83 - \$82 000	\$3 400	\$2 440	\$16 500	\$5 460 +	Nil	Family illness
Kelly	Fannie Bay	3/81 - \$67 000	7/83 - \$85 000	\$3 500	\$1 700	\$12 000	\$ 800 +	\$3 500 -	Further child.educ.
Adams	Nightcliff	11/81 - \$76 000	Not sold - Transferred to spouse following marital breakdown						
Hallam	Tiwi	8/81 - \$59 050	5/83 - \$73 500	\$3 200	\$1 560	\$ 5 000	\$4 690 +	\$1 210 -	Family illness
Beasley	Fannie Bay	1/81 - \$61 750	4/83 - \$75 000	\$3 200	\$2 500	Nil claimed	\$7 500 +	\$ 850 -	Further education
Sullivan	A/Springs	1/82 - \$53 000	6/83 - \$65 000	\$3 000	\$ 600	\$ 9 850	\$1 450 -	\$5 650 -	Marriage - Transfer to spouse
Power	A/Springs	6/82 - \$56 000	7/83 - \$58 000	\$2 750	\$ 650	Nil claimed	\$1 400 -	\$4 800 -	Unemployed
Haigh	A/Springs	9/82 - \$52 700	7/83 - \$64 000	\$2 900	\$ 630	\$ 7 500	\$ 270 +	\$1 030 -	Transfer employment
The following borrowers should not have been exempted as, in accordance with the guidelines:									
• none would have sustained a loss, whether or not penalty was charged; and									
• none had a reason for sale that would justify exemption.									
Rebbeck	Malak	1/83 - \$64 000	6/83 - \$80 000	\$3 400	\$1 200	\$ 6 000	\$5 300 +	\$2 800 +	Transfer employment
Cullen	Malak	6/81 - \$50 920	6/83 - \$67 500	\$3 000	\$ 300	\$ 2 000	\$13 280 +	\$6 380 +	Transfer employment
Howman	Wanguri	6/82 - \$63 900	6/83 - \$73 500	\$3 200	\$ 320	Nil claimed	\$6 080 +	\$2 580 +	Transfer employment
Russo	Parap	4/81 - \$56 600	6/83 - \$80 500	\$3 400	\$1 400	\$ 8 000	\$11 100 +	\$8 100 +	Transfer employment

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 1 AUGUST TO 31 AUGUST 1983

Justification for exemption is highlighted

Name	Location	Date - Purchase Price	Date - Sale Price	Agents Legal Fees	10% p.a. Return on Owners Equity	Value Owners Improvements and Chattels	Nett Gain + Loss -	Penalty Effect Gain + Loss -	Reason for Sale
DeFontenay	Leanyer	4/ 3/81-\$57033	19/ 8/83-\$81750	\$3702	\$2000	\$17000	\$2015 +	\$5262 -	Transfer in employ- ment - exemption granted 2/8
Hill	Fannie Bay	22/ 2/82-\$90000	30/ 8/83-\$85000	\$3576	\$5212	Nil	\$13788 -	\$18282 -	Medical reasons
Settlements for the following two sales, including the waiver of penalty interest, were arranged by our Alice Springs office prior to the approval of new guidelines (Ministerial No. 578):									
Wightman	A/Springs	1/ 1/83-\$52300	31/ 8/83-\$62000	\$3000	\$130	Nil	\$6570 +	\$5762 +	Transfer in employ- ment - exemption granted in July
Bird	A/Springs	1/10/82-\$51800	9/ 8/83-\$68000	\$3245	\$259	\$10000	\$2696 +	\$1538 +	Transfer in employ- ment - exemption granted in July

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER TO 30 SEPTEMBER 1983

Agius	Strangways	10/ 5/82-\$46563	7/ 9/83-\$57000	\$3060	\$1300	Nil	\$6077 +	\$2954 +	Marital dispute
Jackson	Woodleigh	11/ 2/81-\$57600	13/ 9/83-\$66500	\$3145	\$1000	\$ 3000	\$1755 +	\$3162 -	Loss of job in NT
O'Dea	Woodleigh	1/ 5/81-\$58000	22/ 9/83-\$78000	\$3500	\$2450	\$15500	\$1450 -	\$8985 -	Transfer to SA by employer
Lackner	Nightcliff	13/ 5/81-\$45000	30/ 9/83-\$45000	\$530	\$2125	Nil	\$2655 -	\$4798 -	Unit unsuitable to raise family

The waiver of penalty interest was granted in writing to the following, prior to the approval of new guidelines (Ministerial No. 578):

McPherson	Jingili	5/ 3/82-\$62050	16/ 9/83-\$95300	\$3540	\$450	\$20000	\$9260 +	\$3678 +	Medical reasons
Coulson	A/Springs	1/ 5/81-\$46900	16/ 9/83-\$62000	\$3000	\$2500	\$5000	\$4600 +	\$1658 +	Medical reasons
Stolz	Rapid Crk	4/ 3/82-\$61700	29/	\$2500	\$1234	\$2500	\$4566 +	\$2433 -	Marital breakdown

Penalty interest was charged on the following:

Wharton Sold: 21/ 9/83 Penalty: \$1136
Batterham Sold: 22/ 9/83 Penalty: \$3790

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 1 OCTOBER TO 31 OCTOBER 1983

Justification for exemption is highlighted

Name	Location	Date - Purchase Price	Date - Sale Price	Agents Legal Fees	10% p.a. Return on Owners Equity	Value Owners Improvements and Chattels	Nett Gain + Loss -	Penalty Effect Gain + Loss -	Reason for Sale
Ansell	Karama	26/ 6/81-\$61274	3/10/83-\$76000	Nil	\$3312	\$13529	\$2115 -	\$9227 -	Marital breakdown
Andriske	Leanyer	22/ 7/82-\$71226	17/10/83-\$70000	-	-	-	\$1226 -	\$3172 -	Financial problems
Jenkins	Stuart Park	5/11/82-\$55000	28/10/83-\$58000	\$3000	\$500	-	\$500 -	\$4181 -	Financial problems

The waiver of penalty interest was granted in writing to the following, prior to the approval of new guidelines (Ministerial No. 578):

Hall	Rapid Crk	9/ 8/82-\$79000	10/10/83-\$76000	-	-	-	\$3000 -	\$5050 -	Employment transfer
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Penalty interest was charged on the following:

Keam Sold: 14/10/83 Penalty: \$2235
Rollinson Sold: 17/10/83 Penalty: \$7608

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER TO 30 NOVEMBER 1983

Bishell	Millner	26/ 3/81-\$54000	9/11/83-\$58000	\$3000	\$1175	Nil	\$175 -	\$6958 -	Returned to NZ
Grimshaw	Millner	26/ 3/81-\$78000	29/11/83-\$86000	\$3280	\$3500	Nil	\$1200 +	\$1136 +	Divorce
Morris	Larrakeyah	1/10/81-\$90000	29/11/83-\$130000	Nil	\$7000	\$11000	\$21000 +	\$17000 +	Sold to NTHC

The waiver of penalty interest was granted in writing to the following, prior to the approval of new guidelines (Ministerial No. 578):

Nicol	Moil	1/ 8/82-\$56000	9/11/83-\$64500	\$3050	\$420	Nil	\$5030 +	\$742 +	Employment transfer
Stanley	Malak	1/ 4/81-\$51800	22/11/83-\$71500	\$3295	\$750	Nil	\$15655 +	\$7784 +	University in QLD
Lupi	Anula	1/5/82-\$63500	9/11/83-\$68000	\$4090	\$480	Nil	\$70 -	\$2400 -	Moved to Sydney

Penalty interest was charged on the following:

Bedson Tiwi Sold: 18/11/83 Penalty: \$4681

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 1 DECEMBER TO 31 DECEMBER 1983
Justification for exemption is highlighted

Name	Location	Date - Purchase Price	Date - Sale Price	Agents Legal Fees	10% p.a. Return on Owners Equity	Value Owners Improvements and Chattels	Nett Gain + Loss -	Penalty Effect Gain + Loss -	Reason for Sale
Blandford	Karama	13/10/82-\$65000	1/12/83-\$77000	\$2300	\$1500	\$6000	\$2200 +	\$2800 -	Medical
Poole	Karama	16/ 3/82-\$51450	2/12/83-\$55000	\$2800	\$750	Nil	Break even	\$5607 -	Transferred to NSW
Pike	Alawa	6/11/81-\$75000	7/12/83-\$80000	\$3704	\$3390	\$1000	\$3094 -	\$3660 -	Finance difficulty
Hancock	Anula	16/12/82-\$63700	9/12-83-\$80000	\$3500	\$318	\$18350	\$5868 -	\$9138 -	Medical
Farlow	Ludmilla	22/ 3/82-\$65250	9/12/83-\$74000	\$3400	\$326	\$1000	\$4024 +	\$2314 -	Marital
Smith	A/Springs	1/ 6/81-\$49100	16/12/83-\$78500	\$3050	\$612	\$24200	\$1538 +	\$5405 -	Retired from job
Crean	Leanyer	31/ 3/81-\$66000	21/12/83-\$95000	\$3700	\$1600	\$25000	\$1300 -	\$2475 -	Financial
Voysey	Woodleigh	12/ 6/81-\$58500	21/12/83-\$76000	\$3430	\$2125	\$4000	\$7945 +	\$2350 -	Medical
Dohnt	Nightcliff	29/ 5/81-\$46000	23/12/83-\$47000	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1000 +	\$6169 -	Deceased estate
Sistrunk	A/Springs	10/ 3/83-\$62500	23/12/83-\$68500	\$3000	\$400	\$4000	\$1400 -	\$3815 -	Finance difficulty

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY TO 31 JANUARY 1984

Justification for exemption is highlighted

Hawkes	Wanguri	23/12/82-\$72000	5/ 1/84-\$87500	Nil	\$360	Nil	\$15140 +	\$13423 +	Repurchased by NTHC
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Penalty interest was charged on the following:

Dzamka Sold: 5/1/84 Penalty: \$8648

LOANS EXEMPTED FROM PENALTY INTEREST FOR PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY TO 29 FEBRUARY 1984

Justification for exemption is highlighted

Howell	Malak	1/ 2/82-\$62550	8/ 2/84-\$72500	\$3500	\$600	\$5000	\$850 +	\$6472 -	Financial difficult.
Smith	Stuart Park	1/ 3/81-\$50000	8/ 2/84-\$52000	\$2730	\$300	Nil	\$1030 -	\$8188 -	Employment transfer
McLoughlin	Howard Sgs	1/ 3/82-\$56480	14/ 2/84-\$59000	\$3130	\$1496	Nil	\$2106 -	\$6565 -	Bankruptcy
Hartwigson	Alawa	1/ 3/81-\$62000	17/ 2/84-\$84000	\$3495	\$4200	\$17670	\$3365 -	\$14562 -	Medical reasons

The waiver of penalty interest was granted in writing to the following prior to the approval of new guidelines (Minister No. 578):

Korst	Leanyer	1/ 4/81-\$53460	14/ 2/84-\$90000	\$4000	\$4380	2nd mortgage \$17000 Improvements \$15000	\$3840 -	\$11860 -	Medical reason N.B. 3 year period expires April 1984
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BORROWERS SEEKING EXEMPTION OF PENALTY INTEREST

A/C No.	Location	Date - Purchase Price	Date - Sale Price	Agents Legal Fees	10% p.a. Return on Owners Equity	Value Owners Improvements and Chattels	Nett Gain + Loss -	Penalty Effect Gain + Loss -	Reason for Sale
H70Q544199	A/Springs	1/ 6/82-\$51 000	Anticipated March/April 1984 \$68 000	\$3240	\$500	\$12 633	\$427 +	\$4925 -	Employment transfer
1520L61489	Nightcliff	28/ 5/81-\$65 000	5/ 2/83-\$66 000	\$3145	\$4650	\$5000	\$11 795 -	\$17 962 -	Employment transfer
2596220599	A/Springs	1/11/82-\$52 000	-\$58 000	-	-	-	\$6000 +	-	Bankruptcy
Borrower declared bankrupt on 26 September 1983. Official Receiver as the registered proprietor arranged sale of the property. Any proceeds from sale are to be distributed to creditors who agreed to sale price. There will be no profit to borrower.									
2656H16309	Millner	Nov. 82 - \$60 100 (Land \$10 100 (Const. \$50 000)	March 84-\$72 000	-	-	-	\$11 900 +	-	Bankruptcy
Borrower declared bankrupt on 19 September 1983. The Official Receiver as the registered proprietor has sold the property. Proceeds from the sale are to be distributed to creditors who have agreed to the sale price. The borrower will not receive any cash in hand. The Commission under previous arrangements had advised the Official Receiver in writing that no penalty interest would be charged.									
M57HDI0029	Stuart Prk	13/10/82-\$60 000	Not known \$60 000	\$400	\$400	Nil	\$800 -	further loss	See below
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purchased property with the intention of permanent residency. 2. Subsequently married a Swedish person who is committed to remain in Sweden for the next two years. 3. Was advised in July 1983 that penalty interest not normally charged when profit not made on sale and also that NTHC would not repurchase dwelling. 4. Since July 1983 property has been let for a period of three months only - payments being met by immediate family in Darwin. 5. Limited interest shown by prospective purchasers. However an offer has been made at \$60 000 									

<u>1. Loan Account</u>	<u>Date Purchased</u>	<u>Location</u>
C55FDJ0089 - C.S.S. Chew	10 August 1982	Unit 8/1874 Westralia Street Stuart Park

Reason for Sale

The borrower has since married and has one child and considers the unit is not appropriate living conditions to raise a family. The borrower has occupied the unit since December 1981.

Waiver of penalty interest was granted under approved procedures prior to 8 March 1984.

<u>2. Loan Account</u>	<u>Date Purchased</u>	<u>Location</u>
D53MDX0109 - P.G. Dawson	January 1982	Unit 10/4902 Railway Street Parap

Reason for Sale

The borrower has now married and has a child of 13 months. Does not believe the unit is a proper environment to raise a child. The unit has living area downstairs and sleeping area upstairs. The borrower's wife is receiving continuous medical treatment for back problems which occurred from a fall down the stairs whilst pregnant.

<u>3. Loan Account</u>	<u>Date Purchased</u>	<u>Location</u>
1685U53589 - M.J. SANGHA	November 1981	Lot 5358 Mulla Mulla Circuit Karama

Reason for Sale

The borrower has separated from husband and the matrimonial home has to be sold. The borrower has custody of the child and seeks security by transferring loan to another property.

<u>4. Loan Account</u>	<u>Date Purchased</u>	<u>Location</u>
1961U53149 - C.M. & A.M. BAIN	May 1982	70 Applegum Drive Karama

Reason for Sale

Matrimonial home to be sold, borrower separated from husband and has custody of their 2-year-old child. Wishes to transfer to another property to ensure security for herself and child.

<u>5. Loan Account</u>	<u>Date Purchased</u>	<u>Location</u>
2279709299 - G. & C. Washington	July 1982	Lot 929 Heron Crescent Katherine

Reason for Sale

Health reasons. Doctor's letter confirming borrower's general health is suffering due to the intolerance of the noise of his surrounding neighbours.

<u>6. Loan Account</u>	<u>Date Purchased</u>	<u>Location</u>
2755L052A9 - W.B. Smith	December 1982	Unit 8/63 Aralia Street Nightcliff

Reason for Sale

Only option to move residence - There have been several incidents whereby the borrower's life and that of his fiancée have been threatened by the neighbours. The police have been called on 3 occasions and prevented ugly scenes from becoming violent. However, the police advise they cannot assist unless someone is actually injured. The borrower works at the casino at night and his fiancée is virtually a prisoner in her own home. Borrower approached the Commission through the Member for Nightcliff, Mr Steve Hatton.

Bradshaw Primary School - Enrolments in High Schools

24 Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

How many students from Grade 7 at Bradshaw Primary School in (i) 1981, (ii) 1982, and (iii) 1983 enrolled in (a) Alice Springs High School, and (b) Sadadeen High School for the (i) 1982, (ii) 1983, and (iii) 1984 school years?

ANSWER

- (a) The number of former Year 7 Bradshaw Primary students enrolled at Alice Springs High School were (i) 1981, 45; (ii) 1982, 36; and (iii) 1983, 58.
- (b) The number of former Year 7 Bradshaw Primary students enrolled at Sadadeen High School were (i) 1982, 17; (ii) 1983, 30; and (iii) 1984, 30.

Larrakeyah Primary and Pre-school - Relocation

29 Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

How much is the modification at the old hospital to cater for the relocation of Larrakeyah Primary and Pre-school to cost the government?

ANSWER

It is estimated that the cost will be in the order of \$34 000.

Yuendumu - Aboriginal Teacher Aides and Literacy Workers

30 Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

- 1. Is it true there were 12 Aboriginal teacher aide positions and 1 literacy worker at Yuendumu in 1975 and in 1984 there are only 5 Aboriginal teacher aide positions and 2 literacy workers?
- 2. If so, why?

ANSWER

The staffing records for 1975 are retained by Commonwealth Archives on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs and are not readily accessible to the NT Department of Education, but the earliest records held within the NT Department of Education indicate that there were 9 Aboriginal para-professional staff employed at Yuendumu in 1976.

The current Aboriginal para-professional staffing at the school is:

- 1 x A1 full-time literacy worker
- 2 x A1 half-time literacy workers
- 5 x Assistant Teachers
- 1 x School Assistant Grade 2 Adult Education.

This is equivalent to 8 full-time positions.

In addition, there is a School Assistant Grade 3 position which could be filled by an Aboriginal if a suitably trained applicant were available.

Notwithstanding the level of Aboriginal staffing at the school, it should be noted that student enrolments have fallen from 244 in mid-1976 to 206 in June 1984.

It should be noted that the staff referred to above is in addition to the 12 qualified teachers appointed to Yuendumu school.

Monitoring of Leprosy Cases

31 Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH, YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

What special surveillance programs have been undertaken to monitor the cases of leprosy in the Pintubi Aboriginals on the Western Australian border?

ANSWER

Arrangements are currently in hand for Dr A. Dyrting, together with Mr Billy Watson, Aboriginal Health Worker at Lajamanu, and Dr Kerry Kirke, Regional Director, Alice Springs and Barkly Region, to visit the Pintubi Aboriginal community at Kintore in the near future, to assist in surveys of both leprosy and venereal diseases.

Application for this visit has been made to the Kintore community by the Regional Director. Until such time as approval is received from the community, a firm date for the visit cannot be given. The intention is that medical and health worker staff employed by the independent Pintubi Homelands Health Service be assisted with training and advice to enable surveillance programs to be carried out independently by the health service in future.

Applications for Perpetual Pastoral Leases

33 Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

1. How many applications for perpetual pastoral leases have been received as of 30 May 1984?
2. How many such leases (a) have been granted, (b) refused, and (c) are under consideration?
3. To which stations have a perpetual pastoral lease been granted?

ANSWER

Twenty-five applications for perpetual pastoral leases have been received as of 30 May 1984.

Ten applications have been granted, 0 refused and 4 are under consideration. Another 5 have been referred to the Land Board but are yet to be considered while a further 6 are waiting on advice from interested departments before being referred to the Land Board.

Perpetual pastoral leases have been granted to the following stations: Tarlton Downs, Orange Creek, Marqua, Yambah, Alexandria, East Ranken, West Ranken, Soudan, Adder Block and Lucy Creek.

Staff Establishment - Alice Springs Hospital

34 Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH, YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

What (a) were the establishment figures at Alice Springs Hospital on the day level as at (i) June 1982, (ii) June 1983, and (iii) June 1984; and (b) the actual staff numbers at those dates?

ANSWER

(a) Establishment

(i) June 1982 - 521
(ii) June 1983 - 519
(iii) June 1984 - 519

(b) Staff Numbers

(i) June 1982 - 473
(ii) June 1983 - 499
(iii) June 1984 - 491

Contracts on Deferred Financing Basis

35 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. How many contracts were let on a deferred financing basis in the 1983-84 financial year, and what was the total value of these contracts?
2. What is the extent of repayments entered into as a result of these contracts in (a) 1984-85, (b) 1986-85, (c) 1986-87, (d) 1987-88, and (e) after 1988?

ANSWER

1. There were 3 projects financed on a deferred financing basis in the 1983-84 financial year. The value of each financing facility for the various projects was as follows:

Sanderson High School	- \$10 million
Tennant Creek High School	- \$ 3.9 million
Lower Court / Registrar-General's Building	- \$12.5 million

The total value of all deferred financing facilities was therefore \$26.4 million.

2. Under the 3 agreements negotiated, the Territory has the option to repay each facility either in 3 equal instalments after project completion or on a lump sum basis 3 years after project completion. Assuming that the facilities are repaid on an instalment basis, the level of principal repayments in each year would be:

(a) 1984-85	- Nil
(b) 1985-86	- \$4.6 million
(c) 1986-87	- \$8.8 million
(d) 1987-88	- \$8.8 million
(e) After 1988	- \$4.2 million

Interest payments will be dependant upon market rates of interest over the next few years.

University Planning Authority

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In light of the Tertiary Education Commission's recommendations that the University Planning Authority is an inappropriate structure to plan a university, does the government intend to restructure this unit?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the recommendations in the CTEC reports, whilst they did not provide funding for the establishment of a university in the Northern Territory, gave some very clear indications as to what we were on about. Whilst CTEC does not recommend any funding for a university in the Northern Territory during the 1985-87 triennium, its recommendations do contain much that is encouraging for the project. Most significantly, the universities council of CTEC is willing to assist with the examination of possible approaches to developing a proposal regarding a university college if the Northern Territory government wishes to develop such a proposal.

I have made it quite clear that we are interested in developing such a proposal. This question gives me an opportunity to expand a little on the proposal for the establishment of a university college in the Northern Territory. As I have mentioned in the past, we have been looking towards a well-established university setting up a university college in the Northern Territory. To this end, a number of contacts have been made with universities throughout Australia. In fact, the Senate of the University of Queensland has authorised its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brian Wilson, to discuss possible arrangements with the Northern Territory. The University Planning Authority has an important role to play in that respect. Professor Wilson has also agreed to become a member of the University Planning Authority's advisory committee. We are also having discussions at present with the University of Adelaide, the James Cook University, the ANU and the University of Sydney. As members would be aware, we have already had a link with the University of Sydney in relation to post-graduate studies at the Menzies School of Health Research. Last Sunday, the Vice-Chancellor of the Sydney University, Professor Ward, the Vice-Chancellor of the Queensland University, Professor Brian Wilson, and Professor Ken Back from the James Cook University, were in Darwin. We were discussing issues in relation to the establishment of a university college in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I want to make it quite clear that the Northern Territory government does not envisage the Darwin Community College being linked to the university. The Darwin Community College plays a very important part in our community. It serves a purpose and we hope that it will continue to meet the requirements of our community. The main thing that we are looking at with the establishment of a university college, and the eventual university, is that the standards are kept high. In order to do this, we must break completely from the Darwin Community College. I must also say that we do not want to have or be seen to have a second-rate university. That is something that this government will be fighting against.

Whilst negotiations are still at an early stage, I really do not see the point in the opposition's question. We are actively pursuing a course leading to the establishment of a university in the Territory. Senator Ryan has agreed verbally with me that the approach should be one of establishing a university college in the first instance. That is what we intend doing. At this particular point in time, the University Planning Authority has a very important role to play in our future deliberations.

Dialysis Unit for Alice Springs Hospital

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Has his department any proposal to establish a dialysis unit in the Alice Springs Hospital?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter of renal dialysis at Alice Springs has been under consideration by the department for some time. The provision of such a service for people with renal failure has been complicated by the fact that, whilst purchase of the necessary equipment is easy enough, training people to use it is not. Of course, the other problem the Department of Health has in making its decision regarding renal dialysis machines is where they could be located. The only information I can give the honourable member is that the matter has the department's full attention and, hopefully, in the very near future, I will be able to provide him with more information.

Review of Department of Community Development

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Will he table during this sittings the report of the review team which has recently completed a far-reaching organisational review of his department?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot see any problems whatsoever in tabling the report. I will be quite pleased to do so.

Mosquito Breeding Control for Alice Springs

Mr HANRAHAN to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is the Conservation Commission planning to cease its control of mosquito breeding, particularly in the Ilpapa Swamp area near Alice Springs and, if so, what alternatives for mosquito control are planned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for several years, the Conservation Commission has carried out adult mosquito control operations around Alice Springs by fogging with an insecticide. This was a function inherited from the local government section of the old Commonwealth administration. The commission has never been involved in the control of mosquito larvae around Alice Springs. This work has been carried out largely by the Alice Springs Town Council. Control of mosquitoes is not an approved function of the Conservation Commission. The function was transferred to the Department of Health in Darwin in 1982. The Conservation Commission has advised the Department of Health in Alice Springs that the commission will not be performing this work beyond 1984. This should give the Department of Health adequate time in which to make alternative arrangements. At that time, the Conservation Commission will transfer to the Department of Health all equipment that has been used for this fogging around Alice Springs, including a specially-adapted vehicle.

Local Government for Small Towns

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What plans does the Department of Community Development have for the implementation of local government in the smaller town centres of the Northern Territory? I refer mainly to those small towns along the highway in my electorate.

ANSWER

The honourable member for Victoria River has asked an interesting question in regard to what is occurring in the smaller towns along the Stuart Highway. Under part XX of the Local Government Act, there is provision for community government councils to be formed. The Mataranka community has made an approach. I have spoken to the people down there and they are well on the way to forming the community council under part XX of the Local Government Act. As a result of the Mataranka community's enthusiasm towards what it sees as a large number of benefits for its residents, a number of other communities on the Stuart Highway have expressed interest in developing community government councils in their regions. The town of Pine Creek has expressed great interest in the scheme as has the town of Elliott. In response to that interest, members of my department will be conducting meetings with the communities to explain the concept of community government councils and, hopefully, we will be well on the way to providing some form of local government which is appropriate to the size and needs of those particular communities.

Women's Shopfront Information Services

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I draw his attention to the government announcement of 18 June which said that a women's shopfront information service would be opened in the near future. When will that information service commence operation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question of women's shopfront information services was considered by Cabinet approximately 2 months ago and formal approval was given to the establishment of shopfront information services. Responsibility then devolved from myself, as minister responsible for the policy, to the Minister for Community Development whose department is responsible for the actual establishment of the shopfront information services. I believe that considerable work has been done. I am not fully aware of the current status. Perhaps the honourable member would prefer that the honourable Minister for Community Development provide him with a briefing later today.

Electricity Generation in Rural Area

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Given that residents in the urban areas have had to pay for all extensions of services to their allotments, including power, with the purchase price of their land, on what basis does the government intend to charge landholders in the Darwin rural area for electricity extensions?

ANSWER

I am happy to take a couple of moments of the Assembly's time to address the issue of the provision of power to rural areas surrounding Darwin. It is quite a simple matter but it has been blown out of all proportion in recent days by people who, I believe, would prefer to have the power connected for nothing and at the expense of everyone else in the community. As my honourable colleague said, there is no doubt that the people who have already paid \$25 000 or \$50 000 for a block of land to build a house on, and that block included the cost of the provision of power, water, sewerage and other services, are not terribly impressed about the prospect of people, who seek an alternative lifestyle by getting away from it all, being provided with power at government cost and, to wit, at cost to the rest of the consumers in the Northern Territory.

In 1978, the government introduced a very successful rural electrification scheme. It has been going for 5 years. It has connected 80% of the people in the rural area. In the middle of last year, the stage was reached where the scheme could no longer be implemented because of the very long runs of power and the very sparse population to be served in the rural area. NTEC stopped work because it did not have the money to provide the power for nothing. There were not enough consumers and money between them in the area to justify the extensive connections, and there we lapsed.

Late last year, the government received a letter from an action group in Darwin River Dam area, led by Frank O'Brien. Its plea was for the rural electrification program to be continued and to complete the rest of the rural area. That would not be an unreasonable proposition if everybody joined the scheme. The dilemma was that there were not enough people in it and those who were involved were not prepared to pay the shared cost of connection. In Mr O'Brien's plea, he made a very valid point that certainly touched me. It affects the hip-pocket nerve of most people in the area. I think it is a very relevant argument. I will just read the paragraph concerning it. Mr O'Brien says, under the heading 'generators': 'It now costs \$96.10 for a drum of fuel; \$42.22 for 20 L of oil and about \$6000 for a generator. The average cost of generating power for our basic needs' - and he stresses 'basic' - 'is in the region of \$45 a week. Allowing for repairs and replacement costs of the generator itself, the cost rises to about \$68 a week or over \$3500 per year for electricity'.

The point that is relevant is that this is not 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week electricity. Somebody starts the generator and it runs for whatever period it is needed. That is not a terribly convenient way to live but, regrettably, many people live that way. It seemed to me that, if we have 300 to 400 people in the rural area spending, say, \$3000 a year for home electricity, and that was likely to go on for some time unless the nexus could be broken by providing a new scheme, then we really were not doing ourselves a great favour. We are all working for the oil companies and that seems to be a pretty futile exercise. As a result of the personal representations from Mr O'Brien and his group, I asked that a program be prepared that would accommodate 3 important points: that we provide power as soon as possible to the people in the area; that the program enable most people to meet the repayments of their commitment over a period of time should that be their desire; and that the program enable NTEC to recoup its money.

Mr Speaker, for NTEC to be the principal in the scheme instead of all the consumers coming together, it would need to borrow the money. It cannot borrow the money on the premise that there are 400 blocks today and there might be 500

tomorrow and 2000 in the year 1990. On the other hand, there might be only 400 blocks in the year 2000. It needs to be reasonably assured that it will recoup the money borrowed. A program was worked out on that basis. We identified about 430 consumers who would benefit from reticulation in the rural area. That took into account the possibility that some people may subdivide and provide us with a few new connections in the period ahead. It also accounted for an approximate cost of \$2.1m to put the power on. Over a period, NTEC could justifiably recoup that. It also gives us an opportunity to spread the load evenly amongst the consumers. In a system of direct cost per customer, those living close to the source will receive it for \$1500 and others further away will be paying \$15 000. In the end, no one will want to join because of the inequity of the scheme.

We have put forward a very simple scheme. We estimated that, over a period, there are about 400 to 500 people in the rural area who would apply for a connection. A cost of \$5000 per block is to be apportioned evenly amongst them so that NTEC can get on with the work with the objective of completing the job by June 1987. The consumer will have to agree - and it is not compulsory - to pay the \$5000 for the cost of connection. As an incentive, if a consumer gives us a cheque for \$5000 which will enable us to proceed, we will give him a 5% discount. If he is paying \$40 to \$50 per week for power now, we will give him an interest-free loan of the same order for 2 years. If he is in dire circumstances and cannot meet that commitment, we are prepared to give him a 10% interest-rate loan over a period of 10 years or more, if necessary, so that he can meet the repayment of the \$5000 on reasonable terms.

This proposed scheme brought a reaction in the community. I cite Mr O'Brien as one who came down out of his tree on a vine on the premise that it was totally unreasonable that people be asked to pay \$5000 for the power and they should be able to receive it for nothing. We cannot accept the premise that people should receive it for nothing. We could not bring the cost much below \$5000 even if we tinkered very carefully with it. While we are able to ask people to suggest an alternative system of payment to cover the \$5000, we cannot avoid the \$5000 payments.

On 2 occasions, I have invited groups from the rural area to give us a written submission on how the repayment of the money might be tailored to meet their needs. To this date, I have not received a reply and I hope one will be forthcoming. Mr Speaker, I would say to all the people in the rural area that the government and officers of NTEC have spent some 3 to 4 months examining every rural electrification system we could find. We believe we have come up with what is a very generous proposal to help people to get power - people who are currently paying \$40 to \$50 a week for it and who, under the pre-June scheme, would not have obtained power at all during their lifetimes. We believe we have given them a very generous opportunity to come into the scheme.

Mr Speaker, as a result of a letter I sent out and a form that people could send in to NTEC to indicate their interest in the program, last night Mr O'Brien went on radio and said: 'Do not send in your form. Cabinet will change its mind; so hang on'. All I say to these people is that there is not much chance of Cabinet changing its mind because money is money. Unless somebody makes us a donation that enables us to do it for nothing, then it must be paid for. I would encourage rural people to fill in their forms to join the scheme or put forward an alternative proposal for the payment of the money if they think they have one that is better than the one that has been offered and to be assured that the government is very keen to free them from the oil costs they are bearing at the moment and which are totally unreasonable.

Nabalco Licence to Sell Electricity

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Does Nabalco Pty Ltd have a licence to sell electricity as required under the Electricity Commission Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will give that information to the honourable member later today.

Preferential System for Local Contractors

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the fact that the recent Australian Labor Party conference in Canberra successfully moved to prohibit state and territory governments from being able to award contracts on a preferential system to local contractors, can he advise what effect he believes this will have on Territory contractors?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, basically, the Territory government's policy is that the free operation of competition is the best possible thing that can assist private enterprise. What private enterprise needs for survival and growth is a sound and prosperous economy. However, in view of the particular situation of the Northern Territory at self-government, when our industries were in their infancy, the Territory government decided to set in place a system of moderate protection for local industry through the government tender system. As I recall it, the system was that locally-based tenderers would receive, as it were, a tariff protection of 5% against people bidding from outside the Territory. I might say that this system has needed to be utilised on only a handful of occasions in the last 6 years. By and large, Territory business, and particularly the construction industry, is able to compete against people tendering from outside. So it should be because industry that is established in the Territory has the advantage of an existing workforce, premises, local knowledge and all the rest of it.

The Territory government announced earlier this year that it would be maintaining this system of limited support for Territory industry until such time as Territory industry gained its own feet to a stage where that system of support could be withdrawn. I understand that a policy has been introduced and implemented by the ALP National Conference. I do not really see how it relates to the situation of the Territory. It is a decision that has to be made up here by the Territory government. A federal government of any persuasion quite rightly does not have preferential systems between the states because it is, after all, the Australian government. As I understand it, the ALP policy is binding on the federal government. If it were binding, for instance, on the Western Australian government, that government would have to dismantle a considerable protection edifice that has been built up in Western Australia over the years and which, as I understand it, currently is precluding the sale of Territory bricks to allow cheaper construction in Kununurra. I understand it is also hindering the sale of Territory bricks from Northbrick. It was mentioned in the Assembly last year that these clay bricks would be exported to the south. I understand that Western Australian protection arrangements are inhibiting the sale of clay bricks from Darwin to the Argyle diamond project.

The Territory position is that it has a moderate system of assistance believing that the Territory's economy is in its infancy and that local businesses deserve some support. However, we certainly do not intend to go to the extent of governments such as Western Australia and Queensland which virtually attempt to lock out all outside competition. That can only be unhealthy and contrary to the taxpayers' interests and to Australia's federal philosophy. As far as we are concerned, the Labor Party policy passed in Canberra recently has absolutely no relevance to the Northern Territory situation.

Bulk Oil Storage Depot in McMinn Street

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

Does the government intend to take compulsory acquisition action to gain control over land currently used for oil storage off McMinn Street?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government has written to the oil companies on a number of occasions in the past couple of years. We have indicated to them that we believe that the future of the existing bulk oil storage depot in Darwin has a limited useful life and that the advent of the Channel Island Power-station and the opening up of additional land for potentially hazardous industries in that area means that we should sit down and talk about relocating the oil storage tanks. We have told them that we would see a start to moving such fuel depots as about 1988. Being a very big job, we would envisage the completion of such a move in 1995. The fuel companies have met with government officers a number of times to talk about the government's view that the fuel tank farm in Darwin does have a limited life. We have not as yet spoken about acquiring the assets of the companies. We have not discussed the strategies of the move. Such strategies could include a whole range of things, including the government purchasing the land and existing facilities and leasing it back to them or the fuel companies retaining the land which could be rezoned and subdivided after they have vacated the site. At the present time, they own the land under freehold tenure. The whole strategy of moving the fuel storage farm is the subject of discussion between officers of the government and representatives of the various fuel companies involved. I expect it will not be resolved in the short term.

Northern Territory Development Corporation Employment

Mr HATTON to CHIEF MINISTER

In June this year, there was an announcement that the staff of the Northern Territory Development Corporation would be offered direct employment by that corporation. Can he advise us of the circumstances of that change, what offers have been made to the staff and what has been the reaction of the staff to that move?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is correct that not only the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation but the Chairman of the Tourist Commission made representations to me, as the responsible minister, and presumably with the approval of their boards, that, in view of the commercial climate in which both organisations operate, it was desirable that they be taken outside the provisions of the Public Service Act and their employees, so far as possible, be

hired on similar conditions to those prevailing in the commercial world. One can understand the reasons for that because, with the Tourist Commission for instance, many of its employees are hired in the south where the tourist bureaux are located. Of course, one may think that many of these people have never seen the Northern Territory. That is quite incorrect. They are brought to the Territory for regular work experience, as it were. They go round the Territory and visit the different resorts so that they know what they are talking about. However, they do not actually have links with the Territory. In the tourist industry, staff turnover seems to be high. Often, people do not stick in the jobs terribly long and they seem to move from agency to agency. Thus, there is certainly a good deal of rationale behind the proposal, especially from the point of view of the Tourist Commission. It was felt that, by taking the Northern Territory Development Corporation outside the provisions of the Public Service Act, it would enhance the morale of the staff of that organisation, being dedicated as they are to the development of the Territory's economy and believing that they are specialists in the field.

Mr Speaker, with Cabinet's approval, the decision was taken and the Public Service Commissioner was asked to advise on steps that should be taken to implement the decision. As I understand it, the situation is that there are 3 basic options of which staff can avail themselves. Firstly, they can resign from the public service and take up a completely new contract with the Northern Territory Development Corporation. Of course, that would be negotiated by them with the corporation, presumably, before they resign from the public service. The second option is that they can take leave of absence from the public service and remain with the NTDC for 2 years. I believe 2 years is the maximum period for which they can gain leave of absence and I assume a 2-year period will enable them to see how they like operating outside the public service. They will still retain their option to take up a position somewhere else in the public service. The third option is, of course, for them to apply for a transfer to another position within the Northern Territory Public Service as positions become available. I do not expect any redundancies to arise out of these moves. Certainly, it is not the government's intention nor the Public Service Commissioner's intention to harm the prospects of these people at all. I understand they will be covered by provisions in relation to superannuation and so on. Of course, those people who avail themselves of the option of remaining in the public service will have absolutely no interruption of their public service superannuation cover etc.

Although there have been occasions when the matter has been raised in the press, neither of the chairmen of these organisations has brought to my attention any particular problems being encountered with staff. I believe that consultation on the ground has been thorough and that, indeed, this move originated really as a groundswell from the staff within the organisations. To date, the moves have been reasonably successful and I would hope that they will lead to increased efficiency, improved performance and better morale.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the fact that casinos have been used for the laundering of money from criminal activities - particularly drug-related activities - outside the national boundaries of the operations themselves, and in view of the concerns raised by the former Premier of Tasmania, who negotiated Australia's first casino agreements, that Australian casinos should be operated only by Australians, could he advise what action has been taken by the government to establish the credentials of any overseas interests involved in any future

operations of any Northern Territory casinos, particularly those that will be involved in a management capacity?

ANSWER

It is difficult for me to comprehend how massive amounts of money can be moved into Australia for this laundering operation without attracting the attentions of the authorities. However, just assuming that that is so, let me say that, before the Northern Territory government sat down seriously to negotiate with the proposed new operators of the casino, it sent overseas a very senior and experienced officer of the Northern Territory Police Force to carry out thorough investigations on the ground in consultation with the local law enforcement agencies and with the gaming authorities in the areas concerned. Of course, the areas concerned are New Jersey in the United States of America and London in the United Kingdom.

This police officer was away from the Territory carrying out these investigations for a period of approximately 3 to 4 weeks. During that time, I understand, liaison was established with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Liaison was also established with the New Jersey gaming authority, the title of which I cannot specifically remember. I understand from what has been reported to me that the New Jersey gaming authority exceeds in toughness virtually anything that has ever been conceived in Australia and that the very taint of contact with organised crime is sufficient to call into question anyone's licence in New Jersey. In Atlantic City, where casinos are permitted in New Jersey, there are approximately 12 casinos as against Las Vegas where there are something in the order of 60 or more casinos. We are not dealing with Las Vegas. Our people have no connection with Nevada. The casino industry in Nevada has gone through difficult phases. I believe that, at the present time, if it is not cleaned up, it is certainly being cleaned up.

The New Jersey gaming operations started relatively recently. I am sure that honourable members will recall reading about the decision to establish casinos in Atlantic City only in the last 5 years or so. I can remember reading about it in international news magazines and so on. They have been set up under very strict rules and regulations. I think I can say that, if these people have a licence to operate a casino in Atlantic City, then there is virtually no question that they would be acceptable to the Australian authorities. Nonetheless, our man carried out thorough investigations using all the sources that he possibly could. As far as we are concerned, and on the information available to us, they have a clean bill of health. In this instance, I am referring to Pratts who operate The Sands in New Jersey.

In relation to Aspinalls of the United Kingdom, John Aspinall was virtually responsible for the establishment of legal casinos in the United Kingdom. I cannot vouch for the specific accuracy of the figures that I am going to give but I think he has held 3 different casino licences in the United Kingdom. He more or less started a casino, then sold out, started, sold out and so on. He is just a shareholder of Aspinalls UK Ltd which is now a listed public company in the United Kingdom and is subject to the listing requirements there which are pretty strict on the LSC. But Aspinall's interest is really in building up zoos of wild animals rather than gaming. He runs the casino to enable himself to have sufficient funds to maintain the 2 or 3 zoos that he keeps in England. I think they are in the south-east at various country seats that he owns. Apparently, he is the illegitimate son of some member of the aristocracy.

Mr Speaker, aside from that, the UK regulatory authorities are pretty tough. I think most of us would recall that the UK authorities stripped - that

is not the best word to use - the licence off the Playboy Club. The UK regulatory authorities are very strict and they have taken licences away not just from the Playboy Club but from other clubs that they believe have not met their very high standards.

I tried to find out how gaming operates in London by visiting about 3 different casinos every night for the 5 days I was there. The casinos are relatively small and they generally operate, as many things do in London, in old converted houses which are done up very elegantly. They might have as few as 3 relatively small gaming rooms. Some of them have upwards of a dozen. The whole idea in London seems to be to deter members of the public from using them. You have to be a member of the club unless someone arranges to sign you in as a guest. The general idea does not seem to be to make casinos flourish.

I sought information on Apinsalls from independent sources rather than being prepared to accept what he said. He runs a place in Curzon Street which is regarded as the premier gaming establishment, not just in London but in the United Kingdom and perhaps the world, for serious gamblers who tend to regard places like Las Vegas as kids' stuff. All I can say is that we have done our homework about these operators. We have steered clear of Las Vegas where some smells come from. I am not saying by any means that the majority of operators in Las Vegas are not thoroughly above board and bona fide. In Las Vegas, they are operating about 60 casinos on the same revenue base as 12 casinos are being operated in Atlantic City. The difference is that Las Vegas is out in the middle of the desert and you virtually have to fly in. Atlantic City is right on the east coast within 2 hours drive of New York, an hour and a half from Washington and with Philadelphia just down the freeway. Las Vegas operations, which are certainly very spectacular, must be extremely efficient for 60 or so casinos to subsist on virtually the same revenue base as the 12 or so casinos that operate in Atlantic City. Licences in Atlantic City, which originally were not held in terribly high regard, are now most prized.

Mr Speaker, with the 2 operators, we will have a combination of American experience, which is called in the game 'supermarket stuff' where you have a large volume of people, and Aspinalls which attracts the creme de la creme of the gambling world. I welcome any further investigations by federal authorities or others of Aspinalls and of Pratts. I am sure both these organisations would be quite prepared to stand up to any investigation that any competent authority would like to bring forward.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

I assume from his last answer that what will happen with the casinos is that Pratt will open the doors and Aspinalls will close them. If the Chief Minister is not in a position to provide a public seminar on the details of the negotiations that are being conducted by the Northern Territory in respect of this very large proposed development for the Northern Territory, when will he be in a position to at least provide people in the Northern Territory with a little more information than he has provided so far?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this government intends to provide the people of the Northern Territory with details of the entire transaction as soon as that is reasonably possible.

Mr B. Collins: When will that be?

Mr EVERINGHAM: It is very difficult to say, Mr Speaker. I said originally that I hoped that all negotiations would have been completed by June or July. That certainly did not prove to be the case. Negotiations are continuing and I believe agreement in principle has been reached on most aspects. I hope that everything will be concluded within the next 3 months. Certainly, we are just as anxious to see it all concluded. With the agreement of the parties, I am quite happy to table in this Assembly copies of the various documents evidencing the arrangements.

I can only say that, when you are trying to put together an agreement that involves Australian companies, an English company, an American company and an organisation based in France responsible for the sale of the villa units that will form at least one of the hotels, it is difficult to run to the sort of timetable that we would expect to run to if all the parties were living in Australia. We are certainly doing our best. There is no intention at all to hide anything. It is simply that, as I have found, one cannot say too much about what will happen because aspects change from time to time.

Parap-Fannie Bay-Ludmilla Study

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS

Can he advise the current status of the Parap-Fannie Bay-Ludmilla study and when it is likely to be released?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members are no doubt aware that a planning study has been under way over the area the honourable member mentioned. I understand that a first draft of the study has been received by the Department of Lands. I have not seen a copy and I will wait until it is more than a draft. Following consideration of the draft by planners and consultants, amendments will be made and a second draft is expected to be produced fairly shortly. I do not have a specific time frame on that.

Following consideration of that second draft within the department, we will release the study to the public. I will certainly ensure that the honourable member receives a copy. We wish to ensure that interested persons will be able to examine the findings of the study and make recommendations before a final decision is taken and any necessary capital works or upgrading of services is undertaken. Changes to traffic patterns and roads will be the responsibility of Darwin City Council. Whether it will choose to implement such findings will be entirely up to it. No doubt the council has been involved in the study and it will certainly have every opportunity for input as the various drafts are produced. So whilst I cannot give a specific time as to when it can be released to the public, I will undertake to keep the member informed. After I see it, he will be the first to receive a copy.

Casinos in the NT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to supply a little additional information to the Leader of the Opposition regarding investigations in relation to the proposed new casino operators. I omitted to mention that the Chairman of the Racing and Gaming Commission and the senior casino inspector also visited the gaming regulatory authorities in New Jersey and in the United Kingdom in the last 2 months. As far as the Racing and Gaming

Commission is concerned, the clearances by the police of Pratt and Aspinalls are confirmed.

Video Nasties

Mr D.W. COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What action will the government undertake to oppose the introduction of video nasties to the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a different way of putting the question. I have been informed that the revised ordinance has now been passed through the House of Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory. It is that piece of legislation upon which the uniform national legislation agreement is based. I have issued instructions to the Department of Law that it is to transfer the legislative solutions contained in that bill to a Cabinet submission of our own. I feel quite confident that we will be in a position to introduce that legislation at the next sittings of this Assembly.

Air-conditioning of Primary Schools

Mr DALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In recent times, a number of primary schools have been air-conditioned. I cite as examples Karama and Leanyer. Is it proposed to air-condition all primary schools in the future?

ANSWER

It is not the policy of government to air-condition primary schools. The question has been raised in this Assembly on another occasion by the member for Millner. There are some primary schools that are being air-conditioned because of the intolerable conditions that exist in the wet season. At present, the situation is that the Department of Transport and Works is acquiring equipment to test the comfort conditions at a number of schools throughout the Territory, and I stress that that is throughout the Territory and not just in Darwin. A number of schools are being tested at present that would prefer not to have air-conditioning. Depending on those tests - and they will run through to the end of the 1985 wet season - the government will further consider the situation in relation to the provision of air-conditioners in primary schools.

Education Facilities for Katherine

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

My question is asked on behalf of Mr Speaker. In view of the Commonwealth government's recent announcement that the Tindal air base will proceed, what steps will be taken to ensure that there are adequate education facilities for the inevitable influx of school-aged children?

ANSWER

After hearing the budget last night, I am not all that sure that we are going to have the air base there within the period we thought we would. I would like to say that the department has endorsed the strategy for the provision of education facilities in the Katherine area. That strategy involves the

provision of a new pre-school to cater for some 100 students, a new primary school to cater for approximately 360 students and a new high school. Suitable sites have been made available for those particular developments. I am sure members of the Assembly will also be aware that, in recent times, a proposal has been put forward for the establishment of a Catholic primary school in Katherine using part of the high school. Whilst the government has agreed in principle to investigate the proposal, there are a number of concerns. A block of land has been set aside for the establishment of a Catholic primary school in Katherine. Also, we have proposed that the old high school be used for adult education and TAFE facilities and to provide accommodation for the regional office in Katherine as well. There are a number of considerations that have to be taken into account before any final decisions can be taken, but I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that the education facilities at Katherine will be well and truly catered for in the event that the Tindal air base does proceed.

Aerial Medical Services in Top End

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

In view of the uncertainty and concern being expressed by staff, clients and the general public, what is the current status of aero-medical services in the Top End, what firm has the contract, will it be pulling out, will it be going to tender or what?

ANSWER

The subject of the aero-medical services goes back for a number of years to when TAA was operating the service. It lost the contract to Airlines of Northern Australia. The question has been bandied around for the last 3 or 4 years. One must also remember that the service is provided not only in the northern region of the Territory but also in the Alice Springs district where the Royal Flying Doctor Service provides the service. In Tennant Creek, we have 2 private charter operators providing the service for the Department of Health. In Katherine, we have another private charter operator providing the service. In Darwin, Northern Territory Aerial Work has been doing it for the last 3 years. Probably as late as June this year, the Northern Territory government received a letter from NTAW saying that, in view of the fact that it had lost the air surveillance contract from the Commonwealth, it would like to be able to assign the aerial medical contract to Air North. That particular letter was passed to me and I have had discussions with my colleagues. During the time that I was overseas, a decision was taken by the government to defer any decision regarding the reassigning of the aerial medical contract from NTAW to Air North for the time being.

On 3 August, I received another letter from NTAW requesting the assignment to Air North. The reason why Air North has come into the situation is that, with NTAW winding down its operations, it was thought that it would be in a position to take over some of the engineering staff and pilots that NTAW would lay off. However, our most important consideration is the engineering facilities because the Department of Health has its own Nomads. NTAW had Nomads for its air surveillance contract and, consequently, was able to provide a good engineering pool to service both requirements - the Nomads for air surveillance and the Nomads for the Department of Health aerial medical contract. In addition, NTAW had a hangar that could have been used by Air North. Of course, the subject of hangar space is another question. There has been a shortfall of hangar space which will continue until such time as the Commonwealth government makes up its mind to reconstruct a new air terminal on the northern side of the runway. At the same time, it was going to make some hangar space available to commercial and charter operators.

Mr Speaker, in answering the honourable member's question, as far as I am aware, the Aerial Medical Service is operating quite satisfactorily. I have not had any cause for concern regarding its operation. Of course, the uncertainty of who will operate the service is of concern to me. On the one hand, the government wants to ensure that NTAW maintains responsibility for that contract which has another 2 years and 1 month to run. The government is mindful of the considerations the company has in winding down its operation but does not want to lose a very important aviation maintenance facility. However, Air North has said that it will employ most of the mechanical engineers involved in the operation. It will employ most of the pilots that were in this operation and, at the same time, there will be considerable savings for the Department of Health.

At one time, the aerial medical contract had some 4500 operational hours within the Northern Territory. That was reduced when the Royal Flying Doctor Service hours were negotiated in central Australia and the other Territory centres such as Tennant Creek and Katherine. From memory, in 1982, the air hours of operation in the Top End were nearly 2600. Over a period of time, we have been able to reassess it and prune the hours of operation to save money. I understand now that the NTAW contract runs to about 900 hours out of Gove, which is the East Arnhem region, and about 1400 to 1500 hours in the Darwin region.

I have requested an opinion from the Department of Law regarding the probability of an assignment to Air North. Once I receive that, I will probably be in a position to take it back to Cabinet for further consideration. At this stage, NTAW is trying to wind down its operation. In some ways, that may be good for the Northern Territory in the long term. Most of us would remember when Airlines of Northern Australia collapsed. There were problems with setting up a regional airline operation. We dangled the carrot in front of those people who were putting in submissions to run that regional airline operation from Gove through to Ayers Rock. We said the company that was successful would get the aerial medical contract which was quite a lucrative contract for a charter operator which would allow it to cross-fertilise some of the profits from a good operation into another operation which would need time to build up. As I understand it, the new Airlines of Northern Australia operations is successful. Originally, it promised a 7-day-a-week service. Of course, later, it changed the service but it did keep its agreement to introduce jets to the regional operation. With the scaling down of the operation to allow services to be maintained at a reasonably regular rate, that service has built up. I believe the passenger-carrying capacity has increased and it does not really need the aerial medical contract now to cross-fertilise by way of subsidy to its regional operation.

Mr Speaker, at the moment, I do not have any concern about the services being provided by the operator. I really do not think that I would have that many concerns if, eventually, the contract was assigned to Air North. It will only be for a 2-year period because NTAW is quite within its rights to maintain its contract for another 2 years and 1 month. However, when that contract expires, it would be the intention of the government to go to a full tender on it. For the time being, as NTAW has sought permission from the Northern Territory government to assign the contract to Air North, we are seriously considering it with some reservations. I think that the Northern Territory government must insist on the principal contractor, Ansett or ATI, guaranteeing the operation of Air North. Once these problems have been sorted out, I will be in a position to notify members further.

Water for Agricultural Development

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he outline any plan that the Department of Transport and Works has for drilling programs to provide water for current and future agricultural development in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Transport and Works has a very extensive drilling program for this purpose. In 1983-84, a complete technical report on ground water in the Ti Tree area was prepared for the Department of Primary Production. The object of the report was to define areas suitable for horticultural development. A similar study was carried out for the same department on ground water in the Douglas-Daly area. In 1984-85, the Department of Transport and Works plans to evaluate ground water in the Pine Creek-Woodgreen area as an extension of the Ti Tree project. Also in 1984-85, the department intends to identify and assess ground water and surface water resources for proposed major agricultural development in the Wildman River area. This study is to be conducted in conjunction with the Departments of Lands and Primary Production for CSR. As I understand it, that is related to the proposed cashew development. 1985-86 should see the department further investigate the ground water hydrology in the Katherine and surrounding rural areas to provide a basis for policy development on the town's use and for future agricultural use.

Mr Speaker, notwithstanding that, in quite recent years, we have seen a drop off in funds available to the Northern Territory from federal sources - and I am not singling out the present government for that - and we have maintained and are maintaining a very extensive resource development project and drilling program for the purposes of agriculture.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the fact that the Northern Territory government will now become the owner of Federal Hotels' casinos for at least a short period, will he inform the Assembly whether the proposed arrangements for the takeover of these properties by the NTDC and Henry and Walker Pty Ltd will proceed? What will be the relationship between that group and the NT government instead of that group and the casinos and will that group still consist as a 49% equity of Henry and Walker acting on its own account and 51% Northern Territory Development Corporation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly would not like to commit myself firmly to what the final legal arrangements will be but my understanding of the position is that the Northern Territory will notionally become owners of the casinos for a short period of time before they are vested in a property trust which will in fact own and control them. I cannot be specific whether it will be some sort of lease or management arrangement with the new operators. As I understand it, the period that the Northern Territory will actually own the casinos could be limited to - and certainly I would not want to say this as an absolute statement - a period as short as 24 hours or so.

Report on Domestic Violence

Mr DALE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Could he tell me what further action has been taken with regard to the report 'Domestic Violence Between Adults in the Northern Territory' prepared by Peter D'Abbs and the recommendations contained in that report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, following the completion of the report, which was a review of current services and strategies for the future by Mr Peter D'Abbs, it was decided that copies of the report will be distributed for public comment. An interdepartmental committee was formed to consider the 32 recommendations in the report. The committee consisted of people in the Departments of Community Development, Education, Law, Treasury, Police, Health, Housing and the Chief Minister. The committee has been meeting fortnightly to consider the report. Comments have been received from 15 different organisations and councils. I expect the committee to complete its review of all the comments and submissions by the end of this month and present its recommendations by next month.

Shopfront Facility for Consumer Complaints

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I would like to remind the minister that in June he announced the establishment of a shopfront facility to handle consumer complaints in Alice Springs. I ask him to advise this Assembly when in fact that service will become available?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot give a specific date. We have opened a shopfront facility in the northern suburbs of Darwin. It is my understanding that the department is still searching for suitable premises that could be utilised in Alice Springs to provide a similar service. As soon as that problem is resolved, I will advise the member for Stuart by letter as to its commencement.

Alice Springs Abattoir

Mr VALE to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he advise if the government has yet reached a decision concerning the relocation of the Alice Springs abattoir?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the honourable member would know because of his previous interest in the continuing operation of the Alice Springs abattoir, its future is fairly limited because, during the period of operation of the abattoir in the winter months, it does cause a very serious environmental disturbance to the people in the suburban areas of Alice Springs. But it is not that serious that government would seek to move the abattoir to a new site in the immediate future. Added to this is the future of the abattoir so far as the operators are concerned. At a meeting I had with the management of the works last year, it intimated to me that the technology in the Alice Springs abattoir was so out of date that it was doing a job that it was not designed to do. In fact, the kill cost in Alice Springs is some \$20 to \$30 dearer than sending the animals to

Adelaide. On that basis, the works would have a limited life. Further to that, at one stage the abattoir was not prepared to pay its electricity accounts. This matter is before the courts at the moment.

So far this year, the turn-off for Territory abattoirs is down considerably because of the very late rains and the belief amongst the people in the industry that cattle numbers will reach their peak in the October-November months when the animals have had a better chance to fatten up and farmers will get a better return for the product. With this background, the Alice Springs abattoir has done nothing this year and had only a mediocre season last year. There is some doubt as to whether it will actually open its doors next year, particularly given the current situation of the meat processing industry in Australia.

Mr Speaker, my colleagues and I have been monitoring for some time the need for the government to make a site available south of the town of Alice Springs where a new abattoir could be established. We have been considering whether, immediately or at some stage in the future, we should call for expressions of interest or tenders or even have an auction for a block on which to establish a new abattoir because there is no doubt that the future for the existing abattoir is limited for the various reasons I have just mentioned. As the days go on, I will endeavour to keep the honourable member for Braitling advised because I am aware that the constituents in his electorate are very adversely affected by the activities of the abattoir in the winter months when the smell in the town is not the best. I am also endeavouring to keep in close consultation with the Cattle Council of the Northern Territory because it holds a very strong view that there will be a need for an additional abattoir in the town. When that need arises, we will make a decision given the facts at the time.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

I will have to repeat the second half of the first question I asked, which was not answered. There is one question that really must be addressed during this sittings. Will the property trust that will shortly be taking over ownership of the casinos still consist of a partnership with 49% equity held by Henry and Walker alone and 51% by the Northern Territory Development Corporation, as originally announced, or are there in fact other companies that will be involved in this property trust? If the Chief Minister cannot provide those details now, will he provide them during the sittings?

ANSWER

I will do my best to provide what information I can at this stage, subject always to correction because, during negotiations, the parties have changed their stances and changed the degree to which they wish to become involved in the project. As I understand it now, I think it would be correct to say that approximately 90% of the property trust will be held by Australian interests and approximately 10% will be held by overseas interests. I think that part of the amount held by the overseas interests will be equity contributed by the operators. I am not quite sure of the exact extent of their equity commitment. However, when the property trust is finally put in place, as separate from its initial establishment, I would expect that the extent of the NTDC's involvement will be for legal reasons in relation to holding a parcel of shares which, I think, it must hold. This is a terribly complex matter. It changes every week or 2. It is so that those units can be offered to other parties at a later stage. The NTDC itself, again as I understand it, will not be wanting to maintain a continuing interest in the trust.

Proposed Camp on Palmerston Bypass Road

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Is he in a position to advise us on the current status of the proposed camp at the 16-mile on the new Palmerston bypass road?

ANSWER

In relation to that 16-mile camp, I have had discussions with the honourable member. There is definitely a problem in that particular area and it is being looked at. The present situation is that people are camping adjacent to the highway in an area which is not set aside for that particular purpose. There is an area of land that has been leased by the Aboriginal Development Foundation from the Palmerston Development Corporation on the other side of the highway. The Department of Community Development has released \$80 000 to provide some essential services on this site. Water has been supplied to the boundary and plans for the provision of electricity to the boundary are well advanced. The internal provision of services to this particular area cannot be developed until such time as a development plan is submitted by the Aboriginal Development Foundation, which is the leaseholder. At this particular time, we cannot go any further.

We have supplied a truck to the Aboriginal Development Foundation to carry water to the site. We also are providing funds for 2 labourers to assist in garbage collection and area maintenance of the 3 town camps and that includes the area that is being camped on at the moment out at the 16-mile. The present camp is temporary and we hope that situation changes very soon. We have to rely on the Aboriginal Development Foundation to come up with what it wishes to do on the new site before we can provide essential services to that site.

Works in Vicinity of Mereenie Oilfield

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I preface my question by referring to questions I have asked previously about the proposed road and natural gas pipeline between the Mereenie oilfield and Yulara and rumours that a road is to be built between Areyonga and Tempe Downs and a water pipeline in the vicinity of the Mereenie oilfield and the Yulara Village. Will the minister make a statement in relation to the Northern Territory government's plans for such works in the Tempe Downs, Kings Canyon and Lake Amadeus areas?

ANSWER

I do not know that any useful purpose would be served by making a statement on the matter. The present position is that it is highly desirable that we provide piped water to the Yulara Village. That project has been so singularly successful that the existing ground water supplies simply are not adequate. The subject of a gas pipeline is a matter for my colleague, the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy. Nonetheless, if one is digging a trench in the ground over many kilometres, it is logical to lay the pipes side by side in order to save taxpayers' money.

As to the question of a ring road presumably via the oilfields around Carmichael Crag and back to Kings Canyon to link up with a proposed road from the Yulara Village to Kings Canyon National Park site, it is one that is well and truly in the distant future. It is not one that I would be promoting at

this stage. I do not think it is warranted for quite some years to come. There is, however, absolutely no doubt of the need for a link between the Yulara Village and the proposed developments to Kings Canyon National Park. After all, there is no point in a great deal of expenditure by the Conservation Commission and private enterprise building very expensive tourist facilities and upgrading facilities in the Kings Canyon National Park if people are unable to get there conveniently. At this stage, one must come via the Petermann Highway to the Yulara Village. Unless one then tracks across dirt roads, one must backtrack along the Petermann Highway to the Stuart Highway and thence to Alice Springs. That does not take in what I think is one of the most beautiful places in central Australia, the Kings Canyon Gorge. If we are serious about tourism, which we are, we ought to be proceeding - hopefully with the goodwill of the Central Land Council - with the proposed road from Yulara to Kings Canyon. Necessarily, it must traverse Aboriginal land and will require the goodwill of the Central Land Council and, more particularly, of the traditional owners of that area. Incidentally, I see significant benefits flowing to those traditional owners as a result of that communication link.

That is the present position. If the road were sealed, it could cost \$16m. Of course, even to build a gravel-sheeted road of adequate quality for conventional vehicles to use would cost some several millions of dollars. As I see it, the whole future of the Kings Canyon National Park as a tourist destination - and this is a quirk of fate - depends upon the goodwill of the Aboriginal traditional owners. Negotiations have been commenced in a tentative though very serious and formal way by the agencies of the Northern Territory government - particularly the Aboriginal Liaison Unit of the Department of the Chief Minister, which is charged with communications liaison - with Aboriginal people for approval to go ahead with this very worthwhile tourist development project.

Campaign on School Truancy

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

During the June sittings, the minister announced plans to launch a campaign concerning truancy amongst Northern Territory schoolchildren. Can he report on what progress has been made on launching such a campaign?

ANSWER

As the honourable member mentioned, it had been my intention to launch this campaign in July. I did answer a question from the honourable member at the last sittings to that effect. On closer examination, it was realised that, if we did introduce the campaign at this time, we would not achieve the best results. We had not really addressed the problem of truancy in Aboriginal communities. This is a subject that I had made comment on. I think it is necessary to address the Aboriginal truancy problem and the urban problem together. The other problem that we had is in relation to the media contact in the isolated communities. This is something that I hope that other members of the community and various Aboriginal groups will be able to comment on in order to find the best way to get the message across to those communities that their children should attend schools. There was the problem in relation to the implementation of the bussing policy which was forced upon us. In order to keep a free bus service in operation, that was something that we had to do. I believe that, under those circumstances, the result would have been less than effective. I hope that, when we address the problems in the Aboriginal areas as well as the urban areas, we will be able to implement a truancy campaign at the beginning of 1985.

Nabalco and Electricity Commission Act

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Will he or his department be taking action under section 27 of the Electricity Commission Act if it is found that Nabalco Pty Ltd has breached that act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I undertook yesterday to obtain information for the honourable member about the possibility of Nabalco selling electricity without the authority of NTEC. I have not received an answer as yet. Before I prejudice the commission by answering the question that he has just asked, I will get the answer to the first one and then we can address the second one.

Gardens Hill Development Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

Has he given an extension to Gardens Hill Development Pty Ltd for its lease condition which required work to the value of \$1.5m at Gardens Hill to commence on 1 July 1984? If so, how long is that extension for?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have that information before me. I am happy to get it for the honourable member and pass it on to him. I had understood that, if work had not started already, it was about to start. As he mentioned, the lease was finally settled not very long ago, and after a very long period of what one might call negotiation and uncertainty. But the project will be under way very shortly. It is a very big project, one of the biggest private developments in the Northern Territory as far as accommodation units are concerned. I think the end product will cost some \$12m even though the covenants on the block in question are about \$8m. I will get the details for the honourable member of the lease requirements for a commencement and completion date for the first stage. I am sure the covenants are for staged development.

Suspension of Students at Darwin Community College

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware that, at the end of the first semester in this year, 30 students at the Darwin Community College were suspended from their studies because of poor progress? Could he provide the reasons behind that?

ANSWER

The matter has been brought to my attention and is one that is of concern to me. I understand that those students were suspended at the direction of the Examiners Board, which is a normal procedure both in colleges of advanced education and universities. The matter is of some concern to me and I have asked for further comments from the Community College on the suspension of those students.

2 km Law Exemptions in Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Has any consideration been given to the recent request by Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs to have certain places within the town area exempted from the 2 km law and set aside as Aboriginal drinking places?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand the Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs has made application to the Alice Springs Town Council for areas to be declared exempt and also some correspondence has taken place between that council and the Liquor Commission. At this stage, I am unable to provide the honourable member with any further information.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In consideration of the financial investigations which were undertaken with the Federal group of companies and which were made public during the sittings of the Assembly, would the Chief Minister advise if the government has conducted or is conducting a similar investigation in respect of the major participants in the casino redevelopment, including the companies involved in the takeover of the existing properties through the property trust?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can certainly confirm that investigations were made into the financial background of the proposed new operators. At the moment, I am aware of the name of a very large Australian company that is involved in the establishment of the new property trust. If it were possible for me to name that company in this Assembly, I doubt that the Leader of the Opposition would want me to go much further in investigating the financial background of that particular company. I can assure members that what we are trying to do is put together what might amount to a very strong and viable coalition of interests to own and run the casino - a coalition of interests that do have financial standing. The operators have their particular brand of skill and expertise and they have the international contacts. I would hope that it will be seen that we will be linking into one of the biggest travel organisations established in this country as well.

It is a problem for me, Mr Speaker, it is a problem for the Leader of the Opposition, and it is a problem for everyone but, unfortunately, at the negotiation stage of this type of transaction, it is just not possible to name names. All I can say is we are trying to weld together something that we believe will result in a very significant advance for the Territory from its current position.

Rural Subdivisions at Timber Creek

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for LANDS

What progress has been made on the subdivision of rural residential lots at Timber Creek and does the Department of Lands have any applications in hand for the land?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have before me the information on Timber Creek which I should have. The government has been looking at subdividing some land in timber Creek with a view to meeting a small demand which has become evident. A few people have expressed interest in purchasing land in that area and we are very pleased to see an interest being taken in it. One of the difficulties with subdivision at Timber Creek, as with many areas in the remoter parts of the Territory, is the fact that, because of the local geography, we are faced at times with very enormous bills in servicing land to subdivide very few blocks. At times, as honourable members are probably aware, the government has paid what would be the equivalent of \$20 000 to \$25 000 per block to service blocks of land in the more remote areas. Sometimes they are sold for a few hundred dollars, at least to the first owner. One finds that, sometimes a year or 2 later, those same blocks of land are on the market at a very substantial increase. Notwithstanding that, we do propose to turn off some land in Timber Creek. We do have some geographical problems in regard to the siting of Timber Creek at present because of the limited options. It is quite close to the Victoria River and is settled quite close to some small hills which present a difficulty. There is not a great deal of government infrastructure in the town. I know we have proposals for upgrading some of the government services that are provided in Timber Creek. I will obtain additional, specific information for the honourable member.

Gardens Hill Development Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

Can he give an undertaking that the answers he undertook to give at the last sittings on the financial arrangements between the Housing Commission and Gardens Hill Development Pty Ltd on the construction of pensioner units at Gardens Hill will be provided at this sittings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can only apologise to the honourable member if I slipped up on an undertaking that I gave. I will confirm that undertaking through Hansard and ensure that, during the course of this sittings, I will present him with the relevant information.

Drivers' Licences

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

For some time now I have been interested in the possible introduction of photographic evidence on Northern Territory drivers' licences. Has his department addressed this issue and what is the likely outcome of any deliberations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been giving some thought for some time to the possibility of such a question being asked and how I could deal with it. It is true that there is widespread support for such a proposal, and I am surprised at that. Not just within the political wing of my party but throughout the community in general, there is widespread support for the introduction of photograph-identified drivers' licences. I really do not know that I could do justice to all of the arguments in relation to the question at the moment. Perhaps it would be a good subject for an adjournment speech.

It seems to me that any detailed examination of the proposal would favour the negative side notwithstanding that there are many good reasons why we should be following the Victorian method of providing photographic licences. The arguments in support fall under about 5 headings. One is that they would provide positive identification which would help law enforcement and credit checks and provide ready identification for other purposes such as cashing a cheque without making prior arrangements.

A driver's licence with a name and signature on it merely indicates that the person whose name appears on the licence is a person who is licensed to drive. It does not really identify the person at all. It is then argued that if you had one with a photograph, similar to a passport, or the identification that we give to inspectors exercising functions under an act, we would provide for much more accurate identification of the person and facilitate his ability to gain credit, use personal cheque accounts and generally to identify himself. When a government has perhaps 60 or 100 officers of the public service carrying photo identification, it is very easy to check the identity of each of those officers. There is no difficulty in it. How does one check the photographs on thousands of licences? Do we use a passport system or do we ask a person's mates to sign on the back to certify it to be a true photograph of the applicant? What is the validity of that? In the United States, the forging of passports is big business even given all the complexities that go into the identification of the person referred to on a passport as being the person who actually applied for it. Indeed, I believe that misuse of the system resulted in justices of the peace being removed from the categories of people eligible to witness those photographs.

The government envisages that this thing would have to apply equally to people at Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Bathurst and Melville Islands, Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine etc. What mechanism could you introduce which would provide the guarantee of identification of a person in a photograph? In other words, did it really give the name Jim Robertson, Fred Bloggs or whatever? I do not see it as being possible. Because there is nothing else attached to a present driver's licence, other than the department saying that the person whose name appears on it is a licensed driver, no liability attaches to government as to the false use of it. When you go into photographic identification, and we certify that the person whose photograph appears on this licence is licensed to drive, then we have a responsibility, probably at law, to make sure that the person is actually the person whose photograph appears. That one alone makes the thing impractical.

I will not go through the other 4. They are hard to counterfeit, they are popular, there are general law enforcement benefits and there is convenience. Just in answering the first point, I have touched on perhaps each of the others.

I understand the Victorian system is to come in at the end of this year. It is worth considering that Victoria has millions of people. The mass production of these photo licences will mean they will cost somewhere between \$1.30 and \$1.40 each to produce. That is with millions of them and they do not have the problems with remote communities that we would have. In the Northern Territory, the production of a licence is around 4c to 10c depending on the geographic location of the point of issue. The fee charged in the Northern Territory under our present licence system is \$6 for 1 year and \$15 for 3 years. Victoria will be charging a fee of \$30 for 3 years and \$54 for 6 years. So even given its volume, the cost of issuing a licence obviously is a significant factor that not only governments should bear in mind. It is expensive to operate a motor vehicle. It is expensive to register and it is expensive to insure. When you start to get into the \$50 bracket just to issue the licence,

I wonder if this popular concept of photo licences would remain popular with those sorts of impostors on the hip pockets of our drivers.

Mr Speaker, I have a very comprehensive briefing here from the Department of Transport and Works. I must commend the officer who put it together. It was not done with the idea of canning the proposition. A very balanced approach has been taken to it. The officer responsible is John Hewitt. I say that because, if I circulate this brief, obviously members will know his name. If honourable members wish a copy, which will give them far more information than I have given, then I am more than happy to provide one.

Gazettal of Kings Canyon as a National Park

Mr VALE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Has the Kings Canyon area yet been gazetted as a national park and has the government reached a decision concerning the naming of this park?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has asked his question in 2 parts. In answer to the part relating to the decision concerning the name, at the moment the name of the area is Kings Canyon. I believe certain people have put forward recommendations regarding another name for this park. To date I have not seen them. Until such time as these names come to me and are considered by Cabinet, I do not think that I am at liberty to say anything more than that.

Regarding Kings Canyon being gazetted as a national park, pursuant to section 14 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, before declaration of a national park can proceed, notice to this effect must appear in the Northern Territory Government Gazette, requiring a public notification period of 60 days to be observed. A notice to this effect in relation to Kings Canyon appeared in the Northern Territory Government Gazette on 24 April 1984. The Board of the Conservation Commission has considered this matter and will be making recommendations shortly.

Task Force on Groote Eylandt Crime Rate

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Could he please report to the Assembly on the progress of the task force which has been established on Groote Eylandt to look at the high crime rate?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Arnhem is probably in a better position to report to the Assembly in relation to that matter because he is a member of the task force. At this particular stage, we have come to an agreement with the federal government regarding the funding of the operations of the task force, whose job it is to look into what can be done as an alternative to imprisonment on Groote Eylandt. Funding will be on a 50-50 basis. I will provide information on the figures later. The situation on Groote Eylandt certainly appears to be a lot better than it was some time ago. I am hopeful that the task force, of which the member for Arnhem is a member, can produce some suggestions which can be put into operation by the government to improve things in regard to the problems there of the offending young people.

Leanyer Bombing Range

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS

Has the Territory come to an agreement with the Commonwealth over the future of the Leanyer bombing range and, if so, what are the terms of the agreement?

ANSWER

Honourable members will be pleased to learn that a government file has been opened with the title stamped on it: 'Leanyer Bombing Range Defouling Facility'. The Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments have indeed reached an agreement on this particular subject. I am pleased to announce a defouling operation is to be funded by the Commonwealth. It will include the employment of up to 16 civilians and RAAF personnel on a continuous basis for 10 years.

Those members who know where Leanyer bombing range is will appreciate that it is quite a substantial area of land. I noticed in the Government Gazette that declared it in 1950 that it has been used as a bombing range for a very long time. Therefore, it probably has all sorts of bad things scattered across it. The proposal is to clear those undesirable objects. The Northern Territory government has undertaken to provide headworks for the operation in the form of a secure service compound. The compound is to accommodate an ablution facility sufficient to cater for up to 20 people, air-conditioned luncheon and office facilities, a shed and a vehicle wash-down area. The Department of Housing and Construction will fund and install the shed and wash-down slab, while all other facilities and services will be funded by the Territory government.

In the longer term, it is proposed to use some of the land - which we expect to be handed back by the Commonwealth when this exercise is completed or has progressed towards completion - for other uses. It is proposed to relocate the rifle range there which is currently at the back of the greyhound track at Winnellie. No doubt, it would be an eminently suitable area, having regard to the fact that much of it cannot be used for ordinary urban development. It would be ideal for a rifle range which requires a substantial area which does not need to be very well developed.

As a matter of interest to honourable members, I noticed in reading the Government Gazette of 1950 which declared the Leanyer area and an extensive area to sea from it for air gunnery and bombing practice that the penalty for being there while practice was in progress was a fine not exceeding £20. I would have thought the penalty for being on a bombing range when it was in use would have been substantially more than £20.

Registration of Builders

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LANDS

Has the government completed its consideration of the working party report on the registration of builders in the Territory and, if so, does the government intend to register builders?

ANSWER

The working party has completed its report to government. Cabinet has considered this matter and decided that, having regard to the various issues involved in registering builders in the Northern Territory, it would be

undesirable to take this course of action, particularly at this stage of our development. We are not convinced that the trouble required to establish such a system and policing it would result in any significant reduction in the complaints that are laid against building practice. Interstate information which was gathered by the working party indicates that there are still considerable complaints about poor workmanship in building work. We do not believe that the mere registration of a builder will necessarily alleviate that problem. It is one that will be with us from time to time. In our opinion, it is more a consumer protection matter than one of registering builders, with all the government requirements that would have to go with such registration.

In making the decision not to register builders, we undertook to join with the Master Builders Association in a publicity campaign. I believe documents are being produced at present to try to make people aware that they should select their builder carefully and very carefully enter into a contract with the builder. It seems that most of the complaints that have been received in the Northern Territory have been attributable to poor or non-existent contractual relationships between the builders and their clients. It is most unfortunate that people tend to enter into arrangements on a verbal basis when having a room added to their house or whatever. When any problems arise, they find they have overlooked opportunities for redress. Quite often, what might start off as a happy relationship between client and builder may not be so happy after a considerable amount of work has been done. That is when a contract is really needed.

We will be increasing the publicity in this respect to try to encourage members of the community to select a builder, check his reputation, ask to see examples of his work, inspect those examples if possible before engaging the builder and, when one is engaged, to sign a contract - preferably an approved contract produced by some reputable organisation such as the Master Builders Association. The short answer to the honourable member's question is that we have declined to register builders in the Northern Territory.

Upgrading Costs on Darwin Primary School and old Darwin Hospital

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

How much has been spent on the upgrading of Darwin Primary School since the students were vacated from that school earlier this year and can he confirm that the figure of \$70 000 which he mentioned on talk-back is, in fact, the amount that has been spent on upgrading the old Darwin hospital to provide temporary accommodation facilities for the pupils of Larrakeyah Primary School?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to indicate the exact amount that has been spent on the Larrakeyah Primary School at present other than to say that the contract that has been let is for \$2.02m. That is the actual cost of upgrading the hospital facility...

Mr B. Collins: Larrakeyah is being upgraded but that would be the wrong figure. I asked about Darwin Primary School.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I can obtain that information for the honourable member. On the upgrading of the hospital facilities which he referred to - and I referred to an amount of \$70 000 when I answered a previous question on that particular issue - I can inform the honourable member that it has not been anywhere near that price. The cost to upgrade the hospital to accommodate the

school during the upgrading of the Larrakeyah Primary School has been some \$34 000.

Taxi Services for Disabled People

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

I refer to the introduction of a taxi service for disabled people in Darwin on a trial basis. Has this trial been successful and, if so, when will it be introduced to other Territory towns?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the trial service was introduced in Darwin in March of this year and, between March and June, some 30-odd people had registered and were able to use the service provided by the Department of Health through the taxi companies of Darwin. As of last month, I understand about 41 people were using the service. It has been quite successful, Mr Speaker, and I understand that arrangements are being made now to implement the service in other Territory centres. This is an initiative of the Disabled Persons Bureau and it is looking at other initiatives as far as disabled persons are concerned. It is talking about providing sporting and recreational facilities and services and, of course, training courses and programs both for the people who are handicapped and the people who are working for them.

Mr Speaker, the Disabled Persons Bureau was transferred from the Department of Community Development to the Department of Health early in 1983. I think that, since the transfer, the Disabled Persons Bureau has felt a lot more at home within the infrastructure of the Department of Health which is able to provide additional services such as these. I would compliment the Disabled Persons Bureau for taking this initiative in providing a welcomed service to the disabled people living in Darwin. Hopefully, that service will be promoted eventually in other Territory centres.

Naming of Kings Canyon Area

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I preface my question by referring her to the previous question and answer in relation to the naming of the proposed national park in the Kings Canyon area. Is she aware that, long before the area was known as Kings Canyon, it was known for thousands and thousands of years before as Watarrka?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was not aware of the information that the honourable member has just given.

Northbrick Industries

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Yesterday in the Assembly, he referred to problems being encountered by Darwin's new clay brick manufacturing company in promoting its products interstate. What progress has Northbrick Industries made since its commencement late last year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is hard for me to speak on behalf of Northbrick Industries but I understand from the management that it considers that its progress at present is satisfactory. It is disappointed that markets in Western Australia appear to be closed to it, and that is disappointing to the Territory government as well. It seems fairly inequitable when some of the largest building suppliers in the Northern Territory can come from Western Australia and the Territory is an enormous market for Western Australian hardware and goods. Apparently, it continues to warrant and probably makes viable the Western Australian State Shipping Service run, if that run is viable. I do not know if it is. As I understand it, the greatest quantity of cargo is consigned to Darwin. Therefore, I think it is most unfair that the Territory cannot sell a few hundred tonnes of bricks in the north-west of Western Australia, especially when, only a couple of years ago, I received a petition from many hundreds, if not thousands, of the residents of north-west of Western Australia who wanted to be incorporated into the Northern Territory anyway for all the good they said they got out of being administered from their southern capital. Mr Speaker, I do not think their views have changed very considerably. I do not believe that a political boundary, such as exists in this case, should be allowed to prevent the free flow of trade between the Northern Territory and the north-west of Western Australia with which we have had very strong historic links.

Water Supplies for Aboriginal Communities

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In view of the very high proportion of central Australian Aboriginal communities and outstations which have inadequate water supply, what plans has he to accelerate the provision and upgrading of water supplies in that area?

ANSWER

Presently, we are looking at the matter in conjunction with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and having some discussions in a rationalised approach to maximise the expenditure of the money available. Unfortunately, that amount is not as high, especially from the Commonwealth's end, as we would like it to be. I will undertake to obtain further details and provide them to the honourable member at a later stage.

Tourist Information

Mr McCARTHY to CHIEF MINISTER

What plans does the Tourist Commission have to provide accurate and up-to-date information on tourist facilities, caravan parks etc for the benefit of travellers in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Tourist Commission has more than plans to provide such information. In fact, it has published for some time a booklet called the 'Northern Territory Holiday Planner' which has been distributed quite widely throughout Australia and is available through the tourist bureaux in the Northern Territory. It is virtually a traveller's guide to the Northern Territory. It indicates all the accommodation available, including caravan parks. However, I must say that there is one slight discrepancy in relation to the section on caravan parks that was raised with me by Mr Jack Taylor, the proprietor of the Larrimah Green Park Tourist Complex. Although it is at Larrimah, that park apparently is described as being about 20 km further south than Larrimah. Nonetheless, the holiday planner is a pretty good guide to facilities available in the Northern Territory.

There is also the question of setting standards. The Northern Territory Tourist Commission and the government have decided that they should not actually decide what standard a particular accommodation house has in relation to its claims. Of course, we know that some places describe themselves as 4-star and others describe themselves as international resorts. There are various descriptions of tourist and accommodation facilities. For a long time the Automobile Association of Australia has been publishing for the rest of Australia a guide to accommodation which gives all types of accommodation a quality rating. A couple of years ago, the Tourist Commission invoked the assistance of the Automobile Association which undertook, with some financial assistance from the Tourist Commission, a very detailed study of all accommodation throughout the Northern Territory ranging from camping grounds to the best hotels. I believe that the Automobile Association has now published a section on the Northern Territory in its latest guide for its members. Its membership is spread throughout Australia through its various subsidiaries in the states. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, the Michelin guide still only applies to France. But should it be possible to get the Northern Territory assessed by the people who put out the Michelin guide, then I will be happy to do so. In the absence of that likelihood, I think that we have done the best that we can in getting a reputable and prestigious association such as the Automobile Association to do this job for us. I am sure that proprietors of accommodation, seeing the realistic assessment of their facilities given by the Automobile Association, will only be encouraged to strive harder to improve their standards and to better found the basis on which the tourist industry in the Northern Territory must continue for many years.

Yarralin Community Excision

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

Has the official handover of an excision from the VRD lease to the Yarralin community been deferred and, if so, when is that handover expected to take place?

ANSWER

The proposed handover is still planned to go ahead. I think the Chief Minister has it scheduled for a week from now or perhaps a little later. However, this matter has become fairly complex over the last few weeks. We have been trying to arrange the necessary titles and procedures in order to allow the handover to go ahead. The Department of Lands is doing its best to negotiate with the owners of VRD and to go through all the necessary procedures in order to draw up not one but a couple of titles to enable the Chief Minister to hand over to the Yarralin people this very significant area in Victoria River Downs. Hopefully, it will proceed as planned.

Cutta Cutta Caves

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I ask this question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Can she advise whether there are plans to improve the tourist potential of the Cutta Cutta Caves near Katherine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it gives me a lot of pleasure to answer this question for the honourable member. Recently, I had the pleasure of being conducted through the Cutta Cutta Caves by officers of the Conservation Commission. It was explained to me - and it was quite apparent by the number of people who were on the tour - that the popularity of the Cutta Cutta Caves is increasing month by month. As all honourable members know, Cutta Cutta Caves is a nature park just south of Katherine. It is one of the most popular parks in the Northern Territory in that it attracts some 10 000 visitors a year during the dry season. The caves cannot be visited during the wet season because of flooding. The increase in visitors over the last year or two indicates the attraction that the caves have for the tourists. The figure of 10 000 visitors is a 31% increase on the number of visitors who went to Cutta Cutta Caves last year.

Because of the popularity of the caves, the Conservation Commission had to look at a number of things. Cutta Cutta Caves has only one ingress and ventilation is a problem. At the moment there are 4 tours a day - 2 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. The maximum that the rangers consider safe from the ventilation point of view is 5 tours a day. The absolute maximum that could be entertained would be 6 tours per day but that would be taxing the ventilation to the extreme. Because of the popularity of the caves on the tourist schedules, the Conservation Commission rangers have been looking at other caves in the area. There are other caves which do not present the problems that the Cutta Cutta Caves do in that they are walk-through caves. The advantages of this are quite obvious. Ventilation will not be a problem. These caves are being investigated from the point of view of safety and the features that they offer. When the rangers of the Conservation Commission are assured that they have something to offer to tourists which will be of an equivalent standard to Cutta Cutta Caves, it will be opened to the public also.

Nabalco Licence to Sell Electricity

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Further to a question I asked last week, can he yet tell me whether or not Nabalco Pty Ltd has a licence to sell electricity as is required by section 27 of the Electricity Commission Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have an answer for the honourable member. I will read it so that I do not get it wrong. An interim licence for the sale of electricity in Gove was issued by the Northern Territory Electricity Commission to Nabalco in 1979. In August 1982, when NTEC sought to revive the interim arrangements, Nabalco responded by stating that it accepted NTEC's advice as effectively terminating the licence arrangements. Legal opinion to NTEC at that stage did not support this. The latest legal opinion we have from the Crown Solicitor is that the licence has now lapsed and that is evident in 3 ways: first, Nabalco, in fact, has stated that it believes the licence to have expired; secondly, it is charging tariffs higher than the gazetted tariffs in Gove; and, thirdly, it did not claim for subsidy during the period May 1982 to December 1983, when it was entitled to claim under the licence.

Mr Speaker, at the moment NTEC is negotiating with Nabalco to resolve the matter of electricity supply at Gove. It has indicated to me that it does not wish to prosecute under the act at this stage as this could impede the current negotiations. If the honourable member requires any further information in regard to the matter, I would be only too pleased to seek it out for him.

National Mathematics Competition

Mr DALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

He will no doubt be aware of the recent national mathematics competition conducted throughout Australian primary schools. Could he inform us the details of the competition and, in particular, how Northern Territory school students performed?

ANSWER

I am not able to give details of those people who were successful in receiving certificates in that particular competition. I am aware that it is one of the biggest mathematical competitions in the world. Recent statistics show that 1 out of every 4 secondary students do take part in this particular competition. It is wholly sponsored by the Westpac banking group. Further information to hand is that there are 3 divisions: junior Years 7 and 8; intermediate Years 9 and 10; and senior Years 11 and 12. Medals are awarded Australia-wide, depending on entries. This year, there were 18. Distinctions are awarded to the top 15% in each state and or territory. I would say that Northern Territory students fared very well in this particular competition. Joseph Green from the Alice Springs Catholic school was awarded a medal in this year's competition and that is the only time a Territory participant has received high accreditation during our 5 or 6 years of participating in this competition. I also understand that the honourable member for Braitling's daughter, Mandy Vale, who is present here today, also received a certificate of merit in that particular competition.

Freight Charges Inquiry

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Can he advise when he will be presenting the long-overdue maritime freight sections of the inquiry into freight charges and what action he has taken on the recommendations tabled in this Assembly some 6 months ago?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the second part of the inquiry's report will be tabled during this sittings. It was presented to the Administrator just prior to the sittings and steps have been taken to have an appropriate number of copies printed. I will propose that parts 1 and 2 of the report be debated as a whole.

Sealing of Stuart Highway

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the fact that the Stuart Highway in South Australia is now rapidly reaching completion, can he advise whether the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, in conjunction with its South Australian counterpart, will be mounting any national campaign to advise motorists, particularly on the eastern seaboard, of the completion of the Stuart Highway?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission will certainly be mounting a national campaign but it is not proposed to mount a major national campaign in relation to the completion of the sealing of the Stuart Highway until it is actually completed. Unfortunately, sometimes the message has the habit of becoming garbled in the mind of the recipient. The Tourist Commission feels that it could be counter-productive to start telling people that the highway will be sealed in 1986, as we hope it will be, before that is an accomplished fact. The member for Braitling can rest assured that, once the bitumen is down, we will be promoting that fact extensively throughout Australia. I believe that the Department of Lands is engaging in additional planning in relation to the provision of accommodation for caravans and campers. It is possible that additional land will be released in time to enable the development of additional facilities which surveys have indicated will be required. But it is premature yet to engage in any national campaign. It could be that, for some unforeseen reason, the sealing could be delayed. However, we will be letting the world know quite loudly once the seal is down.

Home Purchase Assistance Scheme

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for HOUSING

In the light of discussions in the last week concerning the new Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme, could she advise how that scheme is related to the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that the honourable member has asked that question because I do not think that the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement has been understood by honourable members opposite. The Commonwealth States Housing Agreement was negotiated under the previous federal government in 1981 for a period of 5 years ending in 1986. The current federal government expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of that agreement and decided that the best method of amendment was to completely renegotiate the whole thrust of the agreement which applies to the Commonwealth and 8 state and territory governments.

The new agreement, which will apply for a period of 10 years from last July, is to receive ministerial agreement at a meeting scheduled for next month.

It will provide the Territory with approximately \$30.7m of federal funding towards housing in the 1984-85 financial year. However, under the agreement, the states and territories are required to lend moneys for home purchase loans subject to compliance with certain conditions. Among these conditions are that the rate of interest charged must be related to the ruling minimum Commonwealth Savings Bank market rate for housing loans. A minimum of 20% of the gross annual income of the purchaser and his spouse must be applied to loan repayments. Income for repayment purposes must be adjusted at least annually. Interest subsidies accruing early in the life of the loan must be repaid in full over the life of the loan. First-home owner scheme grants are to be paid directly to the vendor which, in this case, is the Housing Commission, although these are not taken into account for the purpose of determining the borrower's income.

From what I have just said, it is quite clear that the new home loan scheme is tightly tied to the requirements determined by the federal government under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement. As such, it must be recognised that any conditions applying to the scheme are not unilaterally imposed by the Northern Territory government but that, under the scheme incorporating the participation of private lending institutions, the available dollars will be allocated in such a way that more Territorians will be able to obtain their own slices of the pie and be able to put down roots by buying their own home in the Territory.

Approval of Connection of Temporary Power

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Have the statutory requirements under Northern Territory law for the inspection and approval of the connection of temporary power to the Legislative Assembly for today's sittings been met?

ANSWER

No answer given.

Eye Specialist for Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

In view of the fact that Alice Springs has one resident eye specialist and another due to commence duty shortly, can he advise if the Department of Health will be upgrading the facilities used by these specialists in the Alice Springs Hospital?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very happy to advise that the new eye specialist who will be coming to Alice Springs will be provided with facilities to allow him to operate efficiently. The question of ophthalmologists in the Alice Springs region has been a bone of contention on the part of the honourable member for a number of years. If one checked Hansard, one would find that he has asked at least 20 questions on this subject over the last 10 years. The Department of Health has been able to recruit another ophthalmologist to support the existing one who has been carrying out duties with the assistance of interstate ophthalmologists and the ophthalmologist in the Darwin region. We will be providing additional facilities for the new recruit. Hopefully, he will be able to provide the services required by the Alice Springs residents.

East Coast Shipping Service

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is there any likelihood in the near future of a replacement of the east coast shipping service previously serviced by ANL's Townsville Trader?

ANSWER

At the termination of the service, a committee was set up comprised of members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, members of the Port Authority and members of the combined ports unions to assess any applications or expressions of interest which might be forthcoming from the operators of shipping around Australia and indeed elsewhere. 'Elsewhere' of course always poses a problem with the Seamen's Union. Clearly, if there is a viable shipping service, then we would want to see it operating in the Port of Darwin. While a number of companies are still continuing with their feasibility studies, the future does not seem too bright in respect of immediate prospects. As members will be aware, the maritime industrial and economic situation at the moment is not really conducive to the establishment of any coastal shipping service in this country. We would all be aware of the difficulties that ANL has had in maintaining its profitability in coastal runs. It is public knowledge that State Ships of Western Australia is running at a significant loss in respect of its existing west coast shipping service. Until those matters resolve themselves, one can only live in hope. The government is actively pursuing the concept of industrial development zones within the environs of Darwin which, along with massive tourist infrastructures, we hope will build up the economic base to make such a shipping service viable. It is a great disappointment to the government, and to myself as minister in particular, to see a wind-down in coastal shipping activities which has followed right on the heels of the tremendous amount of public money that this government has put into upgrading and maintaining what is probably one of the most modern port facilities now in Australia.

There are still things to be done at the port. The land-backing and various other capital works are still necessary. I am certainly of the view that it would be singularly unwise to spend a great deal more of the taxpayers' money until such time as we have a successful marketing program. To that end, the Port Authority has now recruited a new marketing officer and I hope she will be able to assist the Port Authority and the government in marketing the Port of Darwin. This seems to be a general trend in many industrialised countries where the use of marine facilities are, to put it mildly, at risk. Given all of that, I would urge those officers of the maritime unions, particularly the Waterside Workers Federation and the Seamen's Union, that they should do everything possible in the future to temper their tempers with the knowledge that that could be extremely destructive to our maritime industry.

Cyclone Kathy at Borroloola

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Could he give the Assembly an update on the situation at Borroloola since cyclone Kathy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the situation at Borroloola at present is certainly not very satisfactory as far as I am concerned. It was in March this year that cyclone

Kathy struck and caused a substantial amount of damage and discomfort to the community at Borroloola. A number of steps have been taken since that time and I might just briefly go through what has occurred. There was an inspection of damage almost the day after the cyclone. The Department of Community Development had an officer on site on 25 March and a house-to-house survey was carried out on 4 April. There was a briefing given to the government on those survey results on 19 April. On 27 April, Cabinet considered options and announced relief arrangements which would be made on behalf of people at Borroloola who suffered and this was done on 30 April. After that, cheques were processed and dispatched by 9 May, with some late claims being paid on 22 May. On 22 May, at the end of the original survey exercise, 62 relief payments, totalling \$219 528, had been paid to a total of 78 applicants. Of the balance, 11 were considered ineligible and 5 required further investigation.

Between the dispatch of relief claims on 22 May and the deadline of 29 June, after which time no further applications or appeals were to be accepted, a total of 97 new applications and 15 appeals were received by my department. As a result of these applications and appeals, 2 of my officers spent 5 days at Borroloola conducting an on-site investigation. Approval has now been given for payment of a further 62 applications, totalling \$74 000, and rejection of 55 applications which were deemed to be ineligible or otherwise not warranting payment. Those figures include 5 undetermined applications from the original survey. All applicants were notified by letters dispatched on 13 August.

As well as that, a Northern Territory Development Corporation representative went to Borroloola to assess business loan applications. The government will be considering those in the near future. Yesterday, a deputation of several people had discussions with the Secretary of the Department of Community Development regarding the payment of emergency relief. As a result of those discussions, several people were listed whom we consider may warrant further investigation. A number of officers will travel to Borroloola to look specifically at their requests for assistance. That will be carried out in the very near future.

As well as that, a large amount of money has been spent in the Borroloola community by various government departments, particularly in upgrading services in the community. As well as that, the Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister requesting emergency funding for the upgrading of housing. The amount of money and the need for the housing in Borroloola was established by the task force which was made up of a number of Territory government departments, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Corporation. We have yet to receive any information from the federal government regarding that application for funding. The letter was sent to the Prime Minister on 28 June. It is a pretty sad situation because, as we all know, the monsoon season will be upon us again in a couple of months. We have a situation at Borroloola that, at this stage, may mean hardship for a number of Aboriginal people who are without shelter. The Territory government has spent about \$4.9m in the community. We are in a situation where we are unable to complete the program of providing shelter to all those people in the community because we have not had a response from the federal government. The longer it takes, the greater the problems will be with the onset of the wet season.

Senior Secondary Colleges

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he able to report to this Assembly on the current position of the senior secondary colleges proposal?

ANSWER

The issue of senior secondary colleges in the Northern Territory is still under consideration. Cabinet has asked for further information in relation to the establishment of the senior colleges in the Northern Territory. When that information is before me, I will bring it to Cabinet for further discussion and a decision. I might say here that many of the states are starting to have second thoughts about the establishment of senior colleges. Only recently, I had discussions with the Tasmanian chairman of the equivalent to our COSGO group in Darwin. He was most concerned about the senior colleges that have been established for some time in Tasmania. They are looking to moving away from that. However, Mr Speaker, a decision has not been made. It is still being looked at by Cabinet. I should point out here that, even if a decision were made today, senior high schools or secondary colleges, as they would be called, would not be set up in the Northern Territory until 1986 at the earliest. With that in mind, I make the announcement that the Sadadeen High School will be moving into matriculation next year.

Basic Nursing Training Program

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH

Does the government intend to transfer the basic nursing training program from the hospital to Darwin Community College?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question is under consideration and the Department of Health is holding discussions with the Royal Australian Nurses Federation and the Darwin Community College. Once a proposal is formulated by those organisations, no doubt the Minister for Education and I will discuss that proposal further. There is a move throughout Australia to change the direction of the educational side of the nursing profession. I understand that that particular change is welcomed by the Nurses Federation and other people involved with that particular profession. At the moment, it is the intention of the Northern Territory government to support, in principle, the proposal to incorporate nursing education within the Darwin Community College. But there is much to be discussed and resolved first. We will do that but, for the time being, we are allowing those organisations to meld their proposal before it comes finally to government.

Housing Loan Repayments

Mr PALMER to TREASURER

Has the government given consideration to limiting public service home repayments to a set percentage of gross salary?

ANSWER

We have indeed. I might take this opportunity to address a couple of issues relating to recent changes to the government employees sales scheme which has resulted in considerable public comment over the last few days. Last Friday, the Minister for Housing and I met with representatives of several unions who came to seek from the government - indeed, to demand from the government - an immediate withdrawal of the government's proposal to increase interest rates under that government employees sales scheme. There was also concern expressed that the actions taken by the government in this regard may

indeed be a prelude to an attack on conditions of service for public servants, such as air fares, recreational entitlements, and Territory allowance. To allay those fears in the minds of those union delegates - and clearly it was an important issue - I advised them that, firstly, whilst the government could not commit future governments in the Northern Territory, and subject to the Northern Territory's financial arrangements with the Commonwealth remaining intact unless varied by mutual agreement, the government would undertake not to reduce air fares on recreational leave or Territory allowance entitlements for existing public servants in the Northern Territory. I made that as a flat statement to those people. The only exception to that undertaking is if, in the future, a new package of conditions is negotiated and agreed between the Public Service Commissioner and the unions concerned. I guess that is a fairly obvious exception. I also advised that the government is prepared to overlay the changes in interest rates under the government employees sales scheme with the proviso that no public servant shall pay more than 25% of the income of borrower and spouse or the current percentage of income of borrower and spouse if this exceeds 25%.

Honourable members will be aware that the honourable member for Millner last week suggested that perhaps concerns could be allayed if the government was prepared to place a ceiling on the maximum payments which public servants would be up for under the escalating interest rates which now apply. We have undertaken to do that with the proviso that there have been public servants entering into loans voluntarily wherein they pay from day 1 a greater percentage of their income than 25%. We acknowledge their right to do that. Indeed, people in many cases have that capacity to pay beyond 25% of their income for accommodation. We are prepared, however, even under the escalating interest rates under the changes, to freeze that to the maximum level that they will pay at any time in the future. I offered that to the union delegates at the same time. Any subsidy that happened to be involved in offering those ceilings would be written off by the government. It would not be capitalised and carried forward. I cannot see how we could be fairer than that.

Mr Speaker, I further guaranteed to the union delegates that any case that they put forward which showed anomalies under the new arrangements would be examined forthwith by the government and responded to. Then, if amendments were agreed to, the scheme would be changed. However, that did not go far enough for them because their demands were that the government immediately withdraw the new interest rates and other changes to the scheme. So we did not get very far at the negotiating table.

The government employees sales scheme is still a most generous scheme, probably one of the most generous schemes available to any group of employees in Australia today. It still offers 95% of the purchase price of a house in the form of a loan over 45 years. I do not think very many people have that opportunity in purchasing a home. The new interest rates which apply to the scheme are still concessional interest rates in the first few years. Indeed, under some of the interest rates brackets, concessional rates will apply for at least another 8 years. With regard to the escalating rates which will apply from today, having regard to the escalation in salaries and incomes over the past few years and projected increases in those incomes over the next few years, the government does not believe that the burdens that will be imposed by these increases are at all unreasonable.

Reduction of High Interest on Housing Loans

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for HOUSING

Is it a fact that people currently paying 12.5% interest on loans will have this interest reduced to 11.5% maximum after 1 September this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the short answer is yes. However, for the benefit of members, I will enlarge on that a little. One of the benefits of the new loans scheme is that general housing loans will be related to bank home loan interest rates. As the present rate is 11.5%, this means that those people who are currently paying 12.5% will receive a reduction of 1%. Those people paying less than 11.5% will not escalate to 12.5%, as they would under the old conditions, but would continue to pay 11.5%. Eventually, this will bring all people under similar loan requirements regardless of employment. For anybody who has taken out a loan recently at the minimum rate of 4%, this would take 15 years if the bank rate remains at the current 11.5%. That is the Commonwealth Savings Bank concessional home loan rate. This gradual escalation should be comfortably accommodated in the family budget if CPI increases in salary average 5% per annum as calculated by the federal government in the currently negotiated Commonwealth States Housing Agreement.

Patient Care Committee

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Can he advise approximately how many times the Patient Care Committee has met since it was established for the Royal Darwin Hospital in September last year, how many complaints it has dealt with and whether or not the government established similar committees in other Territory hospitals?

ANSWER

The Patient Care Committee was set up last year with a variety of people from within the health infrastructure of the hospital and there are only a couple of people from the private sector involved in that committee. It was proven early in the piece that the committee was not really working. It may have been a little top heavy with public servants. After several discussions with the Secretary of the Department of Health, we decided that we would change the composition of the committee. Only just recently I received a briefing from the department advising me that the Patient Care Committee now has been reduced from about 5 or 6 people down to about 3 of which 2 people are from the private sector. In fact, they are probably representatives on the Royal Darwin Hospital Management Board.

It is the intention of the government to provide other hospitals within the Northern Territory with patient care committees. We will do that once we have been able to formulate the procedures in a more precise manner than the previous setup that was offloaded.

With regard to the number of complaints, unfortunately I am unable to provide the honourable member with that information. However, I will endeavour to obtain it in the next couple of days and provide it in the course of this sittings. If I am unable to do that, I will correspond with the member and advise him on the remaining part of the question.

Community College of Central Australia

Mr VALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can he advise when the Community College of Central Australia will be completely transferred to its new location in the eastern suburbs of Alice Springs and, further, to what use will the old buildings be put?

ANSWER

Before we can move from one point to another, we must have the building completed. Stage 2 of the Community College of Central Australia is due for completion in March 1985. It is hoped that that move from Anzac Hill will take place during the period March-April of that year. The future use of the Anzac Hill campus is one that is under consideration. I think that we have to take into account the overall requirements of Alice Springs generally, in particular in terms of the future enrolments of children in that particular area and in relation to the likely needs of TAFE and the secondary sectors of that particular community. At this stage, it is anticipated that stage 2 will be completed in March, and that the move from Anzac Hill to the Sadadeen area will take place between March and April. I will endeavour to keep honourable members informed of the progress.

Casino Employees

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the fact that, since the negotiations have commenced for the takeover of Federal Hotels casinos, absolutely no information or assurances whatsoever about their future employment have been given to the 500-plus employees of Federal Hotels in the Northern Territory, can the Chief Minister advise the Assembly if such assurances can be given by the government that the future employment of these 500 people will be guaranteed? Further, is this matter being discussed in the negotiations that are taking place with the people who will be acquiring the casinos?

ANSWER

The honourable Leader of the Opposition is of course quite incorrect when he says that no assurances have been given to staff of the casinos in relation to their continued employment. The Leader of the Opposition should refer to the press releases that were put out, in particular the one that I put out jointly with Mr Greg Farrell. Mr Farrell indicated that he believed that the project that the government was proposing, which required the incorporation of the casinos and the sale of the casinos by Federal Hotels, was in the best interests of the Northern Territory and the people of the Territory. I do not have the documents in front of me but I am quite sure that, in a press release that I put out on or about 16 April, whether with or without Mr Farrell, assurances were given in relation to the continued employment of all but, as I understand it, select executive staff of the casino. Those assurances still stand. Indeed, I understand that Mr John Haddad, the General Manager of the Federal Hotels group, from whom we have heard considerably lately, had a meeting with all the staff of the Darwin and Alice Springs casinos in those respective places and passed on the assurances that had been given in relation to the continued employment of the staff. I do understand, however, that there have been transfers of some staff by Federal Hotels to their other casino properties. I certainly would not want to comment on the reasons for those transfers. In any event, I can assure you that the proposed operators of the casinos will be most reliant on securing

the continuing services of the vast bulk of the staff of the Darwin and Alice Springs properties. It stands to reason. I would imagine that the reason for the honourable Leader of the Opposition's question is simply to try to spread further panic and misinformation.

Mr B. Collins: I have just been told the acquisition is going through today. That is the reason for the question. Are you going to hide it in the budget?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, my assurances are on the record. As I understand, although the bill will go through to its second reading today, the committee stage may possibly have to be taken later. I understand that the bill itself provides that the actual date of acquisition is not the date of passage. I cannot understand why the Leader of the Opposition seems to be in such a flap about this matter. He should have referred to the document for any evidence. It was quite readily available to him.

Federal Hotels Casinos (Compensation) Bill

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Could he advise when his bill will be getting passage through this Assembly?

ANSWER

No answer given.

Residential Land in Timber Creek

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for LANDS

Does the Department of Lands intend to provide serviced residential land in Timber Creek to cater for a number of housing applications currently held by the Housing Commission for the residents of that town?

ANSWER

Last week, I undertook to provide some additional information for the honourable member in relation to the land situation in Timber Creek. I am advised that we do have a proposal intended to service 16 residential and 1 commercial lot in Timber Creek. The order of costs provided at this stage by the Department of Transport and Works is \$1.345m of which \$1m is to upgrade the township's water supply. No doubt, that is an activity which will have to be undertaken if the population of Timber Creek increases. Currently, negotiations are in progress with the Northern Territory Housing Commission to rationalise the level of servicing required at Timber Creek and other minor centres in the Northern Territory. The following projections have been supplied by the Northern Territory Housing Commission: in 1984 it would have liked 6 R1 blocks and 1 R2 block capable of carrying 2 two-bedroom units; in 1985-86, a further 3 blocks; and, in 1986-87, 4 blocks and 1 allotment capable of carrying another 3 two-bedroom units.

Mr Speaker, part of the problem that has been highlighted in the examination of land supply at Timber Creek is the provision of standard services. In these fairly remote areas, most people, naturally, want to obtain very large blocks and, of course, the larger a block of land, the greater the cost of providing services to it. As I mentioned last week, at times we service

blocks of land in the Territory at a cost in excess of \$10 000 and sometimes they return a few hundred dollars on the market because that is all the level of demand can provide for. However, we have turned off land in the past in remote areas despite the fact that it is uneconomical. I have asked the Department of Lands for additional information in regard to Timber Creek with a view to bringing the honourable member for Victoria River and myself completely up to date on land matters in that area of the Territory.

Federal Hotels Casinos (Compensation) Bill

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

In order to assist this Assembly to give some kind of scrutiny to a bill which is being put through all stages at this sittings and to which 3 pages of amendments were circulated only 10 minutes ago, when will the Federal Hotels Casinos (Compensation) Bill, formerly named the Federal Hotels Casinos (Acquisition) Bill (Serial 68), be passing through its second reading and committee stage during this sittings of the Legislative Assembly, and are there any further amendments to it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand that the proposal is that the second reading of the bill will be taken today. However, the committee stage will be deferred until at least tomorrow or perhaps the next day. As the Leader of the Opposition would know, these decisions are flexible. It depends on whether additional amendments come to light that are required by the government or whether Federal Hotels will propose amendments which the government is prepared to accept. We have had communications with Federal Hotels on this piece of legislation and information will be provided to me today concerning suggestions which it has in regard to the bill before the Assembly.

Government Employees Sales Scheme

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for HOUSING

Is it a fact that current public servants continue to have the opportunity to apply for loans under the government employees sales scheme until the end of December 1986?

ANSWER

Current public servants do have until 31 December 1986 to apply for a loan under the government employees sales scheme. The reason for continuing to allow applications under a sunset clause of over 2 years is to ensure that no public servant currently employed by the Northern Territory government will be denied the opportunity to apply for a government employees sales scheme loan. In this housing scheme, it is the government's intention not only to house public servants but to house them in a residence of their own choice.

Aboriginal Community Health Services

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is he aware that his department has refused to allow Aboriginal community controlled health services in the southern part of the Territory to have their minor repairs to medical equipment done in the department's workshops? Can he assure this Assembly that this petty but extremely annoying denial will be lifted and there will be a return to the good old days of mutual cooperation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any such practices happening in the Alice Springs region. At the same time, one must be aware of some of the private health services that are operating in central Australia through the Aboriginal Congress and community health organisations. I find it a bit difficult to allow a part of the private sector to be using Department of Health facilities. However, I will find out what is going on and advise the member if any changes can be made to the current policy of the Department of Health.

Health Surveyors in Alice Springs

Mr HANRAHAN to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is he aware of the depleted number of health surveyors in Alice Springs? Will the problem be rectified and is the service planned to be devolved on the Alice Springs Town Council?

ANSWER

In October 1983, Cabinet approved that a preliminary offer be made to existing local government authorities for the transfer of health survey powers within municipal areas. This was done in December 1983. I am aware that the position in Alice Springs has deteriorated. We are short of health surveyors in that area purely because the devolution of responsibility for health surveyors to the council has taken somewhat longer than expected. Negotiations on staffing levels and other associated costs have not been resolved by the local government associations of the Northern Territory. Until that is resolved, the position will remain unchanged. However, I have asked the Department of Health to examine the possibility of putting a health surveyor in the Alice Springs region until such time as the negotiations with local government are completed.

Casino Land Trust

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

The Treasurer stated this morning on ABC radio: 'The land trust will be responsible for the \$220m development on Myilly Point'. Could the Chief Minister advise the Assembly if the statement is correct or if it is still the intention, as originally announced, that the land trust will only be responsible for the acquisition of the current casino properties which will then be handed over to a further consortium for the actual development to take place?

ANSWER

As I understand the arrangement, the land trust will certainly be the ultimate developer of the whole project on Myilly Point.

Mr B. Collins: This changes day by day.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition will listen to my answer rather than fill his ears with his own noise, I would be surprised if even he could twist the interpretation of words to show it differently - although he is a master at twisting interpretations. For instance, I said on one radio interview that the projects at the old hospital site would be similar to the Yulara project. He used that to refer to the Yulara financing when, quite clearly, I was referring to the fact that it would be a self-contained style of resort with hotels, retail shops, a marina and all the rest of it. The position is that the trust is being established. I might say at this stage that I am prepared to name privately, on a basis of strict confidentiality, to the Leader of the Opposition the major Australian participant in the proposed trust. That proposed participant is a publicly-listed company and certainly does not want its participation aired until such time as it feels itself in a position to advise stock exchanges of its involvement in the whole project.

The position is that the land trust is being established firstly to acquire the casinos. Through a development company, the trust will then arrange for the development of the Alice Springs and Darwin sites - the old hospital site and

the site on the Alice Springs golf course. The trust will, as I understand it, be taking an interest in these projects although it is certainly proposed to float off elements of the project on the hospital site. One of the motels is to be a condominium-style hotel, as is the hotel at Alice Springs. The sale of these condominium units obviously will mean that the trust will only retain such of that element as it wishes to. In any event, the trust is the key to the whole operation. I fail to see the particular point of the Leader of the Opposition's question other than that he appears to be trying to obfuscate the whole position. It certainly is a complex legal position and, as I have said all along, it is subject to negotiation between the parties. These things certainly do change. The position is not helped by the Leader of the Opposition who seems to have embarked on a campaign of attempting, as best he can, to deliberately misunderstand the position and to attempt to deliver misinformation to people in the community.

Reporting of the Budget

Mr DALE to TREASURER

Could he advise if the budget reporting in the Northern Territory has been an accurate reflection of the details contained in the budget introduced yesterday?

Mr SPEAKER: The question is out of order.

Women's Register

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Did Cabinet reject a recommendation from the Women's Advisory Council that the Northern Territory government establish a women's register and, if so, why?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Cabinet did reject a recommendation from the Women's Advisory Council that a register of women be established in relation to appointment to statutory authorities. The reason that the establishment of the register was rejected was that, at the same time, Cabinet endorsed a policy that all vacancies on statutory authorities should be advertised and that women as well as men should be encouraged to apply for such positions. I direct the member for MacDonnell's attention to appointments to statutory authorities in the Northern Territory. I would suggest that he look at the composition of statutory authorities such as the Road Safety Council and the hospital boards throughout the Northern Territory and recent appointments to other major statutory authorities where the government has shown its bona fides in this matter without the necessity for establishing a register which, in our view, would not serve any particular purpose. It may well be that people would seek to place their names on the register who had no suitability for any particular position but would feel, if they were passed over from time to time, that they were being discriminated against.

The government feels it is far better to have a positive policy of appointing women to statutory authorities. We are certainly trying to reflect the proportion of the female population on statutory authorities. What we want are the best-qualified people for the statutory authorities. We believe that there are plenty of well-qualified women in the community and that we will get those women to apply through advertising and through direct approaches. We do not believe the establishment of a register in the Northern Territory would

serve any good purpose at all. Inquiries in other states have shown that little has been gained by the establishment of a register other than a sop to the women's activist groups. The registers have been used to keep women quiet rather than to appoint women to statutory authorities. This government is appointing women and I suggest the member for MacDonnell have a look in the Gazette from time to time.

Public Forum on Fishing Industry

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Recently, I asked for a public forum on the fishing industry. Can he inform the Assembly of any moves to have such a forum?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, by way of background to the need for a forum to discuss offshore fishing operations in Northern Territory waters, I would like to bring to the Assembly's attention that the constitutional position and involvement of the Territory in offshore fishing really finishes at the 3-mile limit. The Commonwealth has the constitutional jurisdiction from that point on. Mr Speaker, as you and I would well know, you having been my predecessor, that the Commonwealth role in administering the offshore fishery is not exactly one of great achievement. In fact, the long-running opposition that we had to Commonwealth policies, particularly in the prawn fishery, has highlighted the need for Northern Territory involvement in the administration of the offshore fishery. Mr Speaker, you would be well aware that the state of the prawn fishery is so parlous that we now have a total of about 300 licensed boats looking for 17 000 t of prawns a year to maintain their financial survival when in fact boats have taken 4000 t to 7000 t out of the fishery and have done so for 10 or 15 years. Only somebody short of mental powers would issue that number of licences in a fishery. I do not blame the existing federal government even though it has not done much to solve the problem.

With that background, the advent of bilateral and joint venture fishing interests in Northern Territory waters have been of some interest to me and, of course, to many people in the industry. By way of explanation, the bilateral arrangement is simply a licensing agreement that the federal government has with overseas companies or countries for a right to enter into a fishery for the payment of an amount of money. There are certain things that the Australian government expects to get back in terms of information about the fishery. Never at any stage did that proposal entertain the possibility of the Australianisation of the fishery. It just allows other people to help themselves.

The joint venture arrangement, which is maturing after a long period of discussion, is an arrangement where, over a period of time, the foreign interests move out of the fishery and enable the Australian interests to take a larger share. In my view, the joint venture is a much more satisfactory way of managing the fishery because it gives us the most important thing we need to know about the fishery; that is, exact information about the harvest. As I said, the bilateral arrangement does not give us guaranteed information about the harvesting approach that is being used by people in the fishery. We know what they tell us. However, the Australianisation of the fishery means Australian interests are involved in the financing, the operation and the distribution of the catch and the return from the fishery. By that means, we will be able to get a better measure of what the fishery can sustain in terms of effort. Over a period of time, we should be able to manage it in a viable manner.

Mr Speaker, at this stage, I can say that the joint venture arrangements that have been organised by 3 leading Northern Territory businessmen and a group of Thai companies are in the final stages of assessment by the federal government for operation in this fishery. My colleagues and I thoroughly support the venture because it will achieve the ends that we were talking about. Members would be aware that there has been some opposition from local people in the community, including a prominent politician who seeks to get his name in the press from time to time. That opposition is based on the fact that they do not want foreigners in the fishery at all. If ever there was a flat-earth approach to a problem, it is the one that is being adopted by these people. The bilateral people are in there going for their lives, doing what they like and telling us what they want us to know. If an Australian wants to gain access through a joint venture participation and seek partners to be in it with him, then it is terrible and we should do all we can to stop it because we do not want foreigners in the fishery. The logic of that does not ring true to me but I guess it does to the people who are advancing the argument.

There is no doubt that the Minister for Primary Industries, John Kerin, is a supporter of joint venture arrangements because he has already issued 2 joint venture licences in Australian waters in recent months. They would appear to be very good proposals. To overcome the resistance at the local level by people whom I would regard as the vanguard of the flat-earth society in the Northern Territory in this matter, I am prepared to accede to the honourable member's request and establish a forum, along the lines of the B-TEC forum that was held recently, to bring people up to date with the latest technology and details of the proposals that are being advanced. The people we would like to see participating in the forum are most certainly the politicians who have had most to say about it and who feel the proposal is unworthy of development in the Territory. We would like the local fishermen, who see their livelihoods being threatened, to give us an example of how that is likely to happen given the mechanics of the joint venture proposal. We would like the federal Department of Primary Industries to allow its fisheries officers to participate because they are involved. We would like Western Australian and Queensland fisheries officers, who already are administrators in joint venture arrangements, to join in so that we can gain the benefit of their knowledge. Certainly, we would like participation from members of CSIRO who have a vast experience in the offshore fisheries in the southern states of Australia and who are showing some interest in the northern fishery. Certainly, we would like those members of CSIRO who could contribute to come to the forum and give us the benefit of their views. It is also important that the Darwin participants in the joint venture and the Thai businessmen who see an opportunity to establish relations in Australia should come too.

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory Department of Primary Production and its fisheries people are manoeuvring now to have the forum organised. I am sure the honourable member for Berrimah will be a leading participant because he has had the opportunity of travelling to Thailand to see what the joint ventures are all about. I would hope that this forum can come to pass at a very early time so that any of the concern in the community that has been expressed can be put aside and fears allayed by virtue of people understanding exactly what joint ventures are all about. I would conclude my remarks by saying that, if anybody can demonstrate to me the logic of having foreign fishing vessels in Northern Territory waters unsupervised, taking what they like, when they like and doing what they like, for an annual fee, and argue with me that that is a better proposition than a joint venture arrangement with Australian companies, then I would very much like to hear the logic behind that proposition.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

The Chief Minister, when he first announced the casino operation, stated that the government would not be putting a penny into it. Could the Treasurer explain to the Assembly the extent of what appears to be a \$1.5m gift revealed in the budget papers yesterday? Could he advise the Assembly of the exact percentage of this tax holiday which is being offered to the new casino operators and the length of time this tax holiday will be applied?

ANSWER

The Leader of the Opposition is making a similar mistake to the one a number of other commentators on the budget have made over the last day or so. He is saying that the smaller amount of revenue which will be derived in the forthcoming year from casino taxes is somehow a gift to the casino operators. The further proposition has been put by a number of commentators that the increase in tax on tobacco and alcohol has been introduced to make up for that. That is the sort of juvenile nonsense that we are coming to expect from people like the ABC journalists who made this very point on Territory Extra this morning. It could be said that the increased revenue coming to the government from any number of state taxation areas, such as stamp duty, payroll tax, mining royalties or motor vehicle registration, could be the extra money that the government needs to cover the tax lost from casinos.

Mr B. Collins: This is the tax holiday and you reckon that you have not got a tax holiday.

Mr PERRON: If the Leader of the Opposition, for the first time in his life, would like to pipe down for a few seconds, he might get an answer to his question. He just cannot help himself. After a few more years in the Assembly, maybe he will.

Mr B. Collins: Answer the question.

Mr PERRON: Keep it up.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the arrangements that we propose to enter into with new owners and operators of the casinos in due course will be on a basis of a completely restructured taxation system which, in the short term, will return a lesser sum to the Northern Territory than has been the case in the past. In the longer term, the project will return very substantially increased revenue to the Northern Territory. This government has never said that the proposal to establish casinos in the Territory was put forward as a basis for increasing revenue for the Territory. The casino taxes that we have obtained in the past have been only a peripheral benefit from having casinos. The reason for bringing them here was to upgrade to a very high standard the level of services provided for tourists, to add to the Territory's man-made attractions and to try to assist tourism generally. The amount of money that has been contributed by casinos each year, relative to the size of our budget, has been insignificant. With the casino operations and our new tourist development plans, we aim to make Darwin an internationally competitive gaming area. Obviously, this requires the securing of respected, international operators who have a capacity to provide a level of service that the sophisticated international casino market requires. In order to achieve that, there must be many changes to the existing system.

The proposal that we will be entering into in the near future provides for a 2-stage tax structure. It is quite different from the existing one. It is anticipated that, for the first couple of years, there will be a reduction in revenue that would not have been the case had there been no change. Thereafter, there will be significant increase to the Territory government revenue as a result of the new arrangement.

Any suggestions of a tax holiday are simply nonsense. If the opposition wants to use that term correctly, it should be referring to the tax holiday that was given to Federal Hotels in last year's budget or the one before when the government decided that, for a 12-month period, the taxation rate for casinos would be reduced from 15% to 5%. Part of that arrangement was that Federal Hotels would fulfil its undertaking to take up additional land in Alice Springs adjacent to the existing casino and build additional accommodation units. It took the tax concession of 10% for 12 months but we did not get the accommodation. If one looks at the history of Federal Hotels in Tasmania, one wonders whether similar things are occurring there. A few years ago, the only casino in Tasmania was returning about \$2m in taxation per year. Tasmania now has 2 casinos, an extra 100 000 visitors per year, an increase of 40 000 in population and yet it is receiving only \$3m in taxation from the casinos. Perhaps the Tasmanian government might care to have a look at the past operations of casinos and see if it can improve them as we are doing.

Arltunga Road

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the restoration work presently being undertaken at Arltunga by the Conservation Commission, will consideration be given to upgrading the access road to Arltunga from the Ross Highway and, if so, when could works commence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is the government's intention to complete the access road redevelopment to coincide with the completion of the internal work at Arltunga. One would assume that that would occur in about 1986-87 subject to normal budgetary considerations.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

I refer to his previous answer which referred to a short-term decrease in casino tax in exchange for a longer-term increase. Could he explain to this Assembly, as it is entitled to know, the precise terms in which he described the tax holiday to Federal Hotels, the percentage of gaming taxes that will be levied in what we now know will be stage 1 of the taxation levy on the new operators and the percentage of gaming taxes that will be levied in stage 2? Could he also advise how long stage 1 will operate and when stage 2 will begin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot provide those details for the honourable member at this time.

Roads in Victoria River Electorate

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, yesterday in the budget speech, the Treasurer mentioned that there would be some upgrading of the Cox Peninsula Road. Can the Minister for Transport and Works outline what likelihood there is of major improvements to the Daly River, Wooliana and Cox Peninsula Roads in the immediate or short-term future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has accurately described the locations of the proposed upgrading works in that area. The works extend from Daly River Road to Wooliana and Cox Peninsula Roads and will occur in the very near future. Apart from repairing damaged causeways on the Wooliana Road, work will be undertaken to make good the worst sections of this road between Bamboo and Brown's Creeks this year.

Tabling of Reports

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

I remind the minister that 2 reports will be outstanding at the end of August. Can he give an assurance to this Assembly that these reports will not be further delayed? I refer to the review into psychiatric services which, in his press release of 22 June, he promised by the end of August and the final report on the problems of alcoholism in Tennant Creek which he said in the last sittings would be available in August.

ANSWER

I would remind the honourable member that he still has not returned the copy of the draft report on alcoholism in Tennant Creek.

Mr Ede: I have.

Mr DONDAS: I have not seen it.

Mr Ede: I returned it by registered mail because I knew you would say that.

Mr DONDAS: At this stage, I have not received a copy of the draft report that I gave to him under the strictest confidence. He now tells me that it has been sent by registered mail. I will be able to take that up with my office when I get over there later today. It may be the subject of an adjournment debate but we shall wait and see. The report will be ready in August. Today is only 29 August.

To answer the first part of the question, I issued a press release to say that there was a gentleman coming from South Australia to review our psychiatric services and, hopefully, he would report to me by the end of this month. When that statement was made, I was of the firm opinion that he would be arriving almost immediately. The member for Stuart has had a briefing with the Secretary of the Department of Health. He is probably well aware of the latest developments regarding the report on psychiatric services. Dr Spragg is evaluating the services. In fact, I signed a letter only this morning informing the member for Stuart that the gentleman in question will be in Alice Springs

from today onwards. He may care to have a talk to him whilst he is in Alice Springs. The important thing is that Dr Spragg has arrived. He is evaluating the services that are being provided at the moment and, hopefully, will be in a position in the middle of September to finalise his report. The honourable member would be aware that the government is considering the installation of halfway psychiatric establishments in Darwin and Alice Springs. In Alice Springs at the moment we are setting up a facility in the hospital grounds. Hopefully, it will be operating in the very near future. Regarding the halfway houses, we are investigating the possibility of encouraging private enterprise to become involved in those operations.

Mr Speaker, things are being done in the area. The member for Stuart had a briefing from the department only this week or late last week. He is aware of what is going on. Once Dr Spragg has provided the department with his evaluations, there will be discussions with the Secretary of the Department of Health. If there is to be any drastic change made in our direction, I would only be too pleased to take it to my Cabinet colleagues for consideration.

Board of Studies

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I remind the minister that legislation was passed earlier this year to enable the development of a board of studies. Could he advise what stage of development the creation of that board has reached?

ANSWER

The legislation to set up that board of studies was passed through this Assembly in March this year. Unfortunately, there was some delay in setting up the board of studies. The main concern was that, although we had passed the amendments, and we had regulations referring to prescribed organisations, unfortunately we did not have any prescribed organisations. Regulations had to be drafted to prescribe those organisations. I am able to inform the member for Nightcliff that the amendment has now been gazetted. I understand that invitations have been called for positions on the board of studies and that the board of studies should be in place by the end of September.

Casinos in the NT

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Could he advise this Assembly of the full extent of the financial assistance that will be offered by the Northern Territory government, by way of tax relief or by any other method, to the casino land trust during the financial year covered by the budget presented yesterday?

ANSWER

As the Chief Minister mentioned to the honourable member a number of times during the course of this sittings - although, obviously, he has a great deal of difficulty being quiet for long enough to listen to the message - details of the final structure of ownership and operation of the casinos and the very involved structure which will lead to the new ownership and the construction of very extensive tourist accommodation facilities in the Northern Territory will be released as soon as they can be in the near future. At present, it is quite inappropriate for those details to be released. The Chief Minister has undertaken to give the Leader of the Opposition some information privately and

confidentially. If he accepts that offer, he will probably understand why the information cannot be released publicly at this time. It would be quite inappropriate to do so. The legislative provisions before this Assembly, including the changes to the Casino Licence and Control Act which were introduced at the last sittings, will provide that the complete details of any new agreement entered into between the government and new operators will be tabled in this Assembly within 3 days. The agreements themselves will be tabled and honourable members will have all the information they require at the appropriate time.

Gyrocompass at Alice Springs High School

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

How dangerous was the gyrocompass found recently at the Alice Springs High School?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I had had some forewarning of this question. I understand that the honourable member asking the question was the owner of the gyrocompass and he left it at the school on his departure many years ago. However, the important thing is that the radiation dose rates were not measurable. If somebody were to sit almost on top of it for 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, it still would not reach the dose limit as set down in the Radiation Safety Control Act. I am unable to say that the honourable member will get the gyrocompass back as I understand it will be kept in Darwin. The honourable member may be able to take that up with the Department of Health. I can advise him that the gyrocompass was not dangerous to teachers, pupils or other people at the Alice Springs High School although the device contained a small amount of radium in the luminous paint on its dial. I issued a press release on 25 August 1984 saying that, as far as the Department of Health is concerned, the device was not harmful to people and there was no cause for alarm. I hope the honourable member will rest easy now in the knowledge it has not caused any grave problems at the Alice Springs High School.

Construction of Housing Commission Houses

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING

Is it a fact that the Housing Commission will construct fewer houses for the general public and public servants this financial year compared to the last financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member should know that there is 1 housing list now. The 2 housing lists are no longer in effect. Public servants and the general public are on 1 housing list. The Housing Commission is very conscious of the need to support the building industry in the Northern Territory. It is very conscious of the need to house people who come to the Northern Territory. I think the commission can stand on its merits in this regard and any housing undertaken during the current year will be done in full consultation with relevant government departments, the general public and those organisations within the public and private sectors which have a need for housing. In doing this, the whole housing situation will be kept under review during the year so that the housing needs of people in the Northern Territory are kept well to the fore at all times.

Funding for Yarralin Community

Mr MCCARTHY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A few days ago, a question was asked about the handover of land at Yarralin. What level of funding is to be provided for the Yarralin community in this year's budget and how does it compare with funding in previous years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Yarralin is an Aboriginal community which is situated on Victoria River Downs Station. It is situated over 400 km by road south-west of Katherine. It has a population of about 120 and there have been considerable difficulties with the tenure of the land on which the community is situated. I believe that this will be rectified in the near future when freehold title over an excision from the station will be granted to the community, as the Chief Minister mentioned earlier in this sittings. Because of the lack of land tenure, government funding to that particular community has been restricted. However, during 1983-84, the following capital works were carried out at a cost of \$148 000: a minor powerhouse, 4 toilets, solar street lights, a supplementary water supply from the Wickham River, upgrading of the creek crossing on the access road, a rubbish dump and repairs to existing laundry and shower buildings. In addition, some \$11 000 was provided for wages, fuel and some materials to carry out municipal-type functions such as the cleaning of public buildings and garbage disposal. In total, \$159 000 was expended in 1983-84. In 1984-85, it is planned to drill and equip bores, install hot water systems, construct a further shower block, upgrade and gravel the airstrip and some of the internal roads. That is expected to cost in excess of \$150 000. In addition, it is estimated that a further \$34 000 will be needed for fuel, wages and materials to carry out municipal-type functions. Thus, a total of \$184 000 will be expended there during this financial year. As well as that expenditure by the Territory government, I have been informed that some \$250 000 will be expended on CEP programs at the Yarralin community. In effect, \$400 000 will be spent this year compared with \$159 000 last year.

Alice Springs Students Attending Darwin Community College

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER of EDUCATION

Is he aware that Alice Springs students returned to Darwin Community College one week earlier than they needed to because they were not advised of a change in the starting date and that this caused a great deal of annoyance and loss of face by the community college as a result?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of that. In putting out its handbook, the Darwin Community College would have to go to press several months before the start of the academic year. If subsequent alterations were made to the dates shown in that handbook, it would be reasonable to expect that something of this nature might occur. My understanding is that, if there is a mistake in the printing of the handbook with regard to a date, the community college notifies the students who are affected by that change. It is a problem that could be expected with anybody who publishes a handbook the size of that published by the community college. I take on board the points that the honourable member has made. If he would care to write me a letter about it, I will examine the matter further.

Impact of Lead Free Petrol on NT

Mr HANRAHAN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What impact will the planned introduction of lead-free petrol into Australia have on the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the introduction of lead-free petrol into Australia has to be one of the greatest confidence tricks that has ever been played on those people who live outside of Sydney and Melbourne. In fact, I think it will bring very punitive costs and some dislocation to people outside of those areas. In the last years of the 1970s, Sydney was suffering from major doses of air pollution. It was proposed that the best way to solve Sydney's problem was to stop burning off rubbish and to stop putting leaded petrol in cars. In both Sydney and Melbourne, ministers for conservation and for transport led a concerted effort over a period of years to ensure that Australia introduced lead-free petrol so that every day in Sydney and Melbourne was totally pollution-free. I guess that is not an unreasonable position for them to take, given that they were the only people who would be affected. They really had the tiger by the tail and were able to tame the tiger by virtue of the fact that the manufacturers of motor vehicles and the major sales areas for those vehicles are in Sydney and Melbourne. There was very little that the manufacturers could do to buck any directions that the state governments brought down in relation to environmental controls on motor vehicles.

Experience throughout the world has shown that lead-free petrol can be distributed throughout various areas in any country. What it boils down to is that the consumer pays. Experience has also shown that the petrol companies would not be slow in tacking a little bit on top for themselves when the opportunity comes to provide this new service. Thus, there has been a fair amount of collusion: 2 state governments who want to get rid of smog; manufacturers who stood to gain a few extra bucks out of providing emission controls; and the oil industry which will not waste any time in banging a cent or two on top of the cost of the lead-free petrol to make it worth their while. They have all the rest of us by the whatevers.

Mr Speaker, that is all very well for people in Sydney and Melbourne. The problem is for people in the Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. We now have to introduce into the countryside a dual system of fuel supply for people who happen to be running unleaded cars as well as leaded ones. The introduction of unleaded cars will take place over a period of 5 or 10 years. In that period, all the small retailers in the countryside will have to introduce dual systems of fuel supply to cover all the vehicles on the road. Who do you reckon will pay? The tooth fairy? Mr Speaker, you and I and our constituents will pay. And for what? So that Sydney can be completely smog-free for 365 days of the year.

Mr Speaker, my difficulty with the proposition is that it is something that will be foisted on all the rural people, at great expense to all concerned, for the benefit of a few people. When I say 'a few', I mean about 20% of the population. Given that that is the case, I do not think it is unreasonable that that 20% of the population foot the bill for the rest of us. I can foreshadow to honourable members that we will have a difficult period in the Northern Territory, probably for 6 or 12 months, when not all outlets will have the dual fuels available for consumers. We are setting a process in train at the moment to make the local people aware of that. The Energy Council met last week and

had an opportunity to spend some time with it. A matter of great concern to the Northern Territory Energy Council is how this will impact on the Northern Territory's tourist industry if not everybody in the Territory is selling lead-free petrol and all our visitors who will come up the south road in 1 or 2 years' time are driving cars with lead-free, anti-pollution gear on them. For the benefit of the Tourist Commission and all those involved in the tourist industry, we are preparing a method by which we believe we can overcome the problem. The oil companies have set up a committee themselves to try to provide to the people of the Territory a system by which both fuels can be made available throughout the Territory because it is unthinkable that we should have a situation where both leaded and unleaded petrol are not available at the one outlet. We need to address the issue of how that is to be effected in the financial sense.

There is no doubt in my mind that to service the occasional visitors who may go to distant points such as Docker River and Hooker Creek will involve considerable expense. It is not conceivable that the amount of petrol which will be sold to them will pay for the dual installations that will be needed. We need to answer that problem pretty quickly. Within this Assembly, we have as many rural members as we have city members. In the major towns, we will be fairly comfortable but, outside of those major towns, there will be some problems. If honourable members have any particular areas of concern on which they would like to obtain clarification, I would be pleased to hear from them. I would ask that they do not wait until we are in the middle of this bun fight to try to solve the problem. If they could look ahead, it would be greatly appreciated.

Budget Allocations for Gardens Hill Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

The 1982-83 budget allocated a sum of \$611 000 for headworks at the Gardens Hill development. However, the current budget indicates that there is an unexpended authorisation of \$466 000 out of that \$611 000. Why has there been a delay in spending this money and when can we expect that the money will be spent?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously I do not have such details before me. I will seek the information and provide it to him during the course of this sittings.

Alice Springs Town Council Contribution to Araluen Complex

Mr VALE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Has the matter of the Alice Springs Town Council's financial contribution towards the running of the Araluen arts complex yet been resolved and, if so, could he supply details?

ANSWER

I cannot give any further information because, at this stage, the situation has not been resolved. However, I can assure the member for Braitling that discussions will be continuing until some satisfactory finalisation is reached.

Oolloo Station

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

In view of his statement yesterday that there will be no further expansion of the ADMA scheme, at least in the near future, could he advise the Assembly what plans the government has for Oolloo Station which was compulsorily acquired from the Rixon family some years ago? Could he further advise if the government intends to offer financial incentives or any other assistance for the current ADMA farmers to diversify into cattle production?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the issue of expanding the ADMA operation on Oolloo or anywhere else certainly has not been addressed by me. The government's main concern at the moment is to see the ADMA farms become viable before we move on to releasing additional land for agricultural cropping development. I foreshadow to the Leader of the Opposition that I will be tabling a report on the ADMA scheme in a few moments and I will make a few comments on it. He is quite welcome to take the matter up from there at the next sittings and debate it if that is the opposition's wish. Mr Speaker, I have had several meetings with the ADMA farmers in recent months and at no stage has anyone put to me that they ought to be doing anything other than cropping on their land. They certainly have not raised the prospect of grazing beef. If that possibility has been considered, it is certainly not one I am aware of and I do not have any firm views on it. I would be interested to talk to the farmers because the whole thrust of the ADMA project is to prove that we can bring our costs of production per acre down to a level comparable with any other grain producer in the country. On that basis, Northern Territory farmers could compete with the rest of the farming community in Australia.

Mr Speaker, as you know, the most important thing about farming is not whether we can grow a product or how much we can grow but whether we can grow it at a price that will enable us to obtain a profit. Therefore, we need to bring our production costs per acre down to a level that is comparable to that in the rest of the country so that we can then maintain our position in the grain market. I indicate to the honourable member that a bill will be introduced to extend the life of ADMA. If, after a period of 10 years of intense and precise farming activity, we establish that we can never bring our cost of production down to anything comparable with the rest of Australia, that will leave us with another decision in 5 years' time. The object of the exercise is to succeed and it is our intention to give all the farmers as much support as we can to achieve that objective.

Housing for Tindal Air Base

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for HOUSING

Now that the commitment has been made for the upgrading of the Tindal base by the Commonwealth government, what actions are required by the Housing Commission to meet the housing needs which will be generated by the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, prior to the final decision to proceed with the development of the Tindal base, an EIS was prepared to ascertain the overall effect of the base on the total Katherine scene. This statement addressed the housing requirements of the RAAF and civil personnel connected directly with development as well as

the increase in the population of the town through natural growth. The commission believes that the predictions contained within the EIS are somewhat conservative and has held meetings with relevant Commonwealth and Territory departments to discuss this issue. Although final decisions on who will build off-base housing have not been made, it would appear that the recent announcement of the upgrading of the Department of Administrative Services office in Darwin to divisional status will be a catalyst for the Commonwealth to undertake these works itself. An efficient option for the Housing Commission to incorporate these residences within its program on an agency basis will be missed under such a decision. This is rather a pity as the coordination and liaison achieved between the Northern Territory government departments will not be able to be fully utilised. Nevertheless, the Northern Territory Housing Commission will be represented on the Katherine and Tindal related infrastructure program committee established by the joint consultative committee on Tindal. This committee has the following terms of reference: to facilitate the construction of essential community services in Katherine, including the extension of services to Tindal arising from the staged development of the Tindal RAAF base; and to identify any social or environmental implications or other specific needs arising from Katherine developmental proposals for consideration or, if appropriate, referral to other working parties or agencies.

So far as the actual construction of houses is concerned, suffice it to say that a greatly expanded program is being developed by the commission. The needs will be constantly monitored and forward projections will be utilised for coordinated development of essential residential land through the Departments of Lands and Transport and Works. Mr Speaker, I would like to say that, because of your great interest in this question, you will be kept fully informed of all developments.

Taxation Arrangements for Casinos

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Will the percentage of gaming levies to be levied under the proposed stage 2 of the new taxation arrangements be greater than the current level of 20% levied in respect of the Darwin casino?

ANSWER

The system of collection and disbursement of revenues from gaming will be quite unrelated to the system as it stands today. Therefore, the question is not strictly relevant. The 2 systems are not comparable.

Northern Territory Roads Program

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the federal member's recent statement that an additional \$2.7m grant is being made to the Northern Territory for the acceleration of the Stuart Highway upgrading program, can he assure the Assembly that this will result in an overall acceleration of the Territory's road program?

ANSWER

When we heard the announcement of the additional \$2.7m which was to be allocated separately to the existing bicentennial roads program and states grants program, we were quite pleased with that news. Honourable members will be aware that the Territory has suffered considerable disadvantage as a result of the Commonwealth minister's decision last year to delay programs on the Stuart Highway for reasons which are perhaps best known to himself. We were quite pleased to hear of the announcement. However, with budgets brought down by the present federal government, one must look behind the facade. When a detailed examination of the position was undertaken by my officers, we found that we had been the victim of the thimble and pea trick, and quite a neat one at that. The bid by the Northern Territory in respect of this year's roads grants, which based on ABRD figures would have been our just entitlement, would have been in the order of \$12.9m. Indeed, we were firmly of the view that this was an agreed figure. It transpired that the actual sum granted to the Northern Territory under that scheme was not \$12.9m which had been based on proper calculations of the 2% levy - and not the indexed levy, just the 2% levy - but \$10.7m. The Commonwealth has taken \$2.2m off our ABRD entitlement and slipped it into another slot and called it a grant of \$2.7m. The net result of that is the difference between \$2.2m and \$2.7m. That is the great acceleration in the Stuart Highway road program.

The honourable member did not ask the question only in relation to the Stuart Highway. He referred to our general roads program. We were denied access to a sum in excess of \$2m last year as a result of these political manoeuvrings and this attempt to make the present federal member appear in a more rosy hue. If we were to examine that and add it to our just entitlement, we should have received \$13.6m this year. Therefore, not only has our capital works program on the Stuart Highway been deferred effectively by a year, the effect of all of this is to compound upon itself. The result has been very simple. We have had to go to tender on the Stuart Highway projects - and indeed on a number of other projects which come under the ABRD scheme - very late in the financial year because of the deferral of payments. That means the ABRD program funds of \$10.7m will only be enough to cope with the revotes to which

we are already committed. In effect, under the ABRD program, the Northern Territory will have no new cash commitments whatsoever this coming financial year. It is worse than that. Because of having to tender late last year and use all of our money for the cash component of the revote to pick up last year's contracts, quite simply that means we will have to tender once again very late in this financial year. As you can see, Mr Speaker, this manoeuvring and game playing for the benefit of Mr Reeves is putting our entire roads program in jeopardy and putting it behind.

The difficulties in trying to maintain the target of 1986-87 will mean that an enormous increase in expenditure will be required in the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88. What effect does that have? If we have to complete the program by the end of 1988, the only way it could be done is to have in those 2 financial years a massive increase in cash commitment to the program. What does that do? It automatically super heats the market. It means that we bring more contractors in and more people are employed from outside to work within the roads industry. At the end of the bicentennial program at the end of 1988, this government will be accused of creating a collapse in the roads construction industry because, clearly, all of those people in the crash program to finalise the project by the end of 1988 will no longer be needed. Not only has it delayed the project, the inevitable consequences will be hardship at the end tunnel.

Mr Speaker, my officers and officers of the Commonwealth Department of Transport will be having further discussions in the next couple of weeks. We will be putting to the Commonwealth the dire consequences in the longer term of this sort of behaviour by the federal minister. I am quite sure that federal officers would not want to see this persist. I hope that they can persuade him as to the folly of his attempts to make Mr Reeves look good.

Working Party on School Bussing

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Will he provide access to the working parties on school bussing for submissions from MLAs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would have thought that all members would be aware that submissions from MLAs can go to the working parties at any time. There were ads in the papers to the effect that submissions or comments are welcomed from any person in the community.

I might take the opportunity, Mr Speaker, to bring members up to date with the progress being made in relation to the working parties. I have met with the 3 working parties in Alice Springs, Darwin and Nhulunbuy and, to date, things seem to be proceeding fairly smoothly. I am satisfied that the bussing policy is in force at present. With that in mind, the department has forwarded to me several options to be passed onto the working parties for consideration. I gave approval that those options be forwarded to the working parties provided that the department was convinced that the school bussing policy was in place and that there would not be any threat to the free bussing system. It has given me that assurance. Those suggestions have been given to the working parties and comment has been made. What they decide to do from there is entirely up to the working parties themselves. I believe that the options that have been put forward warrant serious consideration. We are looking at the excess capacity on buses and enabling children living within the 1.6 km feeder area of their

school to pay for the use of that excess capacity. We are also looking at the possibility of allowing students to use the buses to attend various after-school activities such as horse-riding, football, ballet etc. These are reasonable suggestions that have been put forward by the department. As I said, provided that there is no threat to the free bussing of children who are entitled to it at present, I have no problem in accepting those proposals.

Mr Speaker, this has been an extremely emotional issue. I take the opportunity also of thanking all the people in the community who have supported or accepted that what we are trying to do is to ensure that we have the best possible policy in relation to freedom of choice of school and a bussing system whereby everyone has access to education. It is important that people realise that access to education must be provided for everyone, no matter what their economic circumstances are. If we are to enforce policy in this manner - and it is not changing policy; it is enforcing policy - to keep a free bussing service in operation, then that is what we have to do.

Mr Speaker, if members have submissions for the working parties, they should feel free to submit them and they can take the matter up with the working parties themselves.

Alice Springs Prison Farm

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Will he recite for this Assembly the latest episode in the Alice Springs prison farm saga?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all I would like to say in relation to the so-called 'saga' of the so-called 'prison farm' in Alice Springs is that, at this stage, there is no prison farm in Alice Springs.

Mr Ede: There has not been for 20 years.

Mr MANZIE: I thank the member for Stuart for telling me that it is 20 years since there has been one there. At this stage, there is no intention to commence a prison farm in Alice Springs and I think that this is where the review of correctional services may be of some assistance. There will be a growth in prisoner numbers if the situation in the Territory continues the way it has been going over the last 5 years. The population is increasing due to the efforts of this government and we see no reason why it will not continue to increase. Unfortunately, as the population increases, the number of undesirable people in it increases along with it although the majority of people come here to contribute to the Territory way of life. As a result of that obviously our prisoner numbers will increase and, accordingly, we will have to look at the provision of a prison farm in the southern part of the Territory. However, at this stage, Mr Speaker, there is no intention to commence one and, until the results of our review of correctional services is completed, I will not be in a position to give the honourable member any information regarding the commencement of the prison farm in the southern part of the Territory.

Vandalism in Urban Schools

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Recent publicity indicates a significant rise in vandalism in urban schools in 1984. Is there any evidence to support this view and, if so, what steps are being taken to remedy the situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there have been reports of late suggesting that vandalism has increased in schools. The department carried out a survey in May and June of this year in schools in Alice Springs and Darwin and the results of that survey indicated few schools were experiencing an increase in vandalism. In Darwin, there were some schools which felt that vandalism was increasing: Casuarina High School, Dripstone High School and 2 or 3 primary schools - I think Wulagi, Nakara and one other. It is worth noting that, where schools have caretakers or people living on the premises, there is a marked reduction in vandalism at those schools. In fact, it is the policy of the government at present to provide for a janitor/caretaker flat when planning for high schools.

In answer to the question, while some schools may have experienced an increase in vandalism, the overall situation in the urban areas of the Northern Territory is that it has not increased. I might also say that vandalism in the schools in the bush areas is very severe indeed. It costs the government a tremendous sum each year to repair this damage. It is something that we are looking at continually. However, there has not been an increase in vandalism in urban schools.

Ilpapa Swamp

Mr HANRAHAN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is it proposed to transport the excess effluent from the Alice Springs sewerage ponds by pipeline to another area to overcome the permanency of Ilpapa Swamp and subsequent mosquito breeding?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, such a strategy is proposed for the Alice Springs region. There are more benefits to be obtained than simply the removal of effluent overflow into Ilpapa Swamp. The aquifer in the area near the existing sewerage farm is also very permeable. As a result, it is likely over a period of time that that aquifer could be affected. So far 2 proposals have been put to the government in relation to the establishment of an irrigated dairy farm for the area using the treated effluent as an irrigation source. Given that the aquifer is rather porous in that area, it is probably most unwise to establish such a dairy farm irrigated from that source in the region of the recharge field. The proposal is to run a pipe from the existing sewerage farm to the area outside of the aquifer or recharge area of the Roe Creek bore field and so avoid the problem that the honourable member for Flynn raised - that is, the occasional discharge into the Ilpapa Swamp with its inherent problems. In addition, it would give us a very good opportunity to see the establishment of a dairy farm in the Roe Creek area at long last.

Nabalco Pty Ltd and NTEC

Mr LEO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Was the decision by NTEC not to pursue Nabalco Pty Ltd under section 27 of the Electricity Commission Act taken with his consent or knowledge and, if the decision was taken with his consent, could he explain if his department normally ignores the laws of the Northern Territory? If the decision was made without his knowledge, will he investigate the matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is extremely difficult to give an answer to that question without giving a legal opinion. I say that in all sincerity. The minister responsible for the operations of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission has indicated that, at best, there is some doubt as to the status of the licence held by Nabalco. It is far from clear and the only way to clear it up is to go to court. I do not think it is necessary to do that for reasons I will give. A judicial decision is really required to determine whether or not the licence exists. The Northern Territory Electricity Commission is the only authority that can terminate a licence of this kind. It has never terminated Nabalco's licence. I really do not want to give an opinion but, arguably, the licence is still on foot. What has ceased is not the licence but the agreement under the licence in relation to the payment of subsidies. I do not have the correspondence in front of me but Nabalco wrote to NTEC and indicated that, in its view, that part of the agreement to the licence is no longer on foot. Given that, under the Electricity Commission Act, a licence is issued subject to the agreements entered into between the seller and the commission, the question of whether or not the licence is still on foot is arguable. However, in my opinion, it is not arguable sufficiently to seek a judicial determination of it by way of prosecution. Negotiations have been going on for some time between NTEC and the joint venturers on the agreement component of the licence. That is quite different from saying that it is selling without a licence.

Power-stations and the Customs Act

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware that considerable savings can be made by the Northern Territory Electricity Commission simply by licensing the Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek power-stations in terms of the Customs Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member raised this matter with me the other day and I had the opportunity to seek advice. The short answer is that NTEC stands to make considerable savings in terms of the interest it could make on money that would be available for placement in the short-term money market by changing its current bonding arrangements with the Department of Customs and Excise. All the oil that is imported for use by NTEC throughout the Northern Territory, and it is a considerable amount, is bonded straight out of the store in Darwin and then becomes a component on NTEC's books. NTEC has to pay the excise the moment the product leaves the yard.

About a year ago, NTEC was advised that, if it wished to change its bonding arrangements by seeking bond storage declarations for the major centres where the product is held, it could have the product held in storage in Tennant Creek, Katherine, Alice Springs and other major centres. The excise that we would have

to pay would be paid when we took the product from the tank. When I raised this with NTEC, it advised me that it is aware of the matter but has not got around to doing anything about it. NTEC will examine the matter further to see if some quick arrangement can be arrived at with the Department of Customs and Excise so that the bond arrangements can exist in other centres. We will then have less money tied up in excise that has been paid perhaps 4 or 8 weeks prematurely. That money could be used in the money market to accrue interest for the commission. I thank the honourable member for raising the matter with me.

Karnte Hill in Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

I refer the minister to Karnte, a hill in Alice Springs that is the head pad of a dreamtime woman and the community that has been living on vacant Crown land in that vicinity for 5 years. Has he recently visited this community and will he provide a lease for them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the name that the honourable member used is not familiar to me but I think it is the group I visited in Alice Springs with the honourable member for Flynn. I had discussions with a group of Aboriginals on what is currently Crown land about their wish for some land in the area. It was interesting to note that most of the audience at the time were certainly not Aboriginals who had been living in the area for some years. They were people who came there for the purpose of the meeting. I think there were only 3 or 4 people who had been living there for some time. I pointed out to the group at the time and I point out to the member for MacDonnell now that no formal application has ever been submitted for land in the area. This has been pointed out to the people in writing. I do not think the group has been served very well by some of the Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs who are there, of course, to assist Aboriginals in the best way they can. In addition to that, Mr Speaker, I informed the people concerned that the government has indeed...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will resume his seat. If there are any further interjections from the gallery, I will have it cleared.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I informed the people that the government is having a great deal of difficulty in Alice Springs with the conflicts that have arisen between the government's responsibility to provide for further urban expansion in Alice Springs and the applications by Aboriginal groups who, at present, are squatting in areas around Alice Springs. The issue has been on our plate for some years now. Significant areas of Alice Springs were proposed for urban development and are now seemingly unavailable to the Territory government. Alice Springs is one of those little towns with very specific constraints on it from a planning point of view. It is picturesquely nestled in amongst mountain ranges and there are limited areas for urban development anyway. To have the valley floors denied to government in its attempts to try to accommodate the very rapidly expanding population in Alice Springs creates real difficulties. It is the fastest growing area in the Northern Territory, I am pleased to say. Claims have been made for what are generally termed Aboriginal living areas in the town. These are areas of land primarily for Aboriginals from elsewhere in central Australia who seek land in the vicinity of Alice Springs to live on when they visit town. All that creates real difficulties. Until these types of problems are resolved, I do not see that the government is in a position to alienate further land around Alice Springs with any guarantee that some of it may not be needed in the future for the exercise of normal government.

responsibilities to provide normal services to Alice Springs people, as is the case in the rest of Australia.

Alice Springs Development Problems

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS

I would ask him to detail to this Assembly which areas in Alice Springs have been hindered illegally in their development by groups of Aboriginal squatters?

ANSWER

The honourable member seeks information which, obviously, I...

Mr Ede: You just said it happens; you were convinced a minute ago.

Mr PERRON: Sure it happens. If the honourable member cares to relax for just 5 seconds and listens for a change - and I know he has a great deal of difficulty doing that - he might get an answer. There are a number of areas in Alice Springs that the government had earmarked for urban development and which have been granted to Aboriginals as town living areas. As a result of that action, hundreds of urban blocks of land have been forgone in the development of Alice Springs. That is part of the reason for the existing shortfall of land for ordinary urban development.

One of the areas in question is on the east side. Squatters have been claiming that land for a considerable period. It is an area at the mouth of what has been called the Sadadeen east valley. In that area, in years past, we have proposed some 150 industrial blocks or 500 urban blocks. When the surveyors walked into the valley to survey the area, they were stopped on the grounds that the entire valley was a sacred site. The government's planning process for that area ground to a very sudden halt. That was a serious blow to the government's planning objectives in Alice Springs because the major arterial road to Undoolya was planned to go through that valley. It has been denied to the government ever since that time. It is interesting to note that, prior to that time, the valley was cleared in writing by a group that presently holds a town living lease at the mouth of Sadadeen east valley.

However, we must now find an alternative route to Undoolya, if indeed Undoolya is to be the area where Alice Springs expands. One of the alternative routes is an area which has been occupied by squatters for some years. They are claiming a parcel of land not so much on the basis that it contains sacred sites - although I think that has been suggested of late as well - but so that they can squat in Alice Springs. Clearly, if we cannot go through the valley, as we had planned to do, and instead must put a road alongside it, and people there request that piece of land too, there is a serious conflict which must be resolved by negotiation. Over the past few years, officers from the Department of Lands have done an excellent job in trying to build up rapport with Aboriginal groups who live in Alice Springs. They have tried to explain to them some of the difficulties that the government faces. The options for urban expansion are not endless. The Department of Lands has been negotiating with this particular group with a view to obtaining a road corridor in the vicinity of the land being sought by the squatters.

Mr Ede: You are talking a load of rubbish, Marshall.

Mr PERRON: If the honourable member thinks he knows all about it, I wonder why he asks any questions.

Mr Ede: You are the expert.

Trachoma Program in Central Australia

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Can he supply the Assembly with details of the current status of the trachoma program in central Australia?

ANSWER

I had forewarning of this question from the member for Braitling. However, I understand that the member for MacDonnell and also the member for Stuart have an interest in this matter because I regularly receive letters from the member for Stuart with regard to screening programs for tuberculosis and rubella. I was quite sure that I would get a question very soon on the trachoma program. I took the effort to prepare a statement. It will only take a couple of minutes of the Assembly's time. It is very important because the Department of Health has certainly made giant steps in the training of Aboriginal health workers in the Northern Territory. We have our Aboriginal health institute which is training workers in Katherine. We have now moved into the Alice Springs region. We are also doing it in the Gove Peninsula area.

The important thing is that, through the efforts of the Aboriginal health workers, the program for combating trachoma is certainly starting to work. The member for Stuart would be aware of the problems that we had with the trachoma program about 16 or 17 months ago. Funds were being expended in certain areas but not to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth government or the Royal College of Ophthalmology. Eventually, a Northern Territory Trachoma Eye Committee, comprised predominantly of Aboriginals throughout the Northern Territory, was set up. At the same time, the problem raised its head in Western Australia. The Commonwealth government eventually ceased funding the Western Australian trachoma program. But, because of the good work that was being carried out by Aboriginal health workers in the Northern Territory, the program was allowed to continue here and the trachoma committee was set up.

The committee has 2 senior Aboriginal health workers in the centralian region. They have 4-wheel-drive vehicles and are able to visit all the communities in the region. They are supported by 4 health workers engaged in part-time trachoma diagnosis and teaching. Specialist ophthalmologists and doctors and nurses have been involved in training these health workers.

Yesterday, I was asked a question by the honourable member for Braitling regarding facilities for an additional ophthalmologist who has been recruited. Over the past couple of years, we have been fortunate that the Royal College of Ophthalmology has encouraged its members to visit the Territory 3 or 4 times a year and these specialists have been training Aboriginal health workers. The second ophthalmologist in the Alice Springs region will certainly enable further training of the health workers in that region.

The program in central Australia is coordinated by the Alice Springs Health Worker Training Unit and the supervisor is based in that area. It is well known that poor hygiene, coupled with a dry arid environment, predisposes the development of trachoma. There is on-site training of local Aboriginal health workers who then become responsible for compliance with treatment. As far as

possible, they are also charged with explaining the problems of the disease to their communities and promoting hygiene. Follow-up visits are then scheduled to monitor progress. There is constant encouragement and feedback of results from the communities.

The Department of Health has also adopted a schools trachoma program where all Aboriginal schoolchildren are to have oxytetracycline eye drops or ointment instilled once a day for 5 consecutive days in each school month. The NT Department of Health bears the financial responsibility for provision of eye drops or ointment for the entire trachoma program. That is something that is being examined very carefully by the states.

Mr Ede: Most have rejected it.

Mr DONDAS: That is not quite true.

The Royal College of Ophthalmology is providing us with the information to proceed in that direction. The significant point is that we are trying to cover the problem in schools and this has not been done for a long time.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS ACT House of Assembly Committee

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of members of the ACT House of Assembly Standing Committee on Transition to Self-Government. The committee is led by Mrs Maureen Horder, the Minority Leader. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to our distinguished visitors and hope that their stay in Darwin has been both pleasant and fruitful. Honourable members are reminded of the kind invitation of the committee issued to all members to attend a function today at the Travelodge at 5.30 pm.

TIO Sale of Katherine Sporting Complex

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Could he advise if the Territory Insurance Office has sold the Katherine sporting complex and, if so, for what amount?

ANSWER

I have quite a long briefing here which I am happy to provide to the honourable member. The answer will be a little shorter than the briefing note. Unfortunately, the Territory Insurance Office has had to foreclose on the mortgage it had over a building for which it lent money some years ago in Katherine. The building has been for sale for at least a couple of years, perhaps even longer. A sale has been negotiated between the TIO and a new owner. It has not yet been finalised. Until that time, the purchaser is not very keen on having the transaction details published. Therefore, I decline to advise the Assembly and the public of the figure involved. I am happy to pass the information on a confidential basis to the Leader of the Opposition. One can understand that, until documents are signed, if such a figure were released, then the transaction could be upset. I point out that all the legal processes that were required in this foreclosure were gone through. It is an unfortunate event. The building has been for sale for a long time. Now that a sale is virtually concluded, it would be inappropriate for me to provide any more than that.

Aboriginal Housing

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for HOUSING

What role has the commission in the supply of housing for Aboriginal people in settlements, missions and outstations?

ANSWER

The honourable member did give me prior notice that he would ask this question so that I could do full justice to it. During the past 4 years, Cabinet has endorsed consistently the principle that the provision of public housing in remote communities should be primarily the responsibility of the Northern Territory government through the Northern Territory Housing Commission. Prior to 1983-84, the Commonwealth government did not provide the Northern Territory with the financial capacity to take on this responsibility and, consequently, the Northern Territory Housing Commission continued to give priority to housing in urban areas. In 1983-84, the Northern Territory received a sum of \$9.6m for Aboriginal housing. \$4.3m of this was allocated to urban Aboriginal housing, with \$5.3m being allocated for Aboriginal communities, outstations and small urban townships, resulting in construction of 270 houses and shelters throughout the Territory.

In considering the supply of finance for Aboriginal housing and shelters, need was the prime factor. This was taken into account in the distribution of funding. An assessment was made by a working party consisting of representatives from the Aboriginal Development Corporation, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Northern Territory Housing Commission and various Northern Territory government departments. Cooperation has been excellent to date and the demonstrated results fully justify continuation of the present arrangements.

A further \$9.6m has been allocated to the Territory for Aboriginal housing for 1984-85. Unfortunately, that represents a real reduction in funding when inflationary factors are taken into account. Distribution of this money may cause some reduction in actual accommodation units supplied when one considers that the demand for housing in Aboriginal communities is increasing all the time. Allocation of the same amount of money in actual figures for 1984-85 will place some constraints on this program.

However, possibly the worst feature is the proposal by the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to remove the responsibility for Aboriginal housing from the states and territories and to incorporate all programs under the Canberra umbrella and his control. Apart from the loss of efficiency through locally-based and coordinated groups being disbanded, a possible loss of the excellent liaison which has been established is of grave concern to everybody. As a result, I have authorised that a telex be sent to the federal Minister for Housing and Construction seeking to preserve the existing infrastructure and supporting the aims and achievements in Aboriginal housing of the Northern Territory Housing Commission which, to date, are second to none.

Financial Arrangements for Development of Gardens Hill

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

Will he provide to the Assembly today the information he promised to provide in the June sittings on the financial arrangements, including sale price, loan arrangements and tender conditions, between the Housing Commission

and Gardens Hill Development Pty Ltd for the erection of pensioner units at Gardens Hill?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the honourable member spent a little more time in the Assembly, he would have heard me provide the information that he has been seeking in the adjournment debate yesterday. If he cares to refer to Hansard, he will have it before him.

Planning Study for Nightcliff Area

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LANDS

Further to the announcement in the last sittings of the proposed planning study for the Nightcliff area, could he advise what developments there have been in the formation of the planning study, when it is due to be commenced and whether there will be an opportunity for the public to comment on any proposals being put forward?

ANSWER

I am advised that 2 consultants have submitted proposals to undertake the Nightcliff planning study which the honourable member has been pushing for. Both of the proposals have been with the city council over the last week or so for its input prior to the Department of Lands selecting one of the consultants to proceed with the work. I understand that the study will take until about December this year to assemble all the necessary information and for the consultant to bring down what I understand will be a draft report in the first instance. At that point, the document will be circulated. I will ensure that the honourable member for Nightcliff is the first to receive a copy after myself. He can then get the reactions of his constituents to the recommendations in the report.

Before any of his constituents become upset, I point out that the report is a draft. It will not have been accepted by government at that stage. We will wait for community input. We want the views of people on the future of Nightcliff from a planning point of view and a traffic point of view. Following that process, it will come back to government with recommendations for a final report to be prepared which would then be adopted as planning policy for that particular region in Darwin.

Sale of Electricity by Nabalco

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

When will the terms and conditions by which Nabalco Pty Ltd is able to sell electricity in the Northern Territory finally be negotiated or does NTEC consider that these licences to sell electricity should be allowed to continue in the absence of such terms and conditions?

ANSWER

The honourable member must have been out of the Assembly when I answered this question yesterday. There is a licence in existence and the terms and conditions of the licence between Nabalco and NTEC are still a matter of legal discussion. However, there is a determination on the part of both parties to have terms and conditions and a licence that are satisfactory to enable Nabalco

to sell power on behalf of the government. As soon as the negotiations with Nabalco are complete, I will be only too pleased to let him have a copy of the terms and conditions.

Inquiries into Hill Report

Mr COULTER to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the release, under the Freedom of Information Act, of working papers enable the NT government to conduct further inquiries into the validity of and the methodology employed in the Hill Report regarding the feasibility of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Transport and Works has been handling the correspondence with the federal Minister for Transport or perhaps it might be the suspended-and-now-reinstated-Paddington-Bear Minister for Administrative Services in relation to the release of these documents under the Freedom of Information Act. Since the Minister for Transport and Works has firsthand knowledge of that correspondence with whichever federal minister it was, I think it will probably be better if he answers this question.

Territorian Lottery No 3

Mr DALE to TREASURER

Was the Territorian lottery No 3 successful and what were the net proceeds used for?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise honourable members that the third Territorian lottery was a very big success as were those that preceded it. Honourable members will be aware that it was with a little trepidation that the Northern Territory government allowed the Racing and Gaming Commission to start running Territory lotteries. However, to date, they have been a great success although we are still operating on a basis of 'let us see what we do next' after each one. The third lottery was cranked up to a 75 000 ticket lottery at \$5 each whereas the previous 2 were 50 000 ticket lotteries. It seems that demand for tickets from interstate increased in the third lottery and we are very pleased to see that. As honourable members are aware, the idea of having the giant tickets, which are very attractively produced as tourist souvenirs, has been a success and we will continue with that.

The surplus from the lottery was \$80 000 and it was distributed to aged persons organisations throughout the Northern Territory. There were 8 recipient organisations: the Darwin Council on the Ageing, Alice Springs Council on the Ageing, Katherine Council on the Ageing, the Rural Old Timers' Association, the Darwin Pensioners Association, Tracy Lodge, the Tennant Creek Nursing Home and the Tennant Creek Community Care Program. Those organisations received that disbursement of \$80 000 and I am sure that it was greatly appreciated because it came as somewhat of a surprise. The government makes the decision each time the lottery concludes as to what will be done with the proceeds. In all cases, the funds are distributed to charitable or welfare organisations in the Northern Territory, ensuring that the money we raise here certainly stays here, which is not always the case when interstate lottery tickets are sold in the Territory. Territory lottery number 4 is planned for later on this year. Hopefully, it will be as big a success as number 3.

Bus Shelters

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Could he advise the Assembly what consideration is being given to the provision of bus shelters and or seating for pensioners residing in Wagaman Terrace, Wagaman?

ANSWER

We are negotiating currently with the council which happens to be the custodian of that particular road. As soon as we get its clearance on the type of bus shelter which is acceptable, it will be put in within the next couple of weeks. On the question of bus shelters generally, we have a very large number of requests from members of this place and from outside for bus shelters around the streets of Darwin. The government believes that it is a very good idea. We have all observed the number of shelters which have been erected on the bus routes of Darwin. Certainly, we will be proceeding with that program. We are trying to design a cheaper type of bus shelter in order to maximise the funds available for this purpose.

Vegetarian Meals in Berrimah Prison

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

If there is already provision to serve inmates of Berrimah Prison vegetarian meals for religious and medical reasons, why cannot this be extended to other practising vegetarians so that they can receive the same meals?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I consider that the government has a responsibility to feed prisoners nutritious meals and we are doing it under the guidance of the Department of Health. We also have a policy of providing vegetarian meals to those people who cannot eat meat on religious or medical grounds. However, the department has no intention of varying the meals according to the whims of the prisoners. If a prisoner is eating normal meals and then decides he wants to become a vegetarian, I am afraid that the administrative procedures and the time involved for the staff certainly does not warrant the provision of special meals. If the prisoner so desires, he can remove the meat component from his meal. The Department of Health has assured me that the nutritional value of the vegetable component of the meal is far in excess of what is required for a normal healthy intake of food. If people wish to be vegetarians by choice, they have the ability to reject the meat component of their meals.

Drug and Alcohol Centre in Alice Springs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

What is the situation regarding the proposed drug and alcohol house at Schwarz Crescent in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Drug and Alcohol Bureau has been providing sobering-up shelters in the Northern Territory. In July 1983, a sobering-up centre was opened in McLachlan Street with a pilot program. It proved to be quite successful so arrangements were made to acquire premises in Alice Springs that

would not create any problems within the community. A suitable premises was identified in Schwarz Crescent. Discussions are taking place with the regional committee of the Drug and Alcohol Bureau in Alice Springs. After a community consultation process is finalised, the bureau will set up that particular shelter. Hopefully, that will occur later this year.

Housing for Pine Creek

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for HOUSING

With the proposed development of gold mining at Pine Creek, what demands will be placed on the Housing Commission to provide additional housing for the expected increase in population?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the further development of gold mining at Pine Creek has been judged to be a viable enterprise and it looks like being a 10-year program. This has been proposed by Renison and Enterprise Mines that are proposed down there. Various proposals have been made for housing in Pine Creek. At the moment, I am not at liberty to say what these proposals are because Treasury officials, together with Mines and Energy officials and company officials, are discussing the whole package of the supply of housing and services in Pine Creek. However, there are proposals for housing mining personnel and construction workers in temporary housing, in permanent housing and, in fact, housing some of them in Katherine. All of these proposals are being examined.

The Northern Territory Housing Commission is more interested in having permanent accommodation built in Pine Creek. With the upgrading of the road from Pine Creek to Jabiru, the importance of Pine Creek as a town centre will increase. More people will remain there after the mine is finished. I do not think that the mining intended by these 2 companies will be the end of mining in Pine Creek. Any housing that is built in Pine Creek for these particular venturers will be considered as long-term housing for Pine Creek.

Accelerated Christian Education School

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What is the latest situation regarding the application for registration by the Accelerated Christian Education School in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the ACE school is still negotiating with the Department of Education. Draft regulations in relation to the registration of non-government schools have been circulated and comment is being sought from the community. The department is satisfied at present that the steps being taken by the ACE school are in compliance with the requirements of the department. When anything further happens, I will keep the honourable member informed.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Hill Inquiry

Mr ROBERTSON (Transport and Works)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to answer a question asked by the member for Berrimah. It is a shame that I do not have a complete list of the chronological order of letters in this Paddington circus because it would really give us something to laugh about. Initially,

there was a meeting held in the presence of the Prime Minister and Mr Morris. Since the Hill inquiry meeting was held in the presence of Mr Morris, I naturally assumed that, under the Freedom of Information Act, he would be the correct person to write to. However, by the time the letter reached Mr Morris, it was understood that there was a state of confusion within the Paddington circus in Canberra. Mr Morris indicated to me by letter that he was not the minister responsible for the administration of the Freedom of Information Act but Mr Young, the Special Minister of State, was responsible. Rather than have the Commonwealth come back in 6 months and indicate the reason it had not provided any information was that I had written to the wrong minister, we went through the whole exercise again demanding under the Freedom of Information Act the detailed evidence which we needed to prove or disprove the validity of the Hill Report. A month or so later, we received a further letter from the Commonwealth - from Mr Young or Mr Beazely - saying that we were right in the first place and they were wrong. Finally, about a fortnight ago, we received a letter from Mr Young giving the giddy information that they thought we required. From memory, it was a 1-page letter from the Bureau of Transport Economics saying that the technique used by Mr Hill was valid, a few clippings from Hansard and a few press clippings. That was the information that they insulted us with and on which they expected us to base a thorough and detailed examination of the validity of the very in-depth report by Mr Hill. The answer to the honourable member's question is we have no useful information whatsoever but we shall not give up.

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