

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.

23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

17 May 1988

62. Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Did the Territory Insurance Office pay outstanding tax bills incurred by Hungerford Refrigeration or Rupert Hungerford; if so -
 - (a) were the payments for company tax;
 - (b) group tax; or
 - (c) an individual's income tax.
2. Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration secured; if so -
 - (a) in what ways is it secured; and
 - (b) what assets is it secured against.
3. Who first identified Hungerford Refrigeration as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory.
4. Who made the first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer operations to the Trade Development Zone.
5. Why did the directors of Hungerford refuse to provide directors' guarantees to meet any debts incurred by the company.
6. What were the full terms agreed for the transfer of Hungerford Refrigeration to the Trade Development Zone.
7. What departmental evaluations were made of the Hungerford Refrigeration company; its prospects, its projects and its products.
8. What departmental evaluations were made of the reports prepared for the TIO and the TDZ on the prospects of Hungerford Refrigeration.

9. What is the full extent of public funding (including TIO involvement) in Hungerford Refrigeration.
10. Was a directive issued by the Hungerford Refrigeration Board for the company to pursue local orders rather than export orders; if so, why was this done.

16 August 1988

64. Tenth Anniversary of Self-Government

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister provide an itemised account of the expenditure on the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of self-government.

4 October 1988

67. Treatment of Ear Infections in Schools

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What are the number and percentages of school-age children, by rural school in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine areas, that have:
 - (a) glue ear;
 - (b) perforated ear drums; and
 - (c) educationally significant hearing impairment.
2. How many of the schools mentioned in question 1 above have Health Workers involved in full time campaigns at the school to treat the conditions.

14 February 1989

70. Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Has Henry and Walker, or companies or a consortium associated with Henry and Walker, been given development rights to Myilly Point. If so -

- (a) what are the terms and conditions of those development rights;
- (b) how long does Henry and Walker have exclusive rights over the land;

- (c) what is the value of the covenants placed on the land;
and
- (d) what value has been placed on the land.

71. Excisions by Department of Transport and Works

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

How much money did your department spend on new excisions in the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88 and how much money has been allocated for excisions for the 1988-89 financial year.

72. Water Exploration and Reticulation on New Excisions

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. How much money did the Power and Water Authority spend in the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88 on -
 - (a) water exploration; and
 - (b) reticulation on new excisions.
2. How much money has been allocated for expenditure in the 1988-89 financial year on -
 - (a) water exploration; and
 - (b) reticulation on new excisions.
3. When will water exploration commence on the following excision areas: Aileron, Coniston, Pine Hill, Mount Cavenagh, Central Mount Wedge, Newhaven, Kirkimbie and Limbunya.
4. Why did it take 2 years for water exploration to be carried out for the Karrinyarra Community on Central Mount Wedge Station after the community had been advised by the Department of Lands and Housing in July 1986 that drilling would occur.

73. Excisions on Special Purposes Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many excision titles have been negotiated under the current guidelines.
2. How many excision titles have been registered; when were each of these registered; and when were each of these agreements reached with each pastoral lessee.

3. When were excision agreements reached on the following pastoral leases: Amburla, Anningie, Atartinga, Derry Downs, Hodgson Downs, Humbert River, Jervois, Koolpinyah, Lake Nash, Loves Creek, Manbulloo, Middleton Ponds (Tempe Downs), Mistake Creek, Mount Riddock, Napperby, Newhaven, Tobermorey and St Vidgeon.
4. Was the area on Maude Creek Pastoral lease negotiated under the current excision guidelines. If so when; or if not, under what process was the area negotiated.
5. How many Special Purposes Leases have been converted to fee simple and what is the name of these excisions.
6. How many and which excisions are currently being prevented from being registered because of caveats placed over the leases.
7. How many excision titles are being held up because the applicant group is awaiting incorporation and what is the name of these excision groups.
8. Has your department formulated long term funding programs in relation to new excisions.

16 August 1988

66. Sentencing under Criminal Code

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In court cases relating to slayings as heard by the Alice Springs Court since the introduction of the Criminal Code 1 January 1983 -

1. How many people have been charged with a slaying offence.
2. How many people have been convicted of -
 - (a) murder;
 - (b) manslaughter;
 - (c) committing a dangerous act; and
 - (d) other.
3. What is the average head sentence imposed by the judge on the above convicted persons.
4. What is the average actual sentence served by the above convicted persons.

ANSWER

The Northern Territory Criminal Code was introduced on 1 January 1984 not 1 January 1983 as stated in the written question. All figures therefore are from 1 January 1984.

1. 53.
2. (a) Nil.
 (b) 18.
 (c) 8.
 (d) 3 - Cause Grievous Harm. (These 3 prisoners were also sentenced for manslaughter, therefore in calculating the answers to questions 3 and 4, the sentences for cause grievous harm will not be taken into account).

The total number of persons convicted of (a) Murder, (b) Manslaughter and (c) Dangerous Act totals 26 out of 53 accused charged. The balance breaks up as follows -

- (i) Not guilty -

(a) Murder	1
(b) Manslaughter	Nil
(c) Dangerous Act	4
- (ii) No True Bill (Section 297A Criminal Code) 5

(iii) Nolle Prosequi (Section 302 Criminal Code) 1

(iv) Current 16

3. In a joint judgment (Asche CJ, Kearney and Rice JJ) the Northern Territory Court of Criminal Appeal in R v Anzac said 'As Street CJ point out in R v Withers (1925) 25 SR (NSW) 382 at 394-5 "There is no offence in which the permissible degrees of punishment cover so wide a range (manslaughter)".

There is no standard tariff for Manslaughter and to create one is simply misleading.

The same can be said of Dangerous Act in that it covers (1) such a wide area of criminal conduct and (2) circumstances of aggravation which can take the maximum penalty from 5 years to 14 years.

Using that information and bearing in mind comments relating to the misleading nature of 'average' sentences, it is considered more appropriate to provide a list detailing the range of sentences. The range is as follows -

- (a) Murder - not applicable (mandatory life).
- (b) Manslaughter - (maximum 10 years, minimum 3 years).
- (c) Dangerous Act - (maximum 3 years, minimum 2 years).

4. It is presumed the honourable member's question relates to the term a prisoner has served in jail. Little use, if any, can be made of an assessment of 'actual sentence served'. A person released on parole is for all intents still subject to sentence and under no circumstances can it be said that the person enjoys the full privileges of a person not under sentence. A simple example of this is the fact that a person in breach of parole is liable for imprisonment for the remainder of the sentence not yet completed.

Further, given that a number of persons are currently serving terms of imprisonment, to extrapolate an average term from persons already released would create a nonsense.

68. Leased Premises

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How much space being leased by the NT government as at 1 October 1988 -
 - (a) was occupied; and
 - (b) was unoccupied.
2. What are the locations/addresses of the above leased areas.
3. In each case, what is the length of the lease.

4. What is the monthly cost of leasing those areas not occupied.
5. Are there cleaning contracts for the unoccupied leased areas; if so, what is the monthly cost of the cleaning contracts.

ANSWER

1. The NT government occupied 122 828 m² of leased non-residential accommodation as at 1 October 1988. Of this space,

(a) 120 413 m² was occupied, and

(b) 2415 m² was unoccupied -

Minerals House, Darwin 701 m²

Work Health Authority will occupy this area when fit-out is completed: occupancy is expected by end of March 1989.

AMP Building, Darwin 610 m²

This area, vacated by Department of Lands and Housing staff transferred to Casuarina, has been re-allocated to Treasury.

Lot 1826, Bishop Street, Darwin 204 m²

This vacant area is continuously under review by Properties Division, and a new tenant is being sought.

Cnr George and Barrack Streets, Sydney 537.5 m²

NT Tourist Commission has now occupied these premises following completion of fit-out and has vacated 89 King Street, Sydney.

22 Cavenagh Street, Darwin 363 m²

Vacated by the NT TAB which relocated to Fannie Bay Racecourse.

2. The location/addresses of the above leased areas are shown in Attachment A.
3. The length of each lease is also shown in Attachment A.
4. The monthly cost of leasing those areas not tenanted was \$9913.53. This cost reduced from 1 November 1988 to \$5749 per month pertaining to the NT TAB Cavenagh Street premises.
5. There are no ongoing cleaning charges in respect of vacant premises.

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
<u>DARWIN</u>		
AMP Building	F4,5,6,7,9	5 + 5
AMP Building	F1,2,3,8	5 + 5
AMP Building	Shop 9,13	2
AMP Building	Shop 15	3.8 + 5
Baywood Plaza	F8	5
Berrimah Health Clinic	A11	10 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	F2	5 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 5,6	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 27	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	F1	7 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 4/26	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 7	2 + 2
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 22	2.5 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 24	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 11	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 14	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 17	5 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 18,20,21,2	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 23A	3 + 3
Casuarina Square	Shop 135/136	3
Cavenagh Court	Ground 1/2	5 + 5
Centrepont	Gallery G2	10 + 10
Centrepont	Gallery 15/16	5 + 5

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
Centrepont	Gallery G6	10 + 10
Centrepont	F2-5	10 + 10
Centrepont	Gallery G1	5 + 5
Darwin Centre	F4-7	5 + 5
Darwin Plaza	Part 2,F3	4.5 + 3
Darwin Plaza	Part F4	4.5 + 3
Darwin Plaza	Part 4,F5,F6	4.5 + 3
Darwin Plaza	Part 2	3
Development House	Gnd F1,2	10 + 5
Enterprise House	F1	5 + 5
Enterprise House	Ground	5 + 5
Ethos House	Part Ground	5 + 5
Ethos House	Ground	5 + 5
Harbour View Plaza	Pt Gnd F1-4	10 + 7
Harry Chan Arcade	F1	5 + 3
Harry Chan Arcade	Shop 1	3 + 3
Health House	Gnd,1,2,3,4	10 + 5
Health House	Part 1	3 + 3
Highway House	1	10
Highway House	234	10
Highway House	Part Ground	10
Highway House	Roof	10
Highway House	Gnd Shop 6	5 + 5
Highway House	Part Gnd	3
Highway House	Mezzanine	2

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location	Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
MMI Building		Ground	5
Minerals House		Ground	10 + 5
Minerals House		F1,2	10 + 5
MLC		F2	3 + 3
Monterey House		F1	6 + 5
Moonta House		All	5
National Mutual Centre		F4, Part 5	3 + 3
Palmerston Health Centre		Ground	10 + 5
Pan Hellenic Centre		Ground	3
Parap Theatre		All rear	5 + 5
Port Authority Bldg		Part Ground	3 + 3
Satepak Building		Part 1	4 + 1
Satepak Building		Part 1	3 + 2
T&G Building		F1-5	3 + 1
Tamar House		All	10 + 5
Tipperary School		All	Monthly
Winlow House		Ground	3 + 2
Winlow House		First	2 + 2
1624 Coonawarra Road		All	10 + 10
1624 Coonawarra Road		All	6 + 10
1624 Coonawarra Road		All	5
1633 Carey Street		All	
1654 Day & Harvey Sts		All	3 + 3
1669 Coonawarra Road		All	7 + 3
1718/1719 Albatross St		All	5

ATTACHMENT A

Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
1721 Albatross St	Shed 4	5
1826 Bishop Street	Ground	5
1826 Bishop Street	F1 & 2	5
1745 Catterthun Street	Part Ground	10 + 10
1745 Catterthun Street	Ground F1	8.8
2292 Mitchell Street	F1	3 + 3
2292 Mitchell Street	Shops 1 & 2	5
7 Henry Street	A11	2 + 2
3476 McMinn Street	A11	3
7724 Trower Road	F1	3 + 3
47 Knuckey Street	Part 1	3
516/517 Pavonia Place	A11	5 + 5

KATHERINE

Katherine Govt Centre	A11	10 + 5
Killarney School	A11	
Randazzo Arcade	Part 1	3
Randazzo Arcade	1 Stage 2	10 + 5
Randazzo Arcade	Shops 1,2,3	5
569 Pearce Street	A11	3 + 3
Pandanus Plaza	Part 1st	3 + 3
Katherine Sports Comp	A11	3 + 3

ALICE SPRINGS

AFT Building	Ground	5 + 5
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ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
AFT Building	Ground	5 + 5
CLP Building	1st Floor	3 + 3
Belvedere	1st	3 + 3
Belvedere	F2 Tenancy 9	3 + 3
Belvedere	F2 Tenancy 11	3 + 3
Centrepont	F1	5 + 5
Ford Plaza	Mess 75	5 + 5
Heenan House		5 + 5
Helms Building	Ground	3 + 3
Minerals House	All	10 + 5 + 5
Napperby School	All	
National Bank Bldg	Office 3/4	5
Neutral Junction School	All	Monthly
TIO Building	Ground 1	5 + 5
1575 Wilkinson Street	All	3
431 Gap Road	Ground	5
431 Gap Road	Ground 1	5 + 5
YULARA		
Yulara Medical Centre	All	5 + 5

TENNANT CREEK

Brunette Downs Res	All	
McArthur River St	All	10 + 10
Warrego Police Station	All	
Glynn Building	Shop 5	3

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
TIO Building	Ground Pt 1	10

GROOTE EYLANDT

Alyangula Pre-School	All	Monthly
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GOVE

Lot 43	Ground	5 + 5
Arnhem House	First	5 + 5

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
Conservation Commission	Gaymark Building Palmerston	5 years
" "	Baywood Plaza Palmerston	5 years
" "	Industrial Estate Gove	Annual
" "	Katherine Terrace Katherine	To 05/11/88
Aboriginal Sacred Sites Authority	MLC Building Darwin	To 21.10.88
" " "	Belvedere House Alice Springs	To 07/07/89
NT Tourist Commission	Hindley Street Adelaide	5 years
" " "	Ford Plaza Alice Springs	5 years
" " "	Todd Street Alice Springs	5 years
" " "	Queen Street Mall Brisbane	5 years
" " "	Ainslie Avenue Canberra	5 years
" " "	Smith Street Mall Darwin	15 years
" " "	Liverpool Street Hobart	10 years
" " "	Stuart Highway Katherine	3 years
" " "	Bourke Street Melbourne	6 years
" " "	Macquarie Street Parramatta	8-5 years

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
NT Tourist Commission	Hay Street Perth	5 years
" " "	King Street Sydney	To 31/10/88
" " "	George/Barrack Sts Sydney	6 years
" " "	Paterson/Davidson St Tennant Creek	10 years
" " "	Bockenheimer Land- strasse Frankfurt	5 years
" " "	Saville Row London	10 years
" " "	Avenue of the Stars Los Angeles	10 years
" " "	Thomson Road Singapore	2 years
" " "	Adasaka 1-Chome Japan	1 year
NT TAB	Cavenagh Street Darwin	5 years
" "	Progress Drive Nightcliff	3 years
" "	Parap Road Parap	3 years
" "	Katherine Terrace Katherine	3 years
" "	Patterson Street Tennant Creek	3 years
" "	Shopping Centre Nhulunbuy	6 years
" "	Coles Complex Alice Springs	5 years

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
NT TAB	Vic Hotel The Mall Darwin	5 years
" "	Casuarina Tavern Darwin	5 years
" "	Maranga Hotel Darwin	5 years
" "	Satepak Building Palmerston	5 years
Department of Legislative Assembly	Kerinauia Highway Bathurst Island	To 31/05/91
" " "	Gillen Shopping Centre Alice Springs	1 year
" " "	Ovcaric's Building Nhulunbuy	Monthly
" " "	Patterson Street Tennant Creek	Monthly
" " "	Head Street Shopping Complex Alice Springs	To 14.10.88
" " "	Shop 133 Casuarina Shopping Square Casuarina	Under Review
" " "	Shop 10 Parap Shopping Centre Parap	Monthly
" " "	Helms House Alice Springs	To 18/12/92
" " "	Shop 7 & 8 Moil Shopping Centre Moil	Monthly
" " "	Shop 10 Malak Shopping Centre	Biennial
" " "	TIO Building Katherine	To 10/03/90

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
Department of Legislative Assembly	Howard Springs Shopping Centre Howard Springs	Monthly
" " "	Hibiscus Shopping Centre Leanyer	27/09/90
" " "	Lot 4443 Ludmilla	N/A
" " "	Shop 98A Handyman Centre, Todd Mall Alice Springs	Monthly
" " "	Shop 19 Rapid Creek Complex Nightcliff	To 30/06/91
" " "	Ovcacic's Building Nhulunbuy	Monthly
" " "	Shop 4 Nightcliff Shopping Centre Nightcliff	Monthly
" " "	Highway House Palmerston	Under Review
" " "	Suite T8A Star Village, The Mall Darwin	Monthly
" " "	CLP Building Alice Springs	To -/08/91
" " "	Shop 12 Malak Shopping Centre Malak	To 01/03/92
" " "	Wills House Alice Springs	To 18/01/91
" " "	Tarkarri Road Batchelor	-
" " "	Lot 7082 Tiwi Gardens Road Tiwi	To 11/01/91

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
Territory Insurance Office	Monterey House Casuarina	To July 1989
" " "	CML Building Darwin	To Sept 1989

22 November 1988

69.

BTB Campaign

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. Under orders issued pursuant to the BTB Campaign in the regions: Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Barkly, Katherine, Victoria River, Arnhem Land and Top End; how many (a) cattle and (b) buffalo have been -
 - (i) destocked;
 - (ii) shot on property; and
 - (iii) trucked for slaughter.
2. What are the current herd numbers on a best estimate basis for each of the abovementioned regions for (a) cattle and (b) buffalo.

ANSWER

See table on following page.

69.

1. Prior to the end of 1984-85, records held by BTEC did not differentiate between cattle and buffalo. The following statistics are therefore broken into 2 sections; up to 1984-85 and post 1984-85.

The Victoria River area is included in the Katherine Region for statistical purposes.

	Alice Springs	Tennant Creek	Darwin	Katherine	Arnhem
1(i) Destocked					
1982-1985					
Cattle	23 843	73 472	39 190	82 426	-
1985-1988					
Cattle	16 948	11 393	43 225	73 933	2 234
Buffalo	-	-	58 704	23	27 633
1(ii) Shot on Property					
1982-1985					
Cattle	1 427	10 440	3 252	15 184	-
1985-1988					
Cattle	2 773	7 547	13 130	30 815	2 129
Buffalo	-	-	21 380	-	16 604
1(iii) Trucked for Slaughter					
1982-1985					
Cattle	22 416	63 032	35 938	67 242	-
1985-1988					
Cattle	14 175	3 846	30 095	43 118	105
Buffalo	-	-	37 324	23	11 029
2. Territory Stock Numbers (approximate)					
	304 100	534 000	190 000	578.000	119 500
	(cattle)	(cattle)	(mainly cattle)	(cattle)	(mainly buffalo)

NB These figures relate to stock for which compensation has been paid.

Fitzgerald Dairy

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to repeated attempts by the Fitzgerald family, the operators of the Noonamah dairy, to get government action to secure all-weather access to their property. Is he aware of the government's powers to guarantee that access? Does he believe the owners have a right to government support, and when will that support be forthcoming?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a good question. Certainly, a correct answer needs to be provided to the Territory community. Before I start, I would like to say that the government certainly recognises the excellent work done by the Fitzgeralds in running a dairy farm successfully under extremely difficult conditions in the tropics. It is a family business that is battling against difficult circumstances. Many years ago, I had dealings with Mrs Fitzgerald in relation to the provision of milk and I admire the tenacity with which the Fitzgeralds have approached their business. I would like to indicate the background of a problem which has occurred with the Fitzgeralds.

At present, the Fitzgeralds have a dairy farm located on section 379, Hundred of Strangways. That particular section is not owned by the Fitzgeralds. It is owned by Mr Ralph Meyering who leases a portion of it to Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald for their dairy operations. The Fitzgeralds have made approaches to the government in the past regarding the provision of suitable land to allow them to establish a dairy on their own property and, thereby, eventually to obtain the benefits that such ownership of land would provide to them. As a result of representations made a number of years ago, the Fitzgeralds have been allocated land and are presently establishing a new dairy at Middle Point. They plan to relocate to that site when their lease with Meyering runs out in early 1990.

The legal situation is that access to the present dairy farm should be provided by the lessee. The area that is leased is on a property which has legal access provided from 2 areas: Jenkins Road, which runs along the southern boundary of the access to the Meyering's land, and Bees Creek Road which runs along the western boundary. In order for the Fitzgeralds to operate their dairy farm, they have been running an access across a private freehold block of land which adjoins block 379. The section involved is 2070, which is owned by R.T. and H.T. Heaslip Pty Ltd which is owned by Mr Ron Trezise.

For the last 28 years, access has been undertaken across that block of land to the Meyering's block and, in recent years, it has been used by the Fitzgeralds. At no time has it been looked after by the Territory government because it is across private freehold land. As I understand it, some 2 years ago, the owners of that block decided that they would utilise the block for some private purpose. I believe it is the establishment of a fish farm. Through their lawyers, they wrote to the Fitzgeralds explaining that they would be closing off access and asking them to make other arrangements. This is a private matter between a private landowner and the lessee of a block of land. I do not know the whys and wherefores or what the private exchanges were but I do know that, by July last year, that access to the Fitzgerald's block was closed officially by the Trezises. As I said, in the meantime, there has been an allocation of land for the re-establishment of the dairy farm and plenty of notice was given that the road would be closed.

Unfortunately, with the onset of the wet season, the access that was being used by the Fitzgeralds for entry to their block was inundated to such an extent that access was precluded and no other access was available.

The options open to the government are as follows. First, we could build another access to the Fitzgeralds' place from another area, and that would involve the use of taxpayers' money to provide access to the Meyerings' which would give access to the leased portion of their land. I do not think that anyone would consider that that is a proper use of taxpayers' money. As I said, access is already available to the Meyering property at 2 points. Secondly, as has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Koolpinyah, the government could acquire the land where access was available previously, establish a road and provide access that way. My mind boggled when I heard that the member for Koolpinyah had suggested this. This is the member who became extremely concerned about the 34-mile acquisition, and quite rightly so. She was so concerned that she became involved in politics as a result. Mr Speaker, can you imagine the outcry if people who had used a track across her land to travel from Batchelor to Adelaide River approached the government and said: 'When the water washes the creek crossing out, we cannot get around. We would like you to acquire the access across Mrs Padgham-Purich's land at Batchelor so that we have a road'. The honourable member would fall out of her tree, and quite rightly so. I find the suggestion that the government acquire land ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: The suggestion that the government acquire land to provide an access, not to the owner of the dairy but to the owner of a property that leases to the dairy, is not very sensible for the reasons that I have just outlined. What if the government did what the member for Koolpinyah suggested and acquired that land by riding roughshod over the rights of individuals who have bought freehold land in good faith? And what if the owner of that land decided that he did not like the acquisition and he took the government to court to argue against its ability to take such action? It would take 3 or 4 years for that matter to be settled. The lease runs out in 1990, and the dairy will move somewhere else. The member for Koolpinyah well knows the time involved in land acquisition because she has experience of it. The Meyerings know what is involved because the government went through a process of trying to acquire property from them for the future expansion of Darwin. That took 5 or 6 years of court processes.

It is repugnant to suggest that we acquire private property because it suits the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Koolpinyah. Such action would not solve the problem because it would take many years to effect if the owners of that land decided to fight it. I have been informed that, quite rightly, they would do that.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

That is not a solution for 2 reasons. First, it would take 3 or 4 years to provide a solution and, secondly, it is repugnant to this government to go through the process of simply acquiring freehold land. The legal position is

that we are talking about a conflict between private landowners, nothing more and nothing less. There is provision for the private landowners to take the matter to court if they cannot resolve it between themselves. The Fitzgeralds can apply to the court to enable access ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Koolpinyah has had more than a fair go and I am warning her for the last time.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, they could apply to have access reinstated temporarily on the ground that they were given insufficient notice to enable them to make other arrangements or they could apply on the ground that the access had been used for 28 years and, under the provisions of normal common law, should be deemed a road. That option is open to the Meyerings, and the Fitzgeralds should be saying to them: 'We are leasing a block of land from you and you have the responsibility to provide access'. That is the legal situation. If the government stepped in and simply acquired the land, that process could take 3, 4 or 5 years. Mr Speaker, I have spoken with both parties. I have approached one of the parties and suggested that they might like to discuss the possibility of providing access on a weekly basis until the end of the wet season but my powers did not extend beyond that.

In his press release, the Leader of the Opposition said: 'Lands minister Daryl Manzie should be negotiating in the dispute instead of trying to organise airlifts'. Mr Speaker, despite the Leader of the Opposition's accusation, I have been doing nothing of the sort. Clearly, he does not understand what is occurring. His press release went on to say that the government 'should order the resumption of land to guarantee the Fitzgeralds access to the Stuart Highway'. That would provide no solution. As I have said, resumption would take 3 or 4 years.

The Fitzgeralds are a family of battlers who are doing a good job in operating a business under very adverse conditions. Through no fault of their own, they have been denied access to their property. We are trying as hard as we can to provide solutions. The Minister for Transport and Works has provided staff to assess various entry and access points and to provide information on and assistance in trying to establish an interim access to the property. We have provided another property for the development of a dairy farm at Middle Point to enable the Fitzgeralds to be successful in business. It needs to be understood that there is absolutely nothing the government can do which will provide an immediate solution. The most extreme step that the government could take would be to acquire land.

The Leader of the Opposition laughs but I insist that he listen because his lack of understanding of issues regarding land is absolutely abysmal. I will say this slowly. If the government took the most savage step that it could and acquired land to provide access, that might take 3 or 4 years. Where will the Fitzgeralds be in 3 or 4 years? If they stay there, they will have big problems. There is nothing that the government can do except try to negotiate a settlement - and we have attempted to do that - or provide assistance through the Department of Transport and Works for an alternative route. The issue is a dispute between neighbours and there is legal recourse for the settlement of such a dispute. I would like to know what the member for Koolpinyah would do if, as Minister for Lands and Housing, I attempted to acquire an easement across her Batchelor block to provide easy access for Batchelor residents to Adelaide River because they had been using a track across her land for the last 10 years. She would become most upset, and rightly so.

The government has attempted to do everything in its power to provide assistance to the Fitzgeralds but, under no circumstances, would the action proposed by the Leader of the Opposition provide a solution to the problem. All it would create would be a messy court action at a cost to the taxpayer. Before he opens his mouth, I ask that the Leader of the Opposition ensure that he knows the facts. I ask the media to be a little selective in accepting what he says without checking because his bona fides in this area are certainly not very good. The government supports the Fitzgeralds and what they are doing, and our actions have shown that beyond doubt. We wish them every success and will continue to do everything we can to ensure that they can achieve it.

The Leader of the Opposition, who tries to portray himself as the leader of an alternative government, has given notice to the community that, if an instant solution is available, he will not investigate matters thoroughly, no matter how many people's rights might be trampled on. That is not the appropriate way of going about things in a democratic country and I assure you, Mr Speaker, that it will not be our approach. In conclusion, I would like the Leader of the Opposition to explain how an acquisition could solve the problem this wet season. It could not.

Anzac Hill High School

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he able to advise the House of the outcome of a report which he called for at the commencement of the school year concerning alleged staff shortages and timetabling problems at Anzac Hill High School?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a number of honourable members have expressed concern in relation to staffing in small schools generally. In the case of Anzac Hill High School, the government is employing 3 teachers over establishment levels. It is unfortunate that it was necessary to initiate a report in relation to the staffing of that school. I believe that many people were confused about the role of the over-establishment staff. Because of that, I arranged for a circular to be sent to principals outlining the exact situation in relation to over-establishment staff. Such staff were provided to schools for specific purposes and the normal timetabling provisions do not apply to them, as I believe all honourable members are aware. Certainly, all principals are aware of that. However, to be absolutely certain, the department sent out a direction that principals should not include over-establishment staff in their formal timetabling arrangements.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: In response to that interjection, I will say that the previous Minister for Education had put in place over-establishment staff. I have maintained staffing at that level.

Mr Ede: You have reduced the numbers.

Mr HARRIS: If the member for Stuart is not interested in listening and learning how the system operates, I suggest that he leave the Assembly.

We are trying to inform people about the exercise, and many people have been working on that. I take my hat off to the school council and its

chairperson, Carol Frost, and to the member for Araluen and yourself, Mr Speaker, as well as other people in the community whose comments I have taken on board.

The nitty-gritty of this exercise revolves around the fact that teachers are supposed to undertake a specific teaching load. The department sent 2 officers with expertise in vertical timetabling to investigate the situation at Anzac Hill High School. Their report, to which the member for Casuarina referred, is now before the Secretary of the Department of Education. I have not yet seen it but I am aware of its contents which indicate that existing staff have teaching loads well below normal levels. The normal teaching load for a Band 1 teacher is 80% or 26 teaching periods; for a Band 2 teacher, it is 60% or 19.5 teaching periods; for a Band 3 teacher, it is 35% or 11.4 teaching periods; and a Band 4 teacher has no specific teaching load. The report indicates also that the school can timetable to meet the needs of its students. Incidentally, we will be allowing the maths teacher to remain. I am hopeful that the issue of Anzac Hill High School has now been resolved. I thank all of those people who have been interested enough to contact my office. We have looked at this issue in a responsible manner.

As I mentioned at the start of my answer, I am aware that concern was being expressed by other members in relation to small schools; particularly with regard to staffing of those small schools. The member for Barkly has written me a letter in relation to the Tennant Creek High School. I must say that the Tennant Creek High School has all its teachers working to capacity, and they are to be congratulated on their efforts in providing the options that are necessary for students. In the case of the Tennant Creek High School, it is acknowledged that its teachers have to provide the appropriate courses for Years 11 and 12. It is a difficult situation in those smaller schools.

Mr Tuxworth interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: An additional position will be provided at the Tennant Creek High School and that position will be used 50% for counselling and 50% on teaching time. If members have concerns in relation to the processes that are to be followed in appointing staff or over-establishment staff, all they have to do is contact us and we will look at those concerns.

Mr Ede: I did that last year.

Mr HARRIS: All the member for Stuart is interested in is scoring political points. I am interested in the education of students in the Northern Territory. We are addressing the perceived problems as they are brought to us and often, when a report is carried out on those areas, it is found that the problem is not as it was said to be in the first instance.

We will continue to look at the issues as they are raised, and I can assure the Anzac Hill High School Council, yourself, Sir, the member for Araluen and the opposition, that any matters of concern will be addressed in the appropriate manner by the department.

Coordinator of External Studies at NT University

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it a fact that the Coordinator of External Studies of the Northern Territory University moonlights as a promoter for the Bond University, and is

it a fact that this gentleman carries out that function from a conference room provided by the Department of Education in Capricornia House? Does the minister agree that this entails a conflict of interest, amounting to gross disloyalty to his employer, the Northern Territory University, which is fighting for every student it can get? How did the Department of Education permit itself to become linked with this disgraceful episode by giving it the added credibility of the use of a conference room in the department's own building?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of a report that appeared in the paper yesterday and I am having that matter investigated. Also, I am ...

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, what do members of the opposition want?

Mr Leo: Very simply, Tom, for you to do your job.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, this does not involve just listening to what they have to say. I want to find out the facts and I am doing that. I will be happy to make the information available to the honourable member when I have the answers.

Report on School Fees

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, in response to a question I asked at the last sittings, the minister stated that a government working party had completed a report on the role of school fees in Northern Territory schools. The minister said he would be considering its recommendations. A couple of weeks ago, the Leader of the Opposition made great play of this issue and set up his own working party to investigate the issue of school fees, no doubt to try to boost his own lagging popularity. Can the minister now give some details of the report that he commissioned from the government working party and indicate where the ALP working party fits into this scenario?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Jingili. He has asked questions about school fees and related matters at other sittings. During the last sittings of this Assembly last year, I indicated that I would comment early this year about that working party. I start by saying that the working party that we established for this purpose involved the following people. The chairperson of the committee was Karen Hall, the Parent Liaison Officer with the Department of Education. Members of the committee were: Mary LeFevre, the Superintendent, Secondary; Ms Rosas, the FEPI representative; Richard Creswick, the President of COGSO; Gordon Fietz, the financial planner Department of Education; John Pinney, another COGSO representative; Mr Warwick Otley, the primary principal representative; Mr Brian Chase, secondary principal representative; and Mr Peter Winckler, who is the executive officer. It is clear that the committee had a broad representation. I indicate also that the Northern Territory Teachers Federation was asked to include a representative on this working party but it declined that invitation.

I will go through some of the committee's recommendations.

Mr Smith: Are you going to table the report?

Mr HARRIS: If you wait until I complete my answer, I will tell you what is happening in relation to this report.

One recommendation was that the Department of Education not introduce a specific policy which requires parents to make a yearly financial contribution in respect of each child enrolled in a government school, and I do not have any difficulty with that. At 5.2, the next recommendation was that the Department of Education issue a statement which endorses school communities' discretion to set and collect a yearly parent financial contribution, such contribution to be used to enhance the basic education program as provided by the school from the department's school allocation grant. Another recommendation was that the total amount of the parent contribution, as set by the school community, shall not at any time exceed the average departmental allocation per student for that school. The recommendation in 5.4 is that a specific committee be set up by the minister to review all aspects of the department's allocation per student - that is, the per capita grants - and that such allocations should consider both departmental set course requirements and the actual cost of a school providing a basic education. I will come back to that in a moment because there are some problems in relation to that and I have established a group to examine specific aspects that have been referred to.

Paragraph 6.1 recommends that the parent contribution, as determined by the school community, should be used only to enhance the school's basic education program. There is no difficulty with that. Paragraph 7.1 suggests that the term 'parent contribution' be adopted as the term applicable to moneys paid by parents to the school and used to enhance the school's basic education program.

The matter of a book hire or book deposit scheme was also examined carefully by this working group. The working group believes that such a scheme is not really appropriate in the Northern Territory at this time. It is supportive of the user-pays principle being adopted where a school seeks additional funds to supplement particular activities which are above the requirements of providing the basic education program. The working party preferred that the concept of a resource deposit be introduced, such resource deposit to be separate from and in addition to the parent contribution referred to earlier. The resource deposit is to be used by schools to cover costs associated with the school obtaining, maintaining and replacing non-consumable resources utilised to supplement the basic education program provided by the schools.

Paragraph 8.1 recommends that the department endorse a resource deposit scheme which may be implemented by a school community; 8.2 that the resource deposit, where implemented, be separate from and additional to the parent contribution where it is in effect; and 8.3 that the resource deposit be identified as providing security against loss of or damage to books, audio and video tapes, and computer software as well as providing a means for upkeep and or replacement of resources supplementing the school's basic education program. Paragraph 8.4 recommends that the amount of any resource deposit be determined by the school community and, as an incentive, contain a refund component payable at the time that the student exists at the school. I do not have any particular problems in relation to resource deposits but it may be more appropriate that the total amount of that deposit paid at the start of

the student's schooling be returned when he leaves the school. That is a matter that I will be putting to my colleagues in the near future.

The working party recognises that certain courses contain elective components which require additional materials and or facilities to be available. The working party endorses that the user-pays principle be adopted under certain circumstances and, accordingly, it further recommends, in paragraph 9.1, that the user-pays principle be applied where a school offers courses or activities with elective components which require additional materials and or facilities. The recommendation in 10.1 is that school communities be required to ensure that students whose parents do not or cannot participate in the parent contribution scheme and or resource deposit scheme, where in effect, are not disadvantaged in receiving a basic education.

The recommendation in 5.4 was in relation to the per capita grants. The government acknowledges that there are concerns in the community about the level of funding that we provide. With that in mind, I have set in place a working party to examine that specific issue. On that party, we hope to include: the Deputy Secretary, Policy and Schools Operation, who will be the chairman; the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Services Division; the superintendent (Secondary); a Northern Territory Teachers Federation representative - and I hope that it accepts the position that is being offered; a Northern Territory COGSO representative; 2 Northern Territory Principals Association representatives, 1 representing the primary section and 1 representing the secondary section; and a representative from FEPPI. I will require that working party to complete its task and report back to me by 3 April so that we can proceed on the basis of its recommendations.

The terms of reference of the working party are: to examine the need for and the use of both the per capita grant and parent financial contributions in the context of the overall resources provided by government and in comparison with the situation in the states and the Australian Capital Territory; to specifically examine how the present per capita allocation and parent contribution are being used by government schools; and that basic education is defined as core and recommended curricula up to Year 10 level and the NT Board of Studies and Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia courses and compulsory and optional courses for Years 11 and 12.

It is important to indicate to honourable members the situation in relation to fees paid in other states. In the Northern Territory, we fare reasonably well. We need to take into account what is happening throughout Australia and not simply that we have a good situation in the Northern Territory. It should be even better. In the Australian Capital Territory, the range of fees is: for Years 9 to 10, \$60 and family concessions are available; Years 11 to 12, \$100 and additional subject fees for art, technology and specialist areas may be levied. In New South Wales, the range of fees is: for Years 8 to 10, \$15 to \$60 and there are family concessions; Years 11 to 12, \$15 to \$60 and there are family concessions; additional fees of \$5 to \$30 may be charged for the elective subjects such as home science, industrial arts etc. In the Northern Territory, the range of fees is: Years 8 to 10, \$30 to \$80, and family concessions apply at some schools; \$20 to \$50 book hire or deposit; and the fees for Years 11 to 12 are the same as for Years 8 to 10, and there is an additional \$50 book deposit charge in one case.

In Queensland, the fee for Years 9 and 10 is \$75 to \$80 and for Years 11 and 12 it is \$80 to \$110. In South Australia, the fee for Years 9 and 10 is \$110 to \$120, and allows for family concessions while, for Years 11 and 12,

it is \$110 to \$120, again allowing for family concessions, and in the first year of high school, a book deposit of \$20 is required by the department. In Tasmania, Years 8 to 10 pay a \$24 book hire fee as well as a \$30 to \$50 total levy for subjects such as home economics and manual arts, and a \$22 to \$30 general levy. Years 11 and 12 pay a \$50 book levy and \$50 is the total subject levy, although for subjects such as home economics and manual arts, there are additional fees. In Victoria, another good Labor state, Years 8 to 10 pay a fee of \$120 to \$240, made up of a \$30 to \$80 general levy, plus subject levies ranging from \$5 to \$12 per subject. Years 11 and 12 pay a fee of \$120 to \$240, made up of a \$30 to \$80 general levy plus subject levies ranging from \$5 to \$12 per subject. In Western Australia, there is a maximum fee of \$155 for each student in Years 8 to 10 with additional fees for expensive subjects such as outdoor education. There are no guidelines for Years 11 and 12, which generally follow guidelines for Years 8 to 10, with some additional charges.

It is important that honourable members be aware of fees and charges which apply in the states, and that they be taken into account when considering the subject. I am pursuing the matter. I have noted the report and the working party which I have set up will come back with further recommendations, after which I will be presenting a paper to my colleagues and, subsequently, making a statement in this Assembly.

The Leader of the Opposition has set up a working party in relation to school fees. I do not mind the opposition trying to develop its policies. It does not seem to have any at this stage and such groups may be one way of developing them. However, such working parties must have real credibility and the community must be able to assume that the people involved will look at the issues in an open and responsible manner. Unfortunately, in announcing this working party, the Leader of the Opposition caused a great deal of concern in the community. Many people felt that it would produce tangible results and that fees would be reduced. The announcement of the working party had an adverse effect on a number of schools which were trying to collect fees at that time, and many people had their hopes raised and believed that the opposition's working party would change the face of government.

Mr Smith: It may well do..

Mr HARRIS: That is a load of nonsense, Mr Speaker. It is disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition has created this problem in some schools. We will address the issues responsibly so that people are aware of the situation. The changes that are being proposed will be announced at the appropriate time.

Let us look at the membership of the opposition's working party, Mr Speaker. Alan Perrin has been in and out of all sorts of things from time to time and I can remember him from the dog track ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Members on this side of the House have been very tolerant with the minister. Mr Speaker, I invite you to reflect on the question which the minister was asked, which requested him to advise the Assembly on the progress of the report which he commissioned into school fees. He left that subject 4 or 5 minutes ago and is now commenting on something that the Labor Party is doing. I do not mind setting the agenda in this House because we always do do that. However, it is inappropriate in question time for the minister to continue with this approach.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I ask the minister to relate his reply more closely to the question asked by the member for Jingili.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I think I have been relating my answer to the question from the member for Jingili.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister quoted extensively from a report on school fees which was prepared by a working party of the Department of Education. It is very clear that he was quoting from that document, which relates to public affairs. Unless the minister intends to claim confidentiality for the document, I request, under standing order 255, that he table the report.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Stuart may raise that matter at the end of question time.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, in closing, I will indicate that it is of concern to this side of the House that matters of importance are addressed in the appropriate manner. The government will look at issues ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I suggest that the honourable minister should seek the leave of the Assembly if, having completed his answer, he wishes to make further comment on the matter.

Mr SPEAKER: For the advice of the member for MacDonnell, the honourable minister sat down while I heard the point of order raised by the member for Stuart. He is continuing his answer to the question.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the opposition knew that the government was examining the matter of school fees. Richard Creswick, the President of COGSO, was well aware of the government's working party and, in fact, 2 members of COGSO and its executive officer were involved in the exercise. I had indicated very clearly that there was a need to look at the issue and the government is doing so in the appropriate manner. Members opposite will be properly informed of the decisions of the government in due course.

Mr Ede: Table the report!

Mr HARRIS: The papers from which I have been quoting are little bits and pieces, Mr Speaker, and I have no problem about tabling them. They do not constitute the report.

Certificates of Compliance

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, he would be aware that, over the last couple of years, there has been a demand that sellers of dwellings provide certificates of compliance with the Building Code. This has created considerable difficulty for people, particularly those buying older houses for which information necessary for the issue of certificates of compliance may not be readily available. This is leading to many problems and costs in the community. Is it possible for procedures to be standardised and advertised throughout the community so that people selling houses have accurate information and are aware that they may have to meet some costs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand what the member for Sadadeen is saying. Sometimes, problems arise when property owners attempt to acquire the appropriate certificate in order to show that their houses comply with the Building Code. People owning older houses may have difficulty in obtaining certification. However, it is incumbent on the government to ensure that the buyer has some protection and knowledge of what he is purchasing. Without an engineering background, probably the average person would have a great deal of difficulty in assessing the structural integrity of a property, and that is the purpose of the certification.

However, I am aware that problems exist of the kind referred to by the honourable member, and I indicate that the Australian Uniform Building Regulations Coordinating Council, of which the Northern Territory is a member, has been charged with the responsibility of producing a uniform building code for Australia so that building requirements and codes become standardised in all places. There will always be problems, however, and the government has to decide whether to weight the situation towards the comfort of the purchaser as against trying to provide easier provisions for the seller. I believe that the average Territorian, being the consumer, must always have the scales weighted slightly in his or her favour. As a responsible government trying to provide the best for Territorians, there is no doubt that we will continue to do that.

I am willing to look at any situation that any honourable member would like to bring to my attention regarding problems in particular instances so that I can then make inquiries with the appropriate staff of my department. However, I do not believe that we should walk away from our responsibilities to people purchasing houses.

Media Reports on Proposal to Construct Powerline to Jabiru

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, given that the federal government has refused permission for the construction of a powerline to Jabiru, is the minister concerned that certain media reports last week may have influenced the decision?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not believe that the contents of the ABC 7.30 Report last week had any impact on the federal government's decision. It is my general view that the ABC is about one tenth as important and influential as it thinks it is. I believe that the decision of the federal minister responsible for the environment, Senator Richardson, is all about pure politics. Whilst talking about the ABC, I will say that, since Territory Extra was dropped, its ratings have dropped to about 11%. I am sure that they are only that high because somebody has 3 or 4 radios turned on inside his home. If I can be an advocate for the ABC for a moment, I suggest that it bring back Territory Extra, although the best part of it was the theme with its clanging drums. The ABC should bring back the program if it wants to be as influential as it likes to think that it is.

There is no doubt that Senator Richardson's decision was taken for political reasons. Anybody who knows anything about politics will realise that the federal government is not about to make any decision at all about any matter in the Northern Territory which it believes might upset the environment

lobby, at least until the next federal election is over. That is certainly clear to the Leader of the Opposition because I know for a fact that staff in Senator Richardson's office rang him directly before communicating the news to me last Friday. Let him stand up and deny that, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: I will, if you give me a chance.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, to return to the honourable member's question, the ABC's report on the Jabiru powerline should not pass without comment. As the honourable member said, the report was undoubtedly unbalanced and highly inaccurate. By way of graphic illustration and file footage, the report pictured the powerline as an endless series of giant steel mega-towers, stepping their way across the wilderness in parallel with the Arnhem Highway and reaching across the wetlands to Jabiru.

Let me deal first with the steel towers. The ABC went out to Channel Island and filmed the big corner towers which are in place only at that location. It told its viewers that such towers would be put in place in Kakadu. Wrong, Mr Speaker! As the environmental impact statement clearly showed, no towers at all would be built for the transmission line. Instead, low-profile carriers were proposed, to blend in more suitably with the environment.

Mr Ede: A string of trees.

Mr COULTER: A string of trees, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says. It will be interesting to discover where the opposition stands in relation to this issue, given its new, born-again, pro-development image and the new script for 1989 which the Leader of the Opposition wants us to believe. I am looking forward to hearing that during the course of these sittings.

It is totally wrong to show the route as running alongside the Arnhem Highway. The route for the powerline had been worked out very carefully in consultation with a range of people, including the traditional owners in the area, and I know what they believed about the transmission line and the benefits to be derived from it. The proposed route lay along the old Jim Jim Road, an entirely different location and one which would not entail crossing the wetlands.

The 7.30 Report used a map which showed Jabiru as the centre of a wheel with future powerlines depicted as spokes running out to future mining developments. That was wrong also. By bringing the route up the old Jim Jim Road, the opportunity would have existed for further transmission lines to future customers, as a natural branching from the main route. The report concluded with dark suggestions that, somehow, the taxpayer would end up subsidising this new power system to Jabiru. That is strange logic because already the Australian taxpayer is subsidising the current Jabiru diesel power system. In fact, Ranger receives an excise rebate on diesel fuel which reduces its costs considerably. Our proposal would have provided a power system on a commercial basis, with resultant benefits for all Territory power consumers.

The whole tenor of the 7.30 Report item was that the proposed powerline would have been unsuitable environmentally. Again, this defies logic. Currently, Jabiru generates electricity through diesel which is a considerably dirtier fuel than is natural gas. Up to 70% of fuel heat in the diesel process would go up the stack. However, I am told that the generators at

Jabiru are 39% efficient which means that close to 61% goes up the stack. The gas alternative would reduce that effect almost to zero. Diesel fuel is trucked into Kakadu by road train at the rate of 4 or 5 loads a week. Let us hope that there are no accidents there and no resultant pollution. We are offering an alternative which would provide a far safer and environmentally acceptable method of generating power in Kakadu. The environmentalists should be aware that what we are proposing is a cleaner and far more environmentally-sound option for the generation of power than currently exists at Jabiru.

I am not putting forward any new material on this matter. It is all contained in the documentation and the environmental impact statement which the federal government has considered. How, then, could the ABC get it wrong? Clearly, there are 2 answers. First, it could be incompetence and an inability to do the most basic research. Secondly, and this is more likely, the ABC has been led by the nose by environmental lobbyists, told what was important and told what it should do. It has been hoodwinked by the environment movement once again. I do not know how many times this has to happen before media representatives wake up to the fact that, on countless occasions, the environment lobby has distorted the truth and told outright lies. No doubt, the 7.30 Report will say ...

Mr Smith: But you would not do that, would you?

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: It is interesting to hear the interjections, Mr Speaker, but I say again that I will be interested to see where the opposition members stand on this issue and whether or not they support the development of this powerline. That is what Northern Territorians will judge them on, not hype and rhetoric but what they really believe in. Let us hear it.

Today, we have heard that we will be under attack by this pro-development, born-again, charisma-implant Leader of the Opposition. So far, we have heard one question from him, but it was not put to the power on this side of the House, the Chief Minister. He has not asked him a single question. He put a question to the Minister for Lands and Housing about the Fitzgeralds' dairy. It was a question of equal importance, but he was not prepared to take on the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. He has been prepared to ask only one question. This is the terror that was supposed to be invoked to strike members on this side of the House by the wimp, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of Government Business will withdraw that reference to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr COULTER: I withdraw it unreservedly, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, no doubt the 7.30 Report will say in its defence that it sought an interview with me on the same program and that I was not available. That is true. I did not arrive back in Darwin until the day after the report went to air. However, that does not excuse the people concerned from their duty to check facts that are put to them by other sources before they accept them as gospel truth.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In April 1988, the former Chief Minister was quoted as saying that Lord McAlpine had made a formal application for the direct sale of Crown land at Myilly Point. What progress has been made on that application?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition is familiar with the conditions of direct land sales. If not, I offer him a copy of the document entitled Land Release Guide which is available over the counter of the Department of Lands and Housing. Under the provisions of the scheme, if a person has an application regarding direct sale presently before the Department of Lands and Housing, any further application for direct sale of the same land lies next in line. If the first applicant withdraws his application formally, the next application in order of priority will take its place.

I think everyone in this House is aware that the development application for the Myilly Point precinct is in favour of the Henry and Walker group. We are aware that the McAlpine group has expressed an interest also and it is listed as having an interest. If the first interest is withdrawn, obviously, the next will move into its place in order of priority. I cannot actually tell this House how many people applied for direct sale of the area or what order applications are in, but I can assure the House that the matter fits the guidelines. As I said, I think it imperative that the Leader of the Opposition make himself aware of how the system works. Because he does seem to have difficulty understanding it, I table that Land Release Guide.

Commonwealth Funding to the Northern Territory

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER and TREASURER

The Northern Territory is emerging from a period of economic difficulty and most members of this Assembly are aware that the electricity subsidy is due for review later this year and other recurrent funding is under review. What action is being taken to preserve the level of Commonwealth funding to the Northern Territory in 1989-90?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is the most important matter facing the Territory at this time and I would like to take this opportunity to alert the House to the potentially grave situation which exists with respect to Commonwealth funding of the Northern Territory in 1989-90 and beyond. What is at stake is at least \$107m or 11% of the funds that we receive from the Commonwealth. Honourable members will recall that, in the current financial year, the federal budget provided \$50m for the electricity subsidy for the Northern Territory and \$57m as a special revenue assistance grant as a result of a Grants Commission assessment of the Northern Territory's situation when it was dragged unwillingly into the states tax-sharing pool. The Commonwealth provided that \$57m to ease us into the pool.

In addition to these specific potential cuts to the Territory's funding, there is the more general concern that the Commonwealth will cut further payments to the states and the Northern Territory as it struggles to deal with

the nation's economic problems. The Territory's possible loss is at least \$107m. A loss of anywhere near this magnitude would be a very major blow to the Northern Territory, particularly coming on top of the reductions in federal funding over the past few years. All honourable members are aware of the very harsh treatment which we have received over the past few years. The figures for funding to the Territory from the Commonwealth are as follows. The real cut to the Territory's funding in 1985-86 was 4.4% compared with 0.6% for the states. In 1986-87, the Territory's cut was 3.1% against only 1% for the states. This pattern accelerated in 1987-88 when the real cut to the Territory's funds from the Commonwealth was 9.5% compared with 4.7% for the states.

The economic downturn which followed these very real reductions has been of great concern to us all. We are acutely aware of the loss of employment and population associated with the downturn in economic activity. In particular, the effect on small business and the construction industry has been considerable. The link between Commonwealth cuts and the decline in economic activity cannot be denied. Therefore, we must do all we can to prevent any further reductions in Territory funding.

I am pleased to advise that the federal Treasurer has agreed to a proposal from me that a joint working party of Northern Territory and Commonwealth officials be established. That working party was established in December 1988 and it is examining the extent of the Territory's fiscal disabilities relative to those of the states. The working party is due to report in 2 weeks time, following which I will be holding discussions with the federal Treasurer on options for providing the Territory with a reasonable level of funds for 1989-90 and in future years. I have already written to Mr Keating outlining the very serious situation and alerting him to the consequences of further cuts to the Territory. I must confess that I am a little heartened by what appears to be a constructive attitude on the part of the Commonwealth officers that we have been dealing with, but I cannot stress too strongly the gravity of the situation if the Northern Territory does receive a reduction of \$107m against the funds that it received last year.

I can assure honourable members that I will be doing whatever I can and that the full resources of my government will be brought to bear in whatever way is necessary to work up the Territory's case and to press it to the Commonwealth in order to preserve our position as the best possible in the light of the circumstances that the federal government is in at present.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to express our full support for the Chief Minister in that regard. It is obviously a very important issue.

As we have confirmed that Henry and Walker has first right of refusal for direct sale of land at Myilly Point, when does that right expire? In other words, is there a time limit on that right? Secondly, what constraints exist at present in relation to the type of land use and the value of development? Thirdly, if the firm does not take up its option within the prescribed time, are there any sanctions available to the government in relation to this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is not aware of the circumstances surrounding Myilly Point and the fact that the Henry and Walker group was given a 10-year right for development over the area about 3 years ago, by a previous Chief Minister.

A member interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: It certainly was not the previous Chief Minister. If there is any illusion that the undertaking was given by him, that certainly was not the case.

That information has been quite public and I have said that over a number of years. It has been said in television interviews. People would be aware that, when the university was established on the site of the old hospital, it was on the understanding that it would be there for a 10-year period. I have reason to believe that there will be quite an amount of activity on the site. We are talking about what is probably the best area on the Darwin peninsula for tourism development. If it is developed, it must be done properly and that will require quite a large amount of money.

Mr Smith: Where is the development?

Mr MANZIE: Obviously, the government is concerned that any development that does occur there shall provide the best use of the land in terms of benefit to Territorians. We will certainly ensure that that happens. I know that the opposition has great difficulty with any development proposal that might create employment. We know that the Leader of the Opposition does everything in his power to ensure that the climate for investment in the Territory is damaged, not only nationally but internationally. He denigrates the Territory continually. He has a 2-handed approach, claiming to support development while going out of his way to create a climate which would create embarrassment for would-be developers. He attempts to denigrate publicly those people who would like to inject money into the Territory. He makes no comment, of course, on the disastrous effects of the turnaround of the federal ALP government in relation to the development of the airport. We all remember 1983, when Prime Minister Hawke sat on a bulldozer, hired for the occasion at a cost of \$2000 per hour, and announced the development of the Darwin International Airport. Of course, as soon as the election was over, that project was abandoned.

Mr Ede: We are asking about development on Myilly Point. We have been waiting for 10 years.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is amazing. We have this constant backchat from the benches ...

Mr Firmin interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: We hear a constant chorus of indignation when the facts are stated, but the opposition has to accept the facts. The federal ALP government has strangled development of tourism projects, particularly in Darwin, through its turnaround in relation to the international airport. Hopefully, through the efforts of Senator Bob Collins and my colleague, the Minister for Transport and Works, the problems will be resolved this year - no

thanks to members opposite who have given no credence to our efforts to encourage development.

I know that some Asian interests are looking at the Myilly Point proposal. I am certainly not prepared to go any further because I do not want to jeopardise the chances of some magnificent developments occurring in that area at a reasonably early stage. I point out that I have had discussions with the executives of Australian City Properties, Lord McAlpine's group, regarding the possibility of its involvement in some sort of joint venture with Henry and Walker. I know that the 2 groups have been involved in discussions among themselves which have not been successful. The fact of the matter is, however, that we do not intend to put up a couple of tin sheds or endorse a 50-room motel on Myilly Point. We have to ensure that that site, which is one of the best in the Territory and possibly one of the best in Australia, is developed to an appropriate level to provide maximum benefit to Territorians.

We know we will have problems with members opposite, but I ask the community to look at our record over the last 10 years and to recognise that the effort that this government has put towards orderly development and the creation of jobs has worked and that should be balanced against some of the very sad efforts of people opposite since the days when they fought actively against self-government. Every year, they try to hamper development of the Territory for Territorians. Certainly, we will be doing the opposite.

Fitzgerald Dairy

Mr HATTON to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to debate in this House yesterday in respect of the Fitzgerald Dairy and ask what action he is prepared to take to provide government assistance to the Fitzgeralds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was interesting to note the debate last night on this matter of the denial of access to a farm which is on a lease held by people called the Fitzgeralds. It is a most complicated matter which involves a number of personalities but, when listening to the debate last night by honourable members opposite, and trying to unravel what they proposed as resolutions to it all, one could conclude only that they were having as much difficulty as members on this side of the House were in coming to grips with a real answer.

It was most interesting to note that one of the answers proposed from the crossbenches was compulsory acquisition ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: If nothing else, it is practicable.

Mr PERRON: Those 2 words are normally touted in a fearful way. Compulsory acquisition has always been very unpopular in the Northern Territory, yet we heard members ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You have done it already on that block itself.

Mr Ede: That was 6 years ago.

Mr PERRON: ... opposite advocating that to solve 1 person's problem, government should compulsorily acquire an access across another person's land.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You have already done it.

Mr Ede: 6 years ago.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, a number of people have something to answer for in this case. I think the landlord in question, a Mr Meyering, has a fair bit to answer for in allowing a business to develop under lease over a such long time as he has without fulfilling any responsibility that one would think that a landlord would have to ensure that legal access to such a lease was available. I do not think that it can be denied that, through inaction perhaps, Mr Meyering has played a very significant role in the development of this problem.

Of course, Mr Trezise, over whose land access has existed over many years, could be said to have acted fairly precipitously in moving in such a dramatic way to cut off that access and, in doing so, creating this situation. I understand that Mr Trezise argues that he has been giving notice to the Fitzgeralds for at least a couple of years. I am not sure whether that notice was in writing or not, but he indicated that he wanted that access route across his land closed. I guess it is the right of most owners of freehold land to say that they are giving notice that, one day, access will be stopped so that people affected can do something about it. It appears that, to Mr Trezise's mind, it became necessary to make that move. I am not saying that he moved rightly or justly, simply that he certainly precipitated the problem that the Fitzgeralds are experiencing.

The government has sought to find a equitable resolution to this matter because, when government uses taxpayers' funds to assist a group like this, the possibility exists that other people will feel that they are not being treated justly and that they should also enjoy various accesses which have evolved over the years, through no fault of government. If that access problem is resolved, perhaps we should acquire access strips across other private land in order to sort out other people's problems.

At this stage, our proposal is for the Department of Transport and Works to use part of the electricity easement of the Power and Water Authority to locate a route to the Fitzgeralds' lease which can be used on a temporary basis. Unfortunately, this will cost some money. Knowing the sad plight of the Fitzgeralds, battlers that they are, I doubt that they would have much surplus cash to contribute towards such a resolution. Of course, that would have to be a temporary resolution only. We cannot create permanent roads on government easements in this way. The route is not suitable for a permanent access and some cost will be involved in constructing culverts and so forth. The Department of Transport and Works is proposing to make a loan to the Fitzgeralds in order to create the access on the understanding that, as soon as the Fitzgeralds' proposed move to another site occurs, the access can be closed and, hopefully, the department can take the taxpayers' culverts back and use them elsewhere.

This matter has been in hand for a little while. Officers of the Department of Transport and Works have been talking to the Fitzgeralds.

Mr Smith: It is a pity that you did not do it before the wet season started.

Mr PERRON: We have been talking with them.

Mr Coulter: I put culverts in there before the wet started.

Mr Smith: Have you been down to have a look at them lately?

Mr PERRON: The government has moved to try to resolve the problem. I reject the criticisms made yesterday and the suggestion that we should have used the power of compulsory acquisition to resolve the matter some time ago. I also reject the view of the member for Barkly who says that it is a simple matter. In his opinion, the road over Mr Trezise's land is a public road. He is not interested in anyone else's opinion. If it is a public road, certain legal rights apply. Personally, I believe that it is a private road, and always has been, and therefore the laws relating to public roads do not necessarily apply to it.

The good news is that we are working to provide a temporary alternative access to the Fitzgeralds' dairy albeit, sadly, at public expense. This action would be quite unnecessary if particular citizens had accepted their responsibilities at an earlier stage in the development of this saga.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

To sort out the confusion that obviously exists in his mind, and to sort out the lack of knowledge that exists in the minds of anybody else who is not intimately involved in the matter of the lease arrangements over Myilly Point, will the minister undertake to provide this House with accurate information on the terms and conditions and, particularly, the expiry date of the development right that Henry and Walker currently has over the Crown land at Myilly Point?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has asked questions on notice regarding this matter and those questions will be answered in the normal course of events. He will receive the information and ...

Mr Smith: What do you have to hide?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is amazing. The Leader of the Opposition asks a question but he cannot keep his mouth closed. He must like the sound of his own voice even though not many other people do. It is utterly amazing. The idea of asking questions is to try to obtain some information. The Leader of the Opposition likes to ask questions and then make a noise so that, if any information is forthcoming, he will not hear it.

I will say this very slowly, Mr Speaker, so that everyone can understand. The Leader of the Opposition has asked questions on notice regarding this matter. The answers will be provided in the normal course of events.

Mr Smith: When will that be?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's approach in wasting question time on matters which he has addressed through questions on notice indicates that he has nothing of substance to raise in this House. It is indicative also of his general attitude towards the concept of questions on notice. The details will be provided. They will be provided under the rules of the parliament in response to questions he has asked and I have no hesitation in providing that information.

Land Sold to Education Holdings

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

A large area of land was excised from the Berrimah Research Farm and sold as a Crown lease to Education Holdings, the company which proposed to set up the Darwin International Grammar School and which went into liquidation on 30 January. What will happen to that land? Will the liquidator have complete power to dispose of it publicly or privately or will the government take possession of the land again, as the covenants on the lease were not fulfilled and either dispose of it or allow it to revert to the care and maintenance of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the latter course of action is being taken. We have commenced foreclosure procedures to return the lease to the government on the ground of non-performance.

Denial of Access to School Libraries

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In question time yesterday, the honourable minister publicly endorsed the user-pays principle in regard to secondary education in the Northern Territory schools. He stated that students whose parents do not or cannot pay will not be disadvantaged in terms of receiving a basic education. Is he aware that there are a number of high schools in Darwin where students whose parents have not paid or could not pay have been refused library ID cards and are unable to borrow books to do their homework and, given that these students have already lost a substantial part of the first term, will the minister issue an urgent notice advising schools that libraries are an essential component of our schools and are open to all regardless of user pays and such other mindless, shallow philosophies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am really quite surprised by the question because yesterday I outlined the whole matter of school fees and the proposals to address certain concerns. I wish members of the opposition would get the message. We are as concerned as everyone else is about the implications of school fees. We have a responsibility to ensure that facilities and resources are made available for students to obtain basic education. We are working towards that in a responsible manner. A working party has been engaged on that exercise. Yesterday, a load of nonsense was spoken in here about that. I have made it very clear that there are certain aspects of the report that are of concern to me, and I am examining them further.

One such aspect related to per capita funding. I made it clear that we need to take into account what is happening in the states. In fact, fees in some states are up to \$280. Those issues are being addressed by the government. I have set in place another group to look at that particular aspect. I have indicated that the group will report to me by April. I will bring into the Assembly the reports that have been submitted to date and indicate the government's position. I have made it clear that we are handling this in a responsible manner. Well-qualified people are examining those issues and the government will listen to their comments.

Olgas Road

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER to TRANSPORT and WORKS

Recently, I had the good fortune to visit the Yulara area. I had the opportunity to speak to many tourists staying at the Yulara Village about what they thought of the condition of the Olgas Road. That road is in a pretty sad condition, particularly after all the rain that has occurred in central Australia.

Mr Bell: So is Yulara.

Mr DONDAS: At the same time, on driving back to Darwin, there was an announcement...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Question time is a time when members should ask questions, not make speeches. I think that the member for Casuarina is clearly in breach of that requirement of standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the member to put his question.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Speaker, recently an announcement was made by the Minister for Transport and Works that a level of funding would be provided for the upgrading of the Olgas Road by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments. Can the minister inform the Assembly and members of the public, particularly tourists, what is to happen and when it is to happen, in relation to the upgrading or reconstruction of the road?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I noted the interjection by the member for MacDonnell whilst the member for Casuarina was asking his question. He is proving, once again, that he is an apologist for the federal government and its extremely lax attitude towards the Olgas Road. The Territory government has been in a position ...

Mr Bell: Which capital works program did you drag the chain on, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the record of the Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works is equalled by none. For some 7 years, the federal government has neglected the Olgas Road which is entirely within its province. That is how long the Territory government has been putting forward designs and surveys for an upgraded road to the Olgas. The member for MacDonnell ought to know that. It is in his electorate. However, the press releases which he issued about a month ago demonstrated his total lack of knowledge of his own electorate and his ignorance of matters technical and legal. I am amazed that he has the audacity to interject again this morning.

To put it simply, I do not know when the federal government will take action in relation to the Olgas Road. Whilst it has no obligation at all to make a financial contribution towards upgrading the road, this government has committed a modest amount of Territory taxpayers' money towards its upgrading, in the hope that this will embarrass the federal government into making a move. We will have a federal election this year, and perhaps that will result in some action.

Within the last few weeks, I received a letter from an interstate tourist who was most impressed with the roads in the Northern Territory with the

exception of one - the Olgas Road. The tourist singled out the Olgas Road as being a safety hazard and an absolute disgrace to the Northern Territory. It is largely because of the tourism factor that the Territory government has seen fit to commit Territory taxpayers' dollars to this project. I have spoken and written to federal ministers and, at present, officers of the Department of Transport and Works are at Yulara holding discussions with the ANPWS and other federal officers in an effort to come to a resolution. If a decision can be made immediately to commit federal funds to top up the Territory taxpayers' dollars, we can move at once on the construction of the first 17 km which have already been surveyed and designed and, I understand, cleared by the Aboriginal people. It is now up to the federal government to act and, if the member for MacDonnell has any interest in his electorate, he will lobby actively to ensure that it gives a quick response.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he able to give the House an update on progress towards the construction of a flood-mitigation dam at the Telegraph Station in Alice Springs and is he able to advise on the source of funds for building such a dam?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen has been a staunch advocate for the construction of this dam for some years. I can advise him that, last week in Alice Springs, a meeting was held with senior traditional owners and people concerned with the proposed site. That meeting was very successful and the people involved have requested a further meeting with myself in April, and I will be travelling to Alice Springs to meet with them then. In the meantime, plans have progressed to the stage where we are now looking for material, within the immediate area, for the construction of such a facility. Permission has been given for further work in that regard. I am particularly pleased with the state of negotiations at this stage and I pay tribute to the relevant officers of the Power and Water Authority, particularly Richard Marks, as well as to Stephen Davis and the traditional owners of the region who have been extremely frank in their negotiations on this particular matter. I am delighted with the manner in which negotiations are continuing and I would hope that, at the meeting which I am to attend in April, the consultation and discussion will continue in the same vein.

In relation to the funding of the project, the Chief Minister has clearly indicated that he regards the construction of this facility within the next 2 years as a matter of the utmost importance. In fact, I believe he nominated the end of 1990 as the vital date in the construction period. The Chief Minister is the Treasurer. He has said that he will build the dam and he is to find the money. Of course, I will be supporting him in Cabinet's budget deliberations in trying to procure the money for this very important project from our colleagues. I suggest that money may be forthcoming in the 1989-90 budget, and certainly in the 1990-91 budget, to build that facility. The Chief Minister is committed to it. He has said publicly that he will find the money to construct it and his word is good enough for me as the responsible minister. I will be reminding him of that in Cabinet's budget deliberations if I need to, but I am sure that he will tell his colleagues that money must be made available because of the importance which he places on the project.

In summary, the meeting held last week was very fruitful indeed. At present, we are looking for construction material within the immediate area. The Chief Minister has given his commitment to the project with a construction period in 1990. Given that commitment, funds will be allocated either in the forthcoming budget and, certainly, in the 1990-91 budget.

Air-conditioning of Preschools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Honourable members would be well aware that, on a number of occasions, I have raised in this House the subject of the need to air-condition some preschools. I have lobbied the minister at length over the past 18 months or so. Can he now advise whether any action has been taken and, if so, what the current position is?

Mr Dondas: And what about Alawa and Nakara?

Mr Setter: You are the member for that area, not me.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I judge from interjections that a short reply is warranted. Briefly, in recent weeks, some schools would have received offers to have air-conditioning installed in general learning areas in preschools. Those are the schools where it has been found that heat is above what is considered to be an acceptable standard. It has been a difficult exercise. I did call for a report. Unfortunately, the full report has not been completed and I have received an interim report which has enabled me to proceed in this direction.

It was clear that some schools did not wish to have air-conditioning. I reiterate that we are talking about very young children who are in the school environment for up to 2 to 3 hours each day and who move in and out of their general learning area on a regular basis. It has not been easy to take this decision but the present situation is that offers are being made to certain preschools in relation to the air-conditioning of their general learning area. It is entirely up to school councils to decide whether they wish to take that up, and I understand that there are some that are considering not accepting the offer, but that is their decision. Those school councils that elect for air-conditioning will be required to obtain 3 quotations. The lowest, complying quotation will be the one that will be accepted. Money is available. As honourable members would be aware, some \$1.295m was set aside in the budget to air-condition primary and preschools. Once the final report is in, I will comment further.

Registration of Stolen Vehicles

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In light of the recent disclosures on the widespread sale of stolen cars in the Territory, and the subsequent loss of those vehicles with no compensation for some people who bought them in good faith, what steps is the minister's department taking to ensure that stolen cars are not registered in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Territory government has already taken a number of steps and is proceeding with, amongst other things, amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act which will be introduced during these sittings. The need for them was identified some time ago and they will enable the Territory to participate in a national identification of vehicles system. Put simply, that will involve a numbering system. The same number will be marked consistently on about 5 parts of the motor vehicle, from the chassis right through to the engine. Of course, that will enable vehicle inspection people to recognise quickly if a part of a car has been replaced etc, as was the case in the recent scandal. Details are then fed into a nationally-available information system.

In addition, we have given notice that we are proceeding with a motor vehicle encumbrance system. We have been waiting for some time now for the government of New South Wales to decide what it will do with its system which was seen to be the most appropriate for us as a lead towards a national encumbrance registry. Recently, agreement was given by the New South Wales government for us to link into its system. It needs to expand its capacity for other reasons as well as our own entry. In the meantime, we will be proceeding with preliminary work to inform the various lending authorities and the public on the scheme and the information required for registration. Thus, as soon as the system is available to us, we will be able to link in immediately and, even at that stage, have a substantial inventory of encumbrance registrations. That matter is being pursued by the Minister for Health and Community Services who has responsibility for consumer affairs.

Those measures are progressing and will reduce the risk of such scams occurring. Whatever governments do, criminals are bound to find some way of getting around the system. Nevertheless, this should reduce the occurrences referred to by the member for Arnhem.

Devil's Pebbles

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The government and, more particularly, the honourable minister have been accused publicly by the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority of deliberately provoking a confrontation over sacred sites at the Devil's Pebbles near Tennant Creek. What is his response to that accusation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am mortally wounded by such accusations from the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority. I note that he placed an advertisement in last Sunday's newspaper referring to one of the 'Hypothetical' programs. He signed off as 'Bob Ellis, Redneck Baiter'. I am not sure which particular 'Hypothetical' program he was referring to and I am not sure why I am even sensitive about the advertisement.

I have been accused of deliberately provoking confrontation in a number of instances wherever there has been some activity. Mount Samuel would be a good example and Coronation Hill is another. When I pointed out that, in fact, Coronation Hill is not the Bulla site at all, I was accused of adopting a deliberately confrontationist attitude. The Devil's Pebbles debate is part of a continuing saga.

I am happy to respond to the question from the member for Ludmilla. Let me say firstly that I have issued no directions at all in relation to the Devil's Pebbles. In brief terms, this is the scenario. A mining company, Frankenfeld Quarries, wanted to extract marble from prospective pockets in the general region of the Devil's Pebbles to supply a substantial market in Europe. It applied to the Department of Mines and Energy on 22 August 1987 for 4 extractive mineral leases to mine the mentioned stone. The application was advertised in the Tennant Creek newspaper on 11 September 1987, as required by section 163 of the Mining Act. No objections to the grant of the leases were received - none whatsoever. The company lodged development plans with the department and, on 9 January 1989, an authority under section 104(2) of the Mining Act was issued under the conditions that no loose boulders were to be disturbed and mining was to be restricted to in situ massive outcrops.

No objections were received to the application for extractive mineral leases and the department had established, through the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority, that there were no registered sacred sites on any of the areas concerned. Therefore, the department rightly issued the leases. Following that, the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority has claimed that the whole region is a sacred site and it is threatening litigation if mining starts.

Without going into the rights and wrongs of who claims what, the point is that the Department of Mines and Energy has done only what it was required to do under the terms of the Mining Act. Where is the plot that the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority complains about? The only plot I can see is one organised by the director himself to bring into the public spotlight the sacred sites issues that he dearly wants to have a public and bloody scrap about with the Territory government. The closest scrutiny will reveal that, in the past 6 months, I have not issued a single statement about sacred site matters despite the claim by the authority's director that I do so virtually every day. For 6 months, I have remained silent on the sacred sites issue. It is the director who is being provocative, and everybody knows it.

My attitude to the debate on the Devil's Pebbles is that it is a matter for the mining company to sort out in the correct and prescribed manner with the various government departments and authorities with which it must deal. I have no personal involvement in it whatsoever. These continuing public diatribes from the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority are undignified, particularly those in which he makes highly personal attacks on members of the government, and do him no credit at all. They are gutter tactics and I for one will not be getting down there with him to roll about in the muck.

I read the member for Barkly's column in last Sunday's newspaper in relation to this issue and I now have the history of the Devil's Pebbles dating back to 1980. I agree with the member for Barkly that a resolution must be found so that this very valuable resource can be utilised. The matter is now before the courts and it would not be fair or just for me to say anything further at this stage. Thus, I will not continue my remarks other than to provide honourable members with the basic history of my involvement in this matter: I have had no involvement.

The Department of Mines and Energy acted in a proper manner. It sought objections to the grant of the extractive leases and asked the Sacred Sites Protection Authority for clearance of the area. I repeat that there were no objections and there were no sacred sites in the area. Having completed

everything that was required of it, the mining company rightly went in to begin mining. It is now a matter before the courts and I do not intend to comment further on it until it has been resolved in the courts.

Strip Shows on Licensed Premises

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for TOURISM

As a result of the minister's commitment late last year to provide a policy in this respect, has the government developed a policy on the future of strip shows on licensed premises and does the government propose to legislate to enforce the code of ethics which was designed by the industry in consultation with the minister to set the standards of strip shows, whether they are held on licensed premises or not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some 12 months ago, the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission began receiving complaints about the standard of shows on licensed premises. Subsequently, the commission attempted to negotiate with licensees the adoption voluntarily of a code of ethics which the government believes would be acceptable to the general public. Following this, one major hotel chain introduced the code of ethics and, subsequently, that code was adopted by the Northern Territory Branch of the Australian Hotels Association which, in turn, passed it to other hotels in the Territory which are not in the association. Unfortunately, this voluntary code of ethics broke down because not all the premises that were providing the shows adhered to the code. In actual fact, the hotel chain that originally proposed the code of ethics was found to own one of the properties that was in major breach of the chain's own code.

Public comment about these shows has increased over the past few months, and the matter is being examined through the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. Under section 67 of the Liquor Act, the commission has the power to publish guidelines to assist licensees in the conduct of their licences and generally to provide members of the public with an expectation of what might be provided at licensed premises. At a commission meeting which was held on 13 February 1989, the commission approved the publishing of guidelines for these purposes. It is believed, and probably rightly so, that the publishing of these guidelines is not the end of the problem. It is the government's option, and I have instructed the commission to go down this path, to enable the commission to draw up a tighter code of ethics which will result in my coming back to this place and introducing changes to legislation which will make the regulations conditional to the granting or keeping of a liquor licence.

Section 33 of the Liquor Act gives the commission power to vary conditions of a licence from time to time but, in turn, this section also allows a 26-day appeal period which requires the commission to conduct a hearing if so requested by a licensee. Of course, that option was virtually ruled out because of the time involved and the cost to the community. It is apparent that a large section of the community is seeking for some action to be taken. That has been reflected in the past couple of days by the number of people that have signed petitions that have been presented in this Assembly. However, it is also apparent that there is a large section of the community which favours the continuation of shows, and that indicates that the government should not take action to bar them completely.

Mr Speaker, I will be giving notice of my intention to introduce amendments to the Liquor Act during these sittings and one of the areas that will be encompassed by the proposed changes to the Liquor Act will require that licensees be fit and proper persons to hold licences, whether that is enforced at the application stage or in the course of their conducting an existing licence. I think everybody in this place will join with me and, on reflection, say that some of the marketing programs that have been introduced by licensees in the past few months ...

Mr TUXWORTH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister is so far away from the question that I am wondering whether he heard it in the first place. If he wishes me to, I will ask it again.

Mr Coulter: What is the point of order?

Mr TUXWORTH: The point of order is that the answer that the honourable minister is giving has nothing to do with the question which was whether the government has developed a policy on the future of strip shows on licensed premises. That matter has not been addressed.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. In fact, if my hearing was correct, the minister has answered the member for Barkly's question, in part at least, but I would ask him to be more specific with his reply.

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, I believe that I am answering the question. If the member for Barkly did not hear what I said, he should read my lips.

We are introducing guidelines which are a condition of licence to enable people to conduct strip shows according to those guidelines. That is a pretty firm policy. They will be a condition of the grant of a licence. I cannot put it more plainly.

Mr Tuxworth: You did not say that before.

Mr POOLE: I did say that before but you were not listening.

Mr Dale: That was the truth you were hearing, Tuxie, and you are not familiar with it. You will get used to it after a while.

Mr Tuxworth: Well, it does not come out very often from any of you.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, to continue what I was saying, the government must interfere in relation to strip shows and events such as throw-the-baby competitions. In this day and age, we cannot and should not permit activities of that kind to take place on licensed premises. Those are the sort of areas that the commission should take into account in the granting of licences and in assessing whether or not a licensee is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Denial of Access to School Libraries

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer him to a question I asked yesterday concerning the provision of library services for high school students in the Northern Territory, and his refusal to advise. In view of the fact that, to date, students whose parents have not paid fees have been unable to borrow books from their libraries, will he issue a telex this afternoon to those schools instructing the principals that they will open their libraries immediately so that all students in high schools in the Northern Territory can borrow books?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, let us get something straight right from the word go. The education of Northern Territory students is being looked after adequately. There is a partnership between the Department of Education and the school councils. The member raises this issue continually and is misleading the public totally. As far as providing a basic education is concerned, the situation is that the ...

Mr Ede: Books are basic.

Mr HARRIS: Would you just sit down and listen. You ran off last night. You gave me a serve in the adjournment debate ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Education will address the Deputy Leader of the Opposition through the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education, should have stayed in this Assembly a little longer last night to listen to the explanation of the nonsense that he has put around in the community. He is the master of the 30-second grab. He misleads the public totally on issues, particularly the staffing of Anzac Hill High School and other small schools.

I will respond to the question he has asked now in relation to books. It is very clear that the policy of the department is that books have to be available to allow students to undertake their studies. There is no doubt about that. The department and the school councils would not want a situation in which students could not obtain books. We have been going through the question of school fees over the last couple of days. I have made it very clear that we are trying to look at the issue responsibly and in a sensible and unemotional manner. I noted the comments made by the member for Stuart on television about this matter. He should really look at the issue responsibly.

As far as the parent contribution is concerned, Casuarina Secondary College sent out a letter referring to the fact that it did issue ID cards and that, if students had not paid, they would not receive these cards. What the honourable member fails to acknowledge in any of these situations is that there are provisions for those students who are having difficulty to go to the principal and explain their situation. I refer to the letter from the Casuarina Secondary College: 'If you have difficulty with immediate payment, please contact the registrar'. There is no question of library services being stopped if students are unable to afford these fees. It is the same with another school. A letter from that school says, at the bottom, in large

print: 'Would all parents/guardians please note, where genuine difficulties arise in payment of fees and hire charges, please contact either the council chairman or the principal to make arrangements to ensure no students are disadvantaged'. School councils and the Department of Education do not want to disadvantage students. If there are problems in relation to that, we will be looking at them.

The department issued a circular which made it very clear that students would have access to the libraries etc and the member for Stuart would be aware that library facilities are available until 9 o'clock in the evening at the secondary colleges. His implications about the issue of ID cards and students' inability to obtain books is a load of nonsense. I would suggest to the member for Stuart that he start to perform his job responsibly and that he look at these issues. As I said, as far as the government is concerned, we will ensure that students have access to the materials necessary to enable them to carry out their activities and enjoy all the opportunities available to them through our education system in the Territory.

Mr COULTER (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in the absence of the Chief Minister and the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government, questions relating to the portfolio areas of responsibility that the Chief Minister has should be directed to myself and any questions relating to the areas of responsibility of the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government should be directed to the Attorney-General.

Commonwealth Projects on Defence Bases

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will he confirm reports that the Commonwealth government construction projects at the RAAF base at Tindal and HMAS Coonawarra have been deferred and, if so, what impact will that have on our construction industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no doubt members are aware of the precarious situation of the construction industry over the last year or so and of the measures that this government has taken to stimulate recovery in that industry through such projects as the Yulara developments in the Alice region and the State Square project in Darwin. There has been a gradual return of confidence in that sector. I visited Alice Springs recently and found that the building industry is once again operating at a reasonable level and there has been a return of confidence and enthusiasm in that region. The recovery in the Darwin region has been a little slower although there is an obvious turning of the tide. This morning, Senator Collins mentioned on ABC radio the need for a return of confidence. This comes, principally, through construction activity in the Northern Territory.

This morning, we have a press release from the Master Builders Association flagging, as a result of information from Australian Construction Services, a decline in the commitment to both the Tindal and the Coonawarra defence projects. In March this year, there was to be \$9m-worth of work released on the Coonawarra project. I understand that is now to be drawn out over 4 years. We have heard much crowing from the federal member about the federal government's commitment and the positive impact this would have on the construction industry during the next couple of years. In February and March of this year, \$15m-worth of works at Tindal were to proceed to tender. However, I understand from information supplied by the Master Builders

Association, which claims that its source within ACS is impeccable, that the \$15m program is to be deferred until next year. If there is any truth in that, the impact on the construction industry will be catastrophic.

Construction in the Northern Territory relies to a significantly extent on government programs. This year, this government's construction expenditure will be \$35m, boosted by another \$19m on the State Square project, which brings the total into line with the level of 2 years ago. The federal government's construction program usually involves projects to the value of \$50m to \$60m per year and the private sector provides additional construction projects. We all know that there has been some nervousness in the private sector lately, particularly because of the lack of activity at the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports. Given the positive statements from Canberra in relation to the Darwin Airport, I was beginning to feel that we would soon see some light at the end of the tunnel. Business people have been phoning me from Melbourne and asking whether they should invest in the Northern Territory. I have been able to say that I am confident that those projects will proceed.

Mr Bell: How about applying your super, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I hear nonsense about super. I am talking about \$25m of pre-committed federal government programs in the Northern Territory. This is not mickey-mouse stuff; it is fair dinkum big business. If Commonwealth expenditure on construction declines, the construction industry will falter again. I understand that the federal member was briefed on the Tindal matter and I would like to hear from him as to whether or not that \$15m expenditure will proceed this year. He is always pretty keen to let us know when \$100 000 road jobs are under way with money that is forwarded through the Territory government's road program. If he has known about this for some weeks, as I understand he has, I would like to hear some explanation as to why he has not told the construction industry in his electorate.

More pertinently, rather than the member for MacDonnell crowing about superannuation schemes and whatever, I suggest that he and his colleagues use every bit of their good offices and relationships with their federal colleagues to have this decision turned around. The Territory government made its commitment to the State Square project, and that decision was not arrived at easily. It was made on the basis of a balanced construction industry program over the next 3 to 5 years. It is a deliberate, long-term, balanced program and, if \$25m is to be cut out of the overall construction scene, then we ought to have known about it before now. This last minute stop-start business is not appropriate.

In closing, aside from the construction industry exposure, I now need to question the federal government's commitment to the defence of the north. Coonawarra and Tindal, not to mention another scandal that I will refer to later in these sittings concerning radar installations at Port Keats, have been pulled off the program. What about the army establishment for 1991? What about coastal surveillance and all of those other proposals that we all supported when we heard of them by way of announcements from federal Minister Beazley a year ago? What is the federal government's commitment to the defence of the north? What is its commitment to the people of the Northern Territory and to the construction industry?

Police Force Resignation Rate

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In today's issue of the The Australian, an article appears at page 3 which says that the Northern Territory Police Force has a resignation rate of something like 7.88%, or 59 officers, as against an Australian average of 2% or 3%. Obviously, this represents a cost to the Territory. What will the government do to try to reduce this cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to rise as early as does the member for Sadadeen and read The Australian and therefore I am not familiar with the full details of the article. I will take the question on notice because I believe it is important and needs to be answered in full by the responsible minister. I am sure that the Chief Minister will take great delight in answering the question because I know that a great deal of effort is placed on securing employment in Australia's most respected and honoured police force.

BTEC Program

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Recently, the minister attended the Australian Agricultural Council meeting. What was the outcome of that meeting and what decisions were taken in relation to the Northern Territory BTEC program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I attended the Australian Agricultural Council meeting last Friday in Melbourne. It is a very important forum for a whole range of agricultural and primary industry issues. Some of the matters discussed had direct relevance to the Northern Territory, in particular the BTEC program. Approval was obtained at the Australian Agricultural Council meeting for the impending-free line in respect of tuberculosis be moved north as from 1 March 1989. There is a condition relating to that approval in that performance on 5 stations has to be met. I am pleased to say that that has been achieved on 4 of them. The program on the fifth station is expected to be completed tomorrow. All signs indicate that that will be achieved and that we will proceed on 1 March to move the impending-free line northwards to a line through Banka Banka, Muckaty and Brunchilly. The benefits are considerable. The movement of the line will indicate that we are achieving our program goals. More importantly, it will reduce the impediments that are currently placed on the movement of cattle in that area. It will free up the obligations of pastoralists in that area in relation to the movement of cattle to markets. It will include another 59 properties in the impending-free area. Those 59 properties have some 264 500 cattle which will experience the benefits of the program.

The council decided to broaden the assistance under the type C loans. This will enable pastoralists in provisionally-free or higher status areas to obtain some financial assistance in the event of a breakdown. This relates to mustering costs where destocking has become the only option. The council has agreed that it is desirable to keep open the option for continuing to monitor for brucellosis and tuberculosis beyond 1992. This matter is to be the subject of continuing examination over the next 3 years. I gave notice on behalf of the Territory that I would seek to place on the agenda the matter of

funding beyond 1992 to deal with ongoing monitoring and the related costs, as well as the manner in which breakdowns will be approached if they occur. I am not suggesting in any way that I am pursuing an extension of the program beyond 1992, but I believe there is a need to put in place a mechanism to deal with breakdowns. We have to be practical. There is a chance that they will occur and, prior to 1992, we have to address that possibility.

I will say in passing that this was my first attendance at such a meeting. It is apparent to me that life is not made any easier by the irresponsible comments of the opposition spokesman for primary industry in the Northern Territory. His criticisms of the BTEC program during the last 6 months have not assisted the industry. In fact, they have undermined the states' confidence in our involvement in the program. He has committed a great disservice to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory and everyone is aware of that. It has been left to me to mend the fences and to indicate that, although the honourable member has very little knowledge of the program, this does not prevent him from criticising it at every opportunity. I am confident that that has been achieved, that we will be able to maintain confidence in our program, that we will be seen to be pursuing it very responsibly and will achieve our goals in 1992.

The Queensland Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Neville Harper, will be visiting the Northern Territory during the next couple of weeks to study our program and we will be happy to go through it with him. Honourable members will be aware that many cattle from the Territory go to Queensland and, of course, there are landholders in the Northern Territory who also hold land in Queensland. We have much in common and there are many border issues to pursue. I was pleased to be able to arrange a meeting with the Queensland minister and to have him come to the Northern Territory to discuss matters which are of common interest to us. I believe that our talks will bring great benefit to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. I hope to be able successfully to rebut the irresponsible comments of the member for Stuart and I am sure that we will be able to restore confidence in our BTEC program, both in Queensland and nationally.

Industrial Accidents in the Northern Territory

Mr LEO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

This question is intended for the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government. If the minister considers that the figures released recently on the incidence of industrial deaths and accidents throughout Australia, which clearly show that the Northern Territory has by far the worst record, are nothing more than a beat-up, is he prepared to make available the names of persons or companies who have applied successfully for exemptions under the Work Health Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously I do not have that information to hand. I will certainly ensure that the question is answered in full by the minister when he returns. However, I would like to say that the government is concerned about the figures which indicate that working life may be comparatively hazardous in certain areas in the Territory. I also believe, that the Northern Territory has a comparatively large involvement in hazardous industries such as mining. Given that, I believe that the figures indicate that the problems here are no more or less severe than those experienced elsewhere. However, I will pass the question to the minister for a detailed answer and I reiterate that the government is concerned about the safety of all Territorians.

Darwin Foreshore Study

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What stage has his department's study of the Darwin foreshore area reached and what does he expect will result from it at this stage?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to date, a preliminary report has been forwarded by each of the 2 consultants involved. That has been appraised by the department and others, including the Darwin City Council. Some of the works proposed in the initial study were a little impractical and uneconomic. The basic concepts relate to the promotion of tourism facilities around the extremely valuable foreshores of Darwin, from the ferry terminal through to the Esplanade opposite the Travelodge. Specific proposals include a restaurant at the old fuel tank area, opposite the Esplanade, and the utilisation of the mooring basin itself to promote tourism opportunities related to the fishing industry such as restaurants and fish markets. We expect to have a final comprehensive report which can go on public display in about 4 weeks.

We will be seeking input from the general public in relation to aspects of the report which may be modified or taken up as specific private development projects and those which may require input from government in terms of basic infrastructure. All I can say at this stage is that progress has been made. There has been considerable consultation with the tourist industry and the Darwin City Council. In fact, there was a recent visit by the PATA Group. Its comments have been taken into account in the final revision which is expected shortly after these sittings and will be made available to the public for appropriate comment.

Care of Brain-damaged Patients at Tennant Creek Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I have here what I imagine the honourable minister regards as a confidential report. It is a report to himself through the Secretary of the Department of Health and Community Services from the Acting Regional Director for Health and Community Services for the Alice Springs and Barkly region. The subject of the report is the care of brain-damaged patients and the safety and security of nursing staff and patients at the Tennant Creek Hospital. My question to the honourable minister is a simple one. Has he read this report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the honourable member would pass the document to me so that I may be sure of the accuracy of what he is saying and I can clearly identify what he is waving around, I could answer him more directly. Perhaps this is part of his retraining so that he may become an attendant in this Assembly when he is thrown out at the next elections.

Mr Speaker, I am not certain that I have had this exact document sent directly to me. It is signed by the Acting Regional Director, Alice Springs and it is to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Community Services. I believe that probably what I have is a document from the secretary in which he has included the information in that particular document. The member for MacDonnell and, of course, the member for Barkly who proliferates press releases on nearly every subject that he can think about at any given time that he believes that people may like to hear his views on ...

Mr Tuxworth: You make it pretty easy for us.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, those honourable members are fully aware that, yesterday, I circulated a copy of a statement that I will be making about mental health services in the Northern Territory. This is an ongoing commitment of mine to this Assembly and to the people of the Northern Territory to keep them fully informed about activities that are occurring within my area of responsibility. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition believes it is like reading the telephone directory. I assure him that I place far more importance on this subject.

The one thing I will touch on at this stage is the fact that the 2 honourable members opposite do have an advantage over me in that their approach to people who are being treated for mental illness is that they could not care less what trauma they cause to those people. They could not care less about the confidentiality of these particular people and their families.

Mr Tuxworth: What a load of rubbish!

Mr DALE: At the Tamarind Centre, in excess of 5000 services are given to patients each and every year. A further 2500 approximately are given to outpatients at the Royal Darwin Hospital which means that 7500 treatments are delivered each year. Honourable members opposite pick out 1 or 2, on the odd occasion, so that they can gain a little kudos at the expense of people who are mentally ill. As I have said many times, I think they are sicker than the people we are treating. I intend to pursue this issue in a responsible way and, later today, I will be presenting to this House details of the very responsible programs and policies that this government has in place for people who require psychiatric services in the Northern Territory.

Visitor Fees at Kakadu National Park

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TOURISM

I understand that the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service has made some moves to impose an additional levy on people visiting Kakadu National Park. Is the minister aware of any such new levies and, if there are such new levies and he is aware of them, will he give some information about them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nightcliff for his question. I think everybody in this House is well aware of the trauma that the ANPWS has gone through during the last 12 months with its introduction of various fees, and the arguments that have gone back and forth that, in some cases, have been supported by the federal members of the Australian Labor Party.

Probably, most people in the tourist industry are not aware of the fact that there is an administrative appeals tribunal. I think that has been kept fairly quiet, but we stumbled across it the other day when going through the act. There is an avenue for tour operators to appeal against decisions of the ANPWS. I was interested to read in the newspaper yesterday an article which has great relevance to this question of new and additional fees. This article spoke of the agreement that the Queensland government has reached with the ANPWS with regard to the marine park, the Great Barrier Reef. It does not intend to charge people fees, but will require commercial operators of boats and so forth to obtain permits. They will have to pay a set fee to obtain those permits.

This permit system is in place in the Northern Territory already, and covers areas such as Yellow Waters and the South Alligator River. The operator has to pay a flat fee of \$50. I guess that is fair enough and I do not think people could argue too much about that. Now, it is proposed that they shall pay 50¢ for every passenger carried. That has nothing to do with the general public; it affects the tour operator. The operator will have to fork out 50¢ for every passenger carried. Talk about double-dipping! I do not know of anybody operating boats around the Northern Territory in the tourist industry who has ever retired on the wealth accumulated through his endeavours. The operation is very expensive to organise and run. This levy is an indirect tax which, in the long run, will be passed on to the consumer. Consequently, the cost of boat trips will rise. I cannot see any argument for cost recovery in respect of a boat on the water. I am amazed that this little item has been slipped in under the table to the tour operators in the form of letter from the Director of the ANPWS without any public comment whatsoever.

I think it is disgraceful. The next step will be the imposition of a surcharge for people who want to walk in the park or to go on coach tours in the park. It is a disgraceful attitude. We are already one of the more expensive tourist destinations in Australia because of the distance involved and the cost of operating in the Northern Territory, and all the federal government will do is force costs higher yet again.

Letter from Minister for Tourism to Member for Barkly

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for TOURISM

The minister would remember that I wrote to him in the last 2 weeks concerning allegations laid by a constituent against a senior member of a statutory authority under his control. The minister wrote to deny the allegations, and I thank him for his prompt reply. Will he confirm in the House today that the contents of the reply which he sent me in relation to this matter are true and correct in every particular?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I sense a trap. To my knowledge, on the advice which I received on that day, the comments which I made to the member for Barkly were correct.

Crown Land at Berrimah

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Yesterday, I asked the minister a question regarding the Crown land at the Berrimah Research Farm which was disposed of to Educational Holdings. The minister replied that he has commenced foreclosure proceedings as a result of non-performance. What exactly does he intend to do with the land? Does he intend to return it to the care and maintenance of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries? Does he intend that the liquidator should deal with the disposition of the land? Will it be put up for public auction or does he intend to sell it to the principals of Education Holdings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there were covenants on the lease to Education Holdings and, as a result of non-performance, processes have commenced in relation to the foreclosure of the lease so that the the land will revert to the government.

I advise the honourable member that the government has not considered the question of its future use. It is Crown land and, before any development takes place on it, careful consideration must be given to such things as the visual impact and the fact that that area is not intended to be a development area. The lease to Education Holdings was considered an appropriate use of the land because it involved a school and associated playing fields. The government has not made any decision about the future use of the land and, indeed, has not even discussed the matter. When we reach a decision regarding the land, I will certainly inform the member for Koolpinyah of that decision.

Legislative Assembly Members' Superannuation Fund

Mr TIPILOURA to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, this question is intended for the Treasurer. As a Territorian, I want to see my superannuation contributions invested in the Northern Territory. Therefore, I ask whether the Treasurer endorses the views of the member for Karama who, when the Leader of the Opposition proposed that parliamentary superannuation funds should be invested in Territory business, interjected, and I quote: 'Use your dollars but do not take any of ours'.

Mr PALMER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member claims to be quoting me. I have checked yesterday's daily Hansard and I cannot find any such remark recorded there.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I cannot speak for the member for Karama but, if it is not in the Hansard, it is simply not a matter for the public record, although the daily Hansard is subject to correction.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition cares to listen, I will advise him of the Treasurer's suggestion in relation to this matter.

It is interesting that members opposite are stating that they wish to have their superannuation contributions reinvested in the Territory. The opposition has the opportunity to legislate to invest all superannuation funds, including public superannuation funds, in the Northern Territory. Last night, we heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition talk about a proposal to import buffalo semen from the Mediterranean region into the Northern Territory. If that is the type of proposal in which the opposition wishes to invest the superannuation trust funds of public servants, it has the opportunity to legislate accordingly.

Legislative Assembly Members' Superannuation Fund

Mr HATTON to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

My question is intended for the Chief Minister and Treasurer. Is the Chief Minister aware that the members' superannuation fund is underwritten by the Northern Territory government and, should that fund suffer substantial losses, those losses would be met by the Northern Territory taxpayer, not the members in this Chamber? Is the Chief Minister aware that funds invested by himself and the Leader of the Opposition would not be affected by the opposition's proposal because each of them has served long enough in this

House to receive a guaranteed return irrespective of the value of the fund? I therefore ask the Chief Minister whether the whole proposal to invest members' superannuation funds in speculative ventures in the Northern Territory is nothing more than a potential farce orchestrated by the Leader of the Opposition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I know that the Chief Minister and Treasurer was prepared to issue a press release setting out the substance of some of the matters which the member for Nightcliff has just raised. I am aware that he was seriously contemplating that course of action after yesterday's debate, particularly in terms of the implications for public service superannuation trust funds. Those implications would be considerable in view of some of the proposals put forward by the opposition as investment opportunities in yesterday's debate on the matter of public important in relation to financial services in the Northern Territory. I will leave the matter in the hands of the Chief Minister and Treasurer, but I reiterate to members opposite that, if they are fair dinkum and wish to invest public service superannuation trust funds in high-risk proposals such as the importation of Mediterranean buffalo sperm, they can legislate to do so.

FEPPI Recommendations

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Some time ago, the Northern Territory government adopted the recommendations of the FEPPI report. During the last 12 months or so, some of those recommendations have become outdated. What is the minister's department doing to ensure that the FEPPI recommendations are kept current?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the whole issue of Aboriginal education requires a great deal of investigation and it is my intention to carry out a major review of the area. It will be carried out along similar lines to the review which I conducted on the school councils regulations, although it will be done in much greater depth. I intend to visit most of the Aboriginal communities this year and to discuss with them their concerns in relation to the provision of education services.

Honourable members may be aware that a joint Commonwealth and Northern Territory government review has been carried out and that report has been prepared. The problem with many such reports is that they are often put together by only a couple of people. We need to ensure that the views expressed in such reports are the views of the Aboriginal people themselves. It is my intention to visit the communities in the Northern Territory to discuss those issues with the Aboriginal people themselves. Representatives from FEPPI will accompany me on those visits. Matters that need to be examined include staffing, the bilingual program, truancy provisions and hearing impairment problems that Aboriginal children have. All members would be aware that up to 50% of primary age children suffer hearing impairment. That is of serious concern. The Menzies School of Health Research and the Minister for Health and Community Services are well aware of those problems and are assisting in that regard. In addition, the review will take into account the matter of training. I hope to discuss with the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government his department's programs in this regard. I will be reporting regularly to the Assembly on this vital issue.

It is very important to acknowledge that, whilst there is not so much a need for Aboriginals to control the education provided in their areas, there is no doubt that there is a need for Aboriginals to be involved in the provision of those services in the same way that there is community involvement in schools in the Northern Territory. It is my intention to ensure that the Aboriginal people themselves are involved in this vital exercise. I will be asking the member for Arnhem and the member for Arafura to help in this regard. Communities will be notified well in advance of my coming and they will also be told of the matters that I will be raising. I thank the honourable member for his question. The FEPPi plan is in place. There are some problems with it. We need to ensure that we are up to date in relation to those matters. This will be a major review and I will be listening to the people in those Aboriginal communities and reporting back to the Assembly regularly.

Negotiations with Overseas Interests

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

As all honourable members know, yesterday the government rejected the ALP's proposal to set up a state bank to provide a range of financial services to promote local Territory business growth. Given the government's rejection of our proposal to develop Territory industry, I would ask the honourable minister to bring us up to date with his efforts.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member is raising issues that are incorrect and is trying to make a political statement in the form of a question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I would ask the member for Stuart to ask his question directly.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I ask the Minister for Industries and Development to bring us up to date with his efforts to entice overseas industries here. I know that he will not provide us with details of the amount of Territory money he has to promise them.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member is trying to presume answers.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but again I direct the honourable member to ask his question.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I do not know whether the honourable minister will be able to understand it. I will give him a copy of it because I have been interrupted so many times. My question is: at what stage are his negotiations with the Russians in respect of the processing of McArthur River ore, with the Germans in relation to the development of a chemical complex, and with the French in relation to the development of a liquefied natural gas complex?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if I may go back to his opening comments, the honourable member referred to a debate in this House yesterday and a question asked by the member for Arafura. May I remind them of the advertisement that was placed in the paper. May I remind honourable members that a Smith Labor government would draw on the expertise and success of the Western Australian

model and establish the same system for developing the Territory. That is what he proposed in respect of Territoricorp. Of course, the Northern Territory bank proposal was to be on the same model as the successful Western Australian system. That is what members opposite want. I would think carefully before I invested my funds at the moment. I do not think it would be as successful as the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe. Northern Territory Incorporated is not the type of thing that we want here at the moment. As I said yesterday, I would far prefer to deal with the economic strategies and policies of the socialist left than the Northern Territory Labor Party Smith government Territoricorp. At least, we would know where our money was going - down the drain.

Mr Speaker, I cannot do justice to the honourable member's question in 5 minutes. I am happy to provide him with a detailed briefing on those negotiations. I met with BHP recently. BHP will be in the Northern Territory with Russian representatives. It is too early to detail some of these proposals. I am happy to provide a full briefing, which will require 3 or 4 hours of his time, not 3 or 4 minutes of the Assembly's time, if he is serious about learning what development really means and the effort required to achieve it.

The new script of the Leader of the Opposition relates to development: 'Do not talk to me about environmental issues or Aboriginal issues. I am concerned with economic development and the bread and butter issues'. So far in this sittings, we have had one question on the Fitzgerald dairy - which I think is admirable - and that has been resolved. We have had a question on Myilly Point. Neither question was pro-development in nature. What else has the Leader of the Opposition put forward to this Assembly? What questions has he put to the Chief Minister about development and the economic concerns of Territorians? We have seen this Assembly bogged down on esoteric interpretations of legislation and whether or not we must hand over a document under standing order 255. We have heard nothing during these sittings from this born-again, pro-development, economically-concerned opposition that we are supposed to have. I am happy to provide a full and detailed briefing to the Leader of the Opposition if he can give it the time that it deserves.

Ranger Uranium Mine

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The honourable minister will recall that, in the last sittings of this Assembly, I asked a question regarding the dumping of waste rock at Ranger after a monitor had broken down. He replied that there was no environmental damage. In the meantime, I note that the Office of the Supervising Scientist has claimed that it was the biggest breach that has ever occurred at Ranger. Would the minister care to comment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand 448 000 t of rock was the figure that was mentioned. There can be different types of interpretations regarding environmental damage. If one were an antinuclear, pro-conservation person, one could refer to the whole of the Jabiru zone as an environmental disaster. It has many millions of tonnes of radioactive ore some inches under the ground in many places. The interpretation is all in the mind. Does the honourable member want us to shift all the ore bodies and radioactive material from the area? I will try to arrange it. Let him name the destination that he would like it sent to, the time of delivery and the price. I will accommodate him.

Article in Australian Penthouse

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TOURISM

I am advised that an article was published in the January issue of Australian Penthouse representing the people who live in the Northern Territory as a mob of gunslinging yahoos who behave like raving ratbags and shoot up everything that they see. Representations have been made to me by members who engage in pistol and rifle shooting who have been very upset by this article in that it presents a wrong impression to the tourists who visit the Northern Territory. Has the minister read the article and, if so, what does he intend to do to correct the impression it will create?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this article was cut out and forwarded to me, I believe, by our representatives in Canberra. I received photostat copies of the article and there are a number of ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: But you do not buy it, of course?

Mr POOLE: No, I do not normally.

A number of comments made in the article give a terrible impression of the Northern Territory. It is an unfortunate matter because we were aware that the journalist was in the Northern Territory seeking to do a story on commercial hunting - I forget the name of it - but basically it involves people who run around in the bush firing ink or paint pellets at each other. It conveys ideas about neo-Nazi organisations and that sort of thing. Apparently, he did not get much of a run in the Territory as he tried to hunt these people down and therefore ended up writing an article on attitudes towards guns etc in the Territory. I guess he spoke to some of the more honest and tougher people in the Territory who basically said things to the journalist that perhaps you or I would not like to see printed on the front page of a newspaper, Mr Speaker. Many of the remarks are very irresponsible.

I do not believe anything can be done to correct that once it is done, any more than anything could be done to correct the effect of an article that appeared some 8 months ago in one of the major women's magazines. I forget the name of it. I think it is Mode or something like that. It is laid out in a quite expensive format. That article was about a girl who jumped into a freight truck and drove from Alice Springs to Darwin. She wrote about the comments that were made to her along the way in roadhouses and by truck drivers about women and life in general, and it was absolutely atrocious. I am quite sure it would not be endorsed by any Territorian and certainly it would have done nothing for our image down south at all. I do not think the problem can be addressed, but we are certainly aware of it.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to the statement he made at the conclusion of question time last Thursday, concerning the development rights to Myilly Point. In the course of that statement, he said 2 things: firstly, that there is no time constraint on the development and, secondly, that the government would not allow those development rights to extend indefinitely. In view of the evident contradiction between those 2 statements, I ask if there is a formal, legal agreement between the government and the developers on the development of Myilly Point or is there simply a handshake deal? Secondly, if there is a formal, legal agreement, why has the government refused to lodge details of that agreement with the Land Titles Office, as it is required to do?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to answer that question in the sort of detail required, I would have to seek advice. However, I can assure honourable members that there is an agreement regarding the development of the site, and that is in favour of the Henry and Walker company. I think it is important that we think in general terms of development in the Territory, particularly with regard to the development of specific areas in relation to tourism, as well as other types of development. Regardless of who they are, developers will invest money to obtain a return when conditions indicate that that return will be forthcoming. We have to be aware also of the general economic situation that the Territory is presently in as a result of the policies of the federal Australian Labor Party. I think all members would be aware, as would the community, that events, such as the development of the airport terminal in Darwin, will play a very important part. Mr Speaker, I hear rumblings from members opposite. That is typical.

As I said to one media person the other day, we have a situation where the Australian Labor Party has deliberately tied the hands of the Territory and developers in the Territory. We can look at an analogy of a child having its legs and arms tied together. That is what the Australian Labor Party has done to the economic development of the Territory with its procrastination on such works as the airport terminal development. That situation has continued since before 1979. Those of us who have been here for 20 years or more are aware of the sorts of problems that we have experienced. That sort of procrastination has tied up developers and development in the Territory. We have witnessed the removal of large amounts of funding to the Territory during the last 3 years or so, amounts of up to \$20m. That has caused great problems in the Territory and the blame has to be sheeted home to the Prime Minister and to people like the Finance Minister, and members opposite cannot get away from shouldering some of that blame. That makes times tough and, therefore, we all have to try to do things to promote development in the Territory.

In that economic climate, to ask why a development is not occurring and to blame the government's for that is like tying the hands and legs of a child together, throwing him in the pool, and saying: 'Look, he is not swimming. Sack the coach!' It is ridiculous. I can assure honourable members that a number of developments will go ahead in this town when such projects as the airport redevelopment proceed. There are a number of areas where certain developers have rights to develop land and, hopefully, we will see a turnaround before long. I am certainly doing everything in my power to ensure that we have a climate in which development can proceed.

Mr Speaker, the development rights for Myilly Point are in the hands of Henry and Walker. As I said, there is no time constraint on the developer. Of course, the government would not allow those rights to extend indefinitely. If it appeared that the holding of those rights was to the detriment of development, the government would take action to ensure that those rights were removed.

Darwin Airport Redevelopment

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has he any information or documentation to support his recent statement that the Darwin Airport redevelopment will not physically commence this year, as promised by Warren Snowdon and Senator Bob Collins?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of course I have that information. The Northern Territory CLP government is all about factual representation.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr FINCH: I hear cries from the Leader of the Opposition. Yesterday or the day before, he claimed that this government's comments about the situation in relation to works at Coonawarra and the Darwin Airport were nothing more than a cynical political exercise. He said that we were using scare tactics that had no basis in fact and alleged that the CLP was not telling the truth in relation to these matters.

The simple fact is that the Leader of the Opposition does not know and nor do our federal ALP representatives or the apologists on the opposition benches in this House. Members opposite ought to get their facts straight before they start crowing. The last thing in the world that I wanted to do was to tell Territorians that they had been let down again by the federal ALP government. The reason is that confidence is returning in the Territory business community. That confidence is returning as a result of our progress in re-establishing the construction industry through the balanced programs introduced by this Territory government ...

Mr Ede: Are you going to table it?

Mr FINCH: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asks if I am going to table it. Of course I am going to table it, Mr Speaker. The document that I will table fell off the back of a federal government truck, a truck whose wheels are very rapidly falling off.

Mr Ede: You have been practising that line, Fred.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I have been provoked to this anger because, quite simply, I was seeking some cooperation from the members of the opposition and from our federal representatives to untie the hands of the Federal Airports Corporation. The fact is that the Federal Airports Corporation cannot proceed expeditiously to meet an unrealistic time set for it by the politicians because its hands are tied. Warren Snowdon and Bob Collins announced on 19 August that it would take one month to transfer and that construction would begin immediately after that. To me, 'construction' means bulldozers and work on site and 'immediately' means today, not in 18 months. The apologists opposite may very well feel cocky that their federal colleagues have been

treated gently by the media. Yesterday's editorial in the NT News says: 'Of course, they have promised now that construction work will begin this year. We must take them at their word'. Why should we?

I have a document from the Federal Airports Corporation. It is dated February 1989 and has an FAC letterhead. It is a bar chart indicating how it will develop the construction program for the Darwin Airport. Let me point out 2 or 3 very pertinent aspects. 'Public Works Committee process to commence in June 1989 and completed in October 1989'.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nhulunbuy has been providing a running commentary and I have been fairly tolerant with all members. The minister will be heard in silence.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I understand their embarrassment over this whole saga. Territorians have waited 4 years for what was supposed to be a 6-month review of the construction program for Darwin Airport. We have had promise after promise. There has been complete cooperation from the Territory government.

There is to be 4½ months of Public Works Committee review. A review was undertaken in 1984. Certainly, the scope of the works has changed marginally and, certainly, it is a different Public Works Committee but why put the FAC through this bureaucratic process when everyone has recognised that the principal matter of interest with regard to both airports is time? Next, the design and construction tender processes undertaken by the federal government and imposed on the FAC demonstrate that the FAC is nothing but an attempt by the federal government to distance itself from the real obligation it has to provide infrastructure at airports around Australia. Mr Speaker, can I mention this: 'construction - February 1990'. How do Mr Snowdon and Senator Collins claim that construction work can commence in December when the corporation itself recognises that under ...

Mr Smith: Is that a draft? Does that have 'draft' written all over it?

Mr FINCH: Of course it has 'draft' ...

Mr Smith: Right!

Mr FINCH: ... written all over it.

Mr Ede: Right!

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FINCH: On Friday night, our honourable federal ALP politicians had already written the draft program, had they? Oh, then they are not construction experts! Mr Speaker, I put it to you that, not only is that incorrect, but that the end of this year for commencement of construction is both unrealistic, under the constraints of the FAC, and totally unacceptable to all Territorians, except the galahs ...

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister will withdraw that remark.

Mr FINCH: My apologies, Mr Speaker, I withdraw. Except of course for our apologists for the Territory ALP government, for the federal ALP government ...

Mr Bell: That will be next, Fred. Do not worry.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, may I continue? There have been accusations that the Territory has been engaged in political opportunism. If this is political opportunism, we have been practising it for 4 years and I will continue to practise it until the first aircraft are at the new terminals at Darwin and Alice Springs.

While I am talking about Alice Springs, another commitment was made by Mr Warren Snowdon, on 19 August, in his big press release, when both members put their necks on the line. Do you remember that one, Mr Speaker? I am sure they do, and I am sure Territorians will remember it at the next election. I remember it clearly, because Mr Warren Snowdon said: 'Work will commence immediately on the \$1.3m extension to Alice Springs Airport'. He said that. Another lie, not ...

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister knows that, under standing orders, he shall not make statements of that kind regarding a member in another place.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order. The honourable minister will withdraw that reference to the federal member.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the reference to the word 'lie'. The honourable member for the Northern Territory used a total, absolute untruth, and he knows it. His statement was totally incorrect because, quite simply, construction did not proceed immediately after August. He said, 'transfer of Darwin within 1 month'. Then, later on, he said 'October'. Then Mr Gary Punch said it would take place at the end of the year, in December. Now they say ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister was asked a very specific question by the member for Casuarina, and that was what documents he had to back up his case.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: All that we have heard about from him, and apparently all that he has, is a draft - and I repeat a draft - document from the FAC. Mr Speaker, I think he has answered the question comprehensively.

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

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, of course I do have other information and so do all Territorians who happen to listen to ABC radio. The general manager for new airports with the FAC has acknowledged that its program indicated a February 1990 commencement. It hoped that it might be able to commence late this year. That is not good enough for me but, apparently, it is good enough for members of the opposition and for Territory federal members. Mr Snowdon acknowledged that he and Bob Collins have known about it for some time and have been quite content with construction beginning late this year. If they knew earlier, why did they not say so and face the music in the community? Territorians expected that they would be true to their word and that construction would commence 'immediately after transfer'.

The irony is that the competitive bid by the Territory government in early 1988 envisaged program commencement by June last year and completion of construction by the end of this year. Works on both Darwin and Alice Springs Airports could have been completed by the time the FAC will begin construction. Why is it taking so long? It has nothing to do with the will of the FAC. The FAC is extremely keen to get on with the job. However, it has been constrained by the bureaucracy of 4 government departments even on reaching the transfer stage. Is 8 months acceptable to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition? It must be. Construction is now to commence in February 1990 or perhaps December 1989 - which is still not good enough - with completion at the end of 1992.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! This is a complete and utter abuse of question time. We have listened to this minister who has comprehensively answered the question. He can make a statement on the airport at any time. If he wants to make a statement, I will debate it with him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order, but again I ask the minister to relate his reply directly to the question.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the information which officers of the FAC have given to the Northern Territory government and to journalists has positively confirmed that the program involves a commencement of works next February.

I will finish by saying that I have raised this matter publicly only after many months of deliberative and constructive dialogue with federal ministers. I gave them fair warning, in writing, of what the attitude of Territorians would be if they failed to produce an early announcement of the date for the commencement of works. I did nothing underhanded. I was made aware of the matter last Thursday afternoon and, on Friday, the FAC's program was confirmed by its General Manager Technical. He said that it was the best possible program in view of the constraints imposed by bureaucratic red tape. I have raised the matter in order to achieve an early resolution. There is still a chance of progress although it seems that the federal member has already shown his hand by declaring that he is not interested in expediting matters by cutting through the red tape. What I seek ...

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr FINCH: For the benefit of the member for Nhulunbuy, we will see what the outcome is at the next federal election. The member for the Northern Territory made political mileage by sitting in front of the television cameras beating his own drum about having secured airport redevelopment. That has not been secured. Our federal Labor members have not even secured transfer of the airports, let alone the commencement of construction works. They have let their side down and members opposite should feel embarrassed and ashamed. They will feel the brunt of this at the next election.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS AND HOUSING

Territorians have been waiting for 5 years for some development to occur at Myilly Point.

Mr Finch: They have been waiting for an airport even longer.

Mr Perron: A railway as well.

Mr SMITH: Have you finished?

This morning and in the NT News last night, the minister blamed the lack of action at Myilly Point on the state of the economy. In fact, he was quoted as saying that the state of the economy 'had delayed development of Myilly Point'. How can he justify that statement when an application for development of Myilly Point was received last April from the McAlpine company, Australian City Properties and, as recently as yesterday, the company indicated it was prepared to go ahead with the proposal if given the opportunity? In view of the state of the economy and the need to get some development going in the Northern Territory, will the minister give favourable and sympathetic consideration to the McAlpine proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will go over the answer that I gave at the last sittings because I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition needs to have his memory refreshed. In respect of development at Myilly Point, I advised the House that negotiations were proceeding regarding a proposal and that I was confident of being able to confirm a major development on the site before the end of the year.

Mr Smith: That is what you said in 1984.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, that is the answer that I gave and I believe the Leader of the Opposition should take notice of it. I believe that he is unaware of a number of proposals that are in the wind for the Australian City Properties group of which Lord McAlpine is a director. That company has development rights on some other properties in town. It has to carry out its role in respect of the development of those. I do not intend to be responsible for moving another development into its hands and thereby locking up future development with one company.

Mr Speaker, isn't it marvellous? He does not know what is going on. His ALP policies are slowly strangling the Northern Territory. He sits back there smugly. I can imagine what happens. He rings his mates in Canberra and asks them to put the screws on a bit more and make it look bad for the government. That is how he carries on. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that, regardless of his attitude to the development of the Territory, which we have seen in this House and in the community year after year, this government will do everything in its power to make it attractive for people to come to the Territory. We have done that in the past and we will continue to do so. The development that has occurred here in the last 10 years is phenomenal. Territorians do not appreciate threats by these people to try to curtail that sort of development.

The McAlpine group has some properties in the city of Darwin for which it has development rights. I can assure members that it will develop those properties before it is given other areas to develop. If any developer has a proposal which we consider would be advantageous for the Territory, we certainly would not knock him back. The Leader of the Opposition knows that I have had discussions with Australian City Properties and I have visited its director. I have had him come here for further discussions. I am aware of the sort of proposals involved and I have brought the developers together to see if they come up with an arrangement. I will repeat it very slowly and very carefully. I can advise the House, including the Leader of the Opposition, that negotiations are proceeding in respect of the proposal. I am confident of being able to confirm a major development on the site before the end of the year.

Trade Development Zone

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has the minister taken notice of the public warning given by the Leader of the Opposition that he is causing participants at the Trade Development Zone to jump into an early grave? Indeed, has he taken such premature and precipitous action, particularly in relation to Skycom?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I have noted the position that the Leader of the Opposition has adopted. In yesterday's NT News, he claimed that I had signed the death warrant for Skycom. In fact, all I have done is ask the proprietor of Skycom to return to the zone to discuss his development proposals. That is highly responsible. I have been in touch with him in America by fax over the last week and a half. I am simply asking him to return to the zone to discuss some of his development proposals.

If the subject were not so serious - and I note there is to be a matter of public importance discussion on the Trade Development Zone today - the nonsense uttered by the Leader of the Opposition would be hilarious, especially given the terms of the MPI. It takes one's breath away that the Leader of the Opposition actually has the cheek to suggest that the government is trying to shut down companies operating in the Trade Development Zone and that he is in some way a champion for them. I would love to be in a position today to announce a proposal in the Trade Development zone, but I am not. I am sorely tempted to make a statement on the zone during the course of this evening or tomorrow. I have probably caused a heart attack to officers of the Trade Development Zone and my staff who have told me not to say anything. Perhaps if the MPI debate drags on into the evening, I may be able to release that information then.

In a newspaper report at the weekend, the Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying that he does not support the zone any longer. The Labor Party has dropped the zone. What egg its members will have on their faces! What commitment do they have to the Northern Territory and projects for its development? They have the same commitment as they had for the Sheratons and for Yulara. They talk about contingent liabilities and treat them like the plague. As for Myilly Point, if members of the opposition had had their way, it would have become a housing commune for highly-paid public servants. That is what they wanted to do with it.

The champion of the Trade Development Zone has arrived and he is now supporting it. He must have the hide of a bull elephant. This transparent, hollow and hypocritical rubbish has come from the lips of the man who has done more than anybody else in the entire world to ensure that the Trade Development Zone is forced to operate under an umbrella of uncertainty.

Mr Firmin: Terry the Terminator.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ludmilla will withdraw that remark.

Mr FIRMIN: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has accused me of acting prematurely in the matter of Skycom's participation at the zone. Let

us look at the facts. Firstly, and this is critical to his accusation, I made no announcement about Skycom's situation, as he has alleged. The story carried in the Sunday Territorian was in response to a reporter's inquiries. Secondly, I have merely put the facts as they are. It is a fact that the Trade Development Zone Authority is concerned about Skycom's progress. Would the Leader of the Opposition prefer me to deny that? Would he prefer me to duck my responsibilities and run for cover? As I said in response to the reporter's inquiries, I regard the Skycom proposal as one with great benefits for the Territory and I am sincerely hopeful that all will proceed as planned. The fact is that the Skycom proposal is way behind schedule and the reason, as I said, is tied up with legal, financial and corporate difficulties, difficulties between the Australian and the United States operations. I also said that the problem would be resolved if the Australian operation was able to secure financial agreements with the international bankers.

According to the message received yesterday from the company's principal, Mr Glenn Nicholls, he is extremely hopeful that finance will be arranged. If that is the case, it is good news. However, the Trade Development Zone Authority remains concerned about the lack of progress and it has rightly sought to have Mr Nicholls appear to explain his circumstances. That is entirely correct and proper. You can just imagine the outrage of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker, if such a course had not been followed in the circumstances.

According to the latest advice, Mr Nicholls will be in Darwin next week. The Leader of the Opposition has made great play about threatened eviction of Skycom from the zone but I can assure him that I made no such comment to the reporter concerned and that such action has not been contemplated. That sort of action could follow, in the course of time, as a result of consistent non-performance by a zone occupant. Indeed, that has happened to one occupant. I am hopeful, however, that it will not be necessary to consider such a course of action in this case. I have not sought to publicise the circumstances of Skycom. My responsibility is to ensure that zone participants meet their commitments and that is what has been happening. If I had failed to meet that responsibility, the Leader of the Opposition might have had cause to complain. He has no such cause and he must have the hide of a bull elephant to make the sort of accusations he has made in the newspaper and in this Assembly. I might say here that the announcement of Skycom's commencement in the zone was made at the request of Glenn Nicholls. At that particular stage, he had his US partner with him, US West, and a representative of that company attended the opening. It had nothing to do with me. I was asked to do it by the proponents.

I look forward to today's debate on the matter of public importance, particularly the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition. As I said, more good news will come out of the Trade Development Zone. What it needs is faith and commitment, and I can assure honourable members that I have plenty of both.

Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Amendment Bill

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I draw the minister's attention to the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Amendment Bill which is currently before the Assembly. I draw his attention also to the fact that the Police Powers Committee, which has been so belatedly convened, apparently has advised the government that its proposed marijuana legislation is vitiated. I would also draw the minister's attention to the

bipartisan support for the needle exchange legislation as a crucial part of the battle against AIDS. Will he take the honest, decent stance and separate the needle exchange legislation from the absurd marijuana provisions which are demonstrably vitiated?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is rather ironical that this question has been asked now. I have just finished reading the final draft of a press release which I have now issued. It states that I will not be proceeding with the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Amendment Bill at these sittings. At the last sittings of this Assembly, I stated that I would be calling for input from the Bar Association, the Police Powers Committee, the Law Society and community-based organisations which are involved in the drug scene and in needle exchange programs. Unfortunately, apparently because of the Christmas holiday period between the last sittings and these sittings, some members of those organisations have had difficulty in addressing what now appear to be some very complicated and technical legal issues arising from this legislation.

I have toiled over this legislation. It has 2 main thrusts. Firstly, it has the purpose, following this government's wish, of getting tougher on the drug situation. Recently in this country, we have seen a senior policeman blown away and, apparently, that crime was related to marijuana. I believe that the governments of this land must take some action and do everything in their power to address the issue. In a very small way, the drug component of the bill does that. Perhaps one of the reasons why other governments have not addressed the issue is because it is a little too hard for them to come to terms with legally. We intend to come to terms with it. The Department of Law is now taking into account the comments of the legal profession in the Northern Territory, including members of the Bar Association, the Police Powers Committee and the Law Society, as well as the comments of people who are involved in organisations which deal with drug-related issues on a practical level.

This government does not resile from its position. We will get at the parasites who are feeding drugs to our kids. That is an undeniable fact. If anybody in the Northern Territory believes that I am not going to push to get the needle exchange program in place, they can come and see me privately. It certainly is not the case. The matters are dealt with in a single bill. We have been critical in the past - and can we ever forget the night of the white-headed boy, when he rushed in here with a piece of legislation ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will refer to members by the correct title.

Mr DALE: I withdraw that comment, Mr Speaker. Of course, I am referring to the member for Barkly who caused some embarrassment to this House with a piece of legislation that he thrust through. I am not going to be a party to that. This is far too important. We are going to get it right. We are going to prepare the legislation so that it can be administered properly, not only by the police but by legal practitioners and by the courts of the Northern Territory. We will get it right so that we can save our kids from the parasites who are growing marijuana on farms like that described on the front page of the newspaper yesterday. We have heard about 4 segments on the airwaves over the past week talking about millions of dollars worth of marijuana that has been grown and is destined, obviously, for the kids of Australia.

This legislation will be proceeded with as quickly as possible after we obtain the best possible legal advice to ensure that all legislation relative to this bill will be able to be administered properly for the benefit of Territorians.

Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service Review

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer the minister to the current review of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. Can he confirm that the Northern Territory government has presented a submission to that review and advise what the Northern Territory government's position has been with respect to that review?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can certainly advise the House of the latest situation regarding the review of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. As members would be aware, this review was instigated by the federal government and various parties were asked to make submissions. The Territory government has made a submission. Simply put, the basis of that submission is: 'Hands off Kakadu and Uluru'. The Northern Territory government has always adopted the position that national parks in the Northern Territory should be managed by the Northern Territory and at no stage have we resiled from that proposition. It is an ironical twist that that proposition is supported by the federal government in its dealings with the states. However, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, that empire-building federal bureaucracy that we know so much about, has managed to gain control of 2 parks in the Territory: Kakadu and Uluru.

In our submission, we have said that the ANPWS should not be involved in the management of national parks in the Northern Territory. It is not in keeping with the role prescribed for it by the Commonwealth government and CONCOM - the meeting of federal, state and Territory Conservation Ministers - since 1986. Its activities are incompatible with responsible self-government for the Territory as laid down in Commonwealth statutes. It is against further social, economic and political development of the Northern Territory, which is the stated objective of all political parties. The Territory's position is very simple. The same rules and procedures should apply here as in the states in respect of national park management. The ANPWS's attempts to justify its position on the grounds that there is Aboriginal preference for its management, where Aboriginal land is involved, and that it has commitments under international treaties are absolute rubbish. The examples of the Gurig National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula, the Kings Canyon National Park and the recent agreement on Katherine Gorge show that the Territory can certainly negotiate successfully and work with Aboriginal owners in joint management of parks. If the ANPWS were to join with the Conservation Commission in negotiating a more acceptable arrangement for Kakadu and Uluru, a similar success story could be created in those areas. However, everyone is aware that the ANPWS steadfastly refuses even to contemplate such a step.

Our submission showed clearly that the expansion of the sphere of influence of the ANPWS into the management of Kakadu and Uluru was a public-service-driven move, irrespective of the views of the governments of the day. The submission also outlines the sorry history of the intransigence of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service in relation to park management. We say that what the Commonwealth government has done, or allowed to be done, in this case should be undone and the management of our national

parks should be left with the proper authority, and that is the people of the Northern Territory through the Northern Territory Conservation Commission.

Mines Safety in the Territory

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

My question is based on the assumption that the NT News of yesterday was accurate in reporting the minister's demand for an investigation into Territory mines safety. Will the inquiry include representatives of employees of the mining industry and will mining industry employees be asked their opinion of the Mines Safety Control Act? Will the findings of the inquiry be made public and what deadline has been set for the conclusion of the inquiry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it may be easier for honourable members if I read into Hansard the letter that I have written to the NT Mining Board. That letter is addressed to Mr Adams, the Chairman of the NT Mining Board:

I have noted with regret the report by the Secretary of the Department of Mines and Energy of the fatal accident which occurred at the Woodcutters Mine on 16 February 1989. Whilst increased mining activity in the Northern Territory has no doubt led to an increase in the possibility of incidents, I am concerned that this is the third report of a death on a mine site since the beginning of 1989. With this concern for worker safety paramount, I direct you and your board as a matter of urgency to investigate and report to me on the following:

- (1) the appropriateness or otherwise of the provisions of the Mine Safety Control Act 1982;
- (2) the appropriateness or otherwise of the Northern Territory government's policy of self-regulation on mine sites; and
- (3) whether any legislative or policy change would have prevented any or all the deaths and, if so, your recommendations on what remedial action is required.

You and the members of the board should ensure that you consult as widely as possible with the mining industry, the mine management where the deaths occurred, those unions representing workers on mine sites, the Work Health Authority and the ministerial council established to advise the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government on workers' safety. I would expect that your deliberations will be conducted in a manner appropriate to the seriousness of the matter and you should keep me informed on a regular basis.

Mr Speaker, I think that that has answered all the honourable member's questions.

Mr Leo: Will you make the report publicly available?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will make the findings of the report available.

I would like to stress the seriousness with which I view the deaths in the mining industry. Recently, there was a federal announcement about the findings of a survey indicating that the number of deaths in the mining industry were the highest in the workplace, particularly in the Northern Territory. Working in the mining industry is a dangerous business given the nature of the plant and equipment, explosives and the risks involved. It is my duty as the responsible minister to ensure that the risk to workers is minimised as far as possible. I hope that I have demonstrated to the member for Nhulunbuy the seriousness with which I view the recent accidents in the Northern Territory and my concern to make our mining industry a model for the rest of Australia, as indeed I believe it has been. I hope that the report will be presented to me as expeditiously as possible.

Donations to Life Education Centres

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

My question relates to Life Education Centres. Recently, there have been a number of advertisements on television presented by Mr Dick Smith, indicating that donations to Life Education Centres are tax deductible. I understand that this does not apply in the Northern Territory. Can the minister explain the situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I know that there are some people in the community who are a little confused in relation to tax deductibility for donations to the Life Education Centres. In fact, the Chief Minister wrote to the Treasurer on this matter recently. The bottom line is that donations in respect of counselling drug addicts are tax deductible but donations for the purpose of educating children in relation to drugs are not tax deductible.

I urge all honourable members to lobby the federal Treasurer in relation to this because it is an important matter. The only way that the Life Education Centres are able to obtain the capital necessary for their facilities is through donations. It is about time that the federal government accepted this. To illustrate how confusing this is, I have a letter from the Minister Assisting the Treasurer. This letter was written to Mary Reed, the Secretary of the Top End Life Education Centre. I will quote 2 paragraphs:

The Commissioner of Taxation confirmed that, for donations to mobile Life Education Centres to be deductible, it is necessary that the latter meet the description of a 'public benevolent institution'. Although the phrase 'public benevolent institution' does not have a statutory definition, it is generally understood to be an institution for the relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, destitution, misfortune and helplessness. 'Public benevolent institutions' have as a common feature the giving of relief freely to those who are in need of it and are unable to care for themselves.

The commissioner went on to say that, as he understood it:

The role of the mobile Life Education Centres is to educate people, especially primary schoolchildren, about the effects of drugs and alcohol and to equip them with the skills necessary to overcome the pressures to use such substances. While of obvious merit, such activities do not amount to the provision of benevolent relief and it could not be said that the target audience is in need of such relief.

Consequently, the commissioner concluded by saying that gifts to such centres do not qualify for deductions under the existing provisions of the act.

The National Director of Life Education Centres also received a letter from the Commissioner of Taxation on this particular issue. Again, I will quote 2 paragraphs from that particular letter:

Life Education Centres, which do not only have an educative role but also provide counselling services for drug users and their families, are considered to be 'public benevolent institutions' for income tax purposes because they are providing a measure of direct relief from the affliction. Consequently, donations to such centres will qualify for income tax deductions under subparagraph 78(1)(a)(ii) of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

On the other hand, the various mobile units throughout Australia play a purely educative role in the field of drug education and therefore cannot be accepted as public benevolent institutions.

I urge all members of this Assembly to contact the Federal Treasurer and indicate very clearly that there is a need to review this aspect of the act. I have raised the matter with other Education Ministers and I believe that it is extremely important that it be resolved. As far as the Territory government is concerned, members would be aware that we are providing salary assistance for an educator for Life Education Centres. I will be presenting a cheque for \$20 000 to the Top End Life Education Centre on Thursday this week. It is important that we take the opportunity to support this worthwhile cause because it assists us in educating children and counselling children in relation to drugs and their effects. We should try to give assistance wherever possible. Again, I urge all members to lobby the federal Treasurer. I understand that the Treasurer is considering a review of this matter but every letter helps. I urge honourable members to write immediately.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that all further questions be placed on notice.

TABLED PAPERS

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, further to my answer in question time this morning, I table 2 documents: the FAC Darwin Airport Redevelopment Schedule and the Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works Development Schedule.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Police Force Resignation Rate

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I rise to provide some information in response to a question asked by the member for Sadadeen of the Deputy Chief Minister in relation to police resignations. The responsibility falls within my portfolio.

The honourable member asked what the situation was in relation to police resignations in the Territory, and what we were doing about it. I can advise honourable members that The Australian newspaper dated 16 February contained an article which indicated that the Northern Territory Police Force had a resignation rate of 7.88%. That represented resignations from 59 officers during 1988. These figures are incorrect. The number of police who resigned during 1988 was 50, or 7.14%. A recent study by the Australian Institute of

Criminology found that the Northern Territory resignation rate between 1976 and 1985 was 7.43%. Honourable members can see from those figures that there is no wild fluctuation. The Northern Territory police resignation rate compares more than favourably with the remainder of the public service in the Territory which has a very much higher resignation rate than that.

The Australian Institute of Criminology paper indicated that there have been no significant increases in police resignation rates in recent times. It found also that police resignation rates were lower than those occurring in the respective public services right across the country. Of most significance, the study concluded that the resignation rate for the Northern Territory Police force was found to be particularly high, relative to other police forces, but this was thought to be due primarily to non-operational factors such as isolation and distance from families in southern states where, clearly, most of our police recruits originate. This is borne out by the fact that 46% of the members who resigned during 1988 did so whilst in training. About 70% of police recruits are drawn from interstate and undoubtedly, whatever reason is given, isolation and homesickness could be presumed to have played a substantial part in their resignation.

For some time, the government has been concerned about the resignation rate within the police force and recent positive moves are an indication of the government's determination to reduce this rate. These include: firstly, the introduction of a television recruiting campaign aimed specifically at attracting more local recruits, and no doubt honourable members will have noticed that campaign on Territory television; secondly, a review of training methods, procedures and policies in an attempt to update training so that it reflects not only the needs of the police force but the aspirations of modern youth; and, thirdly, a review of and, where appropriate, the introduction of improved management procedures. It should be noted, however, that the effect of the recent removal of conditions from the Police Arbitral Tribunal Determination, particularly the loss of air fares for new recruits, has yet to be gauged on the resignation rate of police in the Northern Territory. It may be that that action in itself will have an effect the extent of which we cannot determine at this stage.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Work Safe Report

Mr McCARTHY (Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer a question that was asked of the Attorney-General in my absence last Thursday, in relation to the Work Safe Report, that indicated that industrial deaths in the Northern Territory between 1982 and 1984 were the highest in the country. The question demonstrates to me that the member for Nhulunbuy does not really know how the Work Health Act operates. He indicated in the question that I had said that the report was a beat-up. In fact, at no stage did I say that the report was a beat-up. I said that the way the figures were used to demonstrate the point that the federal minister made, which was taken up ably by his cohorts in the Territory, was a beat-up. An attempt was made to compare the figures of the Northern Territory with the figures of the Australian Capital Territory, one being the highest and the other the lowest. The Australian Capital Territory is made up of public servants, working like little beavers in offices. There is not much chance of fatal injury occurring to those people. In the Northern Territory, we have the highest rate per capita of dangerous industry: mining, transport and rural. Obviously, in those sorts of conditions, we are likely to have far higher levels of injury and, unfortunately, death.

It is interesting to note that, of the 31 instances which were the subject of this study - and it should be remembered that this is a study of the years between 1982 and 1984, which was long before the Work Health Act came into being - 14 were transport-related accidents. In other words, 45% were transport-related accidents, and I wonder how the employer or the Work Health Authority is supposed to be able to prevent people from driving dangerously. It is impossible to do that.

The government is very concerned about accidents in the workplace and, through the Work Health Act, I believe that we have put in place the best piece of legislation in Australia to lower that incidence. We still have a way to go. No piece of legislation is ever perfect, but I believe ours is among the best. Most of the accidents that have occurred in the workplace over the last few years could have been prevented if employees had been acting responsibly. Many of the deaths that have occurred in recent times indicate clearly that the employee was doing something that really he ought not to have been doing and that his employer certainly did not condone.

In the second part of his question, the member for Nhulunbuy asked me to provide the names of people or companies which have been granted exemptions since the Work Health Act came into being. The Work Health Act is innovative in that respect. It provides for exemptions to individuals but not to companies and, in that respect, I suspect that the honourable member did not really know what he was talking about. The act does not provide for exemptions to companies. It provides for exemptions to genuine subcontractors who are not responsible to the directions of an employer but to their own directions. Those subcontractors have to be able to show proof that they can maintain an income without coming under the umbrella of the Work Health Act. That proof is required of them but, of course, it is impossible to catch up with everybody.

We know there are people in the workplace who are still not insured. As the inspectors employed by the Work Health Authority visit various places of work, they request that subcontractors show proof of insurance cover and compliance with the provisions of the act. If they cannot show such proof, they are instructed to comply with the provisions of the act and, if they do not do so, they are prosecuted. Prosecutions are currently under way in the courts of the Northern Territory of people who have not complied with the Work Health Act.

As I said, the exemption provisions apply only to individuals who are able to show that they are genuine subcontractors. In fact, 2110 exemptions have been given under the Work Health Act since it took effect. Those are genuine subcontractors and, if the honourable member wants me to table the names of 2110 individuals, he will be responsible for taking a great deal of space in the Parliamentary Record. I do not think that he really needs that information. However, if he wants to contact me, I will be quite happy to show him the provisions which apply under the Work Health Act and to give him any further information he requires.

Protection for Subcontractors on Government Projects

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I draw the minister's attention to news reports concerning the haulage contractor Mr Terry Nichols and ask the minister if he will undertake a review of the present system of contract payment in order to provide better protection for subcontractors engaged on government projects.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I addressed this matter when the member for Koolpinyah raised it last night. However, for the benefit of those honourable members who were not here, I will repeat some of the background to the problem. Despite the claims by the member for Koolpinyah, the government has some sympathy and some understanding of the dilemma in which T & H Bulk Haulage now finds itself.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Well, do something about it.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the member for Koolpinyah, I advise that, since September 1987, together with the Department of Transport and Works and my ministerial officers, I have been involved in a large number of discussions with Mr Terry Nichols about the dilemma in which he found himself in 1987 with a road contractor who, to use a term, 'did a bunk'.

At that time, advice was given to Mr Nichols on a number of occasions by the department, the Katherine regional office, the department's secretariat in Darwin, myself and my ministerial officers that, in effect, if Mr Nichols or other subcontractors wished to avail themselves of the protection that is offered under head contracts with principal contractors, they need to enter into proper subcontract agreements under the head terms of principal contracts. That means that any agreement ought, at least, to be in accordance with the standard pro forma public works contract/subcontract agreement. In addition, subcontracts should include a 14-day payment requirement. That advice has been given repeatedly to all within the business community but, sadly, we find that, time and time again, people enter into commercial agreements, sometimes for very large sums, without appropriate protections for themselves.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: He had protection for himself.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah says that, in this case, the subcontractor or, in fact, the plant hirer, had protection for himself. Last night, she produced copies of delivery dockets. I must admit that that was the first time I had seen those documents. I have had only a very short time this morning to have my departmental people assess whether they can in any shape or form be interpreted as a legal and binding subcontract as required under the principal contract. The initial advice is that they do not. They are delivery dockets. There is no definition of intent and no formalised agreement. Unfortunately, the attempt to try to cover the requirements of subcontract agreements, and we need the Department of Law to pursue this fully but ...

Mr Ede: Did he do the job?

Mr FINCH: Can I say, Mr Speaker, that I have no idea ...

Mr Ede: Did he do the job?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, that is a totally irrational question from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. How would anyone know what subcontract agreements or arrangements are in place between a principal contractor and a supplier or a plant hirer if there is not a formalised agreement that is passed on to government? The government's contract is between itself and the principal contractor. We have obligations under that contract just as contractors have entitlements. The level below that is formal agreements between the next group of parties. It is no different if someone seeks to buy a house or have a house built or anything else. If the requirements and the payments according to them are not defined under a legally-binding document, the purchaser leaves himself exposed.

I can reassure the member for Koolpinyah that, despite her protestations last night, to use her words, that officers of the department had displayed 'supercilious arrogance' - and they will be really delighted to hear her substantiate that claim - for 18 months, officers of the department have tried to be as constructive in their advice as possible, not only to this particular subcontractor but to any others who have found themselves in a similar position.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! My question was very specific. I have listened with patience to the honourable minister's reply but, to date, he has not responded in any way to my question. I asked whether he would undertake to review the present system of contract payment in order to provide better protection for subcontractors engaged on government projects. It was a simple question about whether or not he would order his department to undertake a review.

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

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I inform honourable members that the department has in place a number of measures to help protect the interests of subcontractors under principal contract arrangements. There is the provision that I mentioned: the inclusion of a requirement that any subcontract under the principal contract has a specific format and clauses pertaining to payment. In addition, we attempt as best we can - and it is reasonably successful - to ensure that principal contractors are well and truly vetted before being given jobs. We rely on credit checks within the community and these are usually done by contracting traders etc. We do business checks and we check on previous performance. Unfortunately, the odd number do get through. That is sad, and I feel extremely sorry for anyone who is caught in those circumstances.

In this case, I believe that the principal contractor has skipped interstate. We have a policy that people who default on payment or on product do not obtain further work within the Northern Territory, either as a company or individually as participants in other companies. That policy has been in place. The member for Koolpinyah says that it is a bit late, but where else in Australia is there such a policy? Furthermore, I take this sort of thing so personally that I have taken steps to pursue this contractor interstate and will do the best I can to ensure that he does not repeat this kind of exercise there. It is a vexed question faced by all governments throughout Australia that there are no comprehensive foolproof methods of ensuring that people will not maliciously do a bunk.

The advice that my officers gave at Christmas time to the subcontractor involved was that he should consult a lawyer expeditiously. The member for Koolpinyah suggested last night that that was a problem because of his finances. That was never relayed to me. My advice was: 'Go and see your lawyer. Take your subcontract agreements with you'. I was told then that Mr Nichols had a subcontract and my advice was that he should obtain a proof of debt from his lawyer. I said that we would stall, for as long as possible, the finalisation payment to the principal contractor. We did that for 2 months, but we had a legal obligation under that principal contract. There is a limit to the length of time for which a payment can be delayed and, if people are not satisfied, they simply go to the Ombudsman or take us to court. We did the best that we could but, unfortunately, it seems that action was not taken. When Mr Nichols contacted me, I understood that his lawyer's advice was that, rather than proceed in the direction I had suggested, he should simply go the government. The simple fact of life is that there is no agreement between the department and subcontractors and suppliers. There is no legal entitlement.

Despite claims in the media last night, the government and Fred Finch do not owe Mr Nichols anything. Our obligation is to the principal contractor, not to people down the line. In this case, and in any other case that is brought to my attention, not only do we show sympathy, we also attempt to do the very best that we can to guide people so that they look after their own interests and do not leave themselves exposed to shonky operations.

Mr Speaker, reviews are ongoing. A review was implemented 2 weeks ago through the Northern Territory Traders Association. Its aim is to extend our capacity to conduct accurate credit checks on people. In this case, I am not sure what liquidation action has been taken against the company. However, there will be other creditors and, regardless of what people may think, when it reaches that stage, the government is not able simply to settle with one person and not another. That is a matter for the bankruptcy processors. What I said is that, if people protect themselves with subcontract arrangements and can obtain proof of debt, they can get intervention payment from this government.

Employment of School Leavers in NTPS

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

How many positions were made available to school leavers this year within the Northern Territory Public Service and how many applications were received for those positions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I intend to make a statement on the school leaver employment program during these sittings. I am pleased that the question has been asked now because statements tend to come on quite late in the day.

The school leaver employment program was introduced in 1982 to cater for base grade intake into the public service. That has worked successfully over a number of years. We have taken people into the public service from 1 December to 31 March since that time. Over the last couple of years, we have expanded the school leaver program quite dramatically and, last year, I announced in the House that we would raise the school leaver program to admit 260 people. This year, 440 people will be brought into the work force by means of the school leaver program across both the public and private sectors.

The program is linked into the public service base grade, as has always been the case. In terms of cadetships, the Workstart program has been expanded this year. It is prevocational and broadly based across a range of trades including the metal and construction trades and hospitality. Additional apprenticeship places were announced last year. Public service scholarships are funded by the Department of Education and handled by my department and, for the first time ...

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As the member for Karama and the minister know, the matter addressed by the question is to be the subject of a ministerial statement later in the day. That statement has already been distributed. If the minister wished to attract the attention of the press to the matter, he could simply have said that he would be delivering that statement later instead of trying to have 2 bites of the cherry by delivering his speech twice.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I do not intend to continue at length because, as I said, I will be speaking on this matter later today.

For the first time, we are offering positions for sewing machine mechanics. Mr Speaker, you would be very much aware of developments in the Trade Development Zone. We are certainly meeting the needs of the Territory in providing training for people who will be required in that industry. This year, we are spending the very substantial sum of \$2.43m on our school leavers program, \$300 000 of which is provided by the federal government through DEET, and I am very grateful for that support. We have developed a very sound relationship with the Commonwealth department and the Northern Territory government has continued to demonstrate a high level of commitment.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

This follows on from a question I asked him yesterday morning, which the minister was not able to answer and sought more time to investigate. I have a copy of the standard legal form on which development agreements over Crown land are lodged with the Land Titles Office. I ask the minister whether any such legal agreement exists between the government and the Henry and Walker group in relation to the development of Myilly Point? More specifically, what is the nature of any agreement that exists between the government and the Henry and Walker group? Finally, if the agreement is in this form, why is it not lodged with the Land Titles Office?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asked me a question relating to the agreement between the Territory government and the Henry and Walker group. The Leader of the Opposition asked why the government had refused to lodge details of that agreement with the Registrar-General's Office. He then claimed on 8DN radio yesterday afternoon that, if there are any legal agreements, they should be registered with the Land Titles Office. I doubt that honourable members will be surprised to learn that, once again, the Leader of the Opposition has got it wrong. Having done so, he has compounded his error by repeating it in the media. It is the old foot-in-the-mouth disease from which he constantly suffers.

The Leader of the Opposition is quite correct that the agreement is not registered with the Registrar-General's Office. What he is obviously not aware of is the simple fact that it should not be so registered and, indeed, nor should any other application for direct sale of land be registered at the same stage. The lesson is simple. The property is still in the hands of the Territory government. We simply have an agreement.

Mr Smith: It is still in the hands of the Territory government. Right.

Mr MANZIE: It is an agreement. It is not yet a lease.

Mr Smith: Where is it?

Mr MANZIE: The same situation applies in the case of any direct land sale, including such things as the Palmerston park proposal or the proposed canal development. The procedures are the same. The Leader of the Opposition has tried to make much of this. If he had bothered to undertake a modicum of research before shooting off his mouth, he would have discovered that the Real Property Act precludes anyone registering an encumbrance on a property until they have entered into a lease with its owner.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has attempted to paint a picture of some kind of murky deal over Myilly Point. He has been going round and round. It is typical of the man. We remember his attitude to matters like self-government, the development of the gas pipeline, Palmerston, the Sheratons, Yulara, the Trade Development Zone and anything at all which might create jobs, employment and opportunities for young Territorians. In relation to anything that may require a little encouragement from outside investment, he tries to paint a very dark picture to prevent its occurring.

The reality appears to be that he is incapable of understanding fairly simple procedures. When Henry and Walker has put together the deal for the development of the site, then and only then, it will enter into a development lease for the project. As with any other development lease, it will contain specific timetables for the project's completion and various covenants will ensure that it is done correctly.

Members interjecting.

Mr Ede: They will have to break down the fence to get in there.

Mr MANZIE: That development lease will also contain an agreement for the site which, I might point out, will be ...

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I will point out ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have been fairly tolerant with interjections. I think the honourable minister should be heard in silence as questions are asked in silence.

Mr PALMER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member for MacDonnell should withdraw his reference to the Leader of Government Business as 'boyo'. I find his continual use of that term most offensive.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. The member for MacDonnell will withdraw that reference to the Leader of Government Business.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, in spite of the honourable ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw it without debate.

Mr BELL: I withdraw it without debate.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The manners of members opposite certainly leave a great deal to be desired, but I think that the community has come to expect that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If I pull up members on one side of the House up, I do not need the other side to continue the debate.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I point out that the agreement for payment of the site will be at Valuer-General's price. There should be no confusion whatsoever between the 2 stages and I will go through them slowly so that the Leader of the Opposition may attempt to understand. I think he does understand. He just wants to create an atmosphere that prevents development occurring.

Firstly, the developer makes application for a block of land. That application gives the developer first right over that area. The second step occurs when the developer has finalised the details of the proposal. The developer ...

Mr Smith: 5 or 6 or 10 years later.

Mr MANZIE: The developer enters into a lease with the government for the purchase of the site in question and, to repeat the point I made earlier, it is then that the details are registered with the Land Titles Office. Such is the case with Henry and Walker's right over Myilly Point. It has been given development rights to the area and it retains those rights. As I said in this House last week, I am aware that Henry and Walker is presently negotiating a package for development of the area. When the company has finalised the details of that package, it will enter into a specific development lease for the site and even the Leader of the Opposition should have no difficulty in finding that in the Land Titles Office. There can be no question that the Leader of the Opposition's approach on this issue has really been nothing short of a cheap political stunt. Without justification, he has attempted to cast doubt on the agreement and he has implied incorrect behaviour by this government. I flatly reject any such allegation or imputation.

It is worth while pointing out that the Leader of the Opposition has also overreached himself in respect of his claims about Lord McAlpine's attitude to the development of Myilly Point. As I said yesterday, Lord McAlpine's company, Australian City Properties, holds a number of sites in Darwin which he intends to develop when the economic circumstances are right and not before. I have held a number of discussions with Lord McAlpine over the past year. We have a positive working relationship and I have no hesitation in stating that he is the type of developer who should be encouraged to come into the Territory. Contrary to imputations by the Leader of the Opposition, Lord McAlpine has never suggested that Henry and Walker should be thrown out

of the Myilly Point development simply for his convenience. Indeed, when my office contacted Australian City Properties yesterday, the company was quite concerned to find that it was the focus of the Labor Party's attention and the subject of allegations by the Leader of the Opposition. I am advised that it was made quite clear to the Leader of the Opposition that such action was not considered necessary or desirable on the part of Australian City Properties because it has an excellent working relationship with the Northern Territory government. He is trying to create a problem with another company which is investing in the Northern Territory.

I would like to make a couple of points in relation to questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition and the allegations that he has made in the media. He said Territorians have been waiting for some years now for development to commence at Myilly Point. He is quite correct about that. However, in response, I would like to ask him a couple of very simple questions. How long have Territorians been waiting for the development of the Alice Springs and Darwin Airport terminals? When will construction begin? Those are 2 simple questions. I would like to remind the Leader of the Opposition of a very important point: the redevelopment of Myilly Point will be undertaken by the private sector. As such, it is clearly dependent on fluctuations in the economy and the ability of governments to put in place the infrastructure necessary to make such projects viable. In this regard, there could be no more important public work than the development of the airport terminal. The Leader of the Opposition would serve Territorians far better by having the guts to ask his mates in Canberra to live up to their promises than by making misleading allegations about private companies which are doing their best to survive in an environment that has been forced on Territorians. They are doing it in the Territory for Territorians and I think they should be supported, not denigrated.

Proposed Visit to Canberra by Opposition Leader

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

Yesterday, on 8DN talkback, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about a forthcoming visit to Canberra to discuss with his federal colleagues the Darwin Airport, the Alice Springs Airport and future funding levels for the Northern Territory. Can the Chief Minister indicate whether, in his opinion, it is prudent for such a trip to be made by the Leader of the Opposition at this time?

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Clearly, the question asks for an opinion and that is prohibited specifically by standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: The member will have to rephrase the question.

Mr DONDAS: Is the Chief Minister able to give the House any reason why the Leader of the Opposition should not go to Canberra at this stage?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's comments on talkback radio yesterday were brought to my attention and I must confess that I was horrified when I heard them. It would be nice to think that Territorians could rely on the Leader of the Opposition to use his influence with Labor ministers in Canberra to support initiatives of that government in the Territory or to support the Northern Territory in its bid for fair play financially from Canberra. Unfortunately, he appears to have no influence with the Labor

machine down there or the federal government or the ministers of the federal government individually. His reputation is that of an ineffectual bungler. This unenviable reputation has been built up during previous forays into Canberra by the Leader of the Opposition dating as far back as October 1986. The Leader of the Opposition issued a press release after a trip to Canberra in which he announced he had raised the application of the fringe benefits tax to Territorians with the Prime Minister and had made strong representations to the federal minister to abandon proposals for a gold tax. That is commendable stuff but, of course, I do not think he got very far. Unfortunately, we still have the fringe benefits tax and the mining industry is on notice that the gold tax will be introduced in 1991.

In March last year, the Leader of the Opposition went to Canberra once again to save the Territory. He clung at that time to the coat-tails of Senator Bob Collins and obtained a meeting with the federal Environment Minister, Senator Graham Richardson. He wanted to talk about mining and the environment in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition got so carried away with the occasion that he reported to the NT News on 25 March that mining would definitely proceed at Coronation Hill and he quoted Senator Richardson as the source of this startling revelation. The NT News printed a blazing headline which read 'Mining Nod', followed by a writer line which read 'Victory for BHP, Says Smith'.

A cautionary note was sounded later in the story when a member of Senator Richardson's staff was quoted as saying: 'Frankly, we were very surprised that Mr Smith would say that'. He was not the only one who was surprised. We were certainly surprised, as were the mining industry, the federal Labor government, the Aboriginal traditional owners and the environment lobby. All were surprised that the Leader of the Opposition would say that. The federal minister spent the next 2 days trying to dig himself out of the mire and, no doubt, cursing the day he agreed to spend 5 minutes with the Leader of the Opposition from the Northern Territory. On 25 March, Senator Richardson simply rejected the Opposition Leader's claims in relation to Coronation Hill. In a subsequent interview with Col Krohn on 8DN Talkback, the Leader of the Opposition admitted that he had got it all wrong. He put it down to, and I quote, 'an excess of enthusiasm'. He never explained if this enthusiasm was for the mining industry or for getting his name in the paper.

Mr Speaker, who can ever forget the sheer ineptitude and total stupidity of the Leader of the Opposition's rushed trip to Canberra to save the Northern Territory government's housing package during the last Legislative Assembly sittings? This was the classic example. He thought that he would cobble together a deal with one of the federal government's newest ministers - the Minister for Housing, Peter Staples - to undo our First Home Buyers Scheme so that it could be put together again under the name of the Leader of the Opposition and he would be hailed as being the saviour of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, inexperienced Hon Peter Staples may be, but stupid he is not. He saw the Leader of the Opposition coming from a long way away. He saw through his flimsy attempt at political grandstanding and recognised the political dangers for any federal Labor minister in opposing Australia's most innovative and generous housing scheme. He handed the Opposition Leader a prepared press release supporting the Northern Territory government's housing scheme, and sent him off with a flea in his ear about a callous waste of taxpayers' money on unnecessary airline trips.

The forays of the Leader of the Opposition into the world of real politics in Canberra have been signposted by bungling, embarrassment and ineptitude. As I said at the outset, the 3 issues the Leader of the Opposition threatens to take up in Canberra next week are of vital concern to every Territorian: our construction industry, our tourism industry and the need for a start on the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports early this year, as we have been promised. We need that \$57m Special Revenue Assistance Grant so that we can continue to deliver a high standard of health, education and welfare services to the community. Every householder who has recently paid an electricity bill knows how desperately we need to maintain that \$50m electricity subsidy.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to go out of town next week, then he should go to the Queensland coast for a few days, to the beach where he worked out his quick-fix economic strategy over Christmas to solve the Territory's economic woes. His going to Queensland for a few days will not help Territorians much but at least it will not cause us any harm. I appeal to him, on behalf of all Territorians, not to go anywhere near Canberra next week while these delicate negotiations over our financial affairs hang in the balance.

If the Leader of the Opposition must go to Canberra, if he cannot resist the urge, then I ask him at least to do it properly after I, as leader of government in the Northern Territory, have met the federal Treasurer and discussed the complex matter of the \$107m ongoing assistance to the Territory. If he must go, then he should make an appeal, after that meeting which is yet to be scheduled, to his federal contacts to be fair to the Northern Territory because we have had about all the financial flogging we can stand. If he has to do it, for goodness sake, let him do it correctly rather than make a mess of it as he has done every time in the past.

Horseracing in Alice Springs

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for TOURISM

I received a fax from the Central Australian Trainers' Association in November stating that horseracing in Alice Springs would cease as insufficient funds were available. I believe the racing industry is anxiously awaiting action on the recommendations of a report called the Bennett Report. Would the minister advise on the current position, and is the racetrack in Alice Springs likely to close?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Flynn for his question. I will be making a ministerial statement tomorrow on the state of the racing industry and honourable members will receive copies of the Bennett Report. I am sure that will answer the honourable member's questions in full.

COGSO Opposition to External Examinations

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

This morning on the ABC radio, the President of the Council of Government School Organisations, Mr Richard Creswick, said that, over the past 17 years, his organisation had developed a policy opposing external examinations such as those announced yesterday by the minister. Is Mr Creswick correct in his statement, and could the minister advise whether COGSO has had this policy of opposing external examinations for the past 17 years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. This morning, it was quite clear that the President of COGSO, Richard Creswick, alluded to the fact that COGSO had spent 17 years developing a policy which opposed external assessment. May I say here that, for 16 years, the Council of Government School Organisations has had a policy supporting the introduction of external examinations. I guess it was disappointing to me to note Richard Creswick making that statement at this time. What he should have said was that, when he became the president in 1988, things started to change. He started to move things along the ALP's line, and this is disappointing to me because, after all, he is one of the Prime Minister's Animals. His job is to speak for the ALP through the ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker? I think it is thoroughly unnecessary for the honourable Minister for Education to refer to any member of the Territory community as an animal.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HARRIS: May I just say for the honourable member's benefit that Animals stands for the Australian National Media Liaison Services. Mr Richard Creswick is the spokesman for the ALP in that regard.

Getting back to the issue of the policy of COGSO, it was a disappointment to me that it decided to change in September. Let us look at the previous policy of COGSO. I make it very clear to parents listening that this was the policy prior to September 1988, and it relates particularly to assessment:

521. Council believes that assessment of students should involve a balance of both external examination and school-based assessment in each instance.

522. Council believes that the system should include provision to give students experience in examination techniques from an early age. Assessment at critical points in a student's life, for example, Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12.

I believe that is a sensible approach that was developed by parents through the Council of Government Schools Organisation to the whole issue of assessment.

In September 1988, it is very interesting to note that a good deal of footwork was going on and that the new President of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, Mike Bradley, happened to be there during the course of deliberations on the motion put forward by the COGSO Executive. That motion deleted from the policy the sections which I have just read out, and the policy now reads:

522. Council believes assessment should be both school-based and system-wide and should include a variety of techniques. Council believes that external examinations are not an appropriate technique in junior high schools.

It is nonsense to say, as Mr Creswick did on radio, that COGSO has been developing a policy opposing external examinations for 17 years. It is line

with the opposition's typical approach to such matters: using scare tactics in an attempt to change community attitudes.

There has been a marked response from the community in relation to external assessment. There is no doubt about it. People have been calling for it for many years and it is disappointing that the President of COGSO is attempting to promote the notion that COGSO has been looking at removing support for external assessment from its policy for years. It is important to correct the record in relation to this. The COGSO policy changed only when Richard Creswick became its president.

Assistance to Horticulturists

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Can he give me details of a proposed scheme in the form of grants and/or loans to help established horticulturists to meet their financial calls from time to time in the expectation of continued successful operation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my department is investigating means of supporting the horticultural industry. Unfortunately, at this time, I cannot provide any information to the honourable member. I understand that she has always been a supporter of the horticultural industry, as so many of us are. During the last 8 or 10 years, the value of the industry's annual produce has risen from about \$400 000 to some \$15m. In conjunction with the Department of Industries and Development, my department is looking at means of supporting the horticultural industry and I will provide relevant advice to the honourable member for Koolpinyah and other members when it is available.

Kangaroo 89 - Business Opportunities

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What role is the Northern Territory government playing to ensure that maximum local business opportunities arise from the Kangaroo 89 defence exercise to take place in north Australia later this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member's question is timely indeed. Kangaroo 89 is not scheduled to start until August but, of course, the business opportunities referred to by the honourable member will arise long before that. The exercise will put previous defence exercises in the north well and truly in the shade. Preliminary cost estimates of Kangaroo 89 have reached \$211m. Although I note that the budget for the exercise still has to be confirmed by the federal government, decisions are expected shortly. That budget includes salaries for defence personnel and I understand that the largest single cost will be for the movement of army equipment. As things now stand, the exercise will involve about 24 000 defence personnel, at least 2 FA18 fighter squadrons and 2 United States warships. The core period of the exercise will be from 1 to 31 August but the build-up phase will start on 1 July. The clean-up teams will be active until the end of September. Let us hope they do not make too much of a mess and that they do not get too fair dinkum.

Obviously, substantial opportunities will exist for local business and industry to participate in areas such as construction, maintenance and the supply of stores and non-specialised material. Not all the opportunities will be realised in the Territory, as much as we would like that to happen. For a start, the exercise spreads from Cape York in Queensland across to Cape Onslow in Western Australia. It seems also that the RAAF buys stores on behalf of the 3 services through an interstate supply link which means that the Darwin supply contract is part of a much larger national contract. However, within the framework, the Northern Territory government has already been highly active. Coordination of the Territory effort to get as much business as possible has been through the Industrial Supplies Office which has been raising the awareness of local business and industry of the opportunities that are available and likewise raising awareness within the services of the capabilities of local industry. Shortly, the ISO will be conducting a seminar to bring together defence purchasing officers and local businesses. Also, the ISO will start a local publicity campaign soon to keep local business informed of those opportunities.

I am happy to advise that, through the efforts so far of the Industrial Supplies Office, the Defence Department has acknowledged that some consumables, which have been purchased traditionally interstate, will now be bought locally. In fact, this change in attitude has been reflected already at Tindal where Katherine suppliers are progressively increasing their market share. Defence construction and maintenance documentation is done locally by Australian Construction Services although some design input is occasionally sourced from interstate. The Industrial Supplies Office has established regular communications with the Australian Construction Services to ensure maximum local participation.

I have outlined the early steps that have been taken to obtain the best possible benefits for local business from the Kangaroo 89 exercise. Of course, the results will not be known until the contracts fall due. However, I am confident that the services will seek to work with local businesses as much as possible. Traditionally, the services have enjoyed strong support from the Darwin community, perhaps stronger than in many parts of Australia. I am sure that they would want that good relationship to continue.

Emergency Service Centre for Palmerston

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer the minister to the petition tabled by the member for Palmerston in relation to a 24-hour accident service in the satellite town. I also refer him to the government's election promise to establish - and I quote from the CLP election document - 'a private hospital annexe in Palmerston with a 24-hour medical service'. Why did the minister renege on that promise and why has he and his department had to be dragged kicking and screaming into providing any service whatsoever?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all I can say to the honourable member opposite is: 'Good try'. As far as this government is concerned, Palmerston is a developing area. In all respects, not only in terms of health and community services, we will continue to pay attention to our commitment to its development. The commitment to a 24-hour service certainly was given and the commitment to the construction of a private hospital in that area was certainly spoken about prior to the last election. Nobody resiles from those commitments. We have

had private companies examine the possibility of the establishment of a private hospital in the Palmerston area. They have said that it is not viable at this stage. We are talking about a private hospital - private entrepreneurs will build that structure. It would have to be an economic and viable project for them to embark on it, just as a shopping centre or any other commercial venture would need to be viable.

We gave a commitment that we would have a 24-hour emergency service there. We also have a commitment - as we have to all other areas in the Northern Territory - to develop medical services for the people of Palmerston. Dating back to when I first became minister responsible for this portfolio, we have had a community health centre there and a doctor was operating for 1½ hours per week in that facility. The policy of this government is to encourage private general practitioners to practise in areas of that kind, such as Jabiru, Groote Eylandt, Gove etc. That policy has been in place for some time and Palmerston is no different in that regard. Mr Speaker, 2 general practitioners saw fit to commence business in Palmerston. They put it to me that the government-paid doctor, who was providing the service from the community health centre, was impacting on the viability of their business. On that basis, that doctor was withdrawn and the general practitioners were left to provide the medical services in that area.

I attended a public meeting and I heard what the people of Palmerston were saying. Despite the fact that all the necessary criteria had not been met at that stage, there was a public perception that there was a need for an increase in the service. After a great deal of lobbying by the local member, the Deputy Chief Minister, that public perception was clarified in Cabinet. It was decided that we would provide a 24-hour service there. That is much more difficult to put in place than many people would think because we do not have general practitioners growing on trees. My department has negotiated for quite some time. Consideration has been given to bringing a doctor from Melbourne and we have tried to encourage a specialist gynaecologist whose spouse is a general practitioner to come to the Territory. One could work at the Royal Darwin Hospital and the other could work at Palmerston. The point is that the negotiations have been very difficult indeed.

To provide the service that we have promised, we have had to renovate the community health centre. We will have a general practitioner available 24 hours a day for the people of Palmerston. I apologise to the people of Palmerston and to the local member for the fact that it has taken so long. However, I beg them to understand the difficulties that we have in attracting medical people to the Northern Territory to take up private practice, particularly when they see members of the opposition asking us to put government-paid practitioners into community health centres which will immediately destroy their business once they get there. That is rather a catch-22 situation, but I can certainly say that this government has fulfilled its commitment to the people of Palmerston.

Underage Drinking

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TOURISM

Has the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission or the police achieved any results in containing the activities of underage drinkers in hotels and discos since changes were made to the laws covering this matter last year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, results to date have been reasonably encouraging. During the past week or so, inspectors of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and police checked nearly 200 young adults in the Northern Territory to determine whether they were of a legal drinking age. This occurred in a number of licensed establishments around the Territory, including a number of prominent nightspots which officers and myself have received complaints about. During the past couple of months, I have received a number of complaints from parents about their children being served alcoholic beverages. The checks did not detect any underage drinkers, but I am not naive enough to believe that the problem has been solved. Hopefully, the new laws are having the desired effect of containing it.

It is worth while noting that, during January, a 17-year-old youth was fined for giving a false name and age to the police and for being on licensed premises. He had actually purchased a scotch and coke which ended up costing him \$150. In January, in another case involving the same nightspot, an underage youth was detected on the premises and asked to leave. At that stage, he was not drinking. He was apprehended later by the police and found to be drinking a stubby. That resulted in a fine of \$150 for remaining on licensed premises and an additional fine of \$150 for being an underage drinker. His stubby cost him \$300.

It is pleasing to note that the media is playing its part by focusing on teenage drinking. The top-rating television drama, A Country Practice, has recently run episodes dealing with the problems encountered by teenagers drinking. The National Campaign Against Drug Abuse has shown that the vast majority of Australians regard underage drinking as a major problem. I am told that 93% of the population believe that it is a problem. The results of our checks of 200 people in the past week or so, which failed to find any offenders, may raise some questions as to whether the problem is as widespread in the Northern Territory as many people think. Of course, as in the case of drugs, parental concern is an important factor. In any case, it is pleasing to see the media dealing with a subject which obviously concerns the community as a whole.

I have asked the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission to continue its efforts in this area and underage drinkers and licensed operators who serve them should take fair notice that they will be prosecuted. I will also mention in passing that I am aware of community concern about licensed operators serving people who are hopelessly intoxicated. I have asked officers of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission to pay particular attention to that matter and I assure the community that licensees who serve people who are obviously intoxicated will be prosecuted.

Allegations by Member for Nightcliff

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of allegations against a member of the public made in this place last night by the member for Nightcliff, and has the member for Nightcliff since made a deposition detailing those allegations and evidence to support them? If not, will the minister ensure that officers of his department interview the member for Nightcliff at the earliest possible moment and, if the evidence does stand up after examination, will he advise us of that evidence and the action that he is taking to sort out the problem? Alternatively, if no action is justified, will the minister make a full public disclaimer?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am sure that those members that were here during the course of the adjournment debate last night were very concerned about the seriousness of the allegations that were made. On completion of the speech by the member for Nightcliff, he made the documents in his possession available to me and I immediately contacted the Secretary of the Department of Education. I have received a note from the Secretary of the Department of Education this morning and I will read it into Hansard. I think that it covers the issue as it has been raised. I will read the text of the memorandum:

From a preliminary analysis of the documents provided, the relevant departmental files and minutes of school council meetings, it is apparent that the matter warrants investigation. There is sufficient documentary evidence from which to draw a reasonable inference that Mr Perrin did not declare an interest in a contract which he was responsible for handling during his term of office as Chairman of Nightcliff High School Council. The documents show that Mr Perrin, as chairman, personally handled significant aspects of a contract between the council and the firm for the contract on behalf of the council and the signatory on an agreement between the Department of Education and the council. During this period, he was associated with the firms which were successful in gaining and carrying out the contract.

There is no evidence from the record of the school council that, during the period when he had an interest in the contract, he either declared his interest or abstained from voting. The Education Act and ministerial guidelines and the agreement between the Department of Education and the school all refer to the requirement to comply with ministerial guidelines, one of which relates to declaration of interests of members and requires members of the council to disclose financial interests and requires a member who has a financial interest to refrain from voting. The documents also reveal other apparent irregularities.

In the circumstances, I have no option but to conduct a formal investigation under sections 71H(2) and 71J(2)(g) of the Education Act. When it is completed, I will provide your office with a report.

Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to table this document.

I indicate to honourable members that, if they have concerns which they believe require investigation, I am only too happy to look at them. We are trying to develop a system whereby the devolution of powers to school councils is carried out so that the community generally has a greater role in the running of its schools. We need to ensure that any concerns are looked at in a responsible manner. When the department's report is complete, I will make further comment.

Relocation of Radar Equipment

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

During question time last week, the minister mentioned what he described as a scandal relating to the shifting of a key piece of radar equipment from Darwin to Port Keats. What radar equipment is involved and what impact is its removal likely to have on the civilian and defence needs of Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, when one speaks about matters as sensitive as defence, one needs to be extremely careful. Last week, I addressed the potential cutbacks in defence spending at both Tindal and Coonawarra, matters which the opposition has attempted in vain to evade over the last few days, but matters which still need to be answered. I raised the matter of spending at Tindal for no other purpose than to obtain some straight answers as to whether the federal ALP government is proceeding with its previously announced defence program in the north.

It has extended the initial part of the Coonawarra program from 1 year to 4 years. In respect of the second part of the announced program, we are still awaiting advice but it appears that that will not occur for 5 years or more. There has been acknowledgement that the Department of Defence is reviewing its program at Tindal. When he visits Tindal next month to open the first stage, the Prime Minister will have the opportunity to clarify that or otherwise. The honourable member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, has been unable to give us any comfort to date.

I pass on to another matter even though it is a matter which I am reluctant to debate too openly. However, it is a matter of concern to defence personnel and to the civilian population alike. We have now a proposal to relocate the 2-crew defence radar from Lee Point to Port Keats. Honourable members opposite might say: 'We are not at war. There is still a radar facility at the Darwin Airport'. That is true, but let me say that the original program of the federal government with regard to defence of the north was to retain Lee Point radar, retain Tindal's new radar and provide additional remote-controlled radars at Port Keats and Point Stuart, thus providing very comprehensive radar cover monitoring the northern skies.

Obviously, what has happened is that 2 of those radars have been dropped off the capital works program. To use simplistic terms, the manually-operated radar system is to be moved from Lee Point to Port Keats. The personnel problems that will be encountered in putting people there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year are a minor matter. The motivation is that, now that we have the Hornets at Katherine, we need to have low-level training covered. I do not deny that that is a reasonable objective, but the way to do it logically is to provide a new state-of-the-art, remote-controlled system at Port Keats.

What this means to Darwin is that a radar system that has far greater capabilities than the one at the airport is to be relocated. Any private pilot knows that the Darwin Airport tower radar system is out of action half a day a week every week. Every private pilot in the Northern Territory is aware that our skies are totally unmonitored for half a day a week. People will say that the radar at Port Keats will cover the skies of Darwin. That is true if you are talking about airspace above 10 000 ft. Whether we are talking about defence or whether we are talking about the use of our skies by drug runners or illegal importers etc, what we need is a comprehensive, balanced system. This federal ALP government, which mutters about the defence of the north, appears not to be matching its words with actions. I am extremely concerned. We are not confronted with any immediate threat, but one of the ways of ensuring we ...

Mr Bell: We are not. I don't know about you.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I accept the member for MacDonnell's comment that he may feel safe down in central Australia, but I can tell him that members on this side of the House take defence very seriously. Obviously the best method of defence is putting into place those mechanisms and facilities which will discourage potential aggressors. We hope that, having the facilities in place, will be enough to keep people away. If our back door is open, anyone can come in, including drug runners, illegal importers and even an aggressive force of some sort, although that might not be next year but in 10 or 20 years time. We need to get the systems in place and I am extremely distressed that, although this government raised this very serious matter with the Prime Minister 2 months ago, we have still not received a reasoned response as to why this totally illogical and irrational decision has been taken.

Mr Speaker, I ask honourable members opposite, who seem to be taking this matter extremely lightly, to reflect on the implications of this potential move and to support this government by encouraging their federal colleagues to meet their commitments.

Nightcliff TAB Agency

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he confirm that he has maintained the time-honoured practice of awarding senior management positions within the racing and gaming portfolio to CLP or former CLP political staffers by awarding the lucrative Nightcliff TAB Agency to a Mr Kevin Norton, a former CLP staffer, without the vacancy being advertised according to established practice?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, most certainly, I understand that Mr Kevin Norton has been awarded a TAB contract. Let me make it quite clear, however, that such decisions are made by the TAB Board. The minister is not involved and normal commercial practice is followed. Applications are received and the board assesses them.

Mr Smith: Did it advertise it?

Mr POOLE: To my knowledge, it was advertised. I will certainly confirm that.

Mr Smith: I think you had better check.

Mr POOLE: I will certainly find out, but I assure the member for Nhulunbuy that the decision was made by the board. After the decision was made, I was advised that Mr Kevin Norton had been awarded the TAB contract. I had no knowledge of it prior to that time.

Release of Water at Ranger

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Recently, concerns have been raised by Greenpeace International, the Environment Centre and the Northern Land Council in relation to the release of water from retention ponds at Ranger. What is the situation in relation to the release of water from those retention ponds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly some concerns have been raised and may I say at the outset that I certainly do not share those concerns. Furthermore, I have to say once again that the stated concerns are misplaced and downright misleading. It is virtually an annual event that Ranger is permitted to release excess water from Retention Pond 4 at this stage of the wet season. It is also an annual event that environment groups make a great deal of noise about it and attempt to mislead the public about the facts surrounding the water release. Let us lay out some simple facts immediately.

The RP4 is not within the restricted release zone and it does not hold toxic water. I say this because ABC television news last night stated blandly, and without sourcing the information, that toxic water had been released and that RP4 was in the restricted release zone. Simple, basic facts are being ignored by the ABC in particular, and it brings no credit at all to its journalists and its research people when it issues stories of this kind. Of course, everyone witnessed another similar story about the Jabiru transmission line. In fact, the line proposed along the highway was not the preferred option for that line. Those maps and diagrams were available to anybody. Again, that was simply investigative reporting of the worst kind. I think that needs to be addressed by the ABC management.

RP4 holds rainwater. It is the collection area for water that falls from the clouds on the general area. Its real purpose is to act as a silt trap to prevent silt from entering Magela Creek. RP4 water has not been used at any stage in the mining process. It conforms in every respect to drinking water quality. Mr Speaker, if you had the inclination, you could drink it and swim in it. Indeed, if honourable members have taken the time to have a look at RP4 at Ranger - and I am sure members of the Sessional Committee on the Environment have seen it on many occasions - they will have been very impressed by the birds and the fish that are breeding there.

Because the volume of water in RP4 builds up naturally during the wet season, Ranger generally applies for a release of water at this time of the year. Prior to 1984-85, release by natural, uncontrolled overflows via a spillway which flows into the Magela Creek occurred via Djalkmarra Creek. In 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87, release was effected by controlled discharge via a direct pipeline to the Magela Creek. Last year, no release occurred because of below average rainfall during the wet season. Approval to release through the controlled method was given by the Department of Mines and Energy, after consultation with the Office of the Supervising Scientist, Ranger and the Northern Land Council - despite what the NLC has announced. Release from RP4 via the syphon began at about 2 pm last Monday and continued until

mid-afternoon yesterday. A total of 11 210 m³ of water was released. That is equivalent to 3 minutes of flow in the Magela Creek.

The quality of the water that was released easily meets drinking water standards. If the Leader of the Opposition has some concerns, I suggest he have a scientist tell the difference between some RP4 water and water from a domestic tap. Currently, the uranium concentration in the water is about 53 parts per billion and the international standard is 1000 parts per billion. Those are the facts and figures.

Monitoring of the water release this week has been intensive, involving daily analysis of water samples at the release point and from the Magela Creek upstream and downstream. I understand there have been mutterings from the anti-Ranger lobby about dead fish and deep concern by the OSS, obviously echoed by the Leader of the Opposition. There is no double guessing where he got his information from.

Mr Smith: Where do you reckon?

Mr COULTER: Certainly not from any scientific body or from any knowledgeable person in the area.

Mr Smith: Do you want to bet?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I offer the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to name his source by way of interjection. Not a word, Mr Speaker.

The most stringent inquiries at an official departmental level reveal that the Office of the Supervising Scientist has no concern about this. Apparently, somebody conducted a series of tests on fingerlings in a tank of water and some died.

Mr Smith: 20%.

Mr COULTER: As the OSS points out, it is usual for some to die in all test circumstances. It is as simple as that. It is a natural phenomenon.

On a similar note, there is a story doing the rounds, which cannot be verified, that dead fish were seen in a waterhole at Mudginberri. According to the story, this happened because local Aboriginal people caught some fish and then, I understand, some female person urged them to throw the fish back because Ranger had poisoned the waterhole. The dead fish were those that were thrown back. Unfortunately, this sort of nonsense is only too common. In just about every sittings of this Assembly, I seem to be required to get to my feet to explain away yet another hysterical complaint from the environment lobby about mining at Ranger. In every case that I can remember, the environment lobby has been substantially in error.

Mr Speaker, I have put the facts of the RP4 water release before the Assembly. I can do no more than that except to urge once again that members of the media check the so-called facts that are given to them by the environment lobby before they run their stories.

State Square Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he confirm the belief of local tenderers that subcontract tenders for the State Square project are being sent to Perth for assessment? If this is the case, does he agree that this is an unsatisfactory method of maximising local input into the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not know in whose office preliminary, subsequent or intermediate assessments are done.

Mr Smith: Well, could you find out for us?

Mr FINCH: I am not sure whether the Leader of the Opposition expects me to look over someone's shoulder. I simply do not know.

Mr Smith: You think the answer is yes, do you?

Mr FINCH: I am not saying that at all.

Mr Speaker, can I set people's minds at rest by emphasising again that the responsibility for the comprehensive assessment of all tenderers and their prices rests with the project control group, all of whom are located in Darwin. I do not know if some preliminary assessment is being done in Perth. I doubt it. However, I simply do not know.

Mr Smith: The local tenderers know.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition would like an answer, I am more than delighted to give it to him. As usual, his concern seems to be more with flapping his own jaw than with receiving factual information. I was going to tell the honourable member that the project manager, Tipperary Developments, has its base office for the project in Darwin. Multiplex, the construction manager, and Norbuilt both have their project offices in Darwin. MLE Architects is, of course, a Darwin firm. The project control group comprises 3 government members and 3 representatives of the project manager. Each of those individuals is based here. The observer in that process, the independent ISO representative, is based also in Darwin. I have no idea what the Leader of the Opposition is driving at in this matter. I cannot give him a categorical answer. I do not know whether any tenders have been sent, after their initial processing, to Sydney, Perth, Melbourne or Alice Springs. Why would I know that? I know that they need to be dealt with expeditiously. The project control group is the overall monitor and decision-maker and will determine to whom and at what price subcontracts are let.

Broome Business Opportunities

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I noted a reference in the weekend press about businessmen from Broome in Western Australia entering into contracts with the Darwin business community for construction supplies. Is the minister aware of this and is he aware of the opportunities for Darwin business in Broome and north-west Western Australia generally? Could he advise of any actions which the Department of

Industries and Development is taking to promote this opportunity for Darwin businesses and suppliers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did have the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Braithwaite group of companies who visited the Northern Territory recently. The story of Northern Territory small business initiatives in the north of Western Australia is one of which the small businesses involved can feel very proud.

The people of Broome have suffered from the same problem of isolation that we suffer in the Northern Territory. The delivery time from Perth is 6 weeks and the supplier always says: 'It's on the truck'. Experiences are similar to those which we used to hear about in the Territory before the sealing of the Stuart Highway and the Newcastle Waters bridge. Perhaps local businesses are a little bit hungry at the moment. They certainly have their pencils sharpened and are having considerable success in their dealings with the people from Western Australia.

Last week, 2 businessmen from Broome, representing the Braithwaite group of companies, dropped into my office to reinforce their satisfaction with the Darwin construction supplies market after spending the week here looking at what was on offer. Mr John Braithwaite, the group general manager, and Mr Roland Parthezius, the project manager, were most enthusiastic about doing business with Darwin, particularly in comparison with Perth. This year, they will be building a multi-million dollar resort overlooking the famous Cable Beach at Broome and, as a result of their visit to Darwin, they will be obtaining most of their supplies from here. Those supplies include an order for 750 000 clay bricks, all the doors and windows for the resort, all the roofing material, all the cladding and all the tiles. I was most encouraged by those gentlemen and what they told me.

Over the years, the Darwin business community has had its share of knockers: 'Prices are too high. Delivery time is too long. Service is unreliable'. How many times have honourable members heard such stories? The Broome experience, however, tells a different story. The representatives of the Braithwaite group were fed up with doing business with Perth suppliers who, in their words, quoted prices too high, delivery times too long and could not guarantee reliable service. Because Broome is equally distant from Perth and Darwin, they decided to look us over. They were absolutely delighted with the results. Darwin, they said, understands the Broome problems. With every company they did business with in Darwin, these people achieved satisfactory prices and delivery schedules. They were also able to talk comfortably about cyclone ratings. Their Perth experience was that industry ducks for cover at the mention of the subject.

This story has more significance than just giving pleasant news about local industry picking up orders. Both those Broome businessmen are members of the Broome Chamber of Commerce and they have gone back to their home town to spread the word about Darwin, particularly after contact with the NT Industrial Supplies Office.

Mr Ede: It should be part of the Northern Territory.

Mr COULTER: They told me that \$43m in construction work will be undertaken in the Broome region this year as the area consolidates its position as a high-quality tourist venue.

In response to the interjection of the member for Stuart, the idea of having Broome annexed to Darwin is not a new one. It looks as if it is happening at the moment, on a de facto basis anyway.

Mr Ede: That is right. Keep it going.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, we are not even talking about real competition for the Territory tourism market. Experience shows that visitors to Broome either go through the Territory or come to the Territory. In that respect, I was happy to pledge a closer relationship between the Northern Territory and the Broome region so that areas of mutual interest can be more fully explored. I think that Darwin business people who hosted and looked after the Broome visitors should be commended.

Financing of State Square Project

Mr COLLINS to TREASURER

In early January, an announcement was made on the radio which, as I picked it up, said that the government had borrowed \$20m as its first instalment for the State Square project at an interest rate of 4%, with interest rates climbing to commercial rates. From whom was the money borrowed, what are the details of the rising interest rates - 1% per annum or whatever - how long is the loan taken out for, and has the government invested any temporarily spare amounts of that money in the short-term money market to obtain an interest benefit for Territorians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can provide general information which may inform the honourable member on this matter and I state first that, for the first time, recently the Territory issued capital indexed bonds as part of its loan program. That is important. The interest on these bonds is payable quarterly on the capital sum which is increased each quarter by the previous quarter's CPI increase. The interest rate is a little under 5% per annum. I do not have information before me on the actual institutions from which these funds were raised.

If there is any confusion about this matter, the important point is that we are guaranteeing a fixed return which increases with the inflation rate, and that is the key to it all. It is not some miraculous sleight of hand that provides money at rates way below those available in the general marketplace, but it is a very interesting method of financing major projects. I understand that the tunnel under Sydney Harbour is proposed to be, or is being, financed by this method. In the press release that I issued on 4 January, I said:

Although the proceeds were not being specifically designated for the State Square project, Mr Perron said, he pointed out that he made reference to the likelihood of such issues while describing the financing arrangements being put in place for that project.

As I have announced on a number of occasions, financing of the State Square project has been included in the 1988-89 capital works program of the government and, during construction, finance will be provided through appropriation. Funds will be raised, when required, as part of the Territory government's normal semi-government loans program. I point out to honourable members that our semi-government loans program is the pool of money that is borrowed by the government from a variety of sources, primarily to get on with

the job of building the Territory's infrastructure. That covers roads, schools, police stations, health clinics, Supreme Court buildings and museums. They are funded partly by loans and partly by appropriation. As I have also mentioned to honourable members before, in the Territory at present, we have assets worth 3 times our loan debt. In other words, when one looks at the Territory globally, as one must when considering these matters, we are putting \$3 from appropriated funds towards capital projects and borrowing roughly \$1.

To date this year, we have borrowed \$87.6m and these borrowings have been raised as follows: public issue \$15.9m; private issue \$14.9m; capital indexed bonds, the subject of this question, \$17.8m; and promissory notes \$39m. Those are the current borrowings. Of course, they stand on our books and will be rolled over as they mature. They will be replaced having regard to market conditions of the day. In doing that, we are acting in exactly the same way as every government in Australia acts. That is how the states run their loan programs and, indeed, the Commonwealth government runs its program in a similar fashion. It is an accepted practice and the Northern Territory is certainly not doing anything unusual. The original reason for my press release was to announce that a form of borrowing was entered into by the Northern Territory government which it had not used before. I will read a further paragraph which may clarify it for the member for Sadadeen.

Mr Collins: I doubt it, but do it anyway.

Mr PERRON: This is a further paragraph from my press release:

The interest rate costs on the issue start at a very low rate of a bit above 4% and rise, with movements in the Consumer Price Index, to a rate approaching present day semi-government bond rates by maturity in the year 2005.

That is the particular one we have at present.

At that point in time, the capital sum plus adjustment for CPI increases will be repaid or refinanced on the market conditions then prevailing.

Caravan Park Development in Jabiru

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The minister has responsibility for the Jabiru Town Development Authority. I understand that development of further tourist facilities at Jabiru is soon to proceed. If this is so, can he provide details of the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question was the subject of a press release yesterday. The Jabiru Town Development Authority has reached a decision on who will develop the new caravan park at Jabiru. It has been probably 12 or 18 months since negotiations first commenced with the Gagadju Association, the ANPWS and Ranger with regard to land at Jabiru for a caravan park development.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform honourable members that the successful tenderer for the development of this project is Australian Frontier Holidays who have quite a large range of operations around the Northern Territory. Many proposals were submitted and the tenderers were narrowed down

to 3 - all extremely good. However, it was clear to anyone who perused the proposals that Australian Frontier Holidays was well and truly in front. It is quite a dramatic development valued at about \$6.5m. The first stage, valued at \$5.5m, will be available for the 1991 season.

It is a much-needed development for Jabiru and Kakadu National Park. Members would be aware that the Crocodile Hotel has opened and is attracting quite large numbers of people. It is a magnificent facility but there is a need for other services and other types of accommodation in the Jabiru area. This project will provide that. There will be 200 serviced and sealed caravan sites, 100 tent sites and space to cater for at least 10 coaches. There will also be bistros, bars, kiosk and barbecue areas. Bunkhouses with showers and toilets in the middle and rooms either side will provide cheaper accommodation. That is very much required in that area for those people who do not wish to stay at the Crocodile Hotel. It has always been the Territory government's desire to see the largest range of accommodation styles possible in all areas. I congratulate the committee members who assessed the proposals and reached this decision to grant the development to Australian Frontier Holidays.

Needle Exchange Program

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In view of the fact that section 12 of the Criminal Code, which relates to aiders and abettors and accessories before the fact, and section 64 of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act, which relates to possession and administration, appear to have been breached by the government-encouraged free needle exchange program for drug addicts, which I understand has been in operation since last June, what is the minister doing about this perceived illegal situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the member's question on notice and supply information later.

Barramundi Plan

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I refer to the government's Barramundi Plan which came into effect earlier this month and included a revised buy-back scheme for commercial fishing licences. Has the Commonwealth government taken the lead of the Northern Territory government and introduced a similar scheme for fishermen excluded from Kakadu National Park?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that, for a number of years, my predecessor was pursuing the matter of compensation for fishermen excluded from Kakadu by the closure of rivers within the park. I took up that cause for commercial fishermen when I became minister in July. The previous minister wrote on a number of occasions to Senator Richardson in relation to this matter. I quote from his response of 6 April 1988: 'During the last 2 years, the question of possible compensation payments has been a subject of detailed consideration'. Senator Richardson went on to say that the decision that the Commonwealth would not pay compensation was made on the basis of

legal advice and consideration of the existing Commonwealth policy and that the points raised in the minister's letter did not warrant reconsideration of the decision.

The Northern Territory government revised its buy-back scheme which came into force this month. It provides the opportunity for fishermen to receive a generous amount for their licence, a base figure of \$75 000 for 1000 m of net and a loading for the production of that licence and its utilisation over the previous 3 years. Last year, the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment produced the Black Report which recommended to the federal government that compensation should be paid. As a consequence of that report, I wrote again to Senator Richardson on 30 November last year and noted in the letter that the plan of management of the committee recommended that 'commercial fishermen displaced from the park be offered compensation by the Commonwealth for their total removal from fishing activities in Northern Territory waters'. I requested Senator Richardson to reconsider his previous position and to compensate fishermen. I received a response from him on the 30 January 1989:

I refer to your letter of 30 November concerning compensation of commercial fishermen in Kakadu National Park. The government is yet to respond to the report of the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment, Recreation and the Arts. My view that compensation should not be paid, conveyed in letters to Hon Marshall Perron on 18 January 1988 and 6 April 1988, has not changed.

Mr Speaker, one would almost think that the Leader of the Opposition had been speaking to Senator Richardson and had given the whole scheme the kiss of death. That seems to be an outcome of discussions that he has with various federal ministers.

I wrote again to Senator Richardson on 15 December 1988 requesting that he reconsider his position. In particular, I suggested that, given the legal position that the Commonwealth says that it is in and the difficulties that it would experience in agreeing to compensate fishermen displaced from Kakadu, he may wish to consider a contribution to the Territory's buy-back scheme which we could administer on the Commonwealth's behalf. That would put it one step removed from the position which it claims prohibits it from offering compensation. We would be happy to incorporate such arrangements in our buy-back scheme and seek an equitable resolution for the fishermen displaced from Kakadu. I hope that Senator Richardson gives this favourable consideration.

I note that the opposition's shadow spokesman has not taken up the cause of commercial fishermen recently. It is interesting that, on talkback radio on 13 February, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the Territory buy-back scheme and the new barramundi management plan. I would advise you, Mr Speaker, not to come too close to him today because he will knock you over as he moves backwards. His statement was: 'It is a classic conflict between professional fishermen and the amateur fishermen, and I don't want to do anything to inflame the situation'. Clearly, he does not want to become involved. That is an indication of the inability of the opposition to grasp the needs of people in primary industry, to support their cause and obtain for them the benefits that they need to continue their operations.

Kormilda College

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of the problems with students at Kormilda College? Is it true that half of the student population has already gone to the communities? If so, could he advise what the problems are and what his department is doing about them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am a little confused by the question because, about a week ago, there were some problems at Kormilda in relation to students who had come in from Lajamanu. I understand that more than 40 students were involved and that an incident occurred, although it was really nothing to do with the school as such. The problems related to a change in processing of applications by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training. I understand that the whole system has changed. There is a range of new forms and my understanding ...

Mr Smith: There was a fight at a football match.

Mr HARRIS: Do you want to hear the answer to the question or not?

Mr Speaker, I am trying to cover 2 or 3 issues because I am not sure which one the question actually refers to. I understand that a Baptist minister from Lajamanu had all those forms with him and there was some confusion when he would not release those forms to DEET. That resulted in problems. Some of the children in Darwin had no money whatsoever and the college itself had to obtain space in one of the hostels in town in order to look after the children.

I understand that the actual incident to which the honourable member refers occurred at a football match. We are talking about people who have come in from the bush communities. It should also be noted that some of those students have a history of problems with the school system. The member for Arnhem realises this. It is not easy to fit them into the Kormilda College situation. A number of those students were sent back to their communities. The principal, Peter Harris, has made it very clear that discipline is a very important part of life at Kormilda College. He will not tolerate the sort of behaviour which occurred on that occasion. He is very reasonable and he talks to the communities. Indeed, I understand that the communities are supportive of Dr Harris's attitude in that regard and that he has a very good relationship with them.

Mr Speaker, whilst on the subject of Kormilda College, I could perhaps say that enrolments this year have been outstanding. At present, some 330 students are enrolled at Kormilda College and this is a marked increase on last year's enrolment which reached only 80. The college is moving ahead in leaps and bounds. There are some 290 boarders, of whom 7 are Europeans. There are 33 day students, all of whom are European.

The handing over of Kormilda to an independent organisation has been very successful. I might just touch on that subject whilst I am on my feet, because it relates to the need to reach a decision quickly so that Kormilda will be able to obtain funding through the federal government. The situation is that negotiations are nearing completion with the church group which will be the principal body in relation to the Kormilda College. The papers are due

to be signed in the very near future, at least before the end of February. I can assure honourable members of that and the federal minister will be informed in due course. All is going well with Kormilda. I realise that there are problems in relation to some of the students being returned to their communities but discipline is a vital part of the whole system and it has to be taken into account. I will investigate further the concerns which the honourable member has raised today.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Given that it is the last day of the sittings and that we will deal with the first 3 items on the Notice Paper only, I wonder if you would use your good offices with the Leader of the House to ask him if he would extend question time for a further half hour so that we can get through the backlog of business.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. A question should be directed to the Leader of Government Business whom I now call.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on notice.

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