

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

13 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TUXWORTH—

What funds were spent in 1972/73 and 1973/74 and what is available for spending in 1974/75 on—

- (a) fisheries research; and
- (b) tourist promotion in the Top End?

ANSWER

(a) Fisheries Research:

	Expenditure	Allocation	Committed
1972/73	\$6,181	\$10,000	\$10,247
1973/74	\$5,895	\$10,500	not available
1974/75	\$5,518 (to 1/2/75)	\$10,500	\$11,703

(b) Tourist Board

1972/73	not available	\$316,000	not available
1973/74	\$321,750 extra funds allocated	\$287,000	not available
1974/75	\$337,500 (to 1/2/75)	\$450,000	not available

It should be noted that the amounts shown above are the operational funds for materials and services but do not include associated costs such as wages, extra duty, travel and vehicle hire.

At the present time all the records relating to this matter are not available because of losses occurring through the cyclone and the transport of others to Brisbane.

14 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

What plans do the authorities have for the provision of slipways or dry-dock facilities in Darwin for trawlers so that it will no longer be necessary to send them to Singapore or Perth for repairs and maintenance?

ANSWER

Prior to Cyclone Tracy the Port Authority was investigating the provision of a large slip-way or similar facility for the handling of trawlers.

Since Cyclone Tracy these matters have been deferred. The Authority, will in the near future, be rethinking the entire Port Development Plan which will no doubt include provision of the facility before mentioned.

The Authority's proposals will, in due course, be submitted to the Reconstruction Committee.

15 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Is any research being carried out into improved preservation of potatoes, onions, apples, oranges and other lines to avoid losses due to deterioration without cold storage under Territory conditions?

ANSWER

No research of this nature is being carried out in the Northern Territory at present.

16 Mr MacFARLANE to Miss ANDREW—

Has the Department of Education recommended to the government the establishment of a University at Darwin embracing the faculties of Tropical Agricultural Science, Tropical Veterinary Science and Tropical Medicine and, if so, with what result?

ANSWER

The need for a University or University College in Darwin has been drawn to the attention of the Australian Universities Commission and Darwin Planning Consultants. However, no detailed recommendations have been made regarding the faculties to be proposed within the proposed University.

17 Mr MacFARLANE to Miss ANDREW—

What is the current situation regarding provision of lunches to deprived children at Katherine Area School, and if the arrangements are to be changed, when and to what extent?

ANSWER

There is no policy to provide school lunches in the Northern Territory. However the Department of the Northern Territory does assist needy families so the children in such families are provided with meals by their own parents or guardians.

18 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Is a Rural Bank to be established in the Territory and, if so, when?

ANSWER

Because the function of a Rural Bank is usually the provision of extended credit to rural industries at concessional rates and because this type of assistance is available in the Northern Territory already, there is no

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intention to establish another agency for this purpose. Financial assistance to rural industries is available from the Commonwealth Development Bank and the Primary Producers Board and is of the type normally available from Rural Banks.

19 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

When will the bridge over—

- (a) King River on the Stuart Highway;
- (b) King River on the Victoria Highway; and
- (c) Edith River

have their approaches resealed, or sealed to enable their use as intended?

ANSWER

- (a) Work is proceeding following the take-over of the contract from the previous contractor, Manning Civil Engineering Ltd. The approaches should be sealed within 2 weeks to allow use of the bridge.
- (b) Work on the approaches will commence immediately the gang can be released from the Stuart Highway bridge and completion is expected in 6 weeks.
- (c) The contract has been taken out of the original contractor's hands and a new contract has been let to complete the outstanding work on the bridge which should be completed in July 1975. The approaches will be constructed by day labour and should be completed by July 1975.

21 Mr MacFARLANE to Miss ANDREW—

1. Are Teacher Training Courses in Agriculture available at the Darwin Community College?
2. Will teacher training facilities in agriculture be established in the Northern Territory to assist in meeting the demand for teachers so trained in NT and in other states?
3. Is a general background in the biology of agricultural production a good basis for the training of environmental workers?

ANSWER

1. Teacher Training Courses in Agriculture are not currently available at Darwin Community College.
2. It is proposed that the recently appointed Katherine Rural College Planning Committee will be assessing the need for teacher training in agricultural subjects and will make recommendations regarding programs and facilities required.
3. I have received the following advice from Dr Peter Rudman, Head of the School of Applied Science (Biology), Canberra College of Advanced Education: "If 'Environmental Workers' means ecologists the answer is yes, but more particularly a general background in the whole field of biology, rather than the biology of agricultural production is required. A good basis requires biology, aspects of ecology, land use, resource management etc."

60 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1 What is the salary of:

- (a) trainee nurses in NT Health Services;
- (b) trained nurses in NT Health Services;
- (c) trained nurse who qualifies for employment on a pastoral property and is subsidised by Government;
- (d) Aboriginal nursing aides, such as Rita Bapi of Roper Valley Station, who looks after Aboriginal health?

2. Is literacy required of such people?

3. How do they distinguish between poisons etc if illiterate?

ANSWER

1. (a)	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Adult
	\$3,574 p.a.	\$4,132 p.a.	\$4,654 p.a.	\$5,102 p.a.

- (b) Sisters: Range \$6,125—\$7,205 p.a.
Senior Sister: Range \$7,660—\$8,260 p.a.
Both Grades are in addition entitled to relevant District and Certificate Allowances.
- (c) The Minister for Health has recently approved revised procedures for the payment of subsidies in respect of nursing staff employed on pastoral properties. The Principles embodied in the revision are:
 - where it is considered that a full-time nursing service is justified a subsidy payment equivalent to the current rate of pay of a Senior Sister employed in the Public Service together with appropriate District Allowance will be made.
 - the revised assessment will take into account all persons including children in receipt of regular nursing attention.

Generally a population of 200 persons will attract a full subsidy and a proportionate subsidy with smaller numbers.

The full subsidy rate is \$7660 p.a. plus relevant District and Certificate Allowances.

- (d) Departmental employees of Rita Bapi's category are locally designated Aboriginal Health Workers.

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Aboriginal Health Worker: Range \$4,961—\$5,349 p.a.

2. The grade Aboriginal Health Worker was created for 2 main purposes:

- To provide basic health care in small isolated Aboriginal outstations.
- To assist nursing and medical staff in the larger Aboriginal communities.

Literacy is generally required of trainees; however the selection of applicants is as far as possible left to the community in which the health worker is to serve.

3. This situation usually does not arise as the use of dangerous drugs is confined to professional staff. Health workers undertake a 2 year training course which includes instruction in the use of simpler medicines.

61 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Do Ministers of the Crown, and other VIP's require permits before entering Darwin?

If the answer is yes, who issues the permits?

If the answer is no, why not?

ANSWER

Permits are required for all persons entering Darwin. Permits are issued by persons authorised under the Cyclone Disaster Emergency Ordinance.

62 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. What is the total amount of money allocated for Aboriginal development in NT in 1974/75?

2. What amount was spent on the services of consultants advising the various Aboriginal enterprises in 1973/74, and how much is to be spent in 1974/75?

ANSWER

1. Total funds allocated to date by Government for Aboriginal Development in the NT for 1974/75 is \$40,369,816.00

2. (a) 1973/74—\$397,249.00

(b) 1974/75—\$419,200.00 (estimated)

100 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW—

Have representations been made to the Minister for the Northern Territory or any other Minister for the introduction of a freight subsidy on goods consigned to Nhulunbuy business houses and, if not, will she do so?

ANSWER

No representations have been made to the Minister for the Northern Territory or the Minister for Transport within the past 18 months for a freight subsidy on goods consigned to Nhulunbuy by sea or air.

101 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW—

What stage has been reached in the planning of the Nhulunbuy Community Library?

ANSWER

Detailed assessment of the requirements for, and practicability of, a Community Library at Nhulunbuy has been undertaken by a Committee convened jointly by the Department of Education and the Department of the Northern Territory. The Committee has not yet made any firm recommendations.

102 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW—

Why were plans for a high school at Nhulunbuy cancelled?

ANSWER

No definite plans have been formulated regarding the provision of a separate high school at Nhulunbuy.

Surveys have been regularly carried out but in order for a high school to be viable and provide a suitable range of subjects and electives, a minimum enrolment of 300 students is required. 190 students are currently enrolled in secondary courses at Nhulunbuy Area School.

It is also educationally desirable that a full high school cater for grades 8-12 (form 1 to matriculation). A further survey carried out at the end of 1974, with a view to establishing a matriculation class at Nhulunbuy Area School in 1975, indicated that the number of parents who were prepared to enrol their students was insufficient to warrant formation of the class.

However, a second site has been reserved at Nhulunbuy for future educational needs and the community's views will be sought throughout all stages of planning additional educational facilities.

125 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

In view of the demonstration of the value of the Katherine Flight Service Unit during the emergency evacuation of Darwin, will the facility be retained?

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ANSWER

Destruction of aviation facilities by cyclone Tracy has been so great that concentration of effort has been directed towards facility restoration barely sufficient to permit early resumption of scheduled domestic airline operations. Review of longer term operational planning is now in course and this will decide the future of Katherine aviation facilities.

127 Mr MacFARLANE and Mr RYAN—

In view of the fact that 54 of the 56 radio telephones connected to the Katherine Telephone Exchange are located in the Katherine District, why is the exchange to be relocated in Darwin?

ANSWER

Because of the substantial staffing economies that would accrue and for other considerations, it was intended that operator assistance for calls made by subscribers to both the Katherine conventional radio telephone exchange be transferred to Darwin co-incident with the cutover of the new Katherine automatic exchange later this year. However, because of operational problems at Darwin arising from the recent cyclone it has been decided to retain the operator assistance facility at Katherine for the time being.

152 Mr PERRON to Miss ANDREW—

1. When is it anticipated that business premises in the Winnellie Industrial area will receive power supplies?
2. How many linesmen are working in Darwin at present?
3. Is the Electricity Supply Undertaking having any trouble getting the supplies it requires?

ANSWER

1. As at 6 p.m. on 13/2/75 ninety four (94) services had been connected to commercial consumers in the Winnellie area. Four service gangs have been working in the area since 11/2/75. Prior to this only 1 gang was working in the area. It is anticipated that the majority of consumers in the area requiring supply will have it within 2 weeks from 13/2/75 providing their installations have been restored to an acceptable condition. Some low voltage mains are still to be strung in the area. Also the HV System needs to be strengthened.
2. The number of line crew working in Darwin including cable jointers, inspectors and operators totalled 219 as at 12/2/75. This figure is diminishing gradually as interstate Supply Authorities return home. The figure at 1/2/75 was 259.
3. Some material supply problems due to the usual delays caused by lack of raw materials and transport holdups are arising. However, serious delays in this field have been avoided by the use of air transport and a nation-wide material acquisition network arranged by the Department of Housing and Construction through its regional State Offices.

173 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Will he consider introducing legislation to restore the offence of drunkenness to the statute books.

ANSWER

Yes.

184 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

1. Does the Government have any plans to replace the one radio telephone serving 700 people at Roper Settlement with more adequate communication facilities?
2. Does the Government intend providing any communication facilities for approximately 1000 Aborigines living close to the Roper Highway?
3. What is the estimated cost of installing a land line from the Stuart Highway along the Roper Highway to Roper Settlement?

ANSWER

1. There are no immediate plans at this stage to replace the radio telephone and outpost radio facilities serving the Roper River area. Whilst the Postmaster-General's Department is most anxious to provide improved communication to outback areas there is no economic alternative at present to replace high frequency radio telephone services such as is provided at the Roper River settlement.

The Post Office is undertaking continuing research in this aspect but unfortunately present indications are that it will be quite some time yet before any worthwhile alternative is found.

2. There are no specific plans to provide communication facilities for Aborigines along the Roper Highway who are currently without telecommunication services. However, should any of these communities apply, their applications will receive the full consideration normally accorded such requests.
3. It is estimated that the cost of providing a landline from the Stuart Highway to the Roper River settlement is of the order of \$400,000.

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186 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

1. Why was the micro wave link to and from Darwin useless during the cyclone?
2. What improvements are planned to ensure that Darwin and all other centres on the micro wave route will remain in communication during future emergencies?

ANSWER

1. Although the normal trunk circuits in and out of Darwin failed, this was due to water damage to equipment following roof damage to the Smith Street communication building which houses the equipment necessary to derive the individual trunk channels. The micro wave system itself was not interrupted and the Black Street terminal building maintained contact with Mt Isa throughout by means of an order wire circuit. During Christmas morning this circuit was used to pass emergency messages to other States for the Army, the Department of Health and from the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory, Mr O'Brien, to the Natural Disaster Headquarters in Canberra.

Later in the day another circuit was added and one of the lines was made available to Major General Stretton when he arrived.

On 26 December messages from the Director of Housing and Construction and others to multiple addresses seeking help were despatched by this means until full trunk facilities were restored after noon on that day.

2. Apart from ensuring more secure building accommodation for vital equipment, the Department is implementing plans to diversify the trunk outlets from the various Northern Territory centres including Darwin. Action has already been taken to place some trunk circuits in an underground cable from Darwin to Howard Springs, where they link with the existing pole route running south. Pre-cyclone security plans are being reviewed in depth following experience with Cyclone Tracy and measures, as practicable and in conjunction with other authorities, will be introduced.

189 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

When will the Stuart Highway to Mainoru development road be sealed for the benefit of approximately 1000 people living at Banyili, Beswick, Maranboy, Eva Valley, Euralba, Mountain Valley, Mainoru and Bulmar?

ANSWER

Northern Territory Legislative Assembly Question on Notice No. 151 related to the sealing of the section of the Stuart Highway to Mainoru Road from the Stuart Highway to Beswick Station. A reply to this question was forwarded on 3 March 1975. There are no plans for sealing the road beyond Beswick at this stage. However, progressive upgrading of sections of the road, including some creek crossings, is planned.

65 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

I refer to the Citizens Advisory Committee. I am aware that there was a list of community organisations drawn up to be approached. Who was responsible for deciding which community organisation would be approached and which would not, and what were the criteria?

ANSWER

The Citizens Advisory Committee derived from a motion at the first meeting of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. The need to have such an advisory committee urgently was seen and a motion was carried to set up such a committee. A 3-man sub-committee of the Darwin Interim Reconstruction Commission was appointed to find out and put together suitable names for an advisory committee. Those 3 men were Mr Alan O'Brien, the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory, Mr Harold Brennan, the Mayor of the Corporation of the City of Darwin, and myself. The sub-committee compiled a list of organisations which were regarded as representative of this community and which still had some remnant of their organisation operating in Darwin. Some 25 such organisations were contacted and they in turn drew up a panel of 2 or 3 names as their suggestions for members of the advisory committee. From those names—well over 30 at the time—we chose 16 in the first instance and those people comprised a committee which elected its own chairman. Subsequently, on representation from the Citizens Advisory Committee itself that various suburban action groups have a representative on that committee, the Reconstruction Commission had a third meeting, accepted that advice and resolved that additional representatives be added from those suburban action groups.

66 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

What positive steps have been taken by Government to ensure provision of temporary accommodation for the homeless people of Darwin?

ANSWER

I am not aware of any positive steps that have been taken by the Government in the form of a firm decision for the provision of temporary accommodation of the type suggested by the honourable member. The Department of Housing and Construction, at the last Interim Reconstruction Commission meeting, did put forward a proposal in the form of a recommendation to government to purchase up to 1000 temporary accommodation units which would be available for renting to people who have not got a home in Darwin. I would take it to include the public service workers in Darwin and also the private people.

The reconstruction commission subsequently passed a resolution which went a little further and recommended strongly to the Government that temporary accommodation be used, with assistance from Government, to assist the rate of return of people to this city. Although those 2 recommendations were passed through the commission, I am not yet aware of any firm decision which has been taken on the matter by the Government.

67 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TAMBLING—

What arrangements have been made to have the Katherine Town Plan displayed in positions where it can be inspected outside office hours; that is, before 8 a.m. and after 4.21 p.m. and at weekends?

ANSWER

I am not aware of any plans at the moment to make the Katherine Town Plan available for display as requested. However, I will undertake to discuss it with the department concerned and will relay the answer to the honourable member as soon as possible.

68 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

As both the Majority Leader of the Assembly and a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, I would assume that he can have consultations with the Department of the Northern Territory regarding capital works programs, which no doubt will be amended. If that has been the case, would the honourable member table a list of the operations of the proposed capital works program along with information as to why such operations were proposed?

ANSWER

I have a good deal of sympathy with the object expressed in the question that the people of the Northern Territory should be aware of any alterations now proposed to the capital works program and have an opportunity to express their view on it. As far as the Interim Reconstruction Commission is concerned, at our last meeting we did have a list of capital works programs projects which the Department of the Northern Territory considered might have to be deferred due to the new circumstances arising out of the cyclone. This list was examined by the commission. I point out that this Interim Commission has not any real power of decision at the moment—it is only working in the field of recommendation—and as a result of the considerations of the Commission a number of major projects and minor projects were recommended to be continued and not deferred.

In addition to that, there were a number of other projects which the commission did not have sufficient information on to be able to make a firm recommendation. Further information on those projects will be sought from the Department of Housing and Construction and the Department of the Northern Territory

so that at the first opportunity, even by contact in between meetings, the commission can further advise the Government whether more of these projects should be retained or not.

In addition to that information, I will ask the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory if this list can be made available. I think that the actual recommendations of the commission would be the property of the commission. I personally would have no objection at all to making them available to the honourable member but I will try and check out with Sir Leslie Thiess, the chairman, and make sure that that is in order and provide the information the honourable member sought.

69 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

Does he have any information on government financial arrangements proposed for rebuilding houses in Darwin?

ANSWER

No. I do not believe that such information will be available until the federal bill on the reconstruction commission has been introduced and dealt with. I believe that this information is vitally important and again it was the subject of a resolution and a strong recommendation. The first recommendation made at the last meeting of the Darwin Interim Reconstruction Commission was to the government to decide and to publish details of the financial assistance which will be available. To the best of my knowledge that decision has not been made. If it has been made, it has not been made available to me or to the public.

70 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK

Will he investigate the present entry permit system under the Social Welfare Ordinance with a view of bringing about a relaxation or an agreement to allow residents of Nhulunbuy to have freedom of access to local beaches and Arnhem Land off Nabalco Proprietary Limited leased land?

ANSWER

I am aware of recent press publicity concerning this matter and apparent problems which are being experienced at Nhulunbuy. It is my intention at the first opportunity to go to Nhulunbuy and speak with those concerned. I feel that there are grounds for an amicable agreement between all persons concerned, having due respect to the Aboriginal people of the area and the Arnhem Land Reserve and the population of Nhulunbuy and surrounding areas.

71 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

Is it to his knowledge true that the Minister has flatly refused all private requests from members of this Assembly for information or discussions on the terms of the Darwin Reconstruction Bill?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge the statement made by the honourable member for Port Darwin is true.

72 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Has he any information regarding the Minister's statement on acquisition of land below the 11-metre "surge line"?

ANSWER

I seem to be in the unfortunate position of not being able to give much information in relation to serious questions. The answer is along the same lines as ones that I have previously given. The whole question of acquisition policy by the federal government following the cyclone was the subject of another recommendation by the interim commission, that the government clarify its policy and announce immediately on this question. There has not been any decision made or announced yet.

73 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

In December 1974, Senator Wriedt, Minister for Agriculture, announced that \$20m would be made available to cattlemen of Queensland and the Northern Territory who had no income other than cattle. Has this money been approved by Cabinet and is it in fact available?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge the money has been approved and is available and some of it has been advanced. But to be sure of my facts I would have to check this with the Commonwealth Development Bank in Darwin, who are the agents of the Government in this matter, and advise the honourable member further later in the sittings.

74 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr TAMBLING—

What action has been taken to reroof houses at Berrimah, Howard Springs and Humpty Doo?

ANSWER

As far as I am aware, there is no differentiation between the reroofing and temporary repair program anywhere this side of Noonamah. I will however take the matter up with the Accommodation Coordination Committee to ascertain if the works program has any differential priorities in that area.

75 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr POLLOCK—

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Alice Springs. What deleterious effects on the population of Alice Springs and the quality of life in that town has he observed that may be attributed to the removal from the statutes of the crime of drunkenness?

ANSWER

I have observed many deleterious effects but I would ask that the question be placed on notice to allow full answer later.

76 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

Can he confirm, as a member of the interim commission, that the commission has been and is able to do nothing about reconstruction of Darwin 7 weeks after the cyclone because of the failure of the government to announce policy in any of the fields with respect to which the commission will be functioning?

ANSWER

It is true that the interim commission has not been successful in carrying out any executive action directed towards the reconstruction of the City of Darwin. At the time the government announced its intention to establish a reconstruction commission, back in January, they indicated that this would be established by statute in the Federal Parliament and that an interim commission would be set up in the meantime to examine the situation and make recommendations to government. That is all that this commission has been; it has been an advisory body.

77 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

What immediate plans are there for the provision of a medium security jail in the Darwin area. If he does not know these plans, will he seek as a matter of urgency some clarification from the relevant department because at the moment there is no medium security prison.

ANSWER

I understand at the moment that endeavours have been made to get the prison farm at Gunn Point operative; there were some administrative problems there in relation to staff. I am not aware of the situation just at this moment in respect of medium-term and other prisoners. Some, I understand, are being held at the police cells and working at Fannie Bay, on the grounds there during the day. Others have been transferred to Alice Springs. I will endeavour to find out more details later.

78 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

It is true that people are being held in police cells in Darwin. Is he aware that remand prisoners are being held in those cells with no exercise for up to 2 weeks and this is contrary to United Nations convention? They cannot be sent to Fannie Bay Goal to work because as they are on remand they are not convicted and are not liable to work. However to have them held in cells for up to 2 weeks without exercise is completely contrary to every convention Australia recognises.

ANSWER

I am not entirely aware of that situation.

79 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

After the cyclone, 2 rapists sentenced to 6 years' jail were released after serving only 2 months of their sentence. Have they been apprehended?

ANSWER

As far as I am aware, these 2 persons are at large. I believe they were released by order of the Magistrate and they have not been taken back into custody. That is the information I have had.

80 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

What child-care facilities are available in Darwin at the moment?

ANSWER

I am unaware of any child-care facilities available in Darwin at the moment.

81 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

Is it a fact that on either Christmas Day or Boxing Day prisoners held at Gunn Point walked off Gunn Point and there has been no action as yet to apprehend and charge them as escapees?

ANSWER

I believe that on the day of the cyclone and shortly afterwards there was some misunderstanding as to terms of release of persons at Gunn Point and some prisoners in good faith did leave that area believing that they had been released. Many of those prisoners have since been taken back into custody and there are warrants in existence for those who are still at large.

82 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

There are reports that the government and the Department of the Northern Territory owe contractors and suppliers in Katherine large sums of money. Will he investigate these reports?

ANSWER

I will inquire into this report.

83 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr SPEAKER—

Do members of this Assembly, including yourself, have to have permits to enter Darwin on Assembly business?

ANSWER

Yes, members of this Assembly require permits. The Director of Emergency Services has told me that new permits are being issued to members.

84 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

What provisions have been made for the after-school care of children whose parents are both working?

ANSWER

I ask that this question be placed on notice. To my knowledge there have been no provisions made yet although some independent actions have been taken by the various suburban action groups.

85 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Is he aware that the programs of reroofing and supplying of services such as electricity to areas of the northern suburbs beyond Rapid Creek appear to be lagging well behind other areas of Darwin?

ANSWER

Other than the opinion expressed in the question, I am not aware that the programs are lagging.

86 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

I ask for clarification of an answer he gave to a previous question concerning the capital work program. Has he had discussions with the Department of the Northern Territory in his capacity as the Majority Leader?

ANSWER

No, the Department of the Northern Territory has had no discussions with me in my capacity as Majority Leader or a member of this Assembly. The only way in which discussions have come about is through the medium of the Interim Reconstruction Commission.

87 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK—

In light of the fact that there is no community welfare officer or social worker at Nhulunbuy, will he endeavour to arrange with the Department of the Northern Territory to have a suitably qualified officer permanently based at Nhulunbuy?

ANSWER

Yes, I will make approaches to the relevant departments to make sure that a suitably qualified person is stationed at Nhulunbuy. I will endeavour to find out what the immediate plans of the department are and advise him later.

88 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr EVERINGHAM—

On behalf of the member for Alice Springs, I ask if he would obtain from the Commissioner of Police as a matter of urgency, and table in this Assembly, a statement detailing any increase in criminal acts or difficulties in the administration of law in Alice Springs attributed to the removal from the statutes of the crime of drunkenness?

ANSWER

I ask that the question be put on notice, but I will do my best to ensure that these details are ascertained as quickly as possible.

89 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Is he aware that the beef industry in the Northern Territory is a terminal occupation? If so, what representations has he made to the federal government for immediate assistance remembering that the Northern Territory is a federal responsibility?

ANSWER

The Cattle Producers Council is the combined body representing all the cattlemens associations and the beef industry of the Northern Territory. I have attended most of the meetings of that body here in Darwin and I have assisted the Cattle Producers Council secretariat and executive in drawing up a number of approaches to the federal government for forms of assistance which would best help cattlemen in the beef industry through this desperate situation that they have been in and which may well get worse. In the last few weeks I have been almost fully occupied, I must confess, in matters relating to the Darwin disaster and the Reconstruction Commission, but now that things are getting back to a more organised basis I assure the honourable member that I will renew my representations to the federal government as the Executive Member for Primary Industry to provide immediate assistance to the cattle industry in appropriate ways.

90 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Concerning the announcements from the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory that approximately 1500 public servants would be transferred interstate, I ask whether he has had discussions with the secretary or if his advice is being sought as one would assume that some of those people would have been willing to remain in the Territory and to transfer to the Northern Territory Public Service as the various government departments were transferred over.

ANSWER

I did approach the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory about this matter when the statement about the 1500 people was first made. The secretary informed me at that time that, while no precise figure was available on how many public servants might be involved in the establishment of the Brisbane sub-headquarters, the feeling was that it might be in the order of a couple of hundred. I asked him also whether those who did not want to go to Brisbane could arrange a transfer to another branch of government here, say from the Department of the Northern Territory to the Department of Health or the Department of Housing and Construction. I asked him whether this would be permitted or considered and the answer was that it would be.

91 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN—

Is it a fact that the Fire Brigades Arbitral Tribunal will be convened in the near future to bring down special determinations for the remuneration of fire officers serving during the cyclone emergency?

ANSWER

I have heard mention of this. I do not have any firm information regarding approaches to the tribunal but I will attempt to get this information and pass it on to him.

92 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTS—

Has the majority group a policy on a free beach for Darwin?

ANSWER

This matter has been discussed at a parliamentary party meeting and the decision was reached that the question of a free beach, and any legislation which might be introduced pertaining thereto, would be a matter of personal decision and personal vote. There was no party policy established on this question.

93 Mr STEELE to Mr RYAN—

Is he aware that alcoholic refreshments are being consumed in an uncontrolled manner at the airport with resultant beercan litter and behavioural problems? Why is the official airport bar closed? Will he make representations to the airport manager to have the bar reopened and the situation brought under control?

ANSWER

The situation as he describes it, is true. The situation out at the airport is a bit chaotic regarding the drinking habits of the arrivals and departures. I have been trying to contact the manager of the airport for an official reason why the bar is not open. I have heard secondhand that it is because of structural damage. However, I have also heard secondhand that the building has been inspected by an independent engineer who claims that it would be quite safe. In addition, if the upper floor was unsafe, I suggest that it would also be unsafe on the lower floor where hundreds of people are departing and arriving. I will continue in efforts to contact the manager of the airport to get an answer on that question.

94 Mr DONDAS to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Is it a fact that the Police Officers Arbitral Tribunal will be convened in the near future to bring down special determinations for the remuneration of police officers serving during the cyclone emergency?

ANSWER

I understand that the Police Arbitral Tribunal met within about 14 days of the cyclone and a determination was brought down. This determination made special provisions for extra remuneration for police officers who fulfilled their duties during and after the cyclone emergency. I do not have specific details of the award but I believe it was a very generous one.

95 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Will he make a statement in this place outlining the Country-Liberal Party recommendations on decentralisation of the Department of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I would be prepared to do so at a later stage of these sittings.

96 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr SPEAKER—

Has he any indications from the Minister for the Northern Territory as to provision of a new Assembly building, having regard to the state of this present one?

ANSWER

I have had discussions with the Minister for the Northern Territory and he has indicated that submission should be put before Darwin Reconstruction Commission. This is being prepared in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Construction who have made a survey of the whole precincts of the Legislative Assembly. Today I shall get a written report which I believe will indicate that this Assembly building is irreparable and that members will be given offices elsewhere. However, we will endeavour to keep this building in sufficient repair to enable the Assembly to continue to meet here until a new building is erected in another place.

104 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTIS—

Has any date been set for the next sittings of this Assembly?

ANSWER

In discussion with most other members, I have indicated that there will probably be a requirement for a brief sitting in late March, around about 19 or 20 March, at which stage we may, amongst other things, have to review the emergency legislation and finalise other urgent matters concerned with the cyclone. I imagine it will only be a brief 1 or 2 day sitting.

105 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr SPEAKER—

Do you agree, as Speaker, with statements attributed to the Minister for the Northern Territory, that this Assembly is ruined and that is the reason for the delay or postponement of constitutional development of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I have heard the statement by the Minister and am greatly disturbed by it. I accept that the building is beyond repair as a long term project, but I believe that I have the full support of all members and staff to carry on here until new premises become available. I have prepared a statement for the Press in which I have said that the building is beyond repair as a long term project but that the chamber and staff offices will continue to be used until a new parliament house becomes available to us. Members have already been allocated temporary offices in Block 1 and I understand that the Majority Leader has received an assurance from the Minister and the Secretary of the Department that space will be made available for the executive members and their staff.

In the Press release, I have recalled that, in the early days of the Legislative Council, meetings were held in conditions hardly less arduous than those we have today. I do not believe that the present membership and staff have less fortitude than the early members of the Council. In the statement I have referred to the Assembly sitting 3 times in the first 6 weeks of this year. There is every indication that the level of business this year will be normal or above normal.

I have one difficulty that I hope the Minister will resolve for me, and that is in the matter of staffing. The Department of the Legislative Assembly has an establishment sufficient for its needs but all positions unfilled at the beginning of the year were frozen; and until they are unfrozen there will be a shortage of staff. I will be writing to the Minister as a matter of urgency asking him to unfreeze certain positions and to provide me with funds to recruit to these positions.

Further, today I received a letter from the Director of Housing and Construction relating to the proposed parliament house. Part of the letter reads: "In view of the interest of the Reconstruction Commission in aspects of town planning and siting, this department is preparing for the Legislative Assembly alternative site studies in readiness for the anticipated 5th meeting of the commission in March".

106 Mr PERRON to Mr RYAN—

What are the official reasons for closing Darwin airport to international flights and how long will it be closed for?

ANSWER

I have been unable to contact any official of the Department of Civil Aviation. However, I have spoken to an executive of Qantas who advised that the reasons they were given for closing the airport were that the navigational aids which were being used and are still usable are being supplied with power by emergency sets and therefore do not have any emergency backup. This is a normal requirement of the International Civil Aviation Organisation. There are also some navigational aids which are not operating. The time that the airport will be unavailable could be up to 6 months but they are hoping it will be less. They intend to get it operating as an international airport as soon as possible.

107 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN—

Could he offer any information about the opening of the Casuarina fire station?

ANSWER

I spoke with the Chief Fire Officer this morning concerning the opening of Casuarina fire station. He had with him at the time a building inspector and they were going out to have a look at the building at Casuarina. He is hopeful that they will be able to get the Casuarina fire station operating at the earliest.

While on the subject of firemen, I was asked a question yesterday regarding their claims through their tribunal for allowances. The Chief Fire Officer has advised me that they had not made any claims. However, the firemen themselves are supporting the TLC claims for \$55 a week.

108 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

What was the result of the investigation into the large sums of money owed to contractors and other people in Katherine?

ANSWER

I regret that I have been unable to obtain the information requested by him. I hope to be able to let him have it before the close of this sitting.

109 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK—

Will he enquire into the completion date of Yirrkala Medical Centre and will he find out the commencement date of that centre?

ANSWER

The Department of Health has received advice from the Department of Housing and Construction that the health centre at Yirrkala will be ready for handover at the end of February 1975. The centre will start operating approximately 2 weeks after the handover provided normal barge services are available to convey supplies and equipment to the area.

110 Mr PERRON to Mr EVERINGHAM—

When will the Registrar General's Office resume the registration of transfers to real estate in Darwin?

ANSWER

As far as I was aware, the Registrar General's Office had been open for some time for the registration of conveyances of real property. I understand some transfers have been made there in the course of the last couple of weeks. I will, however, make investigations to ensure that it is open. I know that the Registrar General's Office was very fortunate in that very few, if any, of its records were damaged during the cyclone.

111 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING—

Is he aware of the indiscriminate dumping of corrugated iron, bulldozing of trees and dumping of wet garbage along the Nemarluk Drive? Would he direct this matter to the Director of Emergency Services?

ANSWER

It was drawn to my attention this morning that this indiscriminate dumping is taking place. I will take the matter up with the Director of Emergency Services and the Town Clerk.

112 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Does the honourable member have a policy on extended school hours during the coming months. If so, what is the policy, has she discussed it with the Department of Education and to what result?

ANSWER

I have discussed at length with the Education Department the current policy relating to after-school activities. Each school is invited to call a committee and make arrangements. My policy would be exactly the same. In the northern suburbs we have got together a voluntary group which is organising after-school activities.

113 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN—

Has he any idea how long it would take to reinstate the iron-ore loading facilities and if such reinstatement has been put in hand?

ANSWER

The iron-ore facilities at the wharf I believe were originally going to be out of operation for about 6 months; this was an estimate. It was planned as a repair job by the Navy. I spoke with one of the executives of Frances Creek last week and he said that they felt that repairs could be made to the wharf at an earlier period. However, if the honourable member would like to put that question on notice I will see that he gets a full answer to it.

114 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Will she consider the provisions of full-time auxiliary staff, other than volunteers, who would be paid an amount to provide the necessary supervision for out-of-hours work at the schools.

ANSWER

Yes. I have considered this and I have discussed it with the Education Department. However, I am waiting until Friday when the results of their moves in the direction of after-school education are apparent. In this particular case, it will not be on a voluntary basis; the cost of providing staff to provide these after-school activities will be met.

115 Mr STEELE to Mr RYAN—

What are the employment opportunities in Darwin at present and has he figures available of job vacancies?

ANSWER

The Department of Labor have advised me that currently vacancies exist for 350 positions in Darwin. They are averaging around about 40 to 45 jobs and 40 to 45 people looking for jobs per day, so the status quo is being maintained. Most of the jobs are in trades but there are quite a few labourer positions available. There are no unemployed at present and the attitude of the department is that anybody capable of doing any work in Darwin will have to take the job given to him or her by the department.

116 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Can he advise what form tourism will take in the Top End of the Territory this year?

ANSWER

A complete report is being compiled at the moment by the Tourist Bureau and I hope to table it during this sitting.

117 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

Is it a fact that the Katherine powerhouse is in a bad way, that they have no engineer, and that 2 of their generating sets are out of commission and 2 others are operating at only 70 per cent capacity?

ANSWER

The powerhouse at Katherine I believe has some sort of problem. I was aware of this but I have not been able at this stage to get the exact problem. Once again I request that the honourable member put this question on notice and I will attempt to get full answer for him.

118 Mr PERRON to Miss ANDREW—

When is it anticipated that business premises in the Winneville industrial area will receive power supplies? How many linesmen are working in Darwin at the present? Is the Electricity Supply Undertaking having any trouble getting supplies it requires?

ANSWER

I ask the honourable member to put those questions on notice because, in spite of several attempts at investigation in this area, I have not had an official reply.

119 Mr STEELE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

How many applications have been made for business assistance, and how many of these applications have been approved?

ANSWER

I understand that a considerable number of applications for these loans have been received to date. I understand that none have yet been approved. Several are in the process of being approved but it will depend on the arrival of valuers in Darwin from the south. I understand valuers are expected to arrive on about the 24th of this month and that after that applications should be able to be processed.

120 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS

Would he endeavour to obtain from the Department of the Northern Territory precisely which branches of that department will be affected by transfer, the categories of people it is intended to transfer, and the numbers of people in those categories?

ANSWER

I will attempt to obtain the information required and provide it later in these sittings.

121 Mr PERRON to Mr RYAN—

Is he aware that a mining company in Indonesia has been supplying its operations from Darwin by aircraft? They have had 2 flights into Darwin since the cyclone yet further flights have been refused on the grounds that they are international flights. Will he see if he can correct the situation?

ANSWER

I was unaware of this. However I will attempt to look into the matter further and give an answer to the honourable member.

122 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

When will the Beef Stabilization Bill be presented?

ANSWER

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—Wednesday 12 February 1975

The Cattle Price Stabilization Bill became available from the printer this morning. I did not give notice of it because that would have had the effect of deferring its introduction and discussion until tomorrow. I intend to introduce it and give the second reading speech on it at the conclusion of the Orders of the Day today.

130 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Have precautions against the entry of foot and mouth disease into Australia been relaxed since the cyclone?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge the answer is no. In fact I think that the risks are less than they were before the cyclone. Not long before the cyclone, a sub-committee of the Cattlemen's Association of Northern Australia made an examination of the precautions which were then existing in the port of Darwin and the airport of Darwin against foot and mouth disease and came to the conclusion in a report to the Association that they were adequate. Since the cyclone, the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch quarantine people have been still on deck and the Department of Health are still vigilant in the matter. But with the cessation of international flights landing at this airport one of the main risk areas would have disappeared completely.

131 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

What is the current situation in the Peko retrenchments? Have the unemployed been found other jobs?

ANSWER

The overall picture is still not clear. However, I do have some information that would be of interest. The company has retrenched about 50% of the proposed retrenchments. A further 250 will be laid off in the next fortnight. Fifteen of these people have already arrived in Darwin to take up employment opportunities and a further 45 are coming next week. I believe there are a further 50 applications to work in Darwin pending. There are substantial numbers of hard-rock miners and smelter operators who can be employed by the mining industry in Western Australia. They will take up their positions within the next month. There are several staff positions that have been vacated at Peko in the normal turnover of the company's labour force. The Department of Labour and Immigration has been very quick to recognise the problem at Tennant Creek and has declared the Tennant Creek area a Regional Employment Development area; there should be no trouble in finding a job for any man that wants to work, particularly married men with families who cannot afford to move away from the town.

132 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Has he yet any information on the number of public servants liable to be transferred interstate, the categories into which they fall and the number in each category?

ANSWER

I am unable to give the information to the honourable member at this time but I hope it will be available later in the day. I will send it to her when it is available.

133 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TAMBLING—

What urgent action is being proposed to alleviate the housing shortage in Katherine?

ANSWER

I am not fully conversant with the housing shortages in Katherine. I would ask that the question be placed on notice. I will endeavour to obtain an answer for him today.

134 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

I assume that he is the leader of the executive members on the Administrator's Council and this question deals with Administrator's Council affairs. Are the private members of the Administrator's Council aware that categories of people permitted to enter Darwin are adult male residents, and adult female residents who have essential employment and satisfactory accommodation? In other words, there is a vast difference between permission to enter for adult females and adult males. If they are aware of this, do they condone it, do they propose changing it, or have they ever discussed it?

ANSWER

The categories and classifications for people eligible to enter Darwin under the permit system have changed from time to time and the latest definitive statement on this matter was only made within the last couple of days. The Administrator's Council is of course composed of 5 elected members with the Administrator, and each of those members has an equal voice in the Council. We have not discussed the matter alluded to by the honourable member for Nightcliff recently but there will be a couple of meetings of the Administrator's Council in the near future and I will bear in mind her desire to see the matter discussed and for the Administrator's Council to form a view on it. I will endeavour to see that it is carried out.

135 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

What recommendations of the Gibb Committee Report have been implemented?

ANSWER

I ask that the question be placed on notice.

136 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Is it a fact that there is a shortage of secondary school teachers in Darwin at the present moment?

ANSWER

I have had representations made to me on this particular matter and in my capacity as the Executive Member for Education have sent telegrams to Mr Beasley and the Commissioner for Education. As yet I have had no reply. I have had representations made to me that there is a shortage in specialist fields.

137 Mr VALE to Mr SPEAKER—

This question concerns the invitations honourable members have received to attend a meeting in Katherine. Are there any provisions for members to travel to meetings such as these?

ANSWER

On matters such as this the Speaker has discretionary powers. Any person who wishes to attend a conference such as this should make approaches to the Speaker.

138 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

What steps does he propose to take in order to draw up a budget for Katherine and other areas of the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

I am flattered that he considers I have money with which to allocate a budget to Katherine. The honourable member is aware I am certain that as yet this Assembly has no executive powers, as has become painfully obvious since the cyclone. It also has no money to speak of and I am therefore unable to assist him.

139 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Is there a blueprint for tourism in the Northern Territory and in particular the Top End and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

The simple answer to the question is no. However, I do believe that the Director of the Tourist Bureau and the Tourist Board have been mindful of this problem for some time and have underway certain proposals under which to undertake a survey and prepare a report for the industry.

140 Mr MacFARLANE to Mrs LAWRIE—

In her capacity as honorary member for the National Estate—

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Nightcliff is not responsible for that position in the Legislative Assembly.

141 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Does the Majority Party in this House have a spokesman on Aboriginal Affairs. If so, who is he?

ANSWER

Yes. We did circulate to everybody, I think, a list of responsibilities. It went to all members of the Assembly and to departments, but I will secure another copy for the honourable member. The person in charge of Aboriginal matters, in so far as answering questions etc. and making contacts for legislation, is the Executive Member for Social Affairs, the honourable member for MacDonnell.

142 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

Does he in his capacity as spokesman on Aboriginal Affairs have a policy concerning the desire of Gove residents to be able to travel outside the township area? If so, what is it?

ANSWER

The honourable member may recall the other day there was a question asked on this matter by the honourable member for Nhulunbuy. I then said that I had recently read Press reports concerning the matter and it was my intention to travel there and have discussions with the local people and those concerned with a view to some amicable arrangements, which I am sure can be made, for the movement of persons living in the area through the area.

143 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Does the National Estate interest itself in preserving the life stories of pioneers like the late Charlie Dargie?

ANSWER

I cannot answer the question on behalf of the National Estate, nor is it my province in this Assembly to answer questions relating to environment and conservation. I believe that we do have an executive member who has the responsibility in that field and that is the Executive Member for Education and Consumer Services,

the honourable member for Sanderson. If the honourable member for Elsey would direct his question to her, I am sure she would be happy to take it on board and see what she could find out for him.

144 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr POLLOCK—

What stage has drafting of the proposed amendments to the Mental Defectives Ordinance reached? If he is unaware of this, is he prepared to undertake that he will look into the matter and speed up any proposed legislation?

ANSWER

I am unable to advise to what stage the drafting of the revised Mental Defectives Ordinance is at. I will undertake to find out and to inform the members concerned.

145 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr POLLOCK: On Tuesday the honourable member for Nightcliff asked me if I was aware that prisoners on remand were being held in the police cells for periods in excess of 14 days without proper exercises. I have made inquiries and I am advised that for at least the last 10 to 12 days all prisoners on remand have been conveyed daily to the Fannie Bay Gaol site. There they are being housed in the former female section which provides shelter, a kitchen area, a separate open-air exercise yard. They are being kept separate from sentenced prisoners and generally their conditions are vastly improved on what they formerly were at the time of the cyclone. There are presently in Darwin 13 prisoners being held on remand and 28 prisoners under sentence.

146 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Has the honourable member had discussions with officers of the Australian Electoral Office regarding the feasibility of local government elections being held on time as scheduled.

ANSWER

No.

147 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TUXWORTH: I wish to answer a question about tourism asked of me yesterday by the honourable member for Stuart. The Director of the Tourist Bureau has been south to speak to airline companies, coach operators and accommodation people in an endeavour to seek their aid to promote the top end of the Territory as a tourist destination once authorities give permission to bring in tourists. He has also spoken to local industry people who are equally as keen to ensure that their livelihood in tourism is maintained this season. The response from the domestic airlines could not have been better; they have agreed to fly the trade Press to Darwin so they can see for themselves the tourist plan, bring selected retail travel agents to Darwin from all over Australia, promote the Top End in special package deals once the authorities give permission to do so, and allocate funds to advertising when the Top End is open to tourists. Coach operators have agreed to continue their operations, particularly the camping tours, and to make contact with safari operators based out of Darwin, the idea here being that the existing camping sites be used as bases for day tours to Darwin. The trade Press have offered much support as have newspapers. The Adelaide News and Melbourne Age have promised to run specials each week in the travel sections free of charge. All we have to do is send the information. At the present time the Bureau is continuing to promote the rest of the Territory and correct any fears that centres such as Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Katherine and other areas have been damaged in any way. Any promotion for the top end will be of assistance to the rest of the Territory. Katherine for example will probably benefit as the tourist destination in 1975. Several of the Mid-March departures by coach from south have already been booked out and the fears of the southern bureau staff is that there will not be enough departures to accommodate the people wanting to visit the Top End this year.

226 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

Has he any advice as to what medium security facilities will be provided in Darwin for the holding of people sentenced to prison?

ANSWER

I am unable to advise what medium security steps will be operational in Darwin in the near future. This has been a matter of considerable discussion between myself and the members of the prison service. The Gunn Point prison farm is now operating as a minimum security area. Other prisoners are being held at the police cells in Darwin and they are being taken to Fannie Bay site to work there. There was a suggestion that some security arrangements could be made at Fannie Bay which would allow the prison to be used as a medium security prison until a new prison is built. However, these plans are not proceeding at this stage and there is no firm commitment to provide any medium security prison facilities in Darwin. A submission is being made to the reconstruction committee to approve a site for a new prison out Berrimah way. It is hoped that work on that site can proceed in the very near future to provide some improvement in prison facilities in Darwin.

As many prisoners as possible of a medium security and high security rating are being transferred to Alice Springs. However, the capacity there is rapidly coming to a climax. Arrangements have been made to send prisoners interstate and now prisoners may be moved interstate much more quickly than formerly. Arrangements have been made with most State governments rather than just an arrangement with the South Australian Government to accept prisoners into prisons in other States. However, there is a difficulty in that Aboriginal prisoners cannot be moved interstate easily and this is causing problems. There will be a serious problem in Darwin if there are any female prisoners because at the moment we have very limited facilities.

227 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

When will the Administrator's Council consider the appointment of the parole board legislation which was passed nearly 2 years ago?

ANSWER

I am unable to give a precise answer. I can say that the matter has not come before the Administrator's Council since I have been serving on it but I take note of the honourable member's question and I will have the matter investigated by the Secretary of the Administrator's Council and my own staff.

228 Mr WITHNALL to Mr EVERINGHAM—

I have had 2 complaints from persons who were mortgagors of property to the Commonwealth who had applied for payout figures on the mortgage so that insurance moneys could be paid and who received figures and had the matter finalised only to be told later that they owe the Commonwealth another \$1,500 in 1 case and \$1,100 in another case. Will he ascertain the extent to which mistakes have been made in other cases and can he get some assurance that it is not due to the Finance Branch being partly stationed in Darwin and partly stationed in Brisbane?

ANSWER

I would ask the honourable member for Port Darwin to put this question on notice and I will then undertake to follow it up.

229 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK—

What steps have been taken to upgrade the mosquito eradication program at Nhulunbuy by the Department of Health? Has the incidence of mosquitoes lessened or increased in the Gove Peninsula over the past 3 years since the township of Nhulunbuy was established?

ANSWER

I was at Nhulunbuy last week and discussed the matter of mosquito eradication program with the Deputy Director of Health for the East Arnhem area. He has a program of mosquito eradication for that area. However, the program is hampered by the lack of equipment; the equipment which is there is a little outdated. It is hoped that equipment will be provided shortly to allow the eradication program to be stepped up. As to the second part of the question, I will have to seek information from the Director.

230 Mr KENTISH to Mr EVERINGHAM—

When is new building likely to commence in Darwin apart from repairs and maintenance?

ANSWER

I am unable to provide an answer at this moment but I will undertake to seek out this information during the course of this day.

231 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

It would appear from the second report of the reconstruction commission that areas on the Esplanade and Larrakeyah, the proposed civic centre area in Fannie Bay and a tourist hotel area will occupy land which is at present used for private housing. What plans for acquisition has the Darwin Reconstruction Commission at the present time and is it a fact that acquisition of these areas is proposed?

ANSWER

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has no plans for the acquisition of these areas at the present time nor does it propose to acquire them. A draft town plan has been made available to the public and there is a statutory period of 1 month from March 17 for the public to voice its objections against any particular section of that plan and the accompanying proposals to which the commission has indicated specifically its support at this stage. In the light of the objections received and considered and in the light of the commission's own further consideration some decision will be taken to make recommendations to the Minister for the Northern Territory under the act as to a development scheme for Darwin. Until that process has been completed, it would be premature to refer to any definite policy of acquisition in any particular area.

232 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

What has been done in relation to the sealing of the Stuart Highway south of Alice Springs to Port Augusta?

ANSWER

Several weeks ago, I sent a telegram to the Minister for Transport in South Australia asking him the same question. During a recent visit to Adelaide I had a question to put to the Minister for Transport in the House of Assembly in South Australia. The answer that I received was that the highway from Port Augusta to the border in South Australia is a national highway and South Australia does not have the finance available to carry out any construction on the road. He also pointed out that the money that was being allocated to them by the Commonwealth was being used in the upgrading of the Eyre and the Princes Highway. The South Australian minister did not expect anything to be done on that road other than minimum maintenance until June 1977. This is completely unsatisfactory and I intend to write to the Prime Minister and remind him of the speech which he made during his election campaign last May and ask that something be done immediately to upgrade that road.

233 LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Is it a fact that the present Director of Emergency Services will be leaving Darwin within 3 weeks? If that is so, will a successor be appointed?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for Nightcliff for the news that she has just given me because it is new to me. I do not know that it is a fact. There have been so many rumours circulating Darwin in the past 2 months. Knowing the honourable member for Nightcliff is usually a reliable source of information, I will check her suggestion out during the course of the day and endeavour to advise her before the end of this sitting day as to what Mr McHenry's movements will be.

The matter of appointment of a successor is one for the Administrator in Council and, having been unsuccessful on one occasion, that body could hope for better success the second time.

234 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW—

Could she tell me why the Government has not attended to repairs on the Oenpelli Primary School? Despite repeated requests for several years, no attention has been given to this job.

ANSWER

Staff shortages exist in the Education Department. One position vacant at the moment is the one which lets such contracts. This work is being done by a variety of people from Canberra who have come up on short stints. However, it does become a problem of the Department of Housing and Construction and there is difficulty in letting contracts because of Government non-payment for previous work. However, I have drawn this matter to the attention of the Education Department.

235 Mr WITHNALL to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Is he aware that a building code for the construction of houses in Darwin has been prepared? Is he aware also that it is apparently being acted upon without having been incorporated into any law?

ANSWER

I was aware that a building code had been prepared but I am not sure whether it is being acted on or not. If the honourable member would place his question on notice, I could follow the matter up.

236 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

Is there any truth that there are children in Darwin schools who were not here prior to the cyclone?

ANSWER

There is some small percentage of children in Darwin schools who were not here prior to cyclone Tracy—208 out of approximately 5500 children. This is more or less justified by the usual Christmas changeover of managerial and other positions in Darwin.

237 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

I refer to question 193 on the notice paper which asked if he will obtain information from the Director of Emergency Services. Has the honourable member been able to obtain this information and when will he make it public?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, I do not have that information at the present time. I shall endeavour to obtain it by the end of the day.

238 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—

The Remuneration Tribunal recommended the provision of secretarial assistance to certain members. At least in my own case, that has not been forthcoming. As the Remuneration Tribunal's recommendations have not yet been implemented by the Australian government, when will the secretarial assistance be provided?

ANSWER

I will provide an answer for the honourable member later this day.

239 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

I have information that stoves, washing machines and refrigerators in good order are being destroyed at the RAAF before they are dumped. These things are in short supply in Darwin. Recently at an auction, I saw an electric stove that a year ago would have sold for \$3.00 or \$4.00 run up to \$40.00. I would like to have some assurance that this matter will be investigated.

ANSWER

Yes.

240 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

What steps have been taken to upgrade the roads from Yirrkala to Melville Bay Highway and from Dhupuma College to Gove Airport? When will the maintenance program for roadworks in Gove be officially announced?

ANSWER

I do not have that information. If he will put the question on notice, I will endeavour to give him an answer.

241 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

The Indian government presented a gift of tea to Darwin as a mark of their sorrow at the devastation. I ask the honourable member to find out what has happened to this gift of tea. Is it to be distributed to the citizens of Darwin who were present then and, if so, how? Will he seek an assurance that protocol will not be breached by having this tea sold or otherwise disposed of? It was a gift of one country to Darwin.

ANSWER

I will make investigations and seek the assurance that she wishes in this matter. I think that my colleague the honourable member for finance and law who is a member of the Relief Trust Fund will help with this investigation.

242 Mr KENTISH to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Will he investigate the possibility of stationing 2 police officers at Oenpelli if the community undertakes to provide buildings? Will he follow this up and see what is to be done about it. I would like some assurance from him.

ANSWER

I wish that I could give him the assurance that he requests. Unfortunately, neither myself nor any member of this House has any power over the police force other than a persuasive one. When the petition of the residents of Oenpelli was presented at the last sittings, the Police Commissioner was away from Darwin and I was not able to take the matter up with him. Shortly after that, I was away. However, I intend to speak to the Police Commissioner about this matter in the very near future and I am in complete sympathy with the member for Arnhem on this question.

243 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr POLLOCK—

Will the honourable member tell us in what way 'Medibank' will operate in the Northern Territory and in what way it will affect its citizens?

ANSWER

I am quite uncertain as to how it is going to operate. The other day I asked the Minister responsible to advise me. Despite the request, I have not received any advice on the matter. I would ask that the question be placed on notice.

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