

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed numerical order.
An index to questions appears at the end of Part II.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

63 Mr KILGARIFF to Mr TAMBLING—

1. What is the Housing Commission building programme for Alice Springs for 1974-75 and 1975-76?
2. What is the government housing programme for Alice Springs for 1974-75 and 1975-76?
3. How many applications are on the current waiting lists for Alice Springs Government and Housing Commission homes, and what is the estimated waiting time for each?
4. How many serviced blocks are available in Alice Springs for home builders this financial year and how many will be available in the following financial years?
5. How many houses have been sold to date under the Housing Commission home sales scheme in the Territory and how many applications to purchase are being dealt with now?
6. When will low interest finance for home building similar to that provided in the States be made available in the Territory? Are sales of Housing Commission homes restricted by government policy and, if so, to what extent?

ANSWER

1. The Commission's programme of new work in Alice Springs for 1974-75 was 113 dwelling units. The Commission's programme of new work in Alice Springs for 1975-76 is likely to be 49 dwelling units. Expenditure in 1974-75 in Alice Springs was \$2,533 million, including expenditure on work carried over from 1973-74. The number of dwellings completed in 1974-75 was 130 of which all but one were carried over from 1973-74. 112 uncompleted dwellings have been carried over from 1974-75, of which 12 have now been completed. In 1975-76, budgeted expenditure will be \$2,125 million, including \$1,434 million work in progress carried over from 1974-75.
2. The Government Housing Program for Alice Springs for 1974-75 was 60 houses and 24 two-bedroom flats. The program for 1975-76 is 100 houses, 48 town houses and 20 bachelor flats.
3. (a) The Housing Commission's waiting list for Alice Springs is as follows:

	Houses	2-Bedroom flats	1-Bedroom flats
No. of applicants	86	66	79
Waiting Times	6 mths	9 mths	19 mths

(b) There are 152 applicants on the Government Housing list and the waiting period is approximately 22 months.

4. Service blocks available at Alice Springs for home building in 1975-76 and other years are as follows:— Subject to the completion on time of sub-divisional contracts, it is proposed to auction 100 blocks in 1975-76 period and 120-130 in the 1976-77 period. It is hoped to increase the number for future auctions beyond 1976-77.
5. 1,173 Housing Commission houses have been sold in the Northern Territory and 265 current applications have not yet been processed, of which about 200 are in Darwin, the outcome of which is uncertain at this stage.
6. The Commission was advised in December, 1974 that the Department of Treasury is prepared to recommend that funds borrowed by the Commission would be at 4% similar to that provided for the States, the only major outstanding question being the upper limit of income eligible for housing provided with 4% funds. The terms and conditions under which 4% funds will be made available to the Commission have not yet been finalised although the Commission has assumed in calculating rents of houses completed in the last 12 months that interest charged on the funds borrowed from Treasury will be at 4%. The sales of Commission homes is not restricted by Government policy although the amount of the re-purchase instalments will be governed by the interest rate on the funds borrowed from Treasury for building the houses.

103 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr TAMBLING—

1. Are there any plans for the Housing Commission to provide public housing at Nhulunbuy, and, if so, when?
2. If the Commission has no plans, will he bring the present shortage of houses at Nhulunbuy to the attention of the appropriate authorities and inform the Assembly of their plans to overcome the shortage?

ANSWER

1. There are no immediate plans for the Housing Commission to provide public housing at Nhulunbuy, although initial steps have been taken to ascertain whether the Commission would commence operations operating through an agent in the first instance. It is expected that if a suitable agency can be established, sufficient information may be available within 6-12 months to indicate whether the Commission should commence operations at Nhulunbuy and the approximate date of commencement.
2. The purpose of establishing an agency would be to provide a firm indication on the actual demand for Housing Commission houses at Nhulunbuy.

Note: When the actual demand is known methods to meet it can be considered. There are difficulties at Nhulunbuy which do not arise at other urban centres as the town is on a leasehold by a mining company.

289 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TUXWORTH—

In answer to a question asked without notice in 1970 (see February/March Hansard page 103) steps were said to be afoot to promote tourism in the area centred around Katherine embracing Roper River, MacArthur River, Victoria River, Mary River, Daly River and Katherine River. Were any steps taken and, if so, what were they?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

The Northern Territory Tourist Board promotes the Northern Territory as a whole. In the Katherine region, the Board has encouraged the formation and development of the Katherine Regional Tourist Promotion Association also assisting financially. It is now a strong, effective body in its field. The Association has also been offered assistance in the printing of brochures for tourist attractions in the Katherine region.

The area has been vigorously promoted by the Board itself through the medium of commercial advertising. When Darwin was excluded to tourists after the cyclone, every effort was made to cope with the concentration of tourists in the Katherine region particularly, by ensuring the optimum utilisation of tourist facilities while also attempting to protect the tourist attractions in the region which had suddenly to accommodate the extra tourists.

Enhancing tourists' impressions of the natural attractions by providing an acceptable standard of facilities is considered good promotion. This has been done to the full extent possible with funds available.

369 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

1. Do the forms of application for special educational benefits show the last school attended by the child the subject of the application?
2. If so, how many children who attended school in places other than Darwin in 1974 are now attending school in Darwin?

ANSWER

The application forms for special education benefits are designed to indicate the schools attended in 1974 and 1975 by the applicant's children.

It is not possible to gain a true assessment from the applications for special benefits of the number of children now attending school because such persons, are reconstruction workers not eligible for special education benefits, have brought their families to Darwin since cyclone "Tracy". However, a survey was conducted in Darwin schools on 18 April with the following result:

No. of children attending in 1974	5,917
No. of children not attending in 1974	280
Total enrolment 18.4.75	6,197

These figures include St John's and St Mary's.

383 Mr PERRON to Dr LETTS—

Will he make available information which has been supplied to the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch containing details of the persons involved in a decision to bury livestock and equipment on Mr P. Syrими's farm after cyclone Tracy.

ANSWER

No information can be provided regarding action which was taken on the emergency situation at the Syrими poultry farm after Cyclone Tracy and which is the subject of a claim on the Government.

387 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

1. Has research been completed in the areas at Borroloola fenced for the purpose in the 1960s, and the findings made public?
2. Is it the intention of the Government to continue research and if so, when?

ANSWER

1. As part of its extension work the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch of the Department of Northern Australia has undertaken a series of pasture trials in recent years in the Borroloola area with a view to observing results from species which have given worthwhile results in comparable areas of the Northern Territory.

There has been no specific publication released regarding this pasture work but the information is available to assist local pastoralists in deciding the most economical and effective way of establishing improved pastures.

2. The work will be continued as interest in pasture improvement in the area increases.

When it is considered worthwhile, newly developed pastures which show promise of being suitable for the area will be introduced.

389 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Was \$92,000 allocated to develop the Bulman River area for and by Aboriginals?
2. What amount of this \$92,000 was spent on air charters?

ANSWER

No information on a specific amount of \$92,000 allocated to develop the Bulman River area has been found.

In 1974-75 the following funds were provided:—

- (a) Weemoll Community Inc. Housing Association \$110,000
- (b) Gulperan Pastoral Property Cattle project \$283,480
- (c) Weemoll Community Inc. Development of Airstrip \$11,000

In both (a) and (b) above, there were no individual payments of \$92,000 made.

398A Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

1. How many cattle per year over the last three years have been killed at Katherine, Darwin and Alice Springs?
2. How many marketable cattle are there in the NT for 1975?
3. How many cattle will be killed at Katherine, Darwin and Alice Springs in 1975 for—
 - (a) local trade
 - (b) export?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

4. Is there a surplus of breeding heifers in the NT, if so, how many?
5. What effect would the slaughter of breeding cattle have on the NT beef industry?
6. What steps has the Government taken to encourage export cattle industry?
7. Is the export cattle industry adequately catered in the proposed freight subsidy and cattle price stabilization scheme?

ANSWER

1. The statistics for kills at the three main Territory abattoirs for the last three years are:
Abattoir kills—

	Darwin	Alice Springs	Katherine
1972-73	16,301	5,752	39,265
1973-74	12,802	5,612	20,744
1974-75	3,956	6,488	30,427

2. No detailed survey has been undertaken to determine the number of marketable cattle available over the whole of the Northern Territory in 1975. A survey undertaken in mid-75 in the environmentally sensitive Alice Springs area revealed about 75,000 marketable cattle. There are many indications that the total Northern Territory figure would not be higher than usual due to the holding over of cattle from 1974 and the almost complete absence of an interstate market for Northern Territory store cattle.
3. It is estimated that the kills at Katherine, Darwin and Alice Springs abattoirs in 1975 will total in the order of—
 - (a) local trade 10,000
 - (b) export 24,000
4. Due to a trading recession in 1974 and in this year it is believed that on a number of properties there would be a surplus of breeding heifers. In terms of the pastoral potential of the Northern Territory however in the overall there could not be considered to be a surplus of breeders.
5. The effect of slaughtering breeding cattle would vary with the circumstances of individual station herds. Selective slaughter of older and inefficient breeders would be to the longer term advantage of many properties.
6. In addition to efforts by State Governments the Australian Government has been active in promoting the export of live cattle through Department of Overseas Trade activities in a number of countries, through trade delegations, by assistance to exporters negotiating with overseas buyers and by inviting members and officials of interested Governments to tour Australia to see the cattle under offer.
Locally, the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch of the Department of Northern Australia offers extensive veterinary and advisory services to exporters and is making every effort, including sending veterinary officers to accompany shipments, to help develop a stable and satisfactory live export trade.
7. The proposals put forward by Northern Territory producer associations for freight subsidy and price stabilization schemes do not cover cattle intended for live export.

400A Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW—

1. Have tenders been called for the proposed Yirrkala school?
2. If so, what is the estimated cost of the complex?
3. Has a completion date been fixed?
4. Is it possible to obtain a copy of the proposed plans?

ANSWER

1. The target date set for the calling of tenders for Yirrkala school is September 1975. It is expected that tenders will be accepted in November 1975.
2. An amount of \$6,500,000 has been allocated in the 1975-76 financial programme for the Yirrkala complex.
3. The target completion date is December 1977.
4. The Department of Education has requested copies of the Yirrkala school floor plans from the Department of Housing and Construction which has advised that the plans may not be immediately available. A copy of the plans will be forwarded to me as soon as copies have been received.

471 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

1. Did the Department of Northern Australia purchase lot 668 at the corner of the Esplanade and McLachlan Streets for \$155,000, and, if so, was Ministerial approval obtained prior to the purchase?
2. If Ministerial approval was not obtained who authorized the purchase of the block and for what purpose has it been acquired by the Department of Northern Australia?

ANSWER

1. No. The Department of Services and Property acquired the lot for \$140,800, on behalf of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, following an approach by the Manager of Burns Philp in response to the advertisement of the Government's decision to purchase properties, if owners wished to voluntarily surrender them.
2. See answer to Question 1.

477 Mr BALLANTYNE to Dr LETTIS—

1. How many positions are there on the establishment of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission?
2. How many of the positions are occupied?
3. How many resignations have been received since the Commission was set up?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

4. Will he provide me with a copy of the organization chart for the Commission?

ANSWER

1. The establishment of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is continually under review but there are about 100 positions identified at this stage.

2. At the close of business on 3 October 1975:

DRC Staff	70
Staff Seconded (On loan)	9
Pending Staff Appointments (Offers made but personnel yet to take up duty)	9
Consultants (In established positions)	2
Vacant positions	10
	100

3. At the close of business on 3 October 1975 there have been 14 resignations from the Commission.

4. A copy of an organization chart is provided for the Member as prepared by the then Acting General Manager. The newly appointed General Manager is reviewing the top organization structure and will be making some changes shortly. A supporting structure is currently being prepared for the General Manager.

478 Mr BALLANTYNE to Dr LETTS—

- How many private homes are being restored in the 40 km zone controlled by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission?
- How many of these homes are being rebuilt in accordance with the new Darwin Area Building Code?
- How many new homes are under construction in the 40 km zone and how many will be completed by September?

ANSWER

1. (a) As at 7 October 1975, 729 Building Permits have been issued for permanent repairs in the 40 km zone of the Darwin Area.

(b) As at 3 October 1975, there have been 920 registrations for temporary work up to \$5,000.

2. All 729 permits issued comply with the Darwin Area Building Manual.

3. There are 179 new homes under construction in the 40 km zone. 25 new homes have been completed as at 3 October 1975. (These figures do not include new houses being built by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the N.T. Housing Commission).

481 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

What are the current shipping cargo rates for the coastal ship "Darwin Trader" on the basis of cubic capacity, for containers (refrigerated and unrefrigerated), for vehicles and for power boats?

ANSWER

Current shipping cargo rates for the "Darwin Trader" on the east coast run to Darwin effective from 1 August 1975 are as follows:

(a) per 6.1 metre container (17.5 tonne payload capacity)— at full container rate—non refrigerated

	Old Rate	New Rate as from 1/8/75	Amount of Increase
	\$	\$	\$
Ex Melbourne	1,020	1,323	+ 303
Ex Sydney	960	1,288	+ 328
Ex Brisbane	900	1,100	+ 200

(b) 6.1. metre container—full container rate—refrigerated

	\$	\$	\$
Ex Melbourne	1,145	1,448	+ 303
Ex Sydney	1,085	1,413	+ 228
Ex Brisbane	1,025	1,225	+ 200

(c) 6.1 metre containers—limited container load, non-refrigerated

	\$	\$	\$
Ex Melbourne	44.00/cu.m.	60.50/cu.m.	+ 16.50/cu.m.
Ex Sydney	43.10/cu.m.	55.75/cu.m.	+ 12.65/cu.m.
Ex Brisbane	38.50/cu.m.	51.25/cu.m.	+ 12.75/cu.m.

(d) Standard freight rate on private vehicles which in most cases are stowed in containers

	\$	\$	\$
Northbound from all main east ports	355	497	+ 142
Southbound to all main east ports	275	385	+ 110

(e) Power boats in most cases are shipped in containers at the limited container rate per cubic metre as stated above at (c).

482 Mr KENTIS to Mr POLLOCK—

What is the total amount paid to housing consultants and accountants by Aboriginal Housing Associations or Town Councils in the Territory since 1 January 1973 and what is the number and value of houses or other buildings built as a result of their advice?

ANSWER

The total amount paid to housing consultants by Aboriginal Housing Associations since January 1, 1973, is \$1,259,594. This comprises \$375,249 paid to accounting consultants and \$884,345 paid to technical consultants.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Aboriginal Housing Associations have not undertaken valuation assessments on their houses or other buildings, so I am unable to provide any information in this regard. Records show a total of 103 houses completed at June 30, 1975 with a further 152 under construction at the same date. Another 118 houses have also been transferred from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to the control of the Housing Associations.

483 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

How many public servants have declined the offer of a departmental caravan?

ANSWER

35 public servants have declined the offer of a departmental caravan.

484 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Referring to my question on Notice No. 399 and your reply, who are the "authorised persons" who have access to the information collected and held under the permit section which operated under the Emergency powers legislation?

ANSWER

"Authorised persons" who have access to information derived from the Permit Section are:

- (a) Officers of the Department of Northern Australia who were concerned with the administration of the Emergency powers legislation; and
- (b) accounting and audit personnel.

485 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Is it a fact that the lid or cover on the water tower at Rapid Creek was not secured and because of this was blown off the tower during cyclone Tracy causing extensive damage to surrounding property?

ANSWER

No. The original hatch cover is still hinged in place at the top of the tank.

486 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Has the Administrator's Council started the appointment of a Parole Board for the Northern Territory and, if so, when does it expect that the Parole Board will be formally appointed?

ANSWER

The Administrator's Council finally considered the question of appointments to the Parole Board of the Northern Territory on 22 August 1975. On 25 August 1975 His Honour the Administrator on the advice of his Council appointed Sister Eileen Heath, Captain Alan Richard Walker, Mr Jonathan Martin Isaacs and Mr Edward Quong as members of the Board.

The instrument of appointment will be gazetted on 29 August 1975. His Honour, Mr Justice Forster, as Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory is Chairman of the Board. Mr Robert Francis Donnelly has been appointed as Secretary to the Board.

487 Mr VALE to Mr KILGARIFF—

In the past month, has the Commissioner of Police given any instruction to members of the Northern Territory Police Force concerning the use and carrying of firearms; if so, what are those instructions?

ANSWER

Yes. On 25 August 1975, the Commissioner of Police issued Circular Memorandum No. 10 of 1975. The wording of the Circular reads as follows:—

"FIREARMS"

"Upon the amalgamation of the Police Forces, it is proposed that there will be a uniform policy for the carrying of firearms by the Australia Police.

For the present, in the interim period, the Members of the Northern Territory Police Force who comprise part of the Australia Police may carry only departmental firearms on duty.

During day and evening shift, such firearms are to be concealed when carried.

Concealment of firearms does not apply to members whilst on money escort duty, etc."

The Circular Memorandum is signed by the Commissioner of Police.

488 Mr VALE to Mr KILGARIFF—

As at 1st September 1975—

- (a) What was the strength of the NT Police Force, not including recruits in training;
- (b) How many of those members are permanent officers, that is, not on probation;
- (c) How many are Commissioned officers;
- (d) How many members of the Force own their own pistol or revolver;
- (e) How many Commissioned officers own their own pistol or revolver;
- (f) How many members have a pistol or revolver the property of the Force on personal issue;
- (g) How many Commissioned officers have a pistol or revolver on personal issue;
- (h) How many pistols or revolvers does the Force own;
- (i) How many of these are Smith and Wesson .38 revolvers, military type;
- (j) What is the most recent date of manufacture of any of these revolvers;
- (k) What type of holster is provided to members for use with .38 revolvers;
- (l) Is this holster and revolver easily concealed; and
- (m) Is it a reasonable assumption to say pistols and revolvers owned by members of the Force are more modern and appropriate for use than the normal firearm available to them at Police Stations?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

- (a) The strength of the Northern Territory Police Force as at 1 September, 1975, was 423.
- (b) 331
- (c) 26
- (d) 178
- (e) 9
- (f) Nil
- (g) Nil
- (h) 157
- (i) 80
- (j) Smith and Wesson .38 military type revolvers, patent December 1914. These revolvers were manufactured between 1939 and 1945 in the United States of America on a lend-lease basis to the Australian Armed Forces. The Smith and Wesson .38 Special with a 2 inch barrel was manufactured in 1973. The Beretta .32 automatic pistols were manufactured in approximately 1960. The Browning 9 mm automatic pistols were manufactured in 1966.
- (k) A leather flap lock hip holster is provided for members use for .38 military type revolvers. Holsters are not provided for use with the .38 Special revolvers.
- (l) The Military type .38 revolver and holster is not easily concealable, not is the firearm on its own. The .38 Special either with or without a holster could be carried in the pocket and is easily concealable. The .32 Berettas either with or without a holster are easily concealable. The Browning 9 mm automatic pistols are not easily concealable.
- (m) No.

489 Mr VALE to Mr KILGARIFF—

As of 1 September, 1975—

- (a) Is it the policy of the Registrar of Firearms to issue pistol licences to members of the NT Police Force for use in association with their duty;
- (b) Has there been any recent change in this policy; if so, what was the previous policy;
- (c) Is it intended the Registrar will renew Pistol Licences to members of the Police Force seeking renewal of licences, if not, why; and
- (d) Is it intended, or is consideration being given, to compensating members of the Force who own pistols but are not able to renew licences?

ANSWER

- (a) Pistol licences are issued to Members of the Force whose appointment has been confirmed, for purposes ancillary to their duty. However, the policy is under review.
- (b) There have been no recent changes in policy, although, upon amalgamation, it is anticipated that there will be a uniform policy in regards to the use and licensing of firearms.
- (c) It is intended at the present time to renew pistol licences to Members of the Police Force. However, the policy is under review.
- (d) No.

490 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK—

- (a) How many persons in non-urban areas (but including Warrabri and Yuendumu) of the Stuart Electorate are receiving unemployment benefits?
- (b) Where do these persons reside?

ANSWER

There were 47 payments of Unemployment Benefit made to persons residing in the Stuart Electorate in the week ending 1st October 1975. Location of these persons are listed below.

Location	No. paid in week ending 1/10/1975
Aileron	1
Alcotta	1
Derry Downs	3
Hamilton Downs	1
McDonald Downs	13
Mt. Riddock	1
Murray Downs	3
Napperby	10
Neutral Junction	2
Stirling	5
Waite River	3
Warrabri	Nil
Yuendumu	4
Total	47

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

620 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Has a Southern Land Council been formed and, if so, who are its members and what areas and groups of people do they represent?
2. Who was responsible for the original Aboriginal land claims in Alice Springs and the southern part of the Territory and what organization/s do they represent?

ANSWER

1. A Central Land Council has been formed with an Executive of Charles Perkins, President; Mr Sandy Jurra Jabaltjari and Mr Wenten Rabuntja, Vice Presidents; plus a Council of twenty-two members. This Council, which has additional membership (as members require), is totally representative of all land owners on a tribal basis in Central Australia, according to boundaries and requirements of the Woodward Report.
2. Claims for some areas have been filed by Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, and the Central Land Council. The town claims initially advertised were based on a misunderstanding of the likely claims which the Central Land Council would advise. In fact, the Central Land Council has now lodged town claims of a different nature. The claims notified on 9 October 1975 are the only town claims.

752 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

How many meetings of the Building Board have been held since December 1974?

ANSWER

There have been 11 meetings since December 1974. A twelfth is to be held on 16 October, 1975.

753 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

In the light of the approaching wet season, what steps has the Director of Meteorology taken to liaise with the ABC (Radio Darwin) to announce regular daily weather forecasts for Nhulunbuy (Gove)?

ANSWER

1. The Regional Director for the Northern Territory has liaised with the ABC on several occasions concerning the regular radio broadcast of daily weather forecasts for Nhulunbuy. Although the broadcast of such information could be handled without difficulty by the ABC, the Bureau, until recently, has been unable to undertake the provision of any new services due to staffing difficulties. The relocation of the observation site from Yirrkala to Nhulunbuy was also involved.
2. With present staff levels it will be possible to commence a daily forecast service for the township of Nhulunbuy with effect from 1st November, 1975. It is pointed out, however, that should staff numbers fall to the point where priorities have to be allocated, consideration might have to be given to ceasing the issue of forecasts for specific places.
3. The Regional Director stressed that in any circumstance, warning services for all areas of the Northern Territory will continue to be given top priority as these are the services that could save or minimise loss of life and property. He referred in particular to the issue of warnings of tropical cyclones.

621 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN—

I refer to a section of the Stuart Highway under repair between the airport entrance and the Bombing Road. This repair began about 1974 and is still in progress; there seems to be some movement on it at present. Can he advise me when this section of road is likely to be completed?

ANSWER

I think this is the fourth time this subject has been raised in question time. He is correct in his assumption that work has once again started on this section of the road. Unfortunately I have not received—or have not asked; I don't receive anything without asking—the latest information as to when the contractors would expect to finish the road. I will get this information and pass it on to the honourable member later on in these sittings.

622 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

He is well aware, as are we all, of the serious shortage of nursing and medical staff at the Darwin Hospital. I ask him in this context if it is a fact that there is no money available in the Department of Health budget to advertise for positions?

ANSWER

I would find it difficult to believe that there has not been money allocated for the advertising of staff because over the years there has been a need to advertise consistently for staff. As the honourable member has stated, there is generally always a serious shortage of staff of health services of the Territory.

623 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

How many caravans have the Housing Commission rented up to Friday 10 October 1975? How many caravans does the Housing Commission have available for immediate tenancy, and what is the current waiting time for a person applying for accommodation with the Housing Commission?

ANSWER

I am informed that the Housing Commission has been allocated as at the 10 October 366 caravans. I believe there is a problem with some of these vans in the connection of electrical services and some 70 of these were rectified this weekend. This would make a total of 123 which are tenanted and another 70 now available. I believe that there is a waiting time of some 2 to 3 months for caravans which will be less if technical problems are solved. There is an indefinite delay with regard to 2-bedroom demountables. The Housing Commission is waiting for the supply of 3-bedroom demountables and expects some 73 of them this month. With regard to flats and housing, the Housing Commission is not able to fix waiting times and there are indefinite delays. However, it is expected that 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom flats should be available shortly in some instances.

624 Mr VALE to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is he aware of a press statement made last night by a senior police officer indicating that a number of Northern Territory officers were in favour of joining the Australia Police?

ANSWER

I understand a senior person of the Northern Territory Police Force did make a statement last night and I understood him to indicate that there was a section of the Police Force which wished to be associated with the proposed Australia Police Force. I would think that that person would have the right to indicate that as being a minority report. I spoke to 2 delegations from the Police Force in this last week, from the Commissioned Officers' Association and from the Northern Territory Police Association, a delegation of some 8 people, and they advised me that as far as the Commissioned Officers' Association was concerned 80% were in favour of not being associated with the Australia Police Force. I understand there are 25 commissioned officers so that makes 20 of the commissioned officers not in favour of being associated and 5 being in favour. With the Northern Territory Police Association, 83% of that association do not wish to be associated with the Australia Police Force which leaves 17% who I understand wish to be associated with the proposed force.

625 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Will the Department of Northern Australia involve the Department of Housing and Construction in the rebuilding of homes for persons in the private sector?

ANSWER

The Minister for Northern Australia recently announced that he is considering the allocation of the houses currently under construction by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, and what proportion of these will be distributed between the public and private sectors is still a matter for his decision. A number of those houses are under construction by the Department of Housing and Construction either through day labour or in a supervisory capacity acting as agents for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I am not aware either of any move by the Department of Northern Australia or the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to act in a client capacity for people from the private sector.

626 Mr KENTISH to Mr KILGARIFF—

The honourable member will I think recall a statement by one Mr Bob Hawke, 18 months or 2 years ago, that at a certain level of unemployment the present Labor government would have to go or be removed. He was supported at that time by senior cabinet ministers with similar statements. Can the honourable member advise me what was the level of unemployment indicated at that time by Mr Hawke?

ANSWER

I recollect the statement being made. I am going by memory but I understand the figure was 200,000.

627 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

What action has he taken to require the Administrator to take certain action as provided in the Northern Territory (Administration) Act, section 4V(4) regarding a bill which was passed through all stages of this Assembly relating to the sale of Housing Commission homes? This bill passed all stages at the last sitting and was presented to the Administrator in August. My question is specific, what action has he taken to require the Administrator to take the action as provided by the ordinance?

ANSWER

I took no specific action with regard to the Administrator. However, I did initiate a number of departmental enquiries on this matter and I was informed informally last week that the bill had been assented to.

628 Mr PERRON to Mr RYAN—

Have Commonwealth Railways retrenched or transferred any of their Darwin staff since the iron ore export stopped and the railways here lost the majority of their work?

ANSWER

The railways have not retrenched many of their staff, due mainly to the fact that the cyclone was instrumental in a lot of their staff leaving, and I believe that the current work force strength out there is approximately 30 less than it was prior to the cyclone and prior to the cessation of operations at Francis Creek. I also believe that some of the rolling stock which became redundant at that time would be possibly used at other points throughout Australia.

629 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is it true that the Alice Springs police are equipped with submachine guns, automatic rifles and special riot armaments? If so, for what purpose will those firearms and special equipment be used?

ANSWER

This equipment has hit the headlines I think in the last few days. This is only normal equipment that has been supplied to all police stations in the Northern Territory. The honourable member will remember that in 1973, through action in the Legislative Council, the McKinna Report was brought in. In this report, Mr McKinna indicated that the Northern Territory Police Force had been run down through lack of funds from the Department of Interior which looked after it in those days. He made a recommendation on page 63 of the report referring to firearms: "There is a divergence of opinion as to the type of firearms which should be supplied for use at stations. There should be standardization of firearms throughout the force, and a survey is required to determine the most suitable types of pistol for general use, bearing in mind the availability of spare parts and ammunition. The display of firearms is undesirable and for that reason a concealed weapon carried in a shoulder holster under the coat or shirt is preferable if a pistol must be carried. As a 9mm Browning is a standard Army pistol the ammunition is identical to that of the Owen, it must be considered. Certain other weapons are required at police stations for destroying dogs injured cattle etc. Police must be prepared for any emergency and there is no room for complacency. Therefore a variety of weapons must be kept in station armoury for use in unusual cases. As far as possible it would be wise to standardise on the weapons used by the armed services. This would ensure that the weapons, spare parts, ammunition and the technical knowledge with respect to repairs are always available. An adequate supply of ammunition for each weapon should be maintained". The commissioner went on to indicate the number of guns that should be supplied to various places—Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and so on—and indicated pistols, the SLR rifle, sniper rifle, shotgun, Owen gun, gas gun, gas canisters. There is a complete table there as to how the commissioner saw that they should be issued. And so it is really a false assumption to assume, as has been done in this particular news item, that they are there for the purpose stated in the press statement. Not at all; this is standard equipment for these police stations in a case of general emergency. The emergency which brought about this report was the hijacking in Alice Springs.

630 Mr WITHNALL to Mr RYAN—

Is it a fact that a decision has been taken that the building construction function of the Department of Housing and Construction will be closed and that all personnel in the relevant section of that department have been instructed that they must transfer to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission or be retrenched?

ANSWER

I am not aware of such an event taking place, however I will make some enquiries during these sittings and answer later.

631 Mr WITHNALL to Mr TAMBLING—

Does the Department of Housing and Construction act as agent for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission at the present date in relation to building construction?

ANSWER

Yes.

632 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Has he any information about reports prepared by the Water Resources Branch concerning underground water supplies in Alice Springs and possible recharge difficulties?

ANSWER

I have no knowledge of any reports available that have been done by water resources. I will make investigation to see if they are a public document and if they are I will make them available to members.

633 Mr KENTISH to Mr KILGARIFF—

As the level of unemployment indicated by Mr Hawke as the level of abdication for the government appears to have been exceeded, can he advise me if a new level has been set and, as the government is still obviously in office, what new level of unemployment is required before the government will abdicate its authority?

ANSWER

I am unaware of any new levels of unemployment having been set, and I am unable to indicate to the honourable member the exact situation. If a new level has been set, it has not been disclosed.

634 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTS—

With the intended closure of the Angliss meatworks, can he tell the House where northern growers are likely to get their cattle killed in the future?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Ludmilla has brought to light a very serious problem. Some honourable members will recall that when the Abattoirs Ordinance was constructed back in 1958-59, provision was made to eliminate the small abattoirs around Darwin and substitute a large abattoir in what is called the "licensed abattoir area" which extends for quite a large radius out from Darwin. One of the terms and conditions in that ordinance was that that abattoir should slaughter on behalf of other producers of livestock. With the closure of the Angliss Darwin abattoir, there will in fact be nowhere in the Top End where the individual owner-producer can legally seek to have his livestock slaughtered except by co-operative arrangement with another abattoir such as Katherine or Meneling. This is particularly serious for the pig producers. There is quite a large pig and bacon industry in the top end of the Territory at the moment which employs something like 50 or 60 people. We are hopeful that the Meneling abattoir will be able to take some of the responsibility for killing these local livestock by arrangement. This is not absolutely certain because the 2 remaining abattoirs, at Katherine and Meneling, are suffering the difficulties which abattoirs all over Australia are suffering and unless means can be found to continue their liquidity situation and to enable them to operate, then the whole of the local producers who have animals killed for specialised purposes, such as for the provision of veal and pig meat, could be left in a great hole with nowhere to go. But we are examining the situation to see what can be done.

635 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

In the light of the approaching wet season, what steps has the Director of Meteorology taken to liaise with the ABC to announce daily weather forecasts for Gove?

ANSWER

I know of no such steps. I would ask the honourable member to place that question on notice.

636 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS—

Can he advise the reason for the delay in the processing of applications by pastoralists for carry-on finance?

ANSWER

There are delays extending up to 3 months before some of these claims are routinely processed and there are various reasons for this. Under the guidelines set down for approving claims for carry-on finance, certain things have to be established including the fact that the enterprise has a chance of viability and this requires considerable investigation by the Primary Producers Board. This board is quite limited in numbers and has to try to assess the position of each individual applicant. There are therefore some delays which, under the present guidelines, are unavoidable. However, after the PP board has finished its work, it has to transmit the documentation to Brisbane to the office of the Department of Northern Australia which takes care of the processing of the final payments there. There is a delay of 3 weeks in that situation which I regard as being quite unwarranted and unnecessary.

637 Mr WITHNALL to Mr RYAN—

How many meetings of the Building Board have been held since December 1974?

ANSWER

I ask him to put the question on notice.

638 Mr PERRON to Mr TAMBLING—

How many applications have been lodged with the Building Board of Darwin since the new building code came into force, how many of these applications have been approved and how many buildings have been commenced?

ANSWER

I am a member of the Accommodation Co-ordination Committee of the Department of Northern Australia and in that capacity I have received information which will assist me in answering this question. As at the 3 October, the Building Board had received 1,217 applications of which 930 had been approved. These related to a wide range of building activity right through from accommodation and housing through offices, shops, warehouses, factories. In the sector that relates specifically to housing, there have been 1,052 applications of which 804 have been approved. At the same time, the Building Board has noted registrations for work in the private sector, for those people who were doing repair work of under \$5,000 per house. As at the 26 September, the statistics that were available in that respect were, for permanent repairs, 2,230 registrations and, for temporary work, 925—that is a total of 3,155.

The latter part of the question is rather hard to answer, but I am informed that a recent survey of residential lots by the Department of Northern Australia reveals that building activity on privately owned leases in Darwin was in the order of some 600. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission currently has work in

progress on 672 sites. That is made up of: new houses on new allotments, 351; new houses on previously occupied land, 100; repairs to existing properties 151; and restoration of existing properties, 70. I believe the Northern Territory Housing Commission is currently working on 265 sites in Darwin.

639 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Is he aware that, due to the operation of the plant at Nabalco, there is extensive damage to Melville Bay and irreversible damage at Drimmie Arm? This damage occurred because Nabalco had not kept to their original agreement to mix sufficient sea water with the red mud. If he is not aware of that, would he appraise himself of those facts from the department? If he is aware of it, would he advise this Assembly as to what environmental and pollution control measures are presently being undertaken in Melville Bay and how many environmental officers are stationed there to monitor such procedures?

ANSWER

I am generally aware that there is some concern about pollution arising from the disposal of waste at the Nabalco project at Gove. I am aware that the Environmental Council in Darwin has drawn attention to this on various occasions. In order to obtain a complete answer, I would ask the honourable member to place the question on notice.

640 Mr PERRON to Mr KILGARRIFF—

I understand that the honourable member delivered a paper on Territory laws which relates to industrial relations at a meeting recently in Darwin. Would the honourable member be prepared to table the paper in this House?

ANSWER

I have delivered a paper on industrial law and I will table it in this House within the day.

641 Mr EVERINGHAM to Dr LETTS—

How many staff has he at the present time and in what capacity do they work for him? Does he find this staff sufficient to carry out his duties without strain on his physical and mental processes as the Majority Leader and senior member of the Administrator's Council?

ANSWER

I don't think that the honourable member for Jingili was referring solely to me in relation to this question. He probably has in mind the organisation proposals for the executive that were put forward some 12 months ago to the Minister. At the time that they were put forward, there was a provisional arrangement for 2 staff to be seconded to the executive for their use and consideration given to the organisation proposed in respect of 19 staff members which included 7 secretarial typists. In fact, no staff position for the executive has yet been approved by the Minister and only one of the two people promised on secondment was seconded and is still with us. At the moment, we have one staff member on secondment who assists us with our legislation work and about whom no praise could be too high with the tremendous burden that he has carried. We have 5 steno/secretarial assistants who help us with typing and preparation. That is the total amount of staff. Undoubtedly, this lack of staff has placed a very heavy burden on the whole of the operation of the executive members in the discussions and consultations with other departments in relation to legislation and has in fact affected the working of this Assembly. I have recently had to return legislation proposals to the department of origin because we were simply unable to cope with the further processing of them at that time because we were snowed under with the program already on our plate for this meeting and the next meeting.

642 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr KILGARRIFF—

Is it a fact that, although members of the Parole Board have been gazetted, the ordinance has not yet been commenced and therefore the Parole Board cannot meet and in fact does not exist? If this is a fact, is it because there has been no budget allocation for the operation of the Parole Board and, if that too is a fact, what action has the honourable member taken in this matter?

ANSWER

It is a fact that the Parole Board has been appointed. I believe that the particular legislation has not been commenced. I think that it is also a fact that finance has not been made this financial year for the operation of the Parole Board. What action have I taken? I have been in correspondence with the Administrator and the Department and I have received a message back from the Administrator indicating that he has received my letter and has forwarded it to the department for further advice. I hope that advice will indicate that the Parole Board is convened and the legislation is going to be brought into operation very soon. When I receive this information, it will be passed on to her.

643 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

I refer to Local Government Bill Serial 44 on the notice paper. How many organisations would be in a position to apply to the Corporation of the City of Darwin for a rate rebate if this ordinance is brought into operation in the next month?

ANSWER

I do not have that information readily available. However, I will endeavour to obtain a list of special purpose leases in the Darwin municipality and make it available to the honourable member.

644 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr KILGARRIFF—

How many persons in the Darwin area are receiving unemployment benefits through the Department of Social Security?

ANSWER

There is one female receiving unemployment benefits and 9 males. The last time the honourable member asked that question the answer was one.

645 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr KILGARIFF—

I have a further question for the honourable member for Finance and Law. Can the honourable member advise whether there is an enforceable building code in operation in the Darwin area?

ANSWER

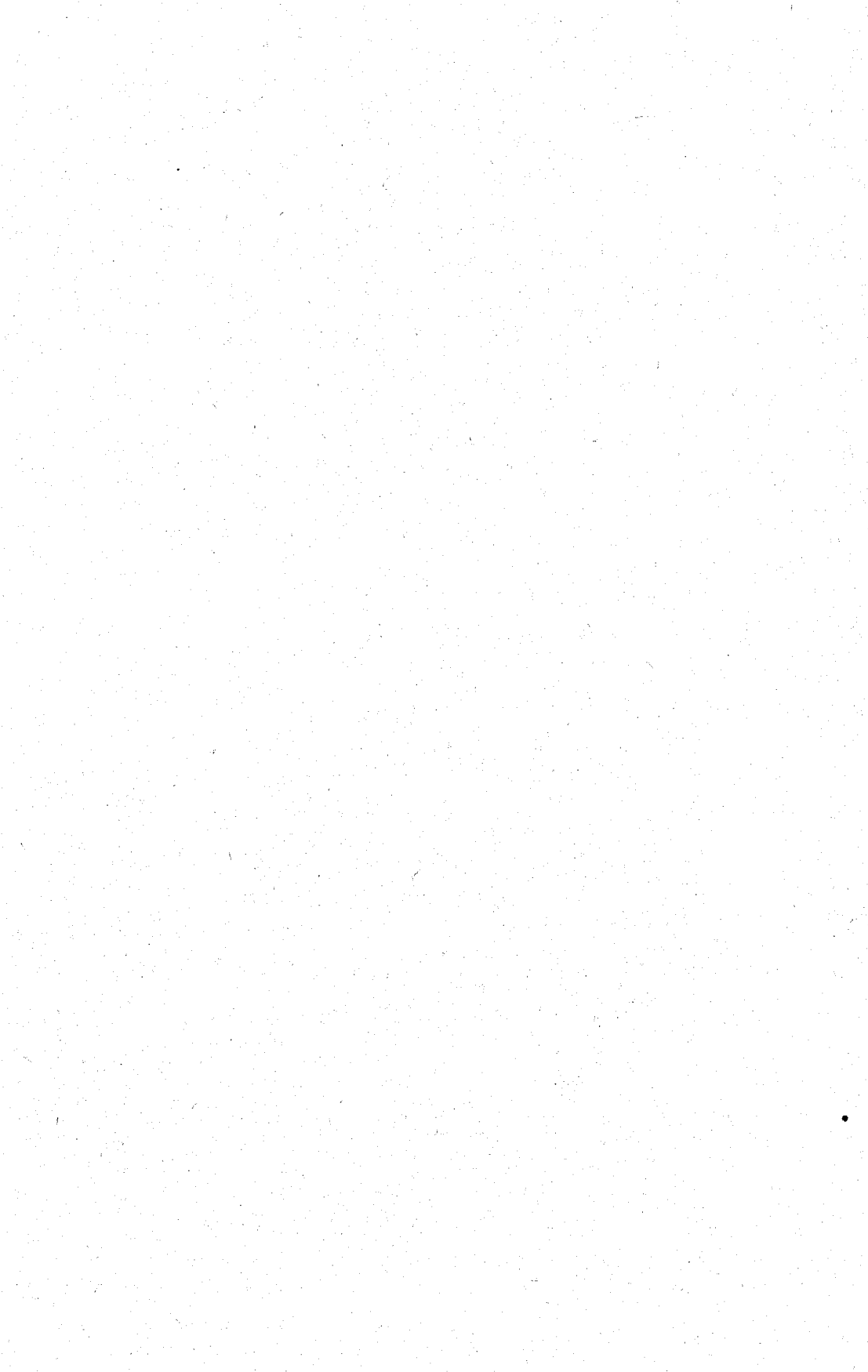
I have received some advice on the matter and as far as I am aware, that manual has not been the subject of any action under the Building Ordinance and therefore would not appear to have any force as law in the Northern Territory. However, under the extensive powers granted to it, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission could use it as an enforceable guideline. I ask the honourable member to place that question on notice so that an accurate answer may be obtained.

646 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

My question follows on a reply given to me by the member for Alice Springs concerning bikes being ridden on Casuarina Beach. The reply states that one difficulty that has been evident is that the majority of persons that have been apprehended are from interstate and had no knowledge that their vehicles were not permitted on the beach. It seems that many of the signs were destroyed during the cyclone and action should be taken by the responsible authority to replace those signs. Has the honourable member for Community Development any knowledge of any requests to any responsible authority to replace the signs at the earliest opportunity?

ANSWER

I did raise the matter with the departmental head of the Local Government Section of the Department of Northern Australia who informed me that there were provisions to provide signs in that particular area, but that there were budgetary and physical constraints in getting them up at this time. I will pursue the matter and get a more up to date answer for the honourable member.



647 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is he aware of the statement made by the Acting Commissioner of Police late yesterday in which the Acting Commissioner asserted that the official police view was in favour of an amalgamation of the Northern Territory Police Force with the Australia Police? If so, is that the view of members of the police force in the Northern Territory or would he consider that to be the view of the Federal Government and expressed by the Acting Commissioner on instructions from that government?

ANSWER

As I indicated yesterday, the Commissioned Officers Association and the Northern Territory Police Association have come out jointly and indicated that they wish to be divorced from the proposed Australia Police Force. Yes, I did see a statement made by the Assistant Commissioner in which he stated that the policy of the Northern Territory Police Force is that they are not against a federal body. I would presume that an official policy means a policy established by the minister in charge of that police department and of course means that it is the government's policy. And so in answer to the honourable members question, it is obviously government policy that the police are to become part of the Australia Police Force, but the majority of members of the Northern Territory Police Force do not wish this to happen.

648 Mr PERRON to Mr TAMBLING—

How many of the existing caravan parks in Darwin comply fully with the Caravan Parks Ordinance? How many residential properties in Darwin have more than 2 caravans sited on them? How many orders have been issued by the Chief Inspector under the Caravan Parks Ordinance since it came into force? Are there any statistics maintained in respect of the number of caravan parks in Darwin?

ANSWER

In relation to the first three parts of that question, I am informed by the inspector that of the existing caravan parks none comply with the Caravan Parks Ordinance. With regard to more than 2 caravans on a residential site, I believe there are 35 such sites in Darwin with more than 2 caravans on them. To date no orders have been issued by the Chief Inspector of Caravans. In July the department stated that owing to the lack of alternative caravan sites available action under the ordinance would not be taken before December 1975.

With regard to the latter part of the question in relation to statistics on caravan parks, I don't believe there are any formal statistics maintained, but several surveys have been carried out by the Department of Northern Australia and the Department of Health and I believe that there are some 670 caravans in 12 formal caravan parks, and I believe that the government has some 840 caravans sited in Darwin. It is also believed that on privately owned residential blocks there are 1,208 caravans.

649 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Will the resignation of Mr Rex Connor mean a change in government policy in the Northern Territory, particularly with respect to uranium mining?

ANSWER

Yesterday I was delighted to hear of the appointment of Senator Wriedt to the portfolio of Minerals and Energy and I sent him a communication expressing congratulations and asking his attitude towards the development of oil and uranium in the Northern Territory. I have not yet had a reply but I would warn members that the policy previously pursued by Minister Connor was a party policy and not a personal one and it is highly unlikely that it will change.

650 Mr KENTISH to Mr TUXWORTH—

How many craft of the Fisheries Branch are involved in inspection work on the Northern Territory coast? Will the high-speed boat due to be delivered this year be commissioned? How will coastal inspections be maintained if the Fisheries Branch is not provided with the craft?

ANSWER

There is one inspectorial boat operating on the coast at the moment. There was provision in this year's budget for a high-speed craft of 55' to be made available to the Fisheries Branch for inspection of the 1200 miles of coast that we have. I have no knowledge of this having been taken out of the budget or not being made available this year and I shall check with that department during the course of the day. In reply to the last part of the question, I do not know, but I will attempt to get an answer from the department during the day.

651 Mr EVERINGHAM to Dr LETTS—

Has action been taken by the Department of Northern Australia under section 118 of the Crown Lands Ordinance to bring about the removal of people who are trespassing on crown land in Darwin?

ANSWER

I understand the answer to that question is that no action has been taken under section 118 of the Crown Lands Ordinance by the government or its agents to bring about removal of people who are trespassing on crown land in Darwin.

652 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

How many officers in the Department of Northern Australia are employed in the Environment Section of that Department?

ANSWER

I am not quite sure of what the honourable member for Nightcliff includes in the expression "Environment Section". There is a branch of the Department of Northern Australia, I understand, still known as the Forestry Fisheries Wildlife and National Parks Branch, I do not know whether that is the area she is referring to or another section again. Perhaps she could clarify what this section is and where it is located.

Mrs LAWRIE: I understand there is no Environment Branch any more; there is a section. I ask how many officers are employed in that section. Perhaps the honourable member could also advise what is their status and their capability for appointment to the job.

Dr LETTS: I have not got the information available now, but I will find it out for the honourable member and inform her during the sittings.

653 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

Is the Darwin Hospital short of anaesthetists?

ANSWER

Yes, the Darwin Hospital is short of anaesthetists. At the end of this month there will not be one full time anaesthetist on the staff at the Darwin Hospital; the hospital will be relying completely on a locum service provided by anaesthetists from southern hospitals. I believe the Royal Brisbane and the Austin are two hospitals that are providing staff, and of course this is quite an expensive operation. The main reason that we are having difficulty in finding anaesthetists, apart from the world wide shortage, is that the salaries offered in the Territory are quite below those offered and available elsewhere in Australia. The Public Service Board does not seem to be able to assist or get on with the job of helping us.

654 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

When will the Rapid Creek Primary School be repaired and restored to its normal use as a primary school?

ANSWER

The Rapid Creek Primary School is at the moment being used for a migrant education service, and there is some degree of uncertainty as to when it will be fully repaired and fully operative. It is hoped by the Education Department that it will come into operation next year. However there seems to be certain minor difficulties involving the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

655 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr KILGARIFF—

How many members of the Northern Territory Police Force have been transferred out of the Northern Territory in recent months?

ANSWER

Since Cyclone Tracy 12 members of the Northern Territory Police Force have been transferred to the Australia Police Force, one on medical grounds.

656 Mr WITHNALL to Mr SPEAKER—

Who is responsible for the delay in the provision of the relocatable offices and buildings that are to be provided to members of this Assembly and when is it now expected those buildings will be ready for occupation?

ANSWER

I propose to make a statement on this matter later in the day.

657 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

Yesterday I asked him if it was a fact that the Health Department in the Northern Territory had no money for advertising and he replied that he didn't think so because they always did have. I repeat my question. Is he now in a position to say whether in fact there is no money to advertise for filling positions for medical staff.

ANSWER

Yes, I am in a position to answer the question. The amount provided in Appropriation Bill No. 1 for advertising for the Northern Territory Hospitals in 1975-76 was \$40,000. This compares with \$61,874 in 1974-75 which included \$27,000 to undertake a special advertising campaign during the year to attract nurses. As at 13 September 1975 the expenditure under the vote amounted to \$29,406. The remainder has been committed. Further allocation of funds for this appropriation is being sought from Treasury. Basically at the moment there is no money for advertising for nursing positions.

658 Mr KENTISH to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is it correct that two mobile police complexes are to be made available this financial year? Where are they to be sited? When is a police station to be constructed at Oenpelli?

ANSWER

Two mobile police complexes are to be provided under the Civil Works Program this year at a cost of about \$340,000. It is expected that they will be available in the Territory in January. One will be sited at Oenpelli and the other one at Hermannsburg. They will be on site as soon as transport and site arrangements can be completed by the Department of Housing and Construction. At present the authorities are looking at the possibility of constructing a police station at Oenpelli in 1976-77.

659 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

I address my question to the Majority Leader as senior member of the Administrator's Council. Following passage of the relevant legislation on "free areas", what action has the Administrator's Council taken to give notice of declaration of any area under the ordinance?

ANSWER

The Administrator's Council has at present the matter under consideration. It has some further investigation it wishes to pursue and a conclusion may possibly be reached before the end of this year.

660 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Of those persons who had an application to purchase a Housing Commission home prior to December 24 last year, when would it be possible for such applicants to recommence negotiations to purchase in line with the Housing Commission policy changes since December 1975?

ANSWER

Providing a satisfactory solution can be found regarding the Housing Commission's financial problems relating to the use of low interest rate funds from the Commonwealth Government for building commission homes, and subject to satisfactory settlement of certain aggrieved principals relating to commission insurance claims, the commission will be submitted a proposed new sales policy within the next 3 months, following which legislation will be necessary. Then the commission would proceed with existing tenants who qualify under the conditions of the new policy.

661 Mr KENTISH to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is he aware that the Town Council of Oenpelli has for some time offered two homes for use of police officers at Oenpelli and that there are firms in Darwin which, to mention one, Webbmater, could construct a mobile gaol within a month?

ANSWER

I have been unaware of this offer made to the police of two houses at Oenpelli and the fact that mobile gaols can be constructed very quickly in Darwin. I will refer the matter to the Commissioner of Police for his consideration.

662 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW—

How long after the completion date of the new class rooms at Nhulunbuy Area School can the Education Department arrange for the removal of the present temporary class rooms?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to procure the answer before the end of the day.

663 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

What facilities are available in Darwin for children who are wards of the state and what action can he take to facilitate provision of such facilities.

ANSWER

The situation in relation to wards of the state in Darwin at the moment is relatively serious because, as far as I am aware, the homes that were here in pre-cyclone times have all been demolished or blown away. It is causing the Department of Social Development some considerable concern. They are working to see what they can do to provide facilities. I know that in the estimates for this financial year there is provision for a facility here in Darwin and one in Alice Springs. I will try and find some more information and advise the member later.

664 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

Can he advise the number of times both the Yuendumu and Plenty River roads have been closed in the last 2 years and the length of those closures?

ANSWER

I don't have that information available at present. I will get hold of it and advise the honourable member later on in these sittings.

665 Mr KENTISH to Mr KILGARIFF—

In view of the massive and increasing unemployment in Australia, far beyond expectation and prediction, has the honourable member any knowledge of why Mr Bob Hawke has not acted on his previous expressed intention to liquidate the present Labor Government?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, while I am in receipt of very many communications and press statements from around Australia, Mr Hawke does not seem to have my name on his list. So the answer is no. But yesterday he asked me regarding unemployment figures and I have a little more information for him. As at 5 October the persons registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service was 246,094 and the seasonal adjusted figure increased to 202,715 or 5.10% of the workforce.

666 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

How many juvenile prisoners are at present being held at Fannie Bay Gaol and how are they being segregated?

ANSWER

I don't know how many are there just at this moment. I know that during the crisis we had a fortnight ago, when the prison officers went on strike, there was one juvenile and he was kept separate from the other prisoners by keeping him basically at Casuarina Police Station cells while the other prisoners were held at the Darwin Police Station cells. There are some facilities that can be used at Fannie Bay, and the remand prisoners and the juveniles, when we are unfortunate enough to have a juvenile in custody in Darwin, are kept separate from the prisoners under sentence. There are only a handful of prisoners under sentence in Darwin itself.

667 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

Can he tell me whether negotiations for the purchase of Connair Pty Ltd are under way between that company and the Department of Northern Australia and, if that is a fact, whether it is true that the Department of Northern Australia would be directly operating Connair Pty Ltd after the purchase takes place?

ANSWER

I don't have an answer to the honourable member's question. I will attempt to find out the answer to this question and pass it on later in this sitting.

668 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK—

What steps have been taken by the Department of Health to bring the nursing staff at the Gove District Hospital up to full strength?

ANSWER

The situation at Nhulunbuy is quite serious in relation to nursing, there is a shortage of nurses there; it has been a consistent shortage. There have been a number of advertising campaigns in an endeavour to gain nursing staff but at the moment no campaign can be undertaken because there are insufficient funds.

669 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr TUXWORTH—

I have a question to ask on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey under the heading of tourism. I refer to yesterday's announcement that the Katherine low level caravan park has been closed and ask what proposals have been put forward by the Government, or anyone else for that matter, to provide alternative land to replace the Katherine low level caravan park and to cater for caravanners and campers who have been denied that facility?

ANSWER

I don't know, I will endeavour to have an answer by the end of this sitting.

670 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr KILGARIFF—

The honourable member would be aware of the existence of a so-called town plan for Darwin in 1974 and previously, and the promulgation of certain other town plans during the course of this year. Would the honourable member tell me whether there is any enforceable town plan in operation for the city of Darwin at the present time?

ANSWER

I have looked at the matter and, as far as I am aware, that plan has not been the subject of any action under the Town Planning Ordinance and therefore would not appear to have any force as a law of the Northern Territory. Under the extensive powers granted to it, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission could use it as an enforceable guideline. I must ask the honourable member to place the question on notice so that I can look at the matter more fully.

671 Mr VALE to Mr KILGARIFF—

Has he any information pertaining to the issue of uniforms to the Northern Territory Police Force?

ANSWER

Members will be pleased to hear that the latest advice on the uniform issue that has been quite controversial in the last few months is that it is now expected that the first issue of uniforms will be available from the Government Clothing Factory in mid-November.

672 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

Is it the intention of the Department of Northern Australia to relocate the Fannie Bay Gaol at the abandoned Frances Creek iron ore mine in the near future?

ANSWER

The question of the relocation of the Fannie Bay Gaol has been with us for some considerable time. Also we have the situation at Frances Creek where a mining settlement which has some 26 homes and other facilities is empty. Consideration is currently being directed to perhaps turning these facilities into some sort of a prison or prison farm or retention centre. No basic decision has been made to move the prison service to Frances Creek. I think possibly greater consideration will be given to using the Berrimah site, and consideration will be given at a later stage to Frances Creek. It is quite undecided at this stage. I can assure the honourable member that every effort is being made at the moment to come up with something to get away from Fannie Bay.

673 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

Is it a fact that the Department of Health vote for overtime has run out and that within the next few weeks there will be no money available for payment of overtime for staff, which would mean that radiologists called on duty at night could not be paid for attending.

ANSWER

I am unaware of that situation. However, I do know the member for Alice Springs was asking some questions the other day privately on this matter. As I understand it, he received the assurance from the department that in relation to overtime for the medical staff there was no need for concern in that area at all.

Mrs Lawrie: You had better check up.

Mr Pollock: If you want me to check up you had better ask.

Mrs Lawrie: I have.

674 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr POLLOCK—

Can the honourable member advise me how long on the average it is taking to process a claim from the Northern Territory against Medibank, whether by a patient or a doctor, and how long on the average it takes for the patient or doctor to receive a cheque in his hand from the date of treatment?

ANSWER

Quite honestly I do not know. I have not received any complaints or heard of any complaint in the Territory. I have heard numerous complaints through the media of the situation interstate. It was said initially that everything would be fixed up in no more than 5 days. The mail service in the Territory is taking more than that anyway, so I imagine it would be quite a deal longer than they proposed it would be. Of course in the Alice Springs area we are not quite as affected because there are so few general practitioners to be able to utilize the service.

675 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr POLLOCK—

I ask the Executive Member for Social Affairs whether he could get an answer to my question.

ANSWER

I will get an answer.

676 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr KILGARIFF—

I am sure he will agree that there is a disparity between the statement issued by the Assistant Commissioner and that issued by the Police Association and the Police Officers Association. Does he consider that the Assistant Commissioner's statement was designed to mislead the public as to the true wishes of the Northern Territory Police Force, and does he consider that the statement does in fact do that?

ANSWER

I think the best I can say on this particular issue is that there is a disparity between what the Assistant Commissioner says and what has been put out by the combined Police Associations. In the first statement put out by the Acting Commissioners, as reported in yesterday's "News", it is said: "The Northern Territory Police element of the Australia Police has not been subjected to continuous interference in its day-to-day operations. Nor have operational controls been imposed by Canberra-based police officers".

I have before me a statement which I understand has been sent to the Prime Minister, various ministers of the government, members of parliament, the Legislative Assembly, etc. In that statement part of their concern is the "almost daily receipt of instructions from the Australia Police Headquarters signed by sundry Commonwealth assistant commissioners, superintendents and inspectors, clearly indicating that this force is regarded in no different light than other police regions formerly Commonwealth police districts under their control." "There is a strong indication that Commonwealth Police assistant commissioners are watchdogs of Northern Territory operational matters and are able to vet, control, question, call to account, require explanations, etc., regarding those procedures." "Thirdly, the frequent direct instruction and imposition of operational controls from Australia Police Headquarters to the Commonwealth Police element of the Northern Territory region of Australia."

677 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

Has any cash been allocated to commence the next three-year programme on the Stuart and Barkly Highways which was approved by the Federal Government last week.

ANSWER

To my knowledge there has been no cash allocated for this job. I believe if the government does not make the funds available to start this programme early next year we will see unemployment in that particular field. I made representation to the Minister for Northern Australia several weeks ago and have not received any answer.

678 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr KILGARIFF—

Since he is obviously concerned about the integration of the Northern Territory Police Force with the Australia Police, has he communicated directly with the Minister, Senator Cavanagh, on the matter asking him just precisely what the procedures will be, and what the degree of autonomy in the Territory will be?

ANSWER

No, I have not been in contact with the Minister for Police and Customs, regarding the proposed Australia Police Force. It is my understanding that probably this week legislation is to be introduced in the Australian Parliament relating to this matter. When we have a copy of this bill, which I hope we will see, we will have a better understanding of it. This matter will be further debated in a motion of mine later today.

679 Mr VALE to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is he aware of a recent Four Corners programme shown both in Darwin and Alice Springs based on a recent court case in Alice Springs? What is his attitude to that programme? In view of criticism in the programme, will the method of interrogating Aborigines be changed?

ANSWER

Yes, I am aware of the TV programme. I was not in Darwin when it was shown here and I was not in Alice Springs when it was shown there, so I only have second-hand information. I have had my attention drawn to this TV programme and I have taken it upon myself to get statements and transcripts of evidence of the court case which was held in Alice Springs some weeks ago. The result of the court case was that the people charged were found not guilty and released. I can only say that, on reading the transcripts, there is certainly a variation, statements that do not agree with other statements. Particularly, medical evidence did not appear to have been followed up. I have taken up the matter with the Acting Commissioner of Police and he informs me that this medical evidence, presented by a doctor from the Alice Springs Hospital, is now being considered by the police and further investigation is being carried out. I also understand that the judge who heard the case indicated that guidelines for interrogation are soon to be made public by him. I think that is as far as I can go at the moment.

680 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr POLLOCK—

As the Executive Member is no doubt aware, the prison officers at Fannie Bay Gaol and Gunn Point Prison Farm were on strike for a week recently. Is he able to advise the house of the reasons for this industrial trouble and whether they have now been resolved.

ANSWER

Basically, there were two reasons for the industrial trouble. One was in relation to a flow on of salaries and the other to conditions at Fannie Bay Gaol and Gunn Point. In relation to the conditions at the two establishments, the problems there have been satisfactorily overcome. In relation to the salary situation, negotiations are still going on. This is a matter which is presently before the Arbitration Commission in relation to indexation. The history of the matter is that the Northern Territory prison officers have for many years been akin to the New South Wales service in salaries. The New South Wales officers have received a series of increases of salaries in the past 12 months and the Prime Minister's Department, the Department of Labour and Immigration amongst others have decided that they will get into the act in relation to Northern Territory salaries and the prisons officers determination. They decreed that the rises that were granted the New South Wales officers were not within the bounds of indexation and therefore could not be passed on without further negotiations. These negotiations are going on and we are awaiting a decision by Mr Justice Moore of the Arbitration Commission.

In relation to the industrial trouble it is worthy of note that during that time, the prisoners had to be detained at the Darwin Police Station for a period of some 6 or 7 days. They did conduct themselves particularly well and at my instigation, recommendation was made to the Administrator and he has approved that all prisoners who were held during that period of the strike will have their sentences remitted by 3 days.

681 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING—

Why has the Darwin Reconstruction Commission found it necessary to remove the gold-lettered sign over at the front of "Big Al's" and replace it with that abomination of a sign that is there now?

ANSWER

I gather the honourable member is referring to the new "logo" of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission which I believe emanated from the office of the chairman as a matter of design. I cannot answer why the gold gilded sign has been removed and replaced with the new one. I have heard various comments in the last few days. Some say that perhaps it is the design for the new dancing academy from the hieroglyphics that are contained on the "logo". Another comment that was made to me was that the actual design is very similar to the Chinese character for trouble due to hardship. Another person has pointed out that if a house was built in accordance with the illustrated design it certainly would not meet the requirements of the new building code.

682 Mr KENTISH to Mr TAMBLING—

What are the current Darwin Reconstruction Commission plans for development and progress in the rural areas under their control?

ANSWER

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has considered plans within four categories within the boundary of the 40 kilometre zone. The Darwin city zone is already well publicised. The proposals for the Berrimah area are now on display for a period of one month under the appropriate sections of the act. The area formally called the 32 square mile acquisition area has not received any planning decisions at this time due to the complications caused by that particular acquisition. For the area bounded roughly by Howard Springs, Noonamah and Humpty Doo an indicative plan has been prepared for administrative purposes and is on display in Moonta House. It indicates to landholders in that area the types of land uses that are under consideration. The more general rural policies are being pursued in conjunction with the Department of Northern Australia as they were prior to the cyclone.

683 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

Is he able to give any information of what stage the establishment of a Northern Territory Health Commission has reached?

ANSWER

Yesterday, I received a telegram from the Director General of Health advising me that the discussion papers for the establishment of the Northern Territory Health Commission are presently with the Minister for Health. He anticipates that the Minister will agree to wide circulation in the near future and he will ensure that a copy is available to this Assembly. At least, the papers have got to the stage where they are with the Minister and we are hoping that he will not take too long to process them.

684 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

When is legislation likely to be introduced into the Federal Parliament concerning land rights for Aborigines?

ANSWER

I have it on reliable authority that the Aboriginal Land Bill will be introduced into the House of Representatives today.

685 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Can he advise me whether copies of that legislation will be available today or upon introduction to members of this Assembly?

ANSWER

I received information just before we met this morning to the effect that the bill will probably be introduced today. I contacted the office of the local Director of Aboriginal Affairs in Darwin and asked him whether

copies of the legislation would be made available. The answer was that no provision had been made for the legislation to be made available to members of this Assembly. I asked whether we could borrow a copy in order to have it further copied. He said that he thought that was possible but he would have to check up to see whether his copy was the same as the one which is to be introduced into the federal house.

686 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW—

Is there a firm timetable for electrical reticulation for subdivisions for freehold sections 462, 463 and 475 in the Humpty Doo area?

ANSWER

I cannot advise at the moment. However, I will endeavour to seek that information and relay it this afternoon. I would like to say that the ESU has been under considerable difficulties in arranging electrical connection especially in that area owing to a shortage of linesmen and the inability of the department to attract them to the Northern Territory.

687 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr KILGARIFF—

Has the Corporation of the City of Darwin made any approach to him to have legislative changes introduced into this Assembly to allow them to lease land presently held by them in trust for the general public? If so, will he be prepared at an early date to release the precise terms upon which they would like the legislation amended?

ANSWER

I am unaware of any request. However, I will check today to see if there is something in the system but I do not recall any such request.

688 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTIS—

On a recent trip to Wave Hill I observed an unsatisfactory state of the contract on the sister's quarters and clinic. I wonder if he could report any progress on the situation?

ANSWER

I can give the up-to-date report on this matter briefly because of correspondence received yesterday; the letter starts off "Dear Goff" and is signed "with all good wishes. Gough". The quarters and clinic were due to be completed in January 1974 and November 1974, respectively. The Prime Minister informs me that the Health Clinic is now completed and the joint inspection to hand over for occupation purposes was carried out on 25 September. He also informs me that there will be some further delay on the nurses' quarters but there is a chance that they may be ready for occupation by the end of January 1976.

689 Mr KENTISH to Mr TAMBLING—

The Member for Community Development would be aware of the influx of people to areas east of Berrimah and the desire of these people to build a Community Hall. When and where can the DRC provide an area of land for such development as they envisage?

ANSWER

I am aware that the Rural Landowners Association and other interested parties in the rural area have made an approach to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for a community hall. I believe that continuing negotiations are taking place between those interested parties, the Department of Northern Australia and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and I believe that they are proceeding with satisfactory performance on all parts.

690 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is it true that the processing of progress claims by the Department of Housing and Construction in relation to contracts in the Alice Springs area is taking up to 2 months and over whereas the stipulated period in these standard works for Housing and Construction contracts is 14 days from architect's certificate? Further, is he aware that the processing of rise and fall claims payments involving amounts in excess of one hundred thousand dollars to individual contractors is taking between 6 and 9 months? If this is true can he get something done about expediting them?

ANSWER

There is a slowing down in payment, not only in contracts but generally throughout government these days. I have not been able to ascertain the reason but, over the last few weeks, I have been consistently working on behalf of various centres and organisations getting these money matters tidied up. I will go into the matter he has referred to in regard to Alice Springs but I would ask him to give me further information. I am aware that in some contracts the rise and fall payments are taking a long time to be paid. There have been negotiations going on between some of these firms and Housing and Construction. It is my hope that these matters may have been signed by now and so those firms which had outstanding money for some time will be relieved. Generally, action is being taken in an endeavour to get these problems overcome. These problems do occur and anyone who has problems should bring them to my notice so that I may negotiate with the various departments and have the matters cleared up.

691 Mr VALE to Mr SPEAKER—

Can you advise the House when repairs to the airconditioning and other areas of the building will be carried out?

ANSWER

A contract has been let and the contractor is due to start work any day. The completion of the contract will not be before February. Air conditioning is one of the things which is most required, but we cannot look forward to the completion of the contract until February.

700 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN—

Can he advise me if the southern access roads into the Northern Territory will be in any better position in this coming wet than they were in the 1973-74 wet and the 1974-75 wet season?

ANSWER

I do not believe that the roads will be in any better condition. The road into the Northern Territory from South Australia has had no upgrading on it in the last 12 months and I consider that the same situation will arise if the weather gets bad down in that area. The maintenance of that particular section of the road is particularly bad. The roads from South Australia therefore, will be no better. If the weather is bad in that region, we will be subjected to closures and delays. The same situation applies to those sections of the Queensland roads which give access to the Northern Territory and which are not sealed. If they have bad weather in these areas I am quite confident that these roads will once again be closed.

701 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

I refer to a question I asked last week about a bill which passed through this Assembly and which he assured me had been assented to. I ask him if in fact it has been assented to and if so, what was the date of assent. If it has not been assented to, what action is he taking to ensure that it is either assented to or assent is not given?

ANSWER

I indicated last week that I had been informed informally that the bill had been assented to. I must apologise in as much as my information was totally incorrect on that occasion. The information I should have supplied to the honourable member was that officers of the department had informed me that approval in principle had been given by the appropriate policy dissections of the department and presented to the Minister. I am still unable to provide any reason as to why the bill has not yet been assented to, and I am just as shocked and horrified as the honourable member for Nightcliff that this matter seems to be yo-yoing between Darwin, Brisbane, Canberra and the Minister's office.

702 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

I appreciate that answer and following that answer I ask whether it is the practice that when bills have been introduced by Executive Members, fully debated and passed, they are then sent to the relevant departments in the Department of Northern Australia and do the rounds there, waiting for approval from public servants before the Administrator or the Governor-General, whichever the case may be, will assent?

ANSWER

I am not aware whether this is the routine or common practice but when this is done it is a matter which I deplore and believe should not happen.

703 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

What is the current staff situation of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission? How many permanent staff does the Darwin Reconstruction Commission employ? How many temporary staff does the Darwin Reconstruction Commission employ?

ANSWER

As at 17 October, the staffing position of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is: staff appointed, 73; staff seconded or on loan, 10; there have been offers of engagement issued to 7 people and there are currently 2 consultants for contractors with the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. There are currently also 14 vacant positions.

704 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

Can he tell me if consideration is being given to the surfacing of the road from Dhupuma College to the Gove Airport?

ANSWER

I do not have an answer to the honourable member's question. I ask that he put it on notice.

705 Mr PERRON to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is it a fact that the Attorney-General's Department refused to provide transcripts of evidence given at inferior courts in Darwin?

ANSWER

I draw the honourable member's attention to the Record of Depositions Ordinance. Section 13 does indicate you can make application for the papers. However I draw the honourable member's attention to section 13(2) which reads: "Nothing in the last preceding subsection requires or permits the clerk of the court to furnish a copy referred to in that subsection to a person not being a party to the relevant proceedings unless the clerk or a stipendiary magistrate of the Territory is satisfied that there is good reason for that person being furnished with a copy". If the honourable member would see me later I can give him further information on the matter.

706 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS—

Realising how dependent the centre is on Adelaide markets, what steps are being taken to convert present killing facilities in central Australia to export standards?

ANSWER

I am not aware of any steps being taken to convert the Alice Springs abattoir at the moment to export standards. I am aware that the history of the Alice Springs abattoir was that it was built initially as a government abattoir and that subsequently it was leased out to private enterprise to operate. I understand that that is still the situation. It would probably be the decision of the lessee as to whether further upgrading of the

present standards was warranted and could be economically met. My understanding also is that the Alice Springs abattoir, like virtually all other abattoirs in northern Australia suffers from problems of liquidity, depressed prices, depressed export markets, and I believe that the chances of extra expenditure of \$100,000 or more being applied to upgrade to an export standard in the light of the economics of abattoir operations would be pretty remote.

707 Mrs LAWRIE to MR KILGARIFF—

At the last sittings of this Assembly, I asked the Executive Member for Finance and Law a question which I again ask him. Following press reports from the Alice Springs district where a citizen is reported to have discharged a firearm to warn off people, has any charge been laid against that person for the discharge of a firearm in a built-up district?

ANSWER

My understanding is that the person has not been charged. I regret that previously I said that I would look into the matter further; I did overlook the matter, I will do it as quickly as possible.

708 Mr PERRON to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is it a fact that many businesses in Darwin have not been paid money owed them by the Government since well before June this year?

ANSWER

I think I touched on this last week. There are very many matters being referred to me at the moment from Darwin and Katherine and other places, and it does appear that there is a large amount of money owed by various departments. At the moment I am in touch with the department but I have had no answer at the present. But some of the amounts of money that people claim or firms claim as being owing to them for several months, runs into quite large figures. If this is the case, and it appears that it is the case, it is regrettable that the government has not paid the money earlier. Quite obviously, if money is owed before June these accounts should have been paid by them. As I have said before, I am looking at the situation. I hope that by tomorrow I may have more definite information for the honourable member.

709 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

Is he able to tell me when the cafeteria in block 8 will reopen?

ANSWER

I am unable to say. I do not think that anybody really knows. As you will be aware yourself, Mr Speaker, you asked questions on this matter earlier in the year. The first time the question was asked, the department advised that certain repairs were going to be made to the place and it would be open in a few months. Since then it has become a showroom for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I have again approached the department and they tell me that it needs a lot of repairs and updating of equipment and that during the cyclone period when it was used as a cafeteria some of the equipment was damaged and it will have to be repaired and renovated. They have come up with a conglomeration of excuses.

710 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr KILGARIFF—

In light of the heated conflict and contradiction which appears to be going on in the media via various press releases between the Minister for Police and Customs and the various police bodies, could he explain the true position vis-a-vis those two organisations and people?

ANSWER

I have today asked the Northern Territory Police Association for a copy of their last statement. I understand from the media that they have refuted a statement made by Senator Cavanagh, the Minister in charge of Police and Customs. I understand that they have refuted his statement that the Northern Territory Police did not wish to be dissociated from the Australia Police Force. I will get a copy of the statement as quickly as possible.

711 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

Is she able to tell me when the Nakara Primary School is opening?

ANSWER

The department informs me that the Nakara Primary School will probably be ready next year. There is still some degree of uncertainty, not the least of which is the number of families who will be living in the area and wishing to send children to that school.

712 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Miss ANDREW (by leave): The honourable member for Nightcliff asked me to comment on "a strong and well-founded rumour that within 12 months water rates and electricity rates will almost double". Water rates and electricity rates will be reviewed. Information is currently being collected regarding electricity rates. When some decision is made it has to be approved by the Administrator's Council and it is not expected that an announcement will be made within 6 months. Nothing has yet been done about water rates.

713 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Miss ANDREW (by leave): The honourable member for Nhulunbuy asked me about the removal of temporary classrooms at the Nhulunbuy Area School. I am informed by the Department of Education that no definite decision has been made regarding the completion of extensions to the Nhulunbuy Area School. Therefore, no decision has been made about the temporary classrooms.

714 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Miss ANDREW (by leave): The honourable member for Arnhem asked about electricity reticulation on sections 462, 463 and 475 at Humpty Doo. A decision is expected within a week by the Department of the Northern Territory.

715 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): The honourable member for Jingili asked whether or not the Department of Northern Australia was negotiating with Connair for its purchase. I directed this question to the department and I have been advised that it has been referred to the secretary in Canberra. In view of the anticipated delay and possibly even the disappearance of the question, I suggest that the honourable member now place that question on notice so that we will be assured of getting an answer.

716 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): The other question related to whether or not the Department of Housing and Construction had transferred all of its building construction section personnel to the DRC or whether they had been retrenched. The answer is that the section is still operating within the Department of Housing and Construction. There have been a few transfers and secondments to the DRC but there have been no retrenchments and the Department of Housing and Construction still has a building and construction section.

717 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

Can he advise me if the Department of Northern Australia has made available copies of the Aboriginal Land Bill and the second-reading speech to members of the Assembly?

ANSWER

The answer to the honourable member's question is yes and no. Late yesterday morning, I received from the local office of the Director of Aboriginal Affairs one copy of the bill and one copy of the second-reading speech. I certainly did not receive enough to be made available to all honourable members, but I have through our own limited resources arranged to have a copy duplicated. I trust that by tomorrow morning there will be sufficient copies of both the bill and the second-reading speech available, so that the Assembly may undertake some consideration of the matter.

718 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS—

The reason given to the fall of from \$10 to \$40 per head at Gepps Cross last Thursday was the completion of the 1975 export season and a necessity to wait for the 1976 season prices. What can the Australian Meat Board do to eliminate such fluctuations either by introducing cattle price stabilisation scheme or other means?

ANSWER

I was aware of the sharp fall in prices at Gepps Cross and I understand that part of the reason for this was a lack of liaison between the Australian Meat Board and the meat exporters in that the Australian Meat Board set a date for the final shipment of beef to the USA under the quota system this year and did not consult the exporters in advance. There was a temporary feeling among the market that they could be caught with meat that could not be shipped in accordance with the quota within the given time for this year. That situation would only be a temporary problem and it would be more than counterbalanced in the immediate future by the fact that Japan has announced a further expansion of her quota and that news will be welcomed by the industry and will probably be reflected in a restoration of those prices.

I believe that the Meat Board's activities in market promotion are probably reflected in this expansion of the Japanese quota. As far as a meat stabilisation plan is concerned, it is not really a matter for the board although they may give advice to government on this problem. If a comprehensive meat stabilisation price scheme was to be introduced in Australia, it would be similar to the approach used in the wheat stabilisation plan and, in so far as it would have to be an Australian-wide scheme, that would mean that it would require federal legislation as well as state legislation. Some people who are represented on the Australian Agricultural Council have been trying for some months to see if it is possible to devise a meat stabilisation or equalisation plan. Both Queensland and New South Wales have taken draft plans to the Australian Agricultural Council but they have not yet met with common approval. I do not know the details of these plans because the Northern Territory is not fortunate enough to have a representative on or an invitation to attend the Australian Agricultural Council meetings.

719 Mr WITHNALL to Mr SPEAKER—

Are you able to say when the provision of newspapers for the use of members will be resumed?

ANSWER

The Clerk has endeavoured to secure a satisfactory arrangement with the newsagent. However, the newsagent demands payment in advance and refuses to give the Legislative Assembly credit. We are examining the situation more closely and we hope that newspapers will be provided very shortly.

720 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTS—

Can he report progress on the pilot farms scheme at Adelaide River?

ANSWER

I ask the honourable member to place that question on notice.

721 Mr WITHNALL to Mr RYAN—

I refer to the answer which he gave to my question yesterday about a retrenchment of members of the Department of Housing and Construction. Will he take steps to convey to members of the Department of Housing and Construction building section that, notwithstanding statements to the contrary made by some officers in the department, the executive member has been assured that there is no intention to disband that section?

ANSWER

I will pass on that information.

722 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

What is the unit price for a 3-bedroomed Housing Commission dwelling and how will economic rent for such a dwelling be computed? Are they on the new contract for loans or if not will they be spread over the whole establishment of Housing Commission homes?

ANSWER

I would ask that she place the formal sections of her question on notice. I am aware that the Housing Commission contract prices are in the order of \$32,000 to \$35,000 per house. With regard to the determination of rents, this is done annually by the Housing Commission and sanctioned by the Administrator's Council. I will endeavour to obtain information about the manner in which this will be done for the coming year.

723 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS—

Last week's Centralian Advocate contained a letter concerning a pastoral property in Central Australia known as Supplejack Downs. The letter averred that there had been undue delay in processing an application made by an occupier for a lease under the Crown Land Ordinance and inferred that the Administrator's Council may have been involved in that delay. Can he advise whether this is correct?

ANSWER

I am aware of the contents of the letter which attempted to trace the history of the occupancy of the pastoral property known as Supplejack Downs and drew attention to the present delays in finalising the matter. As far as I am aware, this matter has not been officially brought to the Administrator's Council as yet.

724 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is he aware of the bank up in service of process and levying of execution in both the supreme and local courts in Darwin? Although there is a supposed establishment of three bailiffs, there is in fact one bailiff carrying out the task. If the honourable member is aware of the position, what is going to be done about it?

ANSWER

This matter has been brought to my attention. I am going to the authorities to see what action has been taken to ensure that the number of bailiffs is brought up to the establishment of three.

725 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr KILGARIFF—

I am sure that he is well aware that the Australian Legal Aid Office in Darwin is woefully inadequate and privacy cannot be accorded to clients. What action is being taken to remedy this?

ANSWER

I have personally inspected the offices in the MLC building. I have taken up the matter with Property and Services to endeavour to have more space made available. I have also drawn to the attention of the Attorney-General the present poor conditions for his staff.

726 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr POLLOCK—

Is that member aware of the statement attributed to the Minister for Repatriation in yesterday's paper that Medibank claims are taking 8 days to process and does he have any comment on the accuracy of this statement?

ANSWER

The member asked me a question last week about delays in the payment from Medibank and I did institute some inquiries which are continuing. The state manager for South Australia/Northern Territory of the Health Insurance Commission advised me last Wednesday that claims made by Territory residents are being processed within a week of receipt at the Adelaide office. Bulk billing is marginally faster because it is a computer based process and does not have as much manual handling as a patient claim. The manager was unable to say how long it was taking for payment of the claims even though they were processed within a week in Adelaide because payment was transcribed by computer to Canberra and he had no executive control over the situation there. The secretary of the commission was unable to tell me how long it was taking claims to be paid. He was going to institute inquiries and advise me in four or five days but he has not advised me as yet. I inquired at the local office of Medibank as to how long it was taking and the lass who was working there said she had a claim submitted for five weeks and she had not received payment. If you work in the place and you cannot get your claim through under five weeks, it is pretty crook.

727 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Is he aware of a detailed and comprehensive report on the Mereenie aquifer in Central Australia at present held by the Federal Minister? If so, would he be prepared to make copies of that report available to members of this Assembly?

ANSWER

I advised the house the other day that I am aware of the study being undertaken by Water Resources Branch for the Minister on the future of the Alice Springs water reticulation. To the best of my knowledge, that report is not due to be finished until late November early December. However, I will contact the Department concerned and ask whether the report is finished. If it is finished, I will ask whether it can be tabled and if it is not finished, I will ask that it be tabled when it is complete.

728 Mr EVERINGHAM to Dr LETTS—

Is the change in the occupancy of the ministry of agricultural portfolio likely to enhance, in the Majority Leader's opinion, Legislative Assembly chances of representation on the Australian Agricultural Council?

ANSWER

I think I can answer that without having to give it as a matter of opinion which, of course, is outside standing orders.

Representation of executive members of this Assembly on Commonwealth State ministerial councils was sought through the then Minister for Northern Australia Dr Patterson, who strongly supported the case for this and was successful in respect of most of these bodies in getting executive members the right to attend. The one in which we have not had any success so far has been the Australian Agricultural Council. Senator Wriedt, the then Minister for Agriculture, has indicated to me on several occasions that he thought that it would create a precedent which he was not prepared to do. I know that Dr Patterson has continued to make representations to Senator Wriedt on this matter and I believe that, with the change of ministry, our chances of being represented on that council will be much better.

729 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr KILGARIFF—

What action is being taken to police our coastline and isolated airstrips to prevent illegal importation of drugs and the introduction of exotic diseases such as foot and mouth disease?

ANSWER

There are actions being taken by the airforce and navy and surveillance of the coast is undertaken to some degree. I will seek a full statement on the matter.

730 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr KILGARIFF—

In a recent AM broadcast, it was stated quite clearly that the illegal export of Australian birds was being carried on, by people given a return ticket to Singapore. In return, they strapped these birds in metal canisters to their bodies and, hidden by their clothes, they smuggled them to Singapore. I ask the honourable member if any particular measures are being taken at Darwin airport to prevent this and, if not, would he attempt to have measures instituted?

ANSWER

I am not aware of what action is being taken by the authorities but I know that the authorities are taking the matter very seriously as can be seen by prosecutions against people who commit this offence throughout Australia. If this sort of thing is being carried on from Darwin to Singapore, I will have the matter thoroughly investigated and I will report back to this Assembly.

731 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW—

What is the designation and address of the officer in Brisbane or Melbourne to whom Darwin residents should address queries concerning their electricity accounts?

ANSWER

I will provide it for the member later today.

732 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

Who has overall responsibility for the development occurring in the Railway Dam area? This includes roads, bulldozing of mangroves with insufficient drainage to allow the mangroves to survive and to have proper salt water inundation. Various activities are being carried on in the Railway Dam area with no overall attitude towards the proper preservation of the area.

ANSWER

I will seek details from both the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the Department of Northern Australia. I am not aware of any leases in that area being vested in local government although I am aware that some specific claims have been made to the Aboriginal Lands Commission for land close to the Railway Dam area. I will seek further information.

733 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN—

There has been resealing of the Stuart Highway in the Coonawarra/Berrimah area. Can he advise what grade of aggregate was used in that resealing, what is the recommended grade of aggregate on such a road and who is responsible for supervision of the contractor to ensure that the proper grade was used? In explanation, perhaps I should say that in one day there were twenty-six broken windscreens.

Mr SPEAKER—

It is quite obvious that many questions are being asked, which should be placed on notice. I direct honourable members' attention to standing orders which outline the procedure. I direct the honourable member to put that question on notice.

734 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

I am sure he is aware that on Housing Commission blocks where there are two caravans in many cases there have been no laundry facilities provided. How is this problem to be overcome?

ANSWER

I am aware of the problem. It has been looked at by both the Accommodation Co-ordination Committee and the Housing Commission. At this stage I am unable to give her any specific information as to what action has been taken for the provision of laundry facilities. I will endeavour to obtain further details of their proposed action this day and advise her.

735 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

This question is asked on behalf of the honourable member for Eley. What progress is the Mount Isa Mine group making with development programs at McArthur River of the silver lead zinc deposits, and what action is being taken to control fishing in the gulf area around Borroloola?

ANSWER

Mount Isa Mines has embarked on a \$13m development program this year. Unfortunately, in the last week, during the development of the underground workings, water has broken into the mine and the pumps have been unable to contain the amount of water coming in. Mount Isa Mines as a result of this has withdrawn for the rest of the wet and will be closing the operation there for a complete reevaluation of the situation. To the best of my knowledge the Fisheries Branch have an inspector stationed at Borroloola to try and maintain a surveillance over the rivers. There is no boat control in that area because the Fisheries Branch only have one boat. It is not possible to do the 1200 miles of the coastline with one boat.

736 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr KILGARIFF—

I understand that a liquor commission has been set up in the ACT. Will the Northern Territory follow suit?

ANSWER

Legislation has been introduced in the ACT and a liquor commission has been formed. As members know, we are looking at legislation for a Northern Territory liquor commission and we are hopeful that it will be introduced early next year. We are studying the ACT report. I think one section of the report says that they have 24-hour trading. I do not think we will be recommending that to this Legislative Assembly.

737 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr KILGARIFF—

I understand he has received a delegation from the Northern Territory Chamber of Industries regarding the indebtedness of the Commonwealth of Australia to private persons and contractors in the Territory. Can he report on the results of his discussions?

ANSWER

I have received a delegation from the executive members of the Chamber of Industries in Darwin. They have indicated that there is a large amount of money owing up to 30 June 1975, something like \$300,000. After that period there would be much more. It is my intention now to call the various departments together in conference with the Chamber of Industries to see if the matter can be satisfactorily resolved. This conference will be of benefit to the traders in Darwin because in some cases they possibly are unaware of the various procedures of government financing. A conference between both parties will be beneficial to all.

738 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr KILGARIFF—

Does a similar situation exist in Alice Springs? If so, what can be done to alleviate the problem there?

ANSWER

To some degree the situation is the same in Alice Springs and other places. It is my intention to be in Alice Springs this weekend and I invite the honourable member, if he receives complaints, to send those people to see me. I understand that the Chamber of Industries is in Darwin to invite people from the Alice representing various organisations to attend the conference.

739 Mr VALE to Mr KILGARIFF—

Is it true that local government package deals are soon to be made to both Katherine and Tennant Creek?

ANSWER

Package deal offers have already been made to Tennant Creek and Katherine. I think the offer was made some 18 months ago. They asked for further negotiations. Katherine I think rejected the package deal unless the department was prepared to put in rise and fall clauses. Next week in Tennant Creek, members of the Local Government Branch of the Department of Northern Australia will meet with the Town Management Board in Tennant Creek to further negotiate the package deal. I will attend that meeting. In Katherine on Tuesday there will be further discussions between the department and the Town Management Board with possibly an answer coming from the department back to the Town Management Board relating to these queries. I will also be attending those discussions.

740 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

When is it expected that a commission will be appointed to conduct the proposed inquiry into the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance?

ANSWER

Inquiries have been carried on since the last sitting of this Assembly to find a suitable person or persons to conduct the inquiry. Those inquiries are still being made.

741 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

Is it his intention to introduce legislation regarding the use of poker machines?

ANSWER

I have no intention of introducing any legislation and I don't know of any legislation in that field that is contemplated. I have not heard any discussion on the matter. I do not feel poker machines are in any way warranted in our community.

742 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr RYAN—

This question is addressed to the honourable member in his capacity as Chairman of the Road Safety Council. It results from a matter of concern raised by the honourable member for Eley. Has the Northern Territory Road Safety Council looked into the situation with the Lindsay Street proposed intersection in a proposed new sub-division in Katherine? If so, have they formed an opinion as to the safety of that proposed intersection in its present form?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not know if the Road Safety Council has been informed of the situation in Lindsay Street. You yourself made me aware of the situation and since you spoke to me earlier this week I have been unable to get hold of a map of the proposed changes to that particular intersection. I am inclined to agree that, since the subdivision is not yet built and will not be built for 3 years, it is an unnecessary change to the intersection at this stage. I have started discussions with the department. I intend to continue with these and also bring it to the notice of the Road Safety Council.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

743 Mr RYAN (by leave): The honourable member for Nightcliff asked a question concerning the highway out at Berrimah. I could have answered part of that question myself the other day except for the grades of the aggregate used and the recommended grades. The information has been supplied to me. The grade of aggregate used was 12mm to 18mm the recommended grade of aggregate is 14mm to 16mm. The supervision of the contract was undertaken by the Department of Housing and Construction.

The honourable member raised a matter concerning the breaking of glass—this was part of the question which I felt I could have answered—that there were a large number of windscreens broken. While the size of the metal will have some effect on this, the main reason the metal is thrown up is the speed of the vehicles. Unfortunately, as I mentioned in a speech the other day, people in Darwin do not necessarily worry too much about other people on the road, so a vehicle speeding in one direction will throw a piece of metal up and a car going the opposite direction can run into it. The car going in the other direction has to be travelling at a fairly reasonable pace to break the glass. While it is unfortunate that we get this situation occurring with a resealing of the road, it is something we have to put up with; people have just got to be a little more careful until the excess gravel is taken off the side of the road.

744 Mr STEELE to Mr SPEAKER—

You would have heard on the radio that the TLC and the Australian Labor Party are going to march on the Assembly tomorrow. I was wondering if you have had any communications in this regard and whether you have prepared the Assembly for such an assault?

ANSWER

No answer made.

745 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr KILGARIFF—

In view of recent drug thefts from the hospital, doctors' surgeries and chemists around Darwin has the incidence of drug charges increased over the last 3 months in Darwin, and do the Northern Territory police have a drug squad in Darwin to counter this problem?

ANSWER

In this last few months more drugs have been stolen from chemists and I believe extra precautions have been taken. I do not know if there has been any increase in people being charged with the use of drugs. I will look at the matter. There is a drug squad in the Northern Territory and in Darwin, and I will enquire what the present establishment is. Some time ago I considered the establishment too light, and I would have my doubts, with the restrictions that have been brought in on staff ceilings in the last 2 months, that there would be a large number in the squad. I will get further information for the honourable member.

746 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN—

When is it likely that full facilities will be restored at the Darwin airport for domestic travellers as well as overseas travellers?

ANSWER

I wish I could give a satisfactory answer but it is almost like the question the honourable member for Arnhem used to ask every sitting, as to when the road was going to be started again at Berrimah. Well, it has finally started. But with regard to the airport, the honourable member, like the rest of us, is obviously concerned with the situation that greets visitors to the town. They walk through the doorway into a place that is falling down around their ears. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has let a contract to repair the overseas section. This has been going on for some weeks although the announcement was only made last week. The contract for repairs to the transit lounge was under way when I inspected the place 5 or 6 weeks ago, and I assume that it is almost finished. I believe there are proposals to spend about \$1m in repairing the facilities out there. I do not know when this is going to be done. I believe it is being considered by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission but whether or not any firm commitments or plans are being made I do not know. The Department of Transport certainly do not appear to be particularly interested and we can only keep pressuring the departments concerned for action and I will continue to do so.

747 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN—

Does he know if, when the bar facilities are restored, they will be made available to internal passengers, or restricted to overseas flights? That is the latest rumour around Darwin.

ANSWER

As a regular visitor to the airport, I can assure the honourable member for Nightcliff that I will be doing everything possible to see that ordinary passengers get the use of the facilities. I believe that there is a small bar in the international section. It appears to be a bar but I do not know if it will be used as a bar. This would mean they have their own facility. I have not heard any rumours that the existing facilities, that the one which was always used as a general bar, would be only open to international passengers. I certainly would create as much fuss as possible to see that it is open to the public because they are the majority of the people travelling and they need the sustenance.

748 Mr WITHNALL to Miss ANDREW—

Is it necessary that the gas turbine alternator in Darwin be used continuously at the present time? Will the honourable member agree that the level of noise from this installation is well-nigh unbearable? Will she endeavour to arrange for the machine not to be used unless effective silencers are fitted?

ANSWER

I ask the honourable member to put the question on notice.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

749 Mr KILGARIFF: Yesterday I was asked whether I was aware that there is only one bailiff at present on the strength of the local courts in Darwin, despite a supposed establishment of 30. The answer is that the Supreme Court uses the services of the sheriff's office and as far as is known there are no problems in this respect. The local court bailiffs are Commonwealth Police, now Australia Police. Until this week there was only one such officer. As from Monday, there have been 2. There were proposals in the Commonwealth Police for two officers as bailiffs. It is not known at this time what proposals for this service have been made in the Australia Police. Outside Darwin, the services are performed by Northern Territory Police and there have been recent problems with this service in Alice Springs.

I would just like to make comment on that. Where it says local court bailiffs are Commonwealth Police now Australia Police, I do not think the answer is quite correct. There is no Australia Police Force as there has been no legislation passed to establish it.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

750 Mr TAMBLING: The honourable member for Nightcliff asked a question relating to the environmental issues surrounding the railway dam area. I am informed that the Department of Housing and Construction utilised the area adjacent to the Dinah Beach Road for dump purposes up to 30 June, but since that date there has been no dumping of a legal nature in that area. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has officers investigating the environmental problems that have now been raised by the honourable member and I hope to provide her with further information within the next few days.

751A Mr RYAN (by leave): The honourable member for Jingili asked me a question and I did not expect to get an answer so quickly so I asked him to put it on notice. I think I should give the answer to the Assembly seeing that the department has now provided it. The question referred to the negotiations under way by the Department of Northern Australia to purchase Connair and asked whether Connair would be operating that company after that date. The answer that I have got from the Department of Northern Australia says that the company has offered the airline to the government and the government is actively considering the offer but no decision has been made.

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