

## PART II

### THE QUESTION PAPER

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II.  
Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

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

NOTICE GIVEN ON DATE SHOWN

From 15 March 1983

Karguru Bush Camp - Lease

- 795 Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM
1. Will he grant a special purposes lease to the Karguru bush camp, Tennant Creek, to enable the provision of adequate ablution facilities?
  2. Was an application for a special purposes lease for the Karguru bush camp lodged with his department in January 1982 and rejected by him in October 1982?
  3. On what date did he inform the applicants of his decision to reject the application?

Apprentices

- 800 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for EDUCATION
1. Is he aware that only 5 panelbeating firms in Darwin employ apprentices?
  2. Do the Territory Insurance Office and other government authorities give preference to firms employing apprentices?
  3. Are corporations such as Telecom encouraged to employ and apprentice local youths in their Northern Territory operations?

Aboriginal Land Claims

- 810 Mr MacFARLANE to CHIEF MINISTER
- Is it a fact that under the Aboriginal Land (Northern Territory) Act (a) water is a mineral, and (b) river banks and river beds can be claimed?

Timber Creek - Land Claim

- 811 Mr MacFARLANE to CHIEF MINISTER
1. Is it a fact that the township of Timber Creek is under land claim?
  2. If the claim is successful, will the houses and improvements become the property of Aboriginals?

Northern Land Council - Legal Advisers

- 813 Mr MacFARLANE to CHIEF MINISTER
- Is he able to say how many legal advisers are employed by the Northern Land Council?

Railway Electrification

- 817 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY
- In view of his predecessor's statement late 1982 about reticulating power from a gas-fired power station in Darwin to Daly Waters, and in view of the proposed gas-operated power station in Alice Springs, will consideration be given to electrifying the Darwin to Alice Springs railway?

Tindal - Education

- 819 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for EDUCATION
- What is being done to anticipate the educational needs of the proposed RAAF base at Tindal?

Electricity - Outback Communities

820 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Accepting that consumers of electricity in major Northern Territory centres, including Aboriginal communities, are heavily subsidised, will the NT government consider extending this scheme to outback communities on cattle stations, tourist ventures and mining operations so that town rates are charged for power consumed, with a subsidy to cover the actual cost of power generation and maintenance?

From 22 March 1983

Lot 384, Katherine

822 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for LANDS, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

1. Is he aware of the neglected condition of lot 384, Katherine Terrace, Katherine?
2. If so, when will this lot be brought into keeping with the Territory's tidiest town?

Specialist Medical Officers

824 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

What is the (1) number, and (2) description of specialist medical officers (a) employed by his department in the year ended 31 December 1982 who have gone into private practice and have entered into sessional or similar arrangements with the department, (b) employed by his department at 1 January 1983 who are expected to enter private practice prior to 31 December 1983 and are negotiating sessional or similar arrangements with the department, (c) positions existed in the department at 1 January 1983, (d) positions vacant at 1 January 1983, and (e) does the department plan to be employing at 31 December 1983?

Kirton and Whiting Report - Cost

825 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

What were (a) consultants' fees, and (b) other costs incurred by his department in the production of the Kirton and Whiting Report on urban-based community health centres?

Community Health Medical Officers

826 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

How many community health medical officer positions (a) existed, and (b) were vacant at 1 March 1983?

Police Administration Act

828 Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Since its inception in 1979, in regard to Division 4 of Part VII of the *Police Administration Act*, on a yearly basis -

1. how many persons have been apprehended;
2. how many of those apprehended were (a) Aboriginal, and (b) non-Aboriginal;
3. how many of the persons apprehended were subject to subsequent apprehension;

4. what is the average period of apprehension;
5. how many persons were released under the provisions of section 131(1); and
6. how many persons were dealt with under section 132?

Education Budget 1982-83

829 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In regard to the 1982-83 Education budget -

1. what are the specific budget allocations for each primary and secondary school in the Northern Territory;
2. what is the overall allocation for remedial teachers in the Northern Territory education system;
3. what is the budget allocation for teacher recruitment;
4. what is the budget allocation set aside to establish and implement testing procedures and tests themselves;
5. in the section of the Education budget where both Territory and Commonwealth money is spent, what is the actual allocation of each; and
6. what capital works items are budgeted for and what is the breakdown of their allocations?

2 km Drinking Law - Advertising

830 Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

What was (a) the cost of preparation and distribution, including postage, of the 2 leaflets, (b) the cost of the recent TV advertisements, and (c) the cost of recent newspaper advertisements regarding the 2 km drinking law?

Crushing Mill - Darwin Power Station

832 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. Will a crushing mill for converting lump coal into powder for use in the proposed coal-fired power station be constructed in Darwin?
2. If so, (a) where will it be constructed, and (b) what is the anticipated cost?

'Boozers are Losers' Campaign

834 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

1. How much is being spent on the 'Boozers are Losers' campaign?
2. For what reason was the contract awarded to a southern firm?
3. Has any contact been made with the liquor industry with a view to controlling the nature of liquor advertising?

From 24 May 1983

Pastoral Properties - Breach of Covenants

836 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

1. Why did the government decide in 1980 not to take action against pastoral lessees in breach of their covenants?

2. A recent report on the ABC program 'After 8' stated that 59% of pastoral properties in Victoria River district, 66% in Darwin and Gulf regions, 23% in Barkly region and 25% in Alice Springs region were in breach of their covenants. In each region, how many properties in breach of covenants were (a) locally owned (i.e., owned in the Northern Territory) (b) owned by Australian interests outside the Northern Territory, and (c) owned by overseas interests?
3. In each region, what were the main breaches of covenants recorded?

Grants-in-Aid Scheme

837 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

How much money under the Grants-in-Aid Scheme was given to community organisations in 1981-82?

Motor Vehicles

838 Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

839 Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

840 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION and CONSERVATION

In his departments -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the departments;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (c) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

841 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

In his departments -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the departments;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

842 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

843 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

In his departments -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the departments;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

844 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

845 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;

- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

846 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

847 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Motor Vehicles

848 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

In his departments -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the departments;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends; and
- (d) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes what restrictions are placed on their use?

Subsidy - Chan Park Nursing Home

849 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

What is the nature and extent of the subsidy paid to Chan Park Nursing Home by the Northern Territory government?

Sewerage Treatment Plant - Darwin

850 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. What were the modifications to the Darwin central zone sewerage treatment plant recommended in the consultants report of 1980?
2. What modifications have been made to the plant?

Kurringal Court - Sale of Units

851 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

With reference to Kurringal Court -

1. On what date did the units become available for sale?
2. How many (a) 2-bedroom units, and (b) 1-bedroom units, have been sold to public servants?
3. How many (a) 2-bedroom units, and (b) 1-bedroom units, have been sold to people who were not otherwise eligible in terms of waiting time for Housing Commission accommodation?
4. How many (a) 2-bedroom units, and (b) 1-bedroom units, are still vacant?

Allocation - Housing Commission

852 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

1. How many persons are awaiting allocation of ground floor Housing Commission flats/units for medical reasons?
2. What is the waiting time for allocation of ground floor single bedroom flats/units?

Secondary Mortgage Market - Report

853 Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

The fourth annual report of the Department of Law (p. 10) indicated that a report on the 'Secondary Mortgage Market' would be provided to you. Has the report been provided to you and, if so, what are its recommendations?

Transcription Services - Contract

854 Mr B. COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Will he provide details of the contract with Spark and Cannon Pty Limited entered into in April 1981 for transcription services and advise what steps are being taken to obviate the necessity for this work to be carried out outside the court service?

National Companies and Securities Scheme - Participation

855 Mr B. COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Has a decision been made by the government to participate in the National Companies and Securities Scheme?

Upgrading - Katherine Terrace

856 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Are there plans to upgrade the pavement in Katherine Terrace to a standard such as the Mall in Darwin in the 1983-84 financial year?

Beef Export Licence

857 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION and CONSERVATION

Has any decision been made on the need for a special export licence for beef killed to Australian domestic standards?

BTB Eradication

- 858 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION and CONSERVATION  
What steps will be taken to fund the BTB eradication campaign in the Northern Territory?

Housing Need - Katherine

- 859 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING
1. Is he aware of the urgent need for houses and flats in Katherine?
  2. When can action be expected for the alleviation of this problem?

Rotary Road Safety Centre - Katherine

- 860 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for EDUCATION  
Are Katherine school children taking full advantage of the Rotary Road Safety Centre near Clyde Fenton School?

Electricity Subsidy

- 861 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY  
Why do Territorians who have their electricity supplied by NTEC receive a handsome subsidy when (a) Territorians who have their electricity provided by the NT government pay nothing, and (b) Territorians living in remote areas on cattle stations, mining settlements and tourist camps pay full rate for their electricity requirements, generators, fuel and maintenance?

Mt Wells Battery - Payment

- 862 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY
1. What is the reason for the delay in full payment by Jingellic Minerals to the government for the Mt Wells battery and associated leases?
  2. When will this be resolved?

Specialist Medical Services

799 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

Is it a function of Darwin and Alice Springs Hospitals to be a pool for specialist services such as pathology and radiology and, if so, is this function being performed satisfactorily?

ANSWER

Darwin and Alice Springs hospitals are responsible for providing relief staff for specialist services such as pathology and radiology to the small hospitals during leave and illness.

This function is performed satisfactorily provided the hospital in question writes in sufficient time to the Medical Superintendent, Darwin Hospital or the Regional Director, Alice Springs, asking for relief staff. This allows the major hospital to plan its staff movements such as leave etc. to fit in with the requests from the smaller hospitals.

Kalano Association - Department of Health

816 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

How are the financial arrangements with the Kalano Association and the Department of Health proceeding?

ANSWER

The financial arrangements with the Kalano Association are:

1. The Department of Health provides a grant-in-aid to the Kalano Association to assist in the employment of a doctor and an operational grant for an alcohol rehabilitation scheme.
2. The approved funding levels are: employment of doctor, \$21 000; and alcohol rehabilitation scheme, \$30 000.
3. Payments are made quarterly in advance.
4. The association is required to acquit advances on a quarterly basis within 2 months of the end of the quarter.

The advance payments for the final quarter are due for payment in late March. However, these payments will be held pending satisfactory acquittance of the December quarter advance. An acquittal statement was provided, however, details were incomplete and the association has been requested to provide a revised statement.

Aerial Medical Services

818 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

1. What are the comparative costs of providing aerial medical services, including routine medical and aerial evacuations, at Katherine, Gove and Darwin?
2. In view of cost benefits will Katherine be considered as the regional centre for top end aerial medical services?

ANSWER

1. The cost per flying hour associated with the Aerial Medical Service in Katherine and Darwin is similar. In Katherine it ranges between \$398 to \$437 per hour depending upon the use of the aircraft, i.e., whether for evacuations or routine visits. In Darwin the cost of the Nomad aircraft is \$420 per hour for all operations. However, the costs in Gove are higher as departmentally-owned aircraft have not operated there since late 1981 and are approximately \$560 per hour.

2. There is no cost benefit associated with making Katherine the regional centre for top end Aerial Medical Services.

Noxious Weeds - Eradication

823 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION and CONSERVATION

Are all property owners in the Daly River basin cooperating with the Department of Primary Production in eradicating noxious weeds such as noogoora burr?

ANSWER

Not all property owners in the Douglas-Daly basin are cooperating with the Department of Primary Production in the eradication of noxious weeds.

In the case of noogoora burr there has been substantial activity by the department in approaching landholders on the necessity of controlling this weed, but certain landholders are still reluctant to commit time and resources. I also advise the honourable member that the department served a notice under the *Noxious Weeds Act* to one landholder in the Katherine region because of his repeated failure to control devil's claw.

Under the *Noxious Weeds Act*, it is the obligation of the landholders to control noxious weeds on their land. It is recognised that some landholders face economic restraints, but the department has assisted in many ways, such as providing advice on control methods, the loan of spray units, and the establishment of the herbicide subsidy. In some instances departmental personnel have undertaken spraying on private property. However, the department requires the landholder to play a much greater role than has generally been the case in the past.

Stuart Highway - Realignment

827 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he aware of plans to realign the Stuart Highway and by-pass the township of Larrimah?

ANSWER

My department has a proposal to upgrade approximately 26 kilometres of the highway in the vicinity of Larrimah during the 1983-84 financial year.

The work involved will provide a wider pavement and realign some sections.

However, it is not proposed to change the alignment through the town. Rather, it is intended to provide for improved road safety, better parking arrangements and substantially decrease the present dust problem.

Newcastle Waters - Power Supply

831 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. When was Newcastle Waters (a) provided with a public power supply, and (b) what was the cost of the provision of that power supply?
2. What is (a) the capacity of the Newcastle Waters power station, (b) how many consumers are using the power, and (c) how many people from Newcastle Waters township signed a petition seeking the provision of a public power supply in October 1980?

ANSWER

1. (a) The public power supply at Newcastle Waters was commissioned on 10 April 1981.
- (b) The cost of providing the public power supply was \$96 566.
2. (a) The power station at Newcastle Waters is fitted with 2 sets of 65Kw capacity each.
- (b) There are 7 consumers including the school and the town water supply.
- (c) There were 6 signatories to the petition dated 28 October 1980.

Mt Wells Battery

833 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER ofr LANDS, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

1. Is the area of the Mt Wells battery still part of the Ban Ban pastoral lease?
2. If so, is this the reason for the delay in full payment by Jingellic Minerals to the government for the Mt Wells battery and associated leases?
3. If so, when will this be resolved?

ANSWER

1. No, it was excised from the pastoral lease in 1982.

Questions 2 and 3 should be referred to my colleague, the honourable the Minister for Mines and Energy.

Pathology Laboratory - Darwin Hospital

835 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and HOUSING

1. Can he inform me as to the fate of the pathology laboratory at the Darwin Hospital?
2. Has he considered the future of the laboratory in the light of a lack of such scientific facilities in the Department of Primary Production?

ANSWER

1. The pathology laboratory at Darwin Hospital is to continue to provide services to the hospital and to support and service other hospitals and medical practitioners in the Northern Territory as the need arises.
2. As the department is still using and will continue to use the facility for its intended purpose, no thought has been given to the needs of other departments.



Salvation Army Nursing Home for Aged Persons

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Does the government support the proposed establishment of a nursing home for the aged in Darwin by the Salvation Army and, if so, will it offer the Salvation Army the same level of financial support that it gives to the Chan Park Nursing Home?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government would support an application from any organisation of the repute of the Salvation Army for the establishment of another nursing home as demand requires. With regard to the level of funding, consideration would have to be within the budgetary context of overall grants-in-aid to organisations that receive those funds from the Northern Territory government.

Use of Police Aircraft for Tourist Purposes

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to an article in a certain publication recently. Is it a fact that the police plane has been used for tourist purposes in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is no need for the honourable member for Tiwi to be modest or discreet about the name of the publication. The publication she referred to was the Australian weekly news magazine, the Bulletin. In the Bulletin recently, there have been a number of articles complimentary to the Northern Territory. The Bulletin has not always been so complimentary. I refer to an article that appeared in the issue of 14 December last year. In his column, David McNicholl wrote - and I omit all unnecessary verbiage: 'Shooting a Northern Territory buffalo is about as thrilling and as dangerous as approaching a herd of jersey cows on their way to milking and letting one of the beasts have it with a .303. I speak from some experience having spent a long time in the Territory and having, to my shame, shot 4 or 5 buffaloes'.

Mr Speaker, since I was aware that this was not quite so, especially if one hunts buffalo on foot - and this is my advice from experienced hunters and I am not aware that the Leader of the Opposition is an experienced hunter - I decided to write to the Bulletin inviting Mr McNicholl to come to the Territory to try his skill and, generally speaking, to try to improve the image of the Northern Territory. As a consequence, Mr McNicholl advised that he and Mr Trevor Kennedy of Consolidated Press - Mr Trevor Kennedy is the Editor-in-Chief and Mr McNicholl former editor of the Sydney Daily Telegraph and a well-known Australian journalist - would come to the Territory. They spent a few days here, principally at the Nimrod Safari Camp, where they were guided by the Commissioner of Police. As a consequence, I received an undated letter from the member for Nhulunbuy about a week ago:

*Dear Mr Everingham,*

*I have recently read an article in the Bulletin dated 10 May 1983 in which a David McNicholl writes about his exploits at a place he describes as Channel Point. While I am pleased that Mr McNicholl obviously enjoyed himself and that he conveyed his delight to his readers, I am alarmed that he also told his readers that the Northern Territory Police*

Commissioner, who appears to have a residence in the Channel Point area, could be used as some sort of tour guide. It would also appear as though the police aircraft can be used as a charter aircraft.

I would appreciate an answer to the following questions because I consider the events as described by Mr McNicholl require some explanation.

1. Was the Police Commissioner on or off duty? If he was on duty, is the role of tour guide part of his job description? If he was off duty does he have the use of a very expensive aircraft, which belongs to the Northern Territory public, while he is off duty? 2. Who flew the aircraft and, if the pilot was a policeman, was the policeman on or off duty? 3. What insurance cover did the aircraft and its occupants have for this flight? 4. Was the flight logged? 5. Which department paid for the expenses incurred on the flight? 6. Was the commissioner acting with or without your knowledge and consent? 7. Does the Commissioner of Police intend to fly any other journalists to various parts of the Northern Territory in a police aircraft?

I feel these questions should be answered in full as it must affect public confidence in the police if the Police Commissioner of the Northern Territory can be perceived with anything other than the dignity and impartiality which his post should hold.

Mr Speaker, I have been weighed down with various decisions the federal government has made and I only got around to replying yesterday:

Dear Mr Leo,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter received on 12 May concerning a recent article in the Bulletin. I note your comments in this regard. If there is any impropriety about the Police Commissioner's actions, which I strongly dispute, I accept full responsibility. The point is that Mr David McNicholl, who is a very senior and prestigious Australian journalist, in his column in the Bulletin magazine dated 14 December 1982, made some disparaging remarks about buffalo hunting in the Northern Territory that could have been very detrimental to the Territory's tourist industry. I enclose a copy of Mr McNicholl's column containing the remarks together with a copy of a letter that I wrote to him on 27 January 1983 following that. Mr McNicholl accepted my invitation extended in that letter to come to the Territory and see for himself. Mr McNicholl was accompanied by Mr Trevor Kennedy, the Editor-in-Chief of the Packer press group. You will appreciate that buffalo hunting and, for that matter, any sort of hunting, is not to be taken lightly by the inexperienced and it was essential that a senior representative of government look after or, as the term goes, host Mr McNicholl and Mr Kennedy. Bearing in mind considerations of safety for these 2 senior people, the only person at a senior level in the government that I know of who is an accomplished marksman and hunter is the Police Commissioner, although the Attorney-General is a marksman. I therefore requested the commissioner to undertake the duty of escorting Mr McNicholl and Mr Kennedy.

As a reader of the Bulletin, you will already have seen that the Northern Territory has had favourable publicity in a couple of issues and, in fact, the 2-page article where mention is made of the Commissioner of Police and the police plane, which is always flown by a police pilot, is an example.

That aside, I would remind you that Commissioner McAuley does have official responsibilities in connection with public safety and in his capacity as Registrar of Firearms. He has been concerned for some time, and I share his concern, that various articles appearing in sporting

magazines have tended to promote a belief in the minds of inexperienced hunters that there are minimal risks associated with hunting water buffalo on foot with small calibre sporting rifles. In fact, the contrary is true. I expect that the Police Commissioner should do all within his power to remove these fallacies.

The visit of Mr McNicholl and Mr Trevor Kennedy afforded an opportunity for him to put these matters back in their proper perspective through the medium of an extensively read magazine such as the Bulletin. David McNicholl's article went a long way to achieving this. Mr McNicholl's article in the Bulletin is the sort of publicity that just cannot be bought even if one were able to do so. Advertising is not half as effective as a satisfied customer writing his own story. In any event, the cost of a page in the Bulletin for advertising purposes amounts to \$4080. So, spending the Police Commissioner's time and using the police plane for a couple of hours at a total cost of about \$450 to fly Mr McNicholl to Channel Point and back in fact saved the taxpayers money.

You might be interested to know that both Mr McNicholl and Mr Kennedy paid their own fares to and from the Territory. Both expressed themselves as most impressed with what they saw of the Territory and I expect that we have only seen the first instalment of goodwill, for which we can partly thank Peter McAuley, in Mr McNicholl's article.

Mr Kennedy expressed his views on how he proposes to use the information and experiences he gained in a letter to the honourable Roger Steele and I quote:

I cannot thank you enough for your enormous kindness and generosity to me on my recent visit to the Northern Territory. It was a real eye-opener and a great learning experience and made all the more pleasurable by your company and your overwhelming hospitality. I much enjoyed meeting the various people who run the place and it was most impressive to experience their freshness and optimism, something which seems more or less confined to the frontiers these days. David is doing a piece on Nimrod and I am hoping to put together something on the Northern Territory when I fly to London at the weekend. Even though the experience was an enriching one, it has whetted my appetite for more information about the Northern Territory and it should contribute to all of our magazines being better informed on what is a most interesting part of our land.

As the host, if the Police Commissioner had not used the police plane, the government would have had to charter a private aircraft at a cost of about \$1320 to take the commissioner and Messrs Kennedy and McNicholl to Channel Point and back.

I consider your letter to be the usual sort of miserable and carping criticism so often made by members of your party against people who are prepared to work long hours, and out of hours, on behalf of the Northern Territory. If Mr McAuley has a residence at Channel Point, it is no business of mine nor is it of yours. I understand several people have purchased land there and all I can say is that I envy them their situation.

I am happy for you to inspect the police aircraft logbooks whenever you wish. Furthermore, it may well be necessary for other journalists from time to time to be flown in the police plane and I make no apology for such arrangements. I trust the above puts into proper perspective the role of the Police Commissioner and the police plane and the occurrence you expressed concern about, and that the dignity and impartiality of

*his position is indeed enhanced by actions of this nature.*

Mr Speaker, all I can say is that, if we are to have that sort of nitpicking persecution of senior officials in this Territory, who are doing the job that they are asked to do by the ministers - and I am the Minister for Tourism - where will we end up? The fact is we have to entertain literally scores of ambassadors, consuls-general, consuls and many other people, some of whom contribute to the Territory. What is the Territory likely to get out of a visit from the Ambassador for Bulgaria? We have to lay on much more for the Ambassador for Bulgaria than we have to lay on for these people. I welcome the visit of the Ambassador for Bulgaria but we get 20 of them a year, 30 consuls-general and scores more consular officials. These are the people within Australia who are going to do our tourist industry a great deal of good.

Employment of Shooter by Conservation Commission

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he advise me that, to his knowledge, the Conservation Commission for the Northern Territory does not employ one experienced shooter?

ANSWER

The Leader of the Opposition will have to redirect his question to the honourable Minister for Primary Production and Conservation, because I relinquished my post as minister responsible for conservation back in November.

Sale of Housing Commission Houses in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is the government any closer to resolving the issue of the sale of commission houses to interested tenants in Nhulunbuy?

ANSWER

This is not a matter that has come across my desk in recent times. Indeed, I have not sighted anything on it since I was minister responsible for housing.

Report on Staffing in NT Primary Schools

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Have the findings of the report on staffing in Northern Territory primary schools undertaken in 1982 by a joint departmental and NT Teachers Federation working party been accepted by the government and, if so, when is it proposed that the implementation of the findings of this report will commence?

ANSWER

This matter is currently before Cabinet and, as no decision has been finalised, I am unable to answer the balance of her question.

Fred's Pass Police Office

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the future of the Fred's Pass Police Office and is it a fact

that the status of the Fred's Pass Police Office is about to be downgraded?

ANSWER

It is expected that, as population and general activities in the Fred's Pass area and the adjacent rural area increase, the scope of police duties there will be expanded. There are no plans to downgrade the status of the office. The only matter of relevance currently under study is the desirability of installing a telephone transfer system so that, in the event of a call being made to the office during a time when staff members are temporarily absent, the call will be switched to the Darwin Police Station. This arrangement will enable existing staff to engage in more external duties than is currently possible.

Employment of Shooter by Conservation Commission

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Mr Speaker, I would like to redirect my question on the dearth of shooters in the Northern Territory Conservation Commission.

ANSWER

I regret to advise the honourable member that I do not carry that information around in my head but I would be happy to provide it as soon as I can in this sittings.

Ownership of Victoria River Downs and Newcastle Waters Stations

Mr VALE to MINISTER for LANDS

Have applications been received for change of ownership for the cattle stations known as Victoria River Downs and Newcastle Waters?

ANSWER

I understand that, at this stage, an application for transfer of ownership of Victoria River Downs pastoral lease has been received. I am advised that an application for the transfer of ownership of Newcastle Waters pastoral lease should be in my hands shortly. This question has been asked at the request of the vendors and the proposed purchasers. Apparently rumours of the impending transactions are rife around the Territory and I have been asked by the parties to make a statement.

The situation is that it is proposed that the 3 Newcastle Waters Station leases, totalling 10 358 km<sup>2</sup> be transferred from Ashburton Pastoral Company Pty Ltd to Consolidated Press Holdings Ltd and Victoria River Downs Station, comprised of 12 359 km<sup>2</sup>, be transferred from Hooker Estates Ltd to Consolidated Press Holdings Ltd. The total area involved in these transfers is 22 717 km<sup>2</sup>. I want to bring this matter to the attention of this Assembly because these transfers, if agreed to, will result in the purchaser holding in excess of the maximum area allowed under section 38A of the Crown Lands Act.

My reasons for considering agreeing to a single owner holding such a large area of Northern Territory pastoral lands are as follows. Firstly, the purchaser is an Australian company of substance. The chairman of that company, Mr Kerry Packer, is a well-known Australian who has very diverse interests and the capital and managerial resources to continue to improve each station in the best interests not only of his shareholders but of the Territory's cattle industry. The change of ownership will result in Mr Ken Warriner of Newcastle Waters Station having overall managerial

responsibility for the group of properties. Mr Warriner is well known in the cattle industry and is highly regarded as a result of his management of Brunette Downs and, more recently, Newcastle Waters. During Mr Warriner's period of management of both stations, he was responsible for the rapid progress made in eradicating tuberculosis and brucellosis from these herds.

The government believes that, if it agrees to the purchases going through, it will result in a group of pastoral properties that are highly complementary in terms of the BTB program. Successful eradication of disease can only be achieved where fencing, yards and watering points are adequate to control cattle. In those cases where destocking is necessary, it is essential to have access to clean areas for testing breeders. The disease eradication program is now sufficiently well advanced at Newcastle Waters to provide clean areas. The nature of the country at Victoria River Downs means that more rapid progress will result with the partial destocking of this property and the transfer of clean cattle to Newcastle Waters. Once Victoria River Downs is largely destocked and areas declared free of disease, the expanded Newcastle Waters herd will have the ability to restock Victoria River Downs and the adjoining Humbert River lease.

Accelerated funding for the BTB program is now in doubt. The capital that Consolidated Press Holdings will bring to the group of properties will contribute largely to establishing additional improvements on each property. As members of the Assembly will now recognise, successful disease eradication is capital demanding. I am told that Consolidated Press Holdings has committed \$1m to such works. I have been advised that the disease control program by the Consolidated Press Holdings group will result in a disease-free herd of approximately 100 000 head of cattle, which could serve as a supplier of breeders to other stations undertaking destocking programs. At present, there are few other herds in the Katherine, Victoria River and Darwin districts that could supply this restocking market. This will benefit the Territory's cattle industry at large.

Members of the Assembly should also note that changes in the corporate policy of the Hooker group have led to a decision to dispose of its pastoral holdings. With such a sale pending, my government was of the opinion that it would be preferable to have a new owner without meat processing facilities. The Consolidated Press Holdings group has no direct involvement at all in meat processing and export and, therefore, will be able to adopt more flexible marketing policies, including the further development of the live cattle export trade.

As stated, the transfer of the 4 pastoral leases to Consolidated Press Holdings will result in a land aggregation of 22 717 km<sup>2</sup>. Mr Kerry Packer, Chairman of Consolidated Press Holdings, has advised that he is willing to enter into a commitment, upon successful completion of the disease eradication program on Victoria River Downs Station, to offer sufficient land for sale to reduce the aggregate holding of Consolidated Press Holdings to that permitted under the Crown Lands Act. Application to subdivide into 4 separate leases will be made shortly.

In addition, honourable members should note that Humbert River Station, at present owned by Rural Improvements Pty Ltd, is being sold to the Consolidated Press Holdings Group by way of a sale of shares in Rural Improvements Pty Ltd. This sale is not subject to ministerial consent. It will, however, be incorporated in the group management program and it is the intention of the owner, on completion of the disease eradication program, to dispose of the property.

Mr Speaker, in light of the uncertainty created by the deferral by the federal government of accelerated financing for the BTB eradication program,

this could provide an opportunity to maintain a level of effort by an Australian company which would be very hard to refuse. I emphasise that I am still awaiting detailed written submissions from Consolidated Press Holdings over and above the oral submissions that I have already received in the course of several meetings with the principals. It seems to me that, prima facie, we have a situation here where, as minister, I should exercise my discretion to allow the holding in excess of the provisions under section 38A. This is an Australian company which has the necessary capital and entrepreneurial skill, a company that is well known around Australia for its success in virtually everything that it undertakes. It is the sort of company that we should be wanting to get into the Northern Territory. For those reasons, I would be reluctant to refuse consent, particularly in light of the various provisos that have been put to me about subdivision in the future - destocking, clearing of the herds and so on. Nonetheless, if I were presented with a convincing reason, I would refuse consent. While I have not arrived at a final decision by any means yet, I say quite clearly to the Assembly that I am disposed to grant these consents unless someone in this Assembly or outside can show me good reason within the next week or so as to why I should not, assuming I receive the submissions that I have asked for.

Yarralin Aboriginal Community

Mr DOOLAN to CHIEF MINISTER

As the Aboriginal community at Yarralin exists at present solely through the good offices of the Hooker Pastoral Company - no lease of any description has ever been granted - what will be the status of this community of some 200 people if ownership changes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand from Mr Packer's representatives that there will be minimal changes on the VRD property in terms of personnel, occupiers and so on. I do not think Mr Packer would be in the slightest bit interested in having any confrontation with the people at Yarralin. I imagine they would continue their negotiations for a lease with Consolidated Press Holdings as they have negotiated with the Hooker Pastoral Company in the past.

Service Station Site at Yulara

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to negotiations that have been carried out for ownership of the service station site and for building on and operation at the service station site. I also refer him to his claim that the Malpa Trading Company put in a nil bid for this particular service station site. Is he now satisfied that it is not the case that Malpa put in a nil bid and will be reopen negotiations on that contract?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not satisfied that the Malpa Trading Company put in a nil bid. In fact, I am more satisfied than ever that it put in a bid of \$1. Mr Speaker, I cannot locate my notes at the moment. Perhaps you could proceed with the next question while I look for them.

Proposed Amendments to Mining Act

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY

Is it his intention to introduce amendments to the Mining Act to provide

for free range exploration licences and strata titling of mineral developments and, if so, what is the intention of these proposed amendments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the proposal for free ranging is just that. It is a proposal I put to industry by way of a letter to all the people that we could locate who have an interest in mining and exploration activity in the Northern Territory. In addition, it was one of the many major points that I put to mining industry interests in both Sydney and Melbourne during the Northern Territory government's recent investment promotion tour of those 2 centres.

The idea of free ranging was put to me as one that should be put to industry for its reaction. I would like to say that, personally, I do not have a view on it. I can see some plusses in it, particularly for the smaller person and in terms of getting a wider-ranging exploration program going in the Northern Territory. On the other hand, I can see difficulty for the major companies who have spent millions of dollars in exploration in the Northern Territory. I am anxious to weigh up the views of the exploration industry in respect of that subject. Any decision Cabinet makes on that matter will be based upon the submissions made by the industry.

In respect to the question of strata titling of mineral resources, mining as such, honourable members will be aware that a bill is currently before the Legislative Assembly which deals with that. I have no doubt that, during the course of this sittings, honourable members will be making their views known on that proposal.

Mr Speaker, it is a matter that would interest everyone from accountants through to taxation officials. The intention was not to direct it towards taxation although, in some circumstances, it would have an effect on the taxation structure of mining companies. It is peculiar, in some ways, to the nature of some deposits in the Northern Territory that we have different minerals at different levels and we have an infrastructure requirement at the surface of the mine which may be different for each of those different levels. Some companies have different subsidiary companies which operate those different levels. For practical purposes, it may be wise to do so.

The matter is currently before the Assembly. I would appreciate honourable members' views on the provisions currently before us on strata titling. It is one that was put forward to us by industry. It is a matter put forward by myself, with the concurrence of Cabinet, to the Assembly on behalf of industry. If there are more problems in it than there are benefits, then we will take that into account at an appropriate stage.

#### Radium Concentrates in Mussels

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware that the Office of the Supervising Scientist has discovered high radium concentrates in mussels in the Mudginberri, Quondong and Georgetown Billabongs? Is he aware that, based on international dose limits, the amounts of radium that have been found in these mussels would indicate that if local residents eat several kilograms a year radium levels in their bodies could exceed those that are considered safe? Are the investigations that are being carried out to his satisfaction?

ANSWER

This is a complex question. Quite clearly, it is one that the Co-ordinator-General has been involved in and, therefore, the Chief Minister

has been briefed on it too. It is true that, in the Mudginberri Billabong, mussels have been found with a radium content in excess of desirable levels. On the current figures, the quantity which would be required to be consumed to be potentially hazardous would be in the order of 5 kg in a year. While it is highly unlikely that any non-Aboriginal person would consume that quantity of mussels, I suppose it is at least possible that Aboriginal people who eat them - and the honourable member for Nightcliff who seems to include herself amongst those who consume mussels - would perhaps consume 5 kg each in a year. We have had extensive discussions with the Supervising Scientist. Further investigations are being carried out now. There is no evidence available to me at this stage that these levels are related to mining activities. It could well be a cyclical effect, the last samples, as I understand it, having been taken in about 1972. Obviously, that was well before uranium mining. The health authorities have been aware of a higher than usual level of radium concentrates in mussels for many years. Apparently it is a figure which fluctuates from time to time. Nonetheless, my information is that, while there is no evidence that it is connected with mining activities in that region, there is perhaps some reason for concern. The matter will be very closely monitored and, if necessary, appropriate warning will be issued, particularly if we cannot come to a satisfactory answer to the problem in the near future. Investigations are in hand.

#### Rates at Berrimah

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To relieve the anomaly of the situation of people paying rates at Berrimah, has he given thought to section 15 of the Darwin Rates Act which gives the minister power to reduce these rates?

ANSWER

As a result of representations by the honourable member for Tiwi, I have addressed this issue. There seems to be a case that can be considered for the reduction of rates in this area. This issue should also be taken into account with other reviews that are going on in the local government area at the moment. It is a matter that I would also like to discuss with the new advisory committee on local government for the rural area. I have agreed to meet with the people in the area and the honourable member for Tiwi some time after the sittings to gain a better appreciation of the problem and so be able to make a decision.

#### Koolpinyah Station Boundaries

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for LANDS

This is a question that has been asked previously by myself, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Victoria River. Has any decision been taken or agreement reached on the realignment of the boundaries of Koolpinyah Station?

ANSWER

It is probably too soon to say that agreement has been reached. I think that substantial agreement has been reached, to put it rather nicely. I received a report this morning from the Department of Lands that negotiations are very close to finalisation. However, I feel it is tempting fate for me to say that. Nonetheless, that is what I am told. I understand that action in respect of the areas that it has been agreed should be acquired will be undertaken very shortly. One should appreciate that, in the Northern Territory, it is not possible for government to walk in willy-nilly and acquire anyone's

land. Soon after self-government, we passed the Northern Territory Lands Acquisition Act which provides many safeguards for owners of land.

Of course, the owner of Koolpinyah is very desirous of retaining all of his property. Indeed, as I understand it, he is desirous of expanding it. Nonetheless, there are certain areas that the government considers to be of greater importance than the rights of the owner. One is in the area of conservation. I think Melacca Swamp and Black Jungle are 2 areas of importance. They are both about 20 ha. There are other recreational areas stretching up towards Gunn Point. Perhaps some horticultural and agricultural areas that we have agreed on should be acquired for some reason from the owner. To the best of my knowledge, that action should be commenced by the Department of Lands shortly.

NT Stock Squad

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the current number of personnel in the Northern Territory stock squad and will this number be maintained throughout the year? What is the expertise of these members at present regarding stock knowledge and what requirements will be necessary for any future appointments to the stock squad?

ANSWER

There are 2 members attached to the stock squad and this level will be maintained. They both have a background in stock matters and experience in rural police stations. Members of the squad are required to attend investigators' courses and have a knowledge of specific stock-related legislation. In addition, both members have attended seminars and stock inspection courses and their duties have been directed towards all aspects of the pastoral industry. These qualifications are seen as the minimum requirements for selection.

Tenders for Channel Island Bridge

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is it a fact that the successful tenderer for the Channel Island bridge was able to vary its tender after tenders had closed? If this is true, why was that allowed to happen?

ANSWER

My understanding is that Jennings won the contract and its tender was \$500 000 less than the next lowest tender bid. I am unaware of any specific variation that may have taken place but I will undertake to seek the information for the honourable member.

Service Station Site at Yulara

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I ask the Chief Minister to answer my question about the service station site at Yulara.

ANSWER

I will read a letter that I wrote on 24 May to Mr Charlie Walkabout, Chairman of Malpa Trading Co Pty Ltd, PO Box 45 Alice Springs:

Dear Mr Walkabout,

Thank you for your letter dated 3 May 1983 concerning arrangements for the development and operation of the service station at Yulara and the involvement of the Malpa Trading Co in the operation of the resort.

In my press statement dated 3 September 1981, I referred to opportunities for the provision of housing, the employment of Aborigines, the manufacture and sale of Aboriginal arts and crafts and the ownership or operation of private enterprise components by Aboriginal people. These opportunities are being taken and work under way includes the construction of Aboriginal housing and workshop facilities for those people who wish to move from Ayers Rock to Yulara.

Aborigines have been and are being employed on the construction of environmental fencing, walking tracks, lookouts and the housing and workshop facilities. It is intended that employment will continue to be available during the construction period and on a long-term basis on work associated with operating the resort.

Regarding ownership or operation of private enterprise components, White Industries were instructed to negotiate with the Malpa Trading Co with a view to seeking an involvement in operating the commercial facilities of Yulara. These include the service station, the Aboriginal arts and crafts centre and the supermarket. Malpa was invited to bid for the right to develop and operate the service station site and was provided with detailed information on the project. Malpa does enjoy a privileged position in relation to negotiations through the availability of information and the government's wish that your company be involved in Yulara.

However, it has always been quite clear that the right to any commercial facility at Yulara would be subject to the negotiation of a satisfactory commercial arrangement and, unfortunately, this was not the case in relation to the service station. You must bear in mind that the construction of Yulara will cost the Territory government \$150m and we must ensure that as much as possible is recouped for the benefit of the taxpayer.

On 16 February 1983, Malpa was advised to consider making an offer for the land cost, with or without a premium, and that any proposal would be compared with others received. On 11 March 1983, your company responded by offering \$1 for the land and development rights which were worth several hundred thousands of dollars as a result of the investment at Yulara by the Yulara Development Company. This, of course, could not be accepted in the light of substantial offers by other companies.

Further, as the Yulara tourist resort is being constructed to accommodate visitors to Ayers Rock and to allow for existing facilities to be demolished and the areas occupied by them to be rehabilitated, Malpa was requested to consider relinquishing the lease held over the existing service station to facilitate the inclusion of this area in the rehabilitation program. In reply, your company advised that the Aboriginal community at Ayers Rock wanted the existing service station to remain to meet their needs and those of visiting Aboriginal people and to operate as a training centre for mechanics. Your company also stated that tourists would be served with fuel, but that Malpa did not propose to encourage tourist trade. From this advice it did not appear that there was any intention by Malpa to offer the closure of the existing service station to coincide with the development of Yulara and the rehabilitation of the national park. The final decision took into account that Malpa

*offered neither a competitive cash bid for the site nor to relinquish their existing lease which might have been considered as an offset.*

*There are still a number of opportunities for Malpa to be involved in commercial activities at Yulara, including retail outlets in the centre for Aboriginal arts and crafts. Your company has been invited by White Industries to make submissions for these facilities and they will be given every consideration. It should be noted, however, that operators will be required to meet normal commercial criteria in relation to financial strength, experienced management skills and the ability to provide the required services. The government continues to support the involvement of Malpa at the Yulara Tourist Resort and negotiations for the retail facilities will include the opportunity for you to seek advice and provide additional information.*

*It is anticipated that meetings concerning the operation of the retail facilities will be arranged in June 1983 and you will be contacted in response to any submission you may have made. I hope that any further proposals you may put forward are made in the light of commercial reality and the fact that the Chairman of the Aboriginal Development Commission, Mr Charles Perkins, has advised me that financial backing is available to you.*

Alice Springs to Darwin Rail Line

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

Has his attention been drawn to media comment that, despite statements to the contrary by the Leader of the Opposition, the South Australian Premier will not accompany him to Canberra for talks on the future of the Alice Springs to Darwin rail line?

ANSWER

My attention has been drawn to comments to this effect. I must say that I am extremely surprised by them. Last Friday, when the Leader of the Opposition was attempting to snow the media, he stated that he and the South Australian Premier would travel to Canberra for talks with the federal government. The front page of the Northern Territory News declared: 'Collins and Bannon join forces'. The Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying that he and South Australian Premier, John Bannon, would be joining forces to ask the federal government to reconsider its position on the railway.

Let me quote from the story in the NT News: 'Mr Collins said that he and Mr Bannon would be going to Canberra at a time yet to be decided to suggest that the federal government should considerably moderate its request to the Territory to share the capital funding'. The Leader of the Opposition also made that claim in a press release that he issued last Friday. He said virtually the same thing: no decision had been made about the timing of the trip to Canberra but he and the South Australian Premier would be making a joint approach.

In case other honourable members have not seen the media reports, Mr Deputy Speaker, let me tell you what they say. The South Australian Premier is not travelling to Canberra with the Leader of the Opposition. He has gone on holiday. The Deputy Premier will not accompany the Leader of the Opposition. He had considered going but has a heavy schedule and has decided against it. The person who might go is the member for Stuart, an electorate in the north of the state. The member for Stuart is the Chief Secretary in South Australia, the man responsible for police and prisons. That is how much importance the South Australian government seems to attach to the Leader of the Opposition and his talks in Canberra. South Australia, which would certainly benefit from the steel and railway sleepers required, is a sleeper itself. The railway would need 156 000 t of steel for rails - steel that would be rolled at Whyalla. It needs 2.5 million sleepers which could be made at the concrete sleeper plant at Port Augusta. But the South Australian government attaches so little significance to the Leader of the Opposition that the Premier has gone on holiday and the Deputy Premier is too busy. Perhaps the Chief Secretary was the only person left standing when the rest of the Cabinet ducked for cover.

Mr Deputy Speaker, one point that emerges from this news item is the fact that the South Australian Premier never intended going to Canberra with the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has misled the people of the Northern Territory once again with his willingness to mishandle the truth. Lest there be any confusion, let me make it quite clear that I am not misrepresenting the facts in this matter. The Premier's office in Adelaide is telling the press, quite openly - and we have it from the ABC and AAP - that the Premier never had any intention of travelling to Canberra or anywhere else with the Leader of the Opposition. The honourable Leader of the Opposition seems to think he can give a version of what he does for consumption in the Northern Territory and that the real facts will never come to light. Mr Deputy Speaker, once again, he has been caught with his pants well and truly down and it is not a pretty sight.

Tobacco Product Advertising

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

I hope he feels free to answer my question with as much zest as the Chief Minister. It concerns the recent Commonwealth-State Health Ministers' Conference held in Hobart, which the Minister for Health attended. We heard of his energetic activities during the course of that conference. The question of uniform legislation on tobacco product advertising was discussed and I ask the Minister for Health what attitude he took on behalf of the Northern Territory to the issue of tobacco advertising, particularly in relation to tobacco company sponsorship of sporting activities?

ANSWER

A paper on the subject was delivered at the conference in Hobart. The paper was sponsored by the Western Australian government and it proposed a ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, both through the electronic media - on which there is already a ban - and in the newspapers. However, there was some concern that the electronic media ban was not successful by virtue of the fact that the names of certain large tobacco companies, by way of sponsorship, appear on the ABC and commercial stations; for example, the Benson and Hedges Golf Tournament and the Marlboro 500 race.

The only thing that came out of the conference was that Western Australia was not supported. The first state that declined to support the recommendations of Western Australia was New South Wales. It was closely followed by Victoria, then South Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory and finally Tasmania. Therefore, Western Australia was left to go it alone.

However, the ministers resolved to ask the Australian Media Council to provide to them at a conference in Canberra on 15 June - which will discuss the introduction of Medicare - a paper on the tightening up of the voluntary code. Of course, the Northern Territory and the states supported a recommendation that the voluntary code for the advertising of tobacco products by both the electronic media and the newspapers be tightened up. That is where we are now. We are waiting to see the recommendations in the paper.

The honourable member has asked what attitude was taken on behalf of the Northern Territory to the idea that the advertising of tobacco - and the advertising of alcohol was brought into the question at the same time - was probably harmful to the development of various sporting organisations in the Northern Territory. At the time, I commented that the tobacco companies were providing financial support to sporting organisations and that, as we had such a very small population base and the Northern Territory government, whilst it was doing a pretty good job, can only provide limited financial support to sporting and other community organisations, the proposal in relation to the advertising of tobacco products would certainly not be in the best interests of the Northern Territory.

Road to Koolpin Gorge

Ms LAWRIE to CHIEF MINISTER

I understand that the status of the road through Gimbat Station to Koolpin Gorge has been referred to the Department of Law for an opinion on whether it is a public road or not. Has that opinion been received and, if so, what was it?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the preamble made by the honourable member for Nightcliff is not strictly correct. The situation is that representations have been received by me, as Minister for Lands, from 4-wheel-drive recreational groups and also from the lessee of Gimbat Station, Mr Helmut Schimmel, in relation to the closure of what is known as the Sleisbeck Road. I would like to point out that the Northern Territory government does not have unfettered control over the Gimbat pastoral lease. The lease is owned in fact by the Commonwealth of Australia and I understand that the Commonwealth, through the Department of Administrative Services, has asked us to administer Gimbat while we are administering all the rest of the pastoral leases in the Northern Territory. The situation is that the transfer of Gimbat to Mr Schimmel was approved by the Commonwealth rather than by the Territory although, nominally at least, the Territory Minister for Lands provided the consent to transfer. Mr Schimmel has been the owner for some time and, apparently, he has closed the gate across Sleisbeck Road. The 4-wheel-drive people complain that this interferes with their access to the property. In strict law, once they take their vehicles off the road on to the property itself, I think they are trespassers anyway. That nice point of law no doubt escapes them.

I have asked the Secretary of the Department of Lands to seek that the Solicitor-General take the matter of the status of the Sleisbeck Road before the Supreme Court for a declaration as to whether or not it is or is not a public road. Frankly, I do not have the resources personally to determine that fact. I do not believe the Attorney-General is in a position to determine that fact because it is the sort of thing where interested members of the public should have a forum in which to put forward their views. As I see it, the best possible forum for a determination of whether Sleisbeck Road is or is not a public road is the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. No doubt any parties who are interested may come forward in the course of the case and put their evidence and their lawyers can put their legal argument. I asked the Secretary of the Department of Lands to expedite this matter. I think it was at least a month or 2 ago that they saw me. I do not know what has happened to it since but I hope that the wheels are being greased. Maybe the fact that this question has been asked will help to grease them even further.

Sentence for Manslaughter at Roe Creek

Mr D.W. COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is he aware of the widespread concern expressed in Alice Springs at the perceived lightness of the sentence imposed on a person convicted of the manslaughter of a crippled man at Roe Creek earlier this year?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Alice Springs for that question because I am aware of that expression of concern. As Attorney-General I have received a number of telephone calls from local people and I would like to spend a few moments addressing myself to that question.

The killing occurred at Orange Creek, not Roe Creek. The defendant's name was Kevin Donnelly and the deceased's name was Harold John Porter also known as Michael John Connors. The conviction was for manslaughter. Sometimes, there is a vast difference in such cases between the facts as believed by the public and the facts available to defence counsel, the prosecution and the court. This is a classic example of that problem.

What is the public perception of what happened? All the public knows is that a disabled and almost crippled man was shot dead at Orange Creek, south of Alice Springs. They know that, for some time, the person who apparently did the shooting was missing. That person was subsequently discovered in Kalgoorlie and extradited to the Northern Territory. It is probably known widely by the public that that person initially denied the offence. They know that that person was arrested and arraigned on a charge of murder. They know that that charge was reduced to manslaughter and that the sentence given by the court was 2 months imprisonment and that the person had spent 5 months in custody. That is the knowledge of the public and, for that reason, they feel some sense of disquiet with a sentence of that nature.

The information available to the court was completely different. The deceased had picked up the accused and offered him a lift to Katherine. The deceased carried a loaded rifle cocked, with the safety off, in his vehicle. The deceased was suffering from a physical infirmity which had made it difficult for him to use that rifle otherwise. On the day of the death, the deceased and the defendant had been drinking until 3 pm and they were sitting in the back of the car with the seats laid back. The defendant asked to use the rifle and got out of the car with it. When getting back in he had his finger on the trigger and it discharged killing the deceased. The bullet entered the back of the deceased's skull at an angle such that it was consistent with the defendant's version and not consistent with a deliberate shot. This was confirmed by forensic tests. All of the evidence available to the Crown pointed to an offence of gross negligence leading to manslaughter. The defendant had no record of any crimes equivalent to this.

The role of the courts in sentencing offenders is to impose an appropriate penalty in view of the relevant circumstances. These include: the parliament's view of the seriousness of the crime as reflected by the prescribed maximum penalty; the offender's motives; his family background, age and mental and physical health; any previous criminal record - and it is to be remembered in this case that there was no record which would have been consistent with this sort of behaviour; how often the particular crime occurs; and the consequence of imprisonment and, especially, whether it would help the person come back into society as a useful citizen.

There is certainly a well-founded view that the role of government is limited in relation to sentencing. In order to make sure that the courts retain their independence, it is believed by most that governments should not interfere by making representations to judges and magistrates other than through its law officers as and when cases are dealt with. Personally, I believe that there is a role for the Attorney-General to discuss community views with judges. I am giving some consideration to doing that. That does not mean to say, in any way, that I believe that this sentence or any other was anything other than perfectly proper. The public will be informed of that when the Crown appeals.

The particular point that I am making is that, regrettably, the information available to the public, was quite different from that available to the court. Having set out the scenario, I can well understand public disquiet at a sentence of 2 months imprisonment for that person's death. But when we understand the full circumstances, we see that, at worst, it was an act of gross negligence. While there has been disquiet on many occasions on the part of the public at sentencing by the courts, it is a shame that the public cannot have information which is available to the courts. I am quite sure that any person who knew the facts of this case would not differ for one moment from the judge's decision.

Undesirable Effects of Overcrowded Accommodation

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HOUSING

Will he accede to my requests for an inquiry into the socially undesirable effects of overcrowded accommodation upon which the Housing Commission is currently unable to make any impact?

ANSWER

During the course of this sittings, I will be making a ministerial statement on housing in the Northern Territory. Hopefully, during that statement, I might pick up the honourable member's question.

Aboriginal Employment in the NTPS

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the level of Aboriginal employment in the Northern Territory Public Service increasing or decreasing?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to answer this question. I told the Legislative Assembly in April 1980 that the Northern Territory government aimed to increase the number of Aboriginals employed within the Northern Territory Public Service to 10% of the service by 1982. It is now very pleasing to be able to say that recent figures reveal that this aim has been achieved. The Public Service Commissioner has advised me that a total of 1137 Aboriginals are now employed as public servants, 543 males and 594 females. This number represents 10.5% of the total NTPS workforce. On the best advice that I have, these figures compare very favourably with those of the southern states which maintain similar statistics. In New South Wales, for example, 1.6% of the state public service is Aboriginal and, in Victoria, only 0.12%. For the Australian Public Service the figure is 0.47%. This shows we have been rather more successful than our southern counterparts in carrying out our policy.

I would also like to make the point that the dispersion of the Aboriginals within the Northern Territory Public Service follows a pattern similar to that of non-Aboriginals with the majority of employees in the base-grade administrative levels. I shall not be satisfied though until there is a larger number of Aboriginals employed above those levels and I have asked the Public Service Commissioner to provide training facilities to enable this to be achieved. Of course, we want to better the figure of 10.5% and we will continue to work on that.

Gold Mine in Pine Creek Area

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is it a fact that a new gold-mining operation is to commence soon in the Pine Creek area? If so, is it a fact that the owners of this gold mine will not be required to pay royalties to the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

I am not in a position to say whether or not there will be a gold mine in the Pine Creek area. I think the honourable member would be well aware of the need for some degree of confidentiality in these matters. May I say that the Pine Creek area, in terms of gold, is a very prospective area indeed. I have

little doubt that there will be a number of new gold mines in the Pine Creek area in the near future. As to the last part of the question, I cannot imagine any circumstances under which people would not pay royalties to the Northern Territory where those royalties are due and payable.

Taxation on Lump Sum Superannuation Payments

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

My question refers to this morning's news item quoting the claim of a leading trade union official, Mr Barrie Unsworth, that certain deals were struck at the recent National Economic Summit Conference. Was the Chief Minister a party to any arrangements at the National Economic Summit Conference whereby commitments were given to the ACTU or any other party that there would be no taxation of lump sum superannuation payments?

ANSWER

It came as a bombshell to me when I heard a news report early this morning with a voice-over from Mr Barrie Unsworth who is the vice-president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions as well as being a very prominent unionist in New South Wales. I think he may even be a member of the New South Wales Legislative Council. In any event, he is a very senior ACTU figure and he claimed that there had been an agreement at the summit conference that there would be no additional taxation of lump sum superannuation payments. I can assure you that neither the Treasurer nor myself were party to any such agreement. Indeed, although there were rumours at the summit of a deal between the ACTU and the government on pay increases, the federal government, and Mr Hawke himself, denied those rumours at the time, and I believed implicitly in what the Prime Minister said. It seems, from what Mr Unsworth says, that not only may there have been an agreement regarding pay increases but further agreements with the ACTU going so far even as no taxation of lump sum superannuation payments. For an agreement to get as far as that, one would imagine it to be a very comprehensive one.

Yesterday, we heard the Leader of the Opposition preach about restraint. One can only say that apparently these deals were selfishly struck behind closed doors between certain parties to the summit and other parties were not privy to them and, indeed, apparently were deceived about them. I believe that the Australian public needs to know, and should be told by the federal government, what other deals were struck behind closed doors at the summit. Every Australian has the right to know what deals the federal government made with the ACTU and what deals were connived at at the summit. Mr Deputy Speaker, all I can say is that it sounds very much to me as though we have all been duped.

Toilet Facilities for Rapid Creek Water Gardens

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will the government erect toilet facilities in the Rapid Creek Water Gardens?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seem to recall that the honourable member for Millner asked a similar question at the last sittings or raised it during an adjournment debate. I am not too sure what response the government gave to him at that particular time. I understand that the water gardens is a very pleasant place for people to congregate and make use of the environment at Rapid Creek. I am not too sure that facilities such as toilets have been

planned at this particular time. I will take the question on notice and respond to the honourable member as soon as I can.

Bag Limits on Waterfowl

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is it his intention to introduce a bill to the Assembly to allow him, upon the advice of his officers, to set bag limits for the taking of waterfowl depending on seasonal prospects?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not have such a proposition before me at the moment. It might be of interest to all honourable members to know that this issue has been raised with me in the last 4 or 5 days by people outside the government and the Conservation Commission. It is believed in some sections of the community that we should have a bag limit, particularly for the duck shooting season. I have raised this matter with the Conservation Commission and I have not had a reply yet. When that advice is received, I will be happy to let the member know.

Bus Service for Palmerston

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I understand the new timetable for bus services will include Karama. Does the government also intend to include Palmerston in new bus schedules?

ANSWER

There has been some discussion about the inclusion of Palmerston in new bus services. I understand that a petition emanating from the City of Palmerston has been circulated to that effect. The government finds itself in a very serious position in respect of the provision of bus services to the people of Darwin. The government subsidy before income this year is expected to be in the vicinity of \$3.15m. We are in a very grave position in respect to financing extended bus services and, until such time as all the ramifications of services in Darwin have been considered - and that includes the discussions that are to take place with the drivers in respect of various aspects of their employment, such as leave loadings and part-time employment - no further extensions to Darwin bus services will be considered.

Radiological Services in NT Hospitals

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is he aware that patients have been refused emergency x-rays on weekends and public holidays at Tennant Creek and Alice Springs hospitals? Will he ensure that emergency radiological services are available at all Northern Territory hospitals?

ANSWER

In most cases, x-ray facilities are available. In Alice Springs, Darwin, Tennant Creek and Katherine, facilities are available Monday through Friday. On weekends, they are only available in emergencies. However, I will examine the situation and give the member a more detailed response at a later date.

Application of Construction Safety Act at Nabalco Plant Site

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Why doesn't the Construction Safety Act, which regulates the safety standards for rigging, scaffolding and related work, apply to the Nabalco plant site? It is a fairly major plant site but no acts relate to construction there.

ANSWER

I will have the matter investigated. I am certainly unable to give an answer now. I will report back to him later.

Darwin Airport

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise if there is any indication on whether or not plans to upgrade the Darwin airport will be completed by the original target date of late 1986?

ANSWER

The honourable member is correct in saying that an \$86m plan to upgrade Darwin airport was originally scheduled to be completed in late 1986. In fact, a newspaper headline on 24 November 1982 indicated that it was an official government proposal and that an \$86m project would commence to upgrade the airport. The previous government was committed to the establishment of a terminal on a new site to the north of the main runway by the end of 1986 with work beginning at the end of this calendar year. This target date now seems unrealistic due to the change in government. As the length of the project is 4 years, the project, if it proceeds, will not be completed until 1987 at the earliest. The delay is one year.

Police Exhibit at Fred's Pass Show

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Why was only one police officer on duty at the police exhibit at the Fred's Pass Show held in May?

ANSWER

For several years, it has been the practice to have only one officer on duty at such show exhibits. There is no reason why there should be more than one officer on duty at a show exhibit at the one time. The police displays are of the walk-through type. In any event, in addition to the officer on duty at the exhibit, other police were present at the show from the Fred's Pass Police Office. As well, plain clothes police from the Darwin Criminal Investigations Branch carried out patrols of the area together with other police. Although the honourable member for Tiwi seems to think that there should be more than one policeman on duty at a show display, I am afraid I cannot see any value in wasting valuable police resources and taxpayers' money.

Study of Salaries, Wages and Employment in Aboriginal Communities

Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What study of salaries, wages and employment in Aboriginal communities is currently being carried out by his department?

ANSWER

I ask him to place the question on notice. It would require a fairly comprehensive answer and I would prefer to do it in writing.

Report on Investment Seminars

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Does he intend to report to the Assembly on the recent investment seminars which he conducted in southern cities and, if so, when may we expect his statement?

ANSWER

I was not intending to report to the Assembly on the recent industrial investment seminars that were conducted by the Northern Territory Development Corporation in Sydney and Melbourne. I reported extensively to the Northern Territory public through the media upon my return. I see no particular reason for a special report or statement to the Assembly on the matter. Suffice to say that, if the honourable member for Sanderson has a particular interest, I would be happy to receive a letter from her and I would try to provide her with any details that she might want.

The investment seminars were very successful. Two other ministers went with me, the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Minister for Primary Production. We were accompanied by the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation, Mr Ray McHenry, a couple of other officials from the NTDC, the Secretary of the Department of Primary Production, Mr Baden Cameron, the Secretary of the Department of Lands, Mr Don Darben, the Chairman of the Tourist Commission, Mr Eric Poole, and the Secretary of the Department of Mines and Energy, Mr Creed Lovegrove. In Sydney, where we stayed for 2 days, we started each day with a working breakfast with 80 or so businessmen and industrialists. After that, persons who wanted to discuss any particular matters with a minister or official were given appointments. Then, an hour or so later, there was a 2-hour seminar on a particular aspect. In the 2 days in each city, we had 4 seminars. For instance, there would be a seminar on rural industries in the morning, a seminar on tourism in the afternoon, a seminar on mining the next morning, and a seminar on something else in the afternoon. These seminars were very well attended. In Sydney, as many as 150 people were at the seminars. In Melbourne, they were not as well attended as that - over 100 at one and between 50 and 100 at most of them. The same sort of thing occurred in Melbourne: at lunchtime you would speak to members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia or whatever. Every day there was a major lunchtime function with a speech, which received good media coverage, a seminar in the afternoon, more appointments with ministers and then an evening function. For instance, one night the largest firm of stockbrokers in Sydney organised a dinner for us with their major clients and another night there was a dinner with all the superannuation fund investment managers.

Quite honestly, after about 2 days of it, you are ready to go outside and cut your throat. You hardly get out of the hotel. But, it was very rewarding in terms of interest in the Northern Territory and actual lists of projects that are likely to come out of it. I do not want to name people or industries at this stage but I think those who have shown an interest are entitled to get a front run. Melbourne exceeded Sydney in terms of firm interest and people desirous of coming up here to put proposals to the NTDC and acquiring land. Of course, we are helping to sell the Territory on the basis of the north south railway which would make the Port of Darwin Australia's front door and the gateway to South-east Asia. Many of these

people were looking at the Northern Territory, and the Top End in particular, in terms of basing establishments here with the advantage of knowing the ropes in a part of Australia yet very close to the markets of South-east Asia. I think that, probably within 12 months, we will see quite definite signs of the results of that investment mission. I would not want to do one too frequently, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would prefer to leave them as far as possible to officials, but I think they are well worth while.

Harvesting and Husbanding of Native Birds

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What incentives can the Conservation Commission advance to people to harvest and husband native birds?

ANSWER

Perchance, Mr Deputy Speaker, I have some advice for the honourable member from the Conservation Commission. It arrived this morning. I am not sure that she will be very happy with it but, nevertheless, I will give it to her. The harvesting of native birds in the Australian states has inevitably led to a serious reduction in the numbers of rare and or attractive birds. Only one state, Western Australia, presently allows the trapping of native birds. This is limited but considerable pressure is being brought to bear to stop this practice. Currently, thousands of native Australian birds are being bred successfully in aviaries and it is the considered opinion of most wildlife authorities that there are enough behind wire now to satisfy the aviary trade.

Finally, Australia is bound by international agreements which are honoured by the Northern Territory and which require detailed management plans before any harvesting for trade purposes should occur. The question of aviculture versus wildlife laws raises a number of complex issues and the Conservation Commission is currently preparing a policy statement regarding aviculture. If the honourable member, any other member of the Assembly or people who know anything about aviculture would like to make a submission to myself or the Conservation Commission about the matter, we would be only too pleased to hear from them.

Funding of East Coast Shipping Service

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is there any basis for the allegations made in the Assembly yesterday that the Commonwealth government will seek contributions from the Northern Territory government for any extensions to the east coast shipping service?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is pretty hard to work out entirely what the Commonwealth may or may not do in respect of services to the Northern Territory. However, one thing is fairly sure, and that is that contributions will be sought. I do not know just how many bingo games the Northern Territory can run to supplement its income in this respect. I have received a letter from Mr Morris, the Minister for Transport in the federal parliament, in respect of the shipping service. I will read this short letter which is addressed to me:

*I refer to your letter of 6 May 1983 concerning the Australian National Line's east coast to Darwin shipping service. I note that your aim was to send me a submission on the justification for the continuation of ANL's east coast shipping service to Darwin by 20 May. You will recall that,*

*at our meeting in Canberra on 3 May, the difficult budgetary position we had inherited and the greatly increased loss forecast by ANL for this service were mentioned. It was also suggested that the Northern Territory government might consider contributing to the losses incurred. No doubt that will be part of your submission.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, the government has made a submission to the federal minister. We are not prepared to make a contribution towards the subsidisation of that service. The Northern Territory government has a \$25m program for upgrading the port. It hired a crane at \$600 000 to ensure that the new Townsville Trader service was unloaded in an expeditious manner. We have recommended to the Commonwealth as follows: the Commonwealth government establish an inquiry into the Darwin east coast shipping service as required under the Australian Shipping Commission Act; concurrently, the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory negotiate a 3-year agreement - and that has been our proposal for some time; and present subsidy arrangements continue until a formal inquiry and negotiations on a 3-year agreement have been completed.

Wet Dump

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In view of the decision that the Darwin City Council will cease wet dumping operations at its Leanyer site in November this year, what progress has been made delineating a new site where wet dumping operations may continue?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the new dump site is under current consideration between the Darwin City Council, officers of my department and officers of the Department of Lands. The Department of Community Development does not have a particular vested interest in the siting of the dump. We are involved in the continuing operational costs of the dump. The siting is more a matter for the Minister for Lands. Whilst I have a fringe interest, I think it would be appropriate if the honourable member directed her question to the Minister for Lands.

Wet Dump

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for LANDS

Mr Deputy Speaker, I redirect my question to the Minister for Lands.

ANSWER

Various government departments and statutory bodies have been working on proposals to relocate the Darwin municipal dump. At present, several alternative sites are being considered. One possible site, which was mentioned in a press release recently by the Lord Mayor, is in the vicinity of Shoal Bay. However, there are serious problems with that site. For example, it is located on land owned by the Commonwealth and used by the Royal Australian Air force. The process of actually obtaining the land would be very time-consuming even if it were likely to succeed. There are possible difficulties with clearing the site of any live bombs remaining on it which could be a deterrent to people using the dump. They might not want to chance having their legs blown off. However, I can assure members that an announcement will be made as soon as a decision has been made about a site.

TAB in NT

Mr VALE to TREASURER

Following wide speculation concerning the possible introduction of TAB in the Territory in recent days, is there any change in the government's attitude to TAB?

ANSWER

I can certainly confirm that there is no change in the government's attitude. Nor is there any reason for commentators to suspect that there has been. But, it appears from the odd snippet in the local press that some people seem to think that the introduction of TAB is imminent. I will be introducing legislation on the next sitting day which will address a revamping of the Racing and Betting Act. That has been foreshadowed ever since an extensive review was undertaken. However, at no time have I indicated that the basic principles of the racing and betting system in the Northern Territory are proposed to be changed by the Territory government. We will be maintaining the off-course bookmaking system which exists throughout the Northern Territory and which, with the exception of one town in South Australia that has a few off-course bookmakers, is fairly unique in Australia. On-course totalisators will be legal in the future as they have been in the past. TAB stands for 'Totalisator Agency Board'. In the states, this is a widespread off-course betting system that works on a totalisator averaging system. For a long time in the Northern Territory, we have had legislation which has allowed on-course totalisators. This will be perpetuated in the new legislation. As far as the major principles of off-course betting systems are concerned, there will be no change.

Use of Police Aircraft for Transport to Nimrod Safari Camp

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he give the Assembly a categorical assurance that at no time prior to the transporting of Mr David McNicoll to the Nimrod Safari Camp was the police aircraft used to transport any non-police personnel or stores to the Nimrod Safari Camp?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, how could I give a categorical assurance to the Leader of the Opposition ...

Mr B. Collins: You said so yesterday.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr EVERINGHAM: ... without having checked this matter out. The Leader of the Opposition again advises me. What I said yesterday or the day before was that the logbook relating to the police plane is open for inspection by the member for Nhulunbuy as opposition spokesman on the police. I do not know who the police plane has transported to the Nimrod Safari Camp in the past. I do not even know that it has been to Nimrod Safari Camp in the past. I would suggest that, if the honourable Leader of the Opposition wants this information, then perhaps he could send the member for Nhulunbuy to have a look at the logbook of the police plane.

I might say that the Leader of the Opposition seems to treat this plane as though it were absolutely the exclusive property of the Police Force. Whilst it is true that the plane was purchased through the police allocation, there

is no doubt that it is an asset of the Northern Territory. I accept full responsibility. If there was any impropriety in the use of the police plane by the Commissioner of Police to take Mr McNicoll and Mr Kennedy to Nimrod, then that impropriety is mine and not the commissioner's. I viewed it as an asset of the Northern Territory government that could be used in these circumstances. It is the first time that I have asked that anyone be taken on the police plane. One can see now that, for the sake of peace and quiet for the Commissioner of Police, one should not even attempt to do these sorts of things. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition takes his usual carping, small-minded attitude to the whole thing. As I pointed out in this Assembly earlier this week, it saved the taxpayers money as well as making use of the plane when it was not detailed for duties of another nature.

Government-sponsored Lotteries

Mr VALE to TREASURER

In view of the success of the government's first lottery, has any decision been taken about any future government-sponsored lotteries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government is awaiting a report from the Racing and Gaming Commission on the various aspects of the first government lottery which, as the honourable member for Stuart said, was an overwhelming success. Suggestions have been put to myself and to other ministers that the government should move quickly into running further lotteries and various alternatives have been suggested. At this stage, we have decided not to take any decision on moving to run another government lottery now or next year or ever. We will await the report from the Racing and Gaming Commission which will put a series of options to the government. The matter will be considered then and, no doubt, an announcement will be made at the appropriate time.

Review of NTDC Operations

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the report of the Commonwealth Development Bank officer seconded to review the operation of the NTDC been completed and when will that report be available for investigation by this Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not undertaken that the report will be available for investigation by the Assembly. I indicated that, after consideration of the report by myself and Cabinet, I would be prepared to consider tabling it in the Assembly. I certainly do not envisage any investigation of the report by the Assembly. No doubt the Assembly can debate the report if it wishes. In any event, the report became available to me on Monday evening and I have taken it home. For obvious reasons, I have not had a chance to read it yet, let alone put it into shape for submission to Cabinet. I see no prospect of its being available to the Assembly until the next sittings.

Mr Speaker, I might take this opportunity to advise you and other honourable members that the only appointment I can secure to see the Prime Minister regarding the railway is at 2.00 pm tomorrow. I attempted to secure an appointment for Monday but that is impossible from the Prime Minister's point of view. Therefore, I will have to leave the Assembly early this afternoon to catch the plane to Melbourne and go to Canberra tomorrow morning. I do not think I will have much time for reading this report over this weekend either. It runs into several hundred pages. Many pages relate to forms and

procedures and the substance of the report amounts to no more than 50 or 60 pages. However, I would say that there is no chance that the Assembly will be considering the report before the next sittings.

ABC Telecasts to the NT

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he able to inform me why Northern Territory citizens were denied the opportunity to see the important telecast by the ABC of the mini-budget that was brought down by the federal Treasurer last Thursday and also the FA cup final last Saturday morning?

Mr Bell: Hear, hear!

ANSWER

For the first time, I have heard an intelligent interjection by the honourable member for MacDonnell. I fully support the honourable member for MacDonnell's concern about 'The Winners' and the honourable member for Port Darwin's concern about the ABC not broadcasting to the Northern Territory the mini-budget that was brought down by the Treasurer, Mr Keating, in the federal parliament last Thursday evening. As well, it did not transmit to people outside Darwin the FA cup final on Saturday. Fortunately people in Darwin were able to enjoy the FA cup final by courtesy of Channel 8 and its sponsors but there was a great deal of concern that this major sporting event in which there is intense interest right around Australia was not televised by the ABC. It goes even wider than that. The ABC and the Minister for Communications were apparently not prepared to relent and declare it an event of national significance. As for 'The Winners', I am campaigning, as I know many Territory representatives are campaigning, for the restoration of the program to ABC television on Saturday evening when it used to run. I think it said that it may run it in future on Monday or Tuesday evenings. I believe that there is a great deal of support for that particular code of football right throughout the Territory. I think that the ABC should reconsider its priorities seriously.

I cannot understand why listeners to radio network 1 were able to hear the mini-budget yet Territorians, as far as I could judge when trying to tune in to the radio at Cobourg Peninsula, were being treated to a concert by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Certainly, it was a very nice concert but most of us wanted to hear what was going on in Canberra because it so vitally affected, as we now know, the future of the Northern Territory. Frankly, it is impossible to divine by what means the person who does the programming arrives at his programming conclusions.

Chief Minister - Meeting with Prime Minister

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of discussions I had with the Prime Minister's office yesterday and the statement that the Chief Minister made this morning, could he advise whether the statement he made to the Assembly yesterday, which was accurately reported on page 1 of the NT News last night, that the Prime Minister had refused to see him, was a true statement?

ANSWER

Absolutely, Mr Speaker. I received a telex from the Prime Minister the other afternoon and I conveyed its terms to the Assembly almost as soon as I received it. The Prime Minister said he was not in a position to see me because he had legislative and other commitments. He said also that his

overseas visit, which commences next week, precluded the possibility of his seeing me. What is that but a refusal? I was told that I could have a meeting with the Treasurer. As a consequence, I had my office pursue the Prime Minister's office and the Treasurer's office. It now transpires that, through our persistence, we have an appointment for 2 pm tomorrow afternoon. If I had accepted the Prime Minister's telex, I certainly would not have had the opportunity to see him before the Premiers' Conference at the end of June. The Premiers' Conference is on 30 June and 1 July. That would be the next opportunity to see the Prime Minister because he will be overseas for several weeks. If that is not a refusal, the Leader of the Opposition is now displaying to members the reason why so many of us consider that he distorts the facts.

Lights at Intersections in Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I have been in touch with the minister on several occasions regarding this matter. Has he any further information on the erection of lights at the Palmerston, Howard Springs and Arnhem Highway turn-offs from the Stuart Highway?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the traffic is very busy at the intersections the member refers to. The Department of Transport and Works will be installing lights at the Palmerston and the Howard Springs turn-offs. The Arnhem Highway turn-off is still under consideration.

Service Station at Yulara

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I gave him a copy of these questions yesterday. Did the Valuer-General value the land on which the service station is to be built at Yulara? If so, what was the valuation? Was Mobil Oil Company advised of the valuation? Why was Malpa Trading Company not advised? If there was no such valuation, how did the Chief Minister arrive at the figure of several hundred thousand dollars for the value of the land and development rights?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, again a member of the opposition rises to his feet and says that he has given me notice and seeks to convey an impression that I have been given plenty of time to obtain this information. In fact, I was given a written series of questions by the member for MacDonnell at 4.45 pm yesterday afternoon. As he well knows, the information has to come from the Yulara Project Office in Alice Springs. Nonetheless, I was able to communicate with the Yulara Project Office. Although I am not in a position to give a detailed response to the question, I can say that the Valuer-General has not carried out a valuation of the service station site. As I explained to the honourable member the other day, Northern Territory taxpayers are putting up, in one way or another, \$150m for the construction of the Yulara Tourist Village. Northern Territory taxpayers, I would think, would expect their government to get back as much as possible of that \$150m from the sale of the commercial site when the time is ripe.

The Yulara Development Company or White Industries - I am not sure which one did it - advertised nationally that this site was for sale. A premium payment for the site was invited. I can say that the Yulara Development Company received several offers, including an offer of several hundred thousand dollars from Mobil Oil Company and an offer of \$1 from the Malpa Trading Company. In my

view, that is where the Yulara Project office, or whoever was dealing with it, deviated from the normal rules. It called in the Malpa Trading Company, counselled it about the situation and invited it to revise its offer. It refused to do that. We now have the situation of its crying that it did not get the site. The fact is that it refused to close down its own old service station, which might have been taken as some sort of compensation. In other words, it wanted to have its cake and eat it too. It is keeping the old one open at Ayers Rock. But, we are supposed to give it the site at the new village and not get anything more than \$1 return for the monstrous amount of capital works that have been done at Yulara: a powerhouse, water reticulation, roads, kerbing and guttering, and accommodation for staff. There is an enormous amount of money to be recovered and we have to seek the keenest possible prices that we can in this area.

Mr Speaker, the Chairman of the Aboriginal Development Commission phoned me several months ago and said that, in relation to whatever money was needed, he would be prepared to consider approaches from Malpa. I believe that Malpa has adopted a bloody-minded attitude over this whole thing and has sought to use its particular position and influence to try to get the site for nothing when, in fact, it could have borrowed the money from the Aboriginal Development Commission had it been inclined to do so. It was its refusal to do that that led to the current situation. I believe that the Malpa Trading Company should be looking at the behaviour of some of its officials rather than the behaviour of the Yulara Development Company, White Industries or any other party. It is the behaviour of its staff that has landed it in the jam that it is in at the moment. If it does not change the attitudes of its staff before the other proposals come to light, such as the store and everything else that will be offered by expression of public interest, then it will land itself in exactly the same jam. We have to get money back for Yulara. Money is available to Malpa and it will have to run its operations there in a commercial way. It should be borrowing the money so that it can run in a true commercial sense.

#### Darwin Performing Arts Centre

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Following the investigation carried out by the Darwin City Council into possible management arrangements for the Darwin Performing Arts Centre, will government now introduce legislation to establish a trust in accordance with the precedent set by the Araluen Arts and Cultural Trust Act in 1979?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as far as I am concerned, final details of how the management of the centre is to be organised have not yet been decided. When they are decided, I will be happy to advise the honourable member of the direction that the government will take in the matter.

#### Archives Building Site

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Following on a question I asked on Wednesday 23 March, has a decision yet been taken on the siting of the new archives building?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, officers of the Departments of Community Development and Lands are currently working on a possible site for the archives building in the Darwin area.

Computer Billing by NTEC

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I put my question on behalf of the member for Eley. Can the minister advise how many people were displaced by the introduction of computer billing by NTEC?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer to the question is none. It is obvious that, by introducing a system of computer billing, certain efficiencies will be made. The computer system of billing was introduced into NTEC to achieve that objective and not to achieve the objective of the loss of people's jobs. At this stage, no one has even had to move from any section because the computer system still has some work to be done on it. It will probably be necessary for 5 or 6 people to be trained for redeployment or, in the normal course of their duties, to fit in elsewhere with the commission at the same levels as they occupy at the moment. That would be the intention. It was not designed to displace people but rather to provide a more efficient and accurate system of billing. I might make the observation, Mr Speaker, that your question clearly arises from concern that computers, in many instances, cause people to lose their jobs. In the use of computers, this government generally has had the attitude that it is not for that purpose but to provide a better and more efficient form of service to the Northern Territory public.

Sunday Air Service to Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he say when Sunday air services to Nhulunbuy will be introduced?

ANSWER

I thought that the honourable member would have been asking Mr Beazley that question because all our efforts so far have been fruitless. We have been in touch with the airlines and we have written to Mr Beazley. We will be holding further meetings with the Ansett organisation. Its proposition will be something that gives it sole rights over Nhulunbuy and I do not think that the honourable member would like that. There is no proposal at this time to provide a return of the services that the honourable member wishes although we are still trying to obtain the best possible solution.

School Councils

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is the minister satisfied at this stage with the progress of the establishment of school councils throughout the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Last year, the Territory passed quite innovative legislation to allow school councils to be established. These will have a high degree of involvement in the operations of schools. I am pleased to say that, despite the complex provisions that are required for a school community to move towards becoming a formal school council under the act, quite a number of applications have been received and 4 of them have been approved.

The requirements are that a constitution which has certain provisions embodied within it must be passed formally and submitted to me, as minister,

for adoption. The Department of Education has been assisting those school communities which have sought information from it on what is involved in forming a formal school council under the act. To date, the 4 approved are Casuarina High School, the Malak Primary and Pre-school, Leanyer Primary School and Tiwi Primary School. Unfortunately, to date, they are all in Darwin. Perhaps it is not that important. Others will no doubt be coming through the system. We have received more applications which have been assessed. I am not sure whether any of those are from areas outside Darwin. However, I am sure a number of school communities will sit back and watch how the brave ones who come in first operate before moving themselves. Some of the responsibilities of school councils under the act are indeed quite important. They must run formal accounting systems because they will be handling taxpayers' funds. They can even go as far as employing staff and administering small contracts. It is quite important and involved. It is important that school councils run a fairly sophisticated administrative system if they are to come under the Northern Territory act. I am sure it will be a great success. Indications to date are that it will be and that additional schools will follow these brave leaders who have my full support.

Bus Services to Karama

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he confirm whether extensions of the public bus service to include Karama will be implemented in view of the review of public bus services currently being undertaken?

ANSWER

The figure that I mentioned yesterday of the subsidy overrun to provide bus services in Darwin included provision of services to Karama. The service has not been commenced but it will be as soon as some of the difficult management arrangements are dealt with.

Sale of Pastoral Leases

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

Has he considered the remarks that I made in the adjournment debate last night on apparent limits to the minister's discretion in approving the sale of pastoral leases to a single owner and could he state if he agrees with my interpretation of his discretion on this matter?

ANSWER

It has been impossible for me to consider the remarks of the honourable member for Millner because I had an appointment in my office at that stage of the adjournment debate. I heard the gist of what he said, namely, that the minister has no discretion in excess of 20 000 km<sup>2</sup>. I cannot but agree with him. In fact, I foreshadowed in my answer to a question that the people would be hiving off property so that there is no dispute at all.

Submission on Tourist Industry

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

Did he make representations to the federal government regarding incentives to the tourist industry to be included in last week's mini-budget and, if so, what response has he received to his submission?

ANSWER

In terms of the mini-budget, obviously the federal government decided to ignore a very major area of possible growth and that is the tourist industry. In my view, that is most unfortunate. If it wished to boost real economic growth, I think it would have been timely for the federal government to pay some attention to the tourist industry in the mini-budget. In fact, subsequent to the summit meeting, I asked the Tourist Industry Advisory Council of the Northern Territory to put together a summary of proposals for initiatives in the tourist industry that could help both the industry and Australian economic growth. I was able to put this submission, which I think is a fairly sound one, to the Prime Minister, the federal Treasurer and various other federal ministers fairly well in advance of the mini-budget. Unfortunately, at this stage, it seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

Mr Speaker, I would not want you to think that we will allow that situation to continue because I know that everyone in the Northern Territory is at least conscious of the benefits that the tourist industry can have for Australia. My colleague, the Treasurer, will be representing me at the Tourist Ministers' Council meeting in Sydney tomorrow. I have already ensured that the Northern Territory submission will be an agenda item. Hopefully, the Tourist Ministers' Council will agree on it and it can then go forward to the federal government with the combined weight of the Tourist Ministers' Council behind it. I do not think that the federal government can continue to ignore the tourist industry for much longer if we are to have any real hope of raising levels of employment in this country in the short-to-medium term. It is the tourist industry that holds out the principal hope for employment growth in this country.

Agriculture at Deep Well Station

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Is he aware that a recent Water Resources report recommends that an area of Deep Well Station is the best area to establish agriculture in central Australia and will he undertake to bring this matter to the attention of the Deep Well Station people with a view to encouraging such a development?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will be happy to bring this matter to the attention of the management of Deep Well Station. In fact, I will also raise it with the Department of Primary Production and the Conservation Commission because these 2 units of government are currently doing an assessment of land that would be suitable for both agriculture and horticulture. It has been shown during the last couple of years that Alice Springs is quite able to cultivate products which can be sold competitively on southern markets. If suitable land is available on Deep Well Station and people are interested in developing it, whether it is the management of Deep Well Station or others, I think we should be looking at it. I can assure the honourable member that I will bring that matter to the attention of the people concerned.

Pensioner Concession Scheme

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Is the review of the pensioner concession scheme completed and can he indicate if it is to be broadened to include widows, invalid pensioners and those on repatriation benefits?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the pensioner's concession scheme is always under review. It is a scheme operated by this government that does not seem to exist in any of the states. It is one of those schemes which, like many others, has the capacity to consume enormous amounts of money. It is not that the government would not like to pay money to everybody that it could but there has to be a limit. No steps have been taken at this stage to broaden the scheme to include the groups mentioned. However, I would emphasise that the government would like to help as many people as possible through the scheme; it is constrained only by the financial problems.

Malpa Trading Company

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I preface my question by referring him to this letter to the Malpa Trading Company in which he said that it did not appear that there was any intention by Malpa to offer the closure of the existing service station to coincide with the development of Yulara and the rehabilitation of the national park. I would also draw his attention to a newspaper report in the Centralian Advocate ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! What is the question?

Mr BELL: I am prefacing it, Mr Speaker. There are 2 documents that relate to the question. The Centralian Advocate reported that the Conservation Commission said that the store and service station at Yulara will be phased out when Yulara is completed. Who is right, the Chief Minister or the Conservation Commission?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the report in the Centralian Advocate but I have my advice. The letter was drafted for me by the Yulara Project Office which is an offshoot of the Conservation Commission. I know that the Conservation Commission had hoped that every facility of that nature within the park - the motel, the service station, the store - would be phased out. In the rather irregular interviews, in terms of commercial practice, held with the Malpa Trading Company, it refused to budge on the question of phasing out the service station and store in the park area. Whilst the Conservation Commission might desire that end, it appears that the Malpa Trading Company will resist it stoutly.

Tax on Beer and Soft Drinks

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey, and it needs a preamble to explain its purpose. Realising that drinkers in Katherine pay 22.2¢ per can of beer in tax at present, does the Chief Minister accept the Mayor of Katherine's suggestion that another 5¢ tax per can be added to help finance the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link, and will soft drinks be taxed similarly?

ANSWER

I cannot answer for the Mayor of Katherine but if she is proposing to introduce that tax on beer and soft drinks in Katherine, I do not think that she will be mayor of that town for very long.

Registration of Chiropractors

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Some time ago in the Assembly, the former Minister for Health introduced, and subsequently withdrew, legislation to register chiropractors in the Northern Territory. Does the present Minister for Health intend to proceed with the registration of chiropractors?

ANSWER

The matter is under consideration and, hopefully, I will be in a position to introduce such legislation during the course of this year.

Proposed Berry Springs Zoo

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Has a detailed site plan yet been prepared for the proposed zoo at Berry Springs and, if so, is the plan available for public information and inspection?

ANSWER

I recall seeing a plan on the Berry Springs zoo. I cannot recall whether it was a mud map or a comprehensive plan of what was proposed for development over a period of 5 years. I think honourable members will recall that the government committed itself to a rather large expenditure over a period of time to bring the Berry Springs zoo up to a satisfactory standard for the benefit of the public. I will seek the map out and, if it is one that can be distributed easily, I will give it to each member of the Assembly for information.

Future Site for Fuel Storage Depot

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS

I am concerned about future fuel storage in the Darwin area. Has an area of land been set aside for a future fuel storage depot and, if so, where is that depot to be sited?

ANSWER

My predecessor as Minister for Lands, the honourable Treasurer, apparently unveiled to a planning seminar in Darwin some time last year, a proposal that there should be a relocation of the fuel installations that are presently, by and large, in the Frances Bay area of Darwin, in the triangle formed by McMinn Street, Stuart Highway and Frances Bay. I cannot but agree with him. I think anyone would agree with the former Minister for Lands that, from a planning point of view, it is time that we started phasing the fuel installations out of such a potentially important urban area.

I understand it has now become the policy of the Planning Authority that, over a period of time, it will proceed to relocate the fuel storage area of Darwin. An area has been set aside on the coast adjacent to Channel Island where this relocation will take place. Although it is not proposed to complete that relocation for a period of 15 years or so, obviously planning, and to some extent action, has had to begin. The first action that the government is likely to take in respect of implementing this policy is that, now that Caltex Oil Company's fuel installation has become surplus to its requirements and has come onto the market, the Northern Territory government intends either

to purchase or acquire it. It may lease the facility for some time into the future. Through a process of consultation and negotiation with the oil companies - and I want to emphasise that - the policy and even the time can be allowed to remain sufficiently flexible to attempt to suit everyone's convenience. When I say 15 years, that is an indicative rather than a firm period, Mr Speaker. We would hope that by about the year 2000 at the very latest, all fuel facilities will be away from the urban area of Darwin, and that land will be available for commercial or other types of urban development.

Seminar on Future of Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

What has been the response to the Co-ordinator-General's efforts to set up a seminar on the future of Nhulunbuy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some months ago, following on a visit to Nhulunbuy by myself and discussions over there with the Confederation of Industry, the Tourist Promotion Association and various other groups within the town, I considered that it would be a contribution to certainty and progress in the town of Nhulunbuy if some indications could be gained from various parties as to the future of the town as they saw it. Naturally, these parties would need to include: the landowners of Nhulunbuy through their representatives, the Northern Land Council; the mining company, Nabalco; the townspeople of Nhulunbuy through their representative organisations, including the Nhulunbuy Town Board; and the various groups that I have spoken to as well, of course, as the Northern Territory and federal governments.

I requested the Co-ordinator-General to endeavour to set up a seminar on the future of the town through a process of consultation with these various groups. The intention would be to try to work out a plan as to where Nhulunbuy is headed so that people there could attempt to take decisions for the future with some degree of certainty. The seminar seemed to be coming along pretty well. I think the Co-ordinator-General had anticipated a successful conclusion and had fixed a date for the seminar when he received word that the Nabalco Company, at that stage, was not prepared to participate. Mr Speaker, you would appreciate that, in the circumstances of Nhulunbuy, Nabalco's participation is essential. Virtually nothing at all can happen over there unless Nabalco agrees to it. Even if the Territory and Commonwealth governments and the Northern Land Council agreed to participate in a seminar, the absence of Nabalco would render it a futile exercise. As a consequence, I said to the Co-ordinator-General that he had better postpone the seminar and use his good offices to attempt to persuade Nabalco to adopt a more flexible approach and perhaps a more cooperative attitude in this regard. If this can be effected, perhaps Nabalco will let us all in on its plans for the future as well as hearing everyone else's plans. The Co-ordinator-General is attempting to induce Nabalco to be part of it all. I can assure the honourable member that I will inform him, as I have in the past, as soon as I have any information.

Fort Hill Wharf

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Which consultant firm is responsible for the design of Fort Hill Wharf?

ANSWER

The only wharf I am familiar with is the one that approval was given for in August 1978. The consultants for that work were Cameron McNamara.

Disease in Pigs in the Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINSITER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he give details regarding the recent outbreak of disease in pigs in the rural area?

ANSWER

It is my intention to make a comprehensive statement to the Assembly on the events of the last 4 or 5 days.

Fort Hill Wharf

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

When did the government first become aware that there were design problems at Fort Hill Wharf?

No answer given.

Amendments to Local Government Act

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When will the amendments to the Local Government Act be introduced to enable the city council to set a minimum rate?

ANSWER

As honourable members would know, a review of our local government legislation is taking place. I have no knowledge that there is any urgency for the purpose put by the honourable member for Port Darwin. I would see that issue being taken in the total context of the review of the Local Government Act.

Tenders for Container Crane

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Did the government engage consultants to assess the tenders received for the construction of the container crane?

ANSWER

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

Large-animal Pound for Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When will we have legislation for a large-animal pound for the rural area?

ANSWER

There is before me at the moment a paper to make provision for a pound in the rural area. I do not believe it is absolutely essential at the moment to have the proposal enshrined in legislation. There are administrative steps that we can take. I believe it will be necessary, in the future, for this issue to be covered by legislation. As it is a local government function, this issue will be taken in the context of the review of that legislation.

Fort Hill Wharf

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Did the government seek advice from the original designers of the Fort Hill Wharf on work needed to upgrade it to meet the requirements of the new container crane? If so, what was that advice?

ANSWER

I ask the honourable gentleman to place his question on notice.

Vehicle Powered by Mereenie Crude Oil

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is it true that a diesel vehicle powered by Mereenie crude oil recently ran from Sydney to Melbourne as part of a southern investment campaign? If it did, what is the future of such oil as an alternative to the refined product known as automotive distillate?

ANSWER

A motor vehicle was indeed driven from Sydney to Melbourne on Mereenie crude oil. The motor vehicle was a Mitsubishi Pajero turbo. The oil was unrefined. The Mereenie partners use unrefined Mereenie crude to power all of their diesel plants at the oil field itself. The crude there is used for everything including four-wheel-drive vehicles, small lighting plants and 330 kw diesel generators. The oil is taken direct from the well and allowed to settle so that the gas dissipates. It is then put through a high-speed centrifugal separator to get rid of impurities - filtering mechanism. That crude then is used to power diesel motors. The motor vehicle that was used in the proving run from Sydney to Melbourne worked perfectly, I am told from the people who were in it who included motor magazine writers. I believe both Wheels magazine and Australian Motor were involved in the exercise. It was quite good publicity for the Northern Territory. It was done as part of our campaign for investment promotion in both New South Wales and Victoria.

As for the last part of the question, I do not believe the partners would ever see the use of Mereenie crude in that form as a substitute for diesel. We would wish to see a refinery set up, in Alice Springs hopefully, to supply the region. It would produce everything from motor spirit to normal distillate to aviation gasoline and, hopefully, naphtha. We would hope to use naphtha in the Tennant Creek power-station. I have asked NTEC to examine urgently the possibility of using the naphtha byproduct to power the Tennant Creek

power-station. I understand that it is quite feasible. The honourable member for Barkly, the Minister for Primary Production, would be aware that the time is approaching when we will need further capacity in the power-station at Tennant Creek. One would hope that naphtha would be one of the means of powering the station. I would certainly not wish to see a very valuable light crude such as Mereenie crude used as a substitute for diesel. Nonetheless, it demonstrates that it is a world class light crude. While it may have appeared to be a gimmick to run a vehicle from Sydney to Melbourne like that, the publicity it received was amazing.

All the television stations in Sydney had agreed to film the start of the run but, regrettably, only Channel 9 turned up because some inconsiderate hound set fire to a public building in the heart of Sydney. We all know that a good fire is much better than a good gimmick. Our television promotion somewhat bombed out but, nonetheless, Channel 9 carried it. The story has been run in the Financial Review and the Weekly Times, complete with photographs and descriptions. It was something that we made a fair bit of play from in respect to petroleum exploration companies based in Sydney and Melbourne. I believe it is the type of thing which attracts a lot of interest. It certainly proved the quality of Mereenie crude oil.

#### Fort Hill Wharf

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Were changes made to the original design of the Fort Hill Wharf and, if so, who authorised the changes?

ANSWER

The opposition has already given public notice that it wishes to discuss the matter in the Assembly. The information requested is contained in several documents in front of me. I am not able at present to single out specific dates in respect of quick questions.

#### Proposed Hilton Development in Alice Springs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the current situation regarding the proposed Hilton development in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

It has long been the government's desire to see established in Alice Springs at least one 4-star international standard hotel. We are after quality accommodation, probably for the middle to upper tourist market. Obviously, it would also be preferable if that establishment could be run by one of the world's leading hotel chains for the very simple reason that it would have well-established in-house promotion facilities and a network of business connections. We have been negotiating with a group in Alice Springs and Adelaide which has been trying to set up such a venture for some time. Even though a hotel might be called the Sheraton or the Hilton, it is most unlikely that that hotel chain in fact owns that hotel. It merely operates it on behalf of the owner. I understand the operating fee is a base fee plus a percentage, which covers costs and probably includes a margin of profit. There is an additional incentive in the form of a percentage of the profits. These sorts of agreements no doubt vary.

The group that put together the Hilton Hotel project in Adelaide were in touch with the people in Alice Springs who were proposing to redevelop the

golf course there. Part of the golf course redevelopment included a substantial area of land for an international hotel. It is still owned by the golf course developers and there is an option over the land in favour of the hotel developers. As I understand it, after many attempts the hotel developers have recently been successful in putting together a package of finance which should enable them to proceed with construction in the not-too-distant future. For some time, they had the Hilton group interested. I think that is the reason it became the Hilton Hotel project. But there was a time delay in putting together the financial package. This is the big problem with the Northern Territory that is very hard for the ordinary person to appreciate. Big financial institutions - not necessarily Australian ones - do not just flock to invest their money in the Northern Territory. They want to put their money in the places where they have invested many times before. Superannuation funds are happy to build hotels in Sydney because hotels in Sydney have proven track records.

Even so, the Premier of New South Wales assured me only a month or two ago that hotels in Sydney often take as long as 5 years or more to become economically viable. This is one of the problems in the Territory. Big hotels do not have a track record in the Territory because we have never had them before. All that can be done is to carry out feasibility studies and try to produce cash flow statements etc based on assessed occupancy. These things are viewed sceptically by the financial institutions. I think that everyone will acknowledge that it is unlikely that a hotel of between 200 and 300 rooms in Alice Springs would become profitable in the first 3 years of operation, and probably not even 5 years if that is the case in places like Sydney. It is necessary for the development of the Territory's tourist trade that we get into this area because these hotels have a spin-off effect in that smaller accommodation facilities grow up around them to service them. For instance, in Hobart, where the Wrestpoint Casino is situated, little motels have grown up to service it. Because it took so long to put the finance package together, Hilton has tended to go somewhat cold on the proposal. It is having troubles with its hotel in Adelaide. I understand that the occupancy rate is only 25% to 35%. I think the first time it was full - although I am not sure - was at the time of the constitutional convention. Hilton are a bit wary.

We believe that our tourist strategy involving Yulara must have another first-class hotel in Alice Springs. We are talking now not only to Hilton but also to Sheraton. Sheraton Hotels is a well known chain which has also expressed interest in developing a hotel in Darwin and it is interested in Yulara. It is fair to mention that Hilton is also interested in Yulara. When I go overseas next Sunday, I will be going on from Malaysia and Japan to the United States for 3 days. On one day, I will meet with Hilton in New York and Sheraton in Boston the same afternoon. I hope to obtain some indication from their head office executives as to their intentions. If we cannot have Sheraton or Hilton, we shall have to start looking at others. Obviously, those are the 2 most desirable chains to attract to the Northern Territory. They are world wide and the flow-on benefits to the Northern Territory tourist trade are almost incalculable.

Money Missing from Safe at Darwin Prison

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

He will be aware that a sum of money went missing from the safe at Darwin Prison. Could he indicate why this matter was not reported immediately and if his department has concluded its investigation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I confirm the details given by the honourable member for

Nightcliff. An investigation was carried out by the department at the prison as a result of funds being found to be missing. The exact details of the incident are not in my head. In order to give the honourable member a complete answer and to afford the person concerned a reasonable degree of protection, I propose to answer that question in writing today or tomorrow.

Fort Hill Wharf

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is it true that the consultant for stage 1 of the Fort Hill Wharf was not invited by the government to tender for the consultancy services for stage 2 and, if so, why?

ANSWER

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

Impact of Increased Cost of Aviation Fuel

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What impact has the recently announced 2¢ per litre increase in aviation fuel had on travel into and within the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is not just a question of the 2¢ impost on aviation gasoline. As a result of the so-called mini-budget, we have seen a complete abnegation once again of solemn promises and undertakings of the now federal government when it was seeking election by Northern Territorians. We were told that the cost of motor spirit would come down 3¢. What have we seen? We have seen an increase proposed by the removal of the equalisation subsidy scheme. Mr Speaker, in relation to the Cessna 210, 206 or Cherokee Lance aircraft which are the basic charter aircraft used around here, 2¢ a litre in aviation gasoline happens to correspond almost exactly to 2¢ a minute. With the larger twins, that can become 5¢ or 6¢ a minute. One must bear in mind in the Northern Territory the thousands of hours which are flown. Preliminary estimates are that it could cost the commuter in the Territory up to, or perhaps slightly in excess of, \$2m in a year. I do not know whether those figures are accurate. Certainly, they seem very high to me. The Department of Transport and Works has a fairly good indication of the hours flown in commercial planes. Many thousands of hours are involved. If one talks in terms of 2¢ to 6¢ a minute and relates that to thousands and thousands of hours flown in a year, an astronomical impost on the people of the Northern Territory in that order is not unbelievable.

Control of Marauding Stock in Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Would he undertake to get a definite policy thrashed out between the Conservation Commission and the police for the control of marauding, uncontrolled stock in the rural area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not really know what marauding stock are. I presume the honourable member for Tiwi refers to missing or straying stock. I am not sure that it is the responsibility of the police to care for wandering stock unless they cause some hazard to the public. Neither am I sure that it is the

responsibility of the Conservation Commission. I would have thought that the Department of Primary Production would have had somewhat more responsibility than either of the 2 authorities referred to by the honourable member. Frankly, I think it much less a responsibility of any government department than of the owners of the stock. The owners of such animals have a responsibility to fence in their stock properly. I suggest to the honourable member that the problem of wandering stock can be alleviated by people building adequate and proper fencing.

Fort Hill Wharf

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Does the bringing forward of Fort Hill Wharf stage 2 mean that strengthening of the dolphins on the iron ore wharf has been deferred?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask the honourable member to place the question on notice.

Fort Hill Wharf

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Does the government intend to take any legal action against persons or organisations resulting from changes in the design of Fort Hill Wharf?

No answer given.

Sadadeen Subdivision

Mr D.W. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

When are the blocks from Sadadeen stages 1 and 2 expected to be ready for turn off?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have that information immediately to hand. I will be happy to answer the honourable member as soon as I obtain the information.

TIO Policy

Mr VALE to TREASURER

My question relates to the issue by TIO of an insurance policy to a paraplegic to cover him to drive speed cars at Darwin speedway. Will TIO now adopt an open door policy on the issue of insurance coverage to disabled people to compete in other sporting events?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would like to make it clear to anyone who may have misunderstood the action of the TIO in issuing special coverage to a paraplegic to race at the speedway from time to time that that was a commercial action by the TIO. The office has the usual reinsurance in such coverage that it would have to cover any other person racing at a speedway. It is notoriously difficult to obtain coverage for activities such as buck-jumping and car racing which are prone to injure people. However, if one is prepared to pay the price when the insurance company assesses the relevant risks,

coverage can be obtained. The fact that the TIO commendably issued ordinary commercial coverage for a paraplegic to drive a car on a speedway does not mean that the TIO is in a position to insure the uninsurable. Under its charter, the TIO has to run on commercial insurance principles and it has to make a profit. I would like to make it clear that the TIO will be assessing risks which are presented to it from time to time in a normal commercial sense.

Power for Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Does the NT government subsidise power production in Nhulunbuy and, if so, under what conditions? Are those conditions being reviewed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to answer the question. I know that there is an arrangement between the Northern Territory and the producers of the electricity in respect of government needs. I am also aware of a subsidy arrangement but I cannot give the details. It would be better if I wrote to the honourable member later.

Causeway in Heavitree Gap Area

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the recent floods in Alice Springs and the inconvenience caused to residents of the farm area, will the government give urgent consideration to the need for an all-weather causeway across the Todd River in the Heavitree Gap area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during the floods, people were marooned on the other side of the river and unable to get into the city of Alice Springs. The Department of Transport and Works is looking at other sites for causeways further down from the Gap. That side of Alice Springs is growing quite extensively in terms of rural developments. I am not saying that, at this stage, the government will commit funds for such a project but we are certainly making that investigation.

Poker Machines in Clubs

Mr HARRIS to TREASURER

There has been considerable comment about the introduction of poker machines into clubs in the Northern Territory. What is the government's attitude towards this issue?

ANSWER

As the honourable member for Port Darwin says, the subject of poker machines being made available in clubs is very topical because the Australian Licensed Clubs Association is holding its annual meeting in Darwin at present. I addressed that organisation this morning and took the opportunity to point out that there had been no change whatsoever in this government's position or its policy towards poker machines: they will not be permitted outside the casinos.

The arguments that have been presented by the Licensed Clubs Association, and indeed the opposition, are full of holes. Clubs already have an array of opportunities open to them to raise funds internally, many of which they either do not really appreciate or have not taken advantage of. Many of these

are not available to clubs elsewhere in this country. I refer to such things as bingo. The Northern Territory is the only place in this country where there are no controls on bingo games as to size, frequency, jackpots etc, provided the club is an association approved by the Racing and Gaming Commission. Virtually all licensed clubs could be approved associations on those terms. Bingo is a game by which a great deal of money is raised in this country to assist charitable organisations and clubs. I do not think the Territory is anywhere near its saturation point there.

Under the legislation passed last year, those clubs can install approved gaming machines. Few of these are being installed at the moment. Again, I do not think clubs have explored sufficiently the market that is available to them for such machines but they generally require a degree of skill as well as a degree of chance in order to reach a score whereat one can obtain a prize. Again, the Northern Territory is the only place in Australia where this activity is permitted by law. All clubs can conduct major lotteries with permission, and they can conduct minor lotteries without permission. The old days when the chook raffle was an illegal event are certainly long gone in the Territory. As I mentioned in the Assembly before, the Territory is in the forefront in Australia in the reform of this kind of gambling. We make it legal. Another activity that clubs can engage in is calcuttas. There are no controls on beer ticket machines. All we want to know is how many they have and where they are installed. We do not want any information about returns or turnover. Clubs are also encouraged to sell Instant Sports Lotto tickets on an agency basis from Tattersals in Victoria. Unfortunately, the clubs have not made a great deal of use of that opportunity.

Some people in the clubs appear to think there is some easy way in which they can get over their financial problems. They believe poker machines would provide it. I can assure them that they are wrong, particularly in a town this size. It is not simply a matter of lining the machines along the walls, preparing the treasurer for the inflow of money and establishing a special committee to work out how to spend it. We pointed out to the Licensed Clubs Association that there are more clubs per head of population in the Northern Territory than anywhere else in the country. Indeed, we have almost twice as many clubs per adult person as New South Wales, which is regarded as a state with many clubs. Per head of population, we have 4 times as many clubs as some states in Australia. It is no wonder some of the clubs have difficulty. I have someone on my staff who is a member of 7 clubs in Darwin. If any of those 7 clubs believes that it will receive substantial revenue from such a member, it is joking. Such people are almost phantom members so far as significant contributions to the revenue of the club are concerned. I can assure honourable members that many people in Darwin are members of at least 2 and, in many cases, more clubs. They cannot be counted upon as normal contributors who will drop in every evening on the way home from work to spend a few dollars, be it on a poker machine, over the bar or however. The government has not changed its policy. Unlike the ALP, we do not favour the proliferation of poker machines throughout the Northern Territory and it will not occur as long as this government is in office.

Prison Farm for Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When can the citizens of central Australia and the people involved in the provision of correctional services there expect the establishment of a prison farm?

ANSWER

The honourable member's question is timely because the matter of another

prison institution in the central Australian area has been under active review for quite some time. The government committed itself to the establishment of a prison farm in the Alice Springs area some 12 or 18 months ago and wheels were put in motion to identify sites and look at how it might be done. During that period, the prison population has dropped off considerably. That is a phenomenon for which we have no explanation. Neither do we have any expectation that numbers will rise subsequently to the stage where they will justify the establishment of a new institution. I can advise the honourable member that the matter is under constant review because it is one that the government treats very seriously. Overcrowded prisons are not desirable under any circumstances, nor is it desirable to build an institution which will not have anybody to go into it. I will advise the honourable member of any change in the prison population or trends in the numbers of people being committed to prison. The government would act quickly to rectify any problem situation.

Community Facilities at Sanderson High School

Mr VALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Will he advise if he is satisfied with the community facilities which are to be provided by the construction of the Sanderson High School?

ANSWER

I certainly am. I do not have a list before me of the community facilities which are being incorporated in the design for the Sanderson High School. However, I can assure honourable members that they are indeed quite extensive. These days schools are designed for more community use than ever before. We have taken particular note of the wishes of citizens in the Sanderson area which have been expressed to the government about particular requirements as they see them. We have not been able to meet every request for facilities to be included in the design of the school. For example, a swimming pool was asked for and we felt that, at this stage, we had to say no. We believe that the education dollar should be used for more direct education facilities than a swimming pool. We pointed out to the community that there was substantial land available at the high school site and that negotiations could continue with other parties, such as local government, should it so desire on the subject of the installation of a community pool. However, other facilities more directly related to a school - an oval, tennis courts, car-parking, toilets, possibly a library - have been taken into consideration. I believe the new high school, which we hope will open its doors at the beginning of the 1985 school year, will be the Territory's most modern school in design and its most progressive by incorporating all the reasonably practical suggestions that have been put forward to us by the community in that area.

Northern Suburbs Schools

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Could he advise the Assembly what interim arrangements will be made to handle the expected overload at Casuarina and Dripstone High Schools in the period leading up to the opening of Sanderson High School and whether any programs need to be scrapped or curtailed?

ANSWER

I am certainly not aware of any programs that would be scrapped or curtailed. In fact, a small amount of additional accommodation can be provided at other high schools. I cannot be specific without obtaining more details. However, other high schools in the Darwin area will be able to accommodate the small bubble, as it were, in students prior to the opening of Sanderson

High School. It had not been intended to build the Sanderson High School within the foreseeable future but that the students from that area would be accommodated at other high schools in Darwin, some of which have declining populations because their feeder areas are getting older and older. However, there will be no difficulty at all in meeting the needs of Darwin citizens in that regard.

Prison Farm for Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

My question relates to the answer to a previous question on a prison farm in central Australia. Will he give an indication of the numbers of prisoners that, in his view, would justify the establishment of such a prison farm?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can do that but I would need to refer to the department for statistical data and advice. I would prefer to answer by letter. It is something I would prefer not to do off the top of my head.

Federal Deficit

Mr D.W. COLLINS to TREASURER

Is he aware of an article on page 2 of the Weekend Australian titled, 'The story of the Treasury and the Exocet missile', in which it is claimed that yet a third estimate by federal Treasury on the budget deficit gives a figure something like \$8000m instead of the much touted \$9600m?

ANSWER

Like all interested Australians, I am aware of the particular article. As I hope most Australians have, I have taken renewed interest in the subject of deficits since they seem to be touted around in the breeze so regularly and so firmly these days as an excuse not to carry out former commitments. As honourable members are aware, less than 3 months ago, we were advised that the coming financial year would produce a federal deficit of \$9600m. I spoke earlier in the Assembly on this and I am pleased to note that the article the honourable member refers to seems to confirm the points I made. Predicting a deficit so far away would seem to be a very imperfect sort of science which would produce very rubbery figures, to take a cliché from another place. The factors impinging on a deficit, particularly a federal deficit, are such things as growth in the economy, the inflation rate, world oil prices, levels of unemployment and the effect they have on the federal deficit by way of welfare payments, and wage increases. That, of course, is a great subject in the community at present: what wage increases the country can afford over the remainder of this year, let alone the balance of the next financial year. It demonstrates how the deficit factor of the federal budget is influenced by a whole series of imponderables. By way of example, the federal salaries' bill for the public service is \$4300m a year. For every 1% increase in national wages that is granted, there is a \$43m impact on the federal budget and on the federal deficit. The federal government could not tell you exactly how much will be granted in the next round of wage increases for which cases are being heard at present by the Arbitration Commission, let alone subsequent increases that may be applied for over the period from Christmas to the middle of next year. Predicting deficits 13 months away is a very imperfect science. Mr Howard is asking the federal Treasurer to release much more information than has been released to date on how the \$9600m figure was arrived at. Mr Howard suggests that the figure, without any action being taken by the federal government since it came to office, could well have been \$8000m and not \$9600m. Earlier this year, the figure was \$4200m, it then rose to \$9600m and it is now being suggested that perhaps it is \$8000m. It is all over the place.

One thing we can be very sure about is that it will continue to be used and there will be further crystal-balling by all and sundry. It is crystal-balling whether we are talking about Treasury's figures or John Howard's or those of any other expert who claims some knowledge of the subject such as the academics who are called upon from time to time to put forward their views, As mentioned in the article that the honourable member for Alice Springs has brought to our attention, John Howard said, and this is yet another guess, that it will be in the vicinity of \$8000m. Obviously, no one really knows and no one should be game enough to state absolutely what the deficit will be. However, I am sure that we will have the thing touted many times over the next 12 months as a reason why the federal government cannot fulfil the promises it made so recently.

Sale of Beef to South Korea

Mr VALE to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he advise the implications for Northern Territory cattle producers and

Northern Territory abattoirs if South Korea obtains beef from New Zealand instead of Australia as proposed?

ANSWER

I believe that all honourable members will be concerned at reports in the press last night and this morning that the Korean beef importers would not purchase any more beef from Australia in retaliation for Australia's attitude towards Korean investment in a Queensland gas project. As a matter of urgency, I raised this matter with the department this morning because I believe that the Northern Territory's position is such that we cannot afford to lose any markets where we have our foot in the door. I was particularly keen to obtain a briefing from the department. If South Korea reduces its purchases of Australian beef, the Northern Territory will be affected. However, the effect is likely to have more serious long-term rather than immediate implications. At present, the beef market is relatively buoyant. However, it is subject to notorious cyclical fluctuations. The implications of the loss of established markets are particularly serious when market conditions are declining. In such situations, the loss of overseas market outlets may have marked and serious effects on overall Australian supply-demand relationships.

In 1981-82, South Korea imported only 10 t of Northern Territory beef. During the same year, it imported 5466 t from South Australia. A proportion of the South Australian shipment is likely to have been processed from Northern Territory cattle. During the past 2 years, the quantity of Australian beef imported by Korea has increased sharply from 6079 t in 1980-81 to 54 011 t in 1981-82. Shipments during the current financial year are running at levels above those in the preceding year. Korea is now Australia's third largest beef customer after the USA and Japan. Although the South Koreans have specific carcass requirements, a number of Northern Territory pastoral districts are capable of producing the required carcass type. Consequently, the Northern Territory beef industry's potential is seriously threatened by the foreshadowed closure of the South Korean market.

Frances Bay Drive

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Could he indicate why work has stopped on the road linking the Frances Bay connector road with Reichardt Road, Winnellie?

ANSWER

I indicated in a press release that that road would become Tiger Brennan Drive. A short section is called Frances Bay Drive at present. The proposal is that that will extend to Palmerston. We are looking at about 15 years lead time to when the population of Palmerston grows to such an extent that there will be a need for a major connecting highway. It was decided that, when the first contract was let, the road would be left so that the parts across the swamp areas could settle and that further work would be picked up in the next contract stage. I am not sure of the details of when that will be undertaken. I will obtain further information and provide it to the honourable member later.

Northern Territory Aerial Work

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is the minister aware that it has been reported today that Northern Territory Aerial Work is about to terminate its operation in the NT? Is the minister further aware that Airlines of Northern Australia is continuing to operate at quite substantial losses and can he advise whether the closure of

NTAW will lead to any changes in services offered by Airlines of Northern Australia?

ANSWER

I understand that Northern Territory Aerial Work presently holds the Commonwealth aerial surveillance contract in the Northern Territory which expires on 30 June 1983. I discussed this matter recently with the general manager of ATI, Mr Yates, and he advised me that Airlines of Northern Australia will again lose money during the current financial year but its losses have been reduced substantially to around \$0.5m. He indicated that, as a result, all he can foreshadow at present is that there may be some changes in respect to the Katherine to Darwin service and that will involve further negotiations with Tillair. Those changes will be picked up by Tillair. It is only a possibility at this stage.

Soil Conservation Techniques in Douglas-Daly Farming Region

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he assure me that adequate attention is being paid to soil conservation techniques in the Douglas-Daly farming region?

ANSWER

The honourable member gave me advance notice of this question. The answer that I have been provided with by the Department of Primary Production, ADMA and the Soil Conservation Unit is not a long one but is fairly comprehensive. I am aware of the potential for soil erosion in the Douglas-Daly project farm area. I am pleased to advise the honourable member that it is being actively combated by the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority and its project farmers. Prevention rather than cure is the principle being pursued.

ADMA has obtained the services of the Soil Conservation Unit of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission to plan a soil conservation strategy for the region. Officers of the Soil Conservation Unit were active in the area last year and are continuing their excellent work this dry season. Up to date, they have surveyed most of the country in the area and the balance of the cleared country will be surveyed by the end of this dry season. They have prepared plans for soil conserving structures for all or part of each of the 6 project farms and the Douglas-Daly research farm, and they have supervised the construction of diversion banks, contour banks and waterways on part of 5 of the farms and on the Douglas-Daly research farm. Further construction to protect a much larger area will take place this dry season. It is anticipated that all construction work on the 6 project farms will be completed by the 1984 dry season.

You would be aware, Mr Speaker, that soil conservation does not rely on engineering structures alone for its success. An integral part of all successful soil conservation is surface management of the soil. This involves minimum tillage of the soil with a view to retaining large amounts of crop stubble on the soil surface. I am also pleased to say that the Department of Primary Production will commence direct drilling or zero tillage trials in the Douglas-Daly area this coming wet season. Its principal benefit is in the reduction in soil lost through wind and water erosion to very low levels. I further understand that the Soil Conservation Unit consults regularly with ADMA and the project farmers on a range of issues related to soil conservation on the farms. It also confers with other groups who may be involved with the program; for example, the Roads Division of the Department of Transport and Works. I am happy to say that I believe adequate attention is being given to

soil conservation strategies, techniques and their implementation in the Douglas-Daly area.

Northern Territory Aerial Work

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I would like to ask in another way the question that I previously asked the honourable Minister for Transport and Works. He may have misunderstood what I was trying to ask. Is it true that the pilots employed by Northern Territory Aerial Works are likely to receive termination notices in the next few days?

ANSWER

I am advised by the same general manager that NTAW intends to issue retrenchment notices to some 7 to 10 pilots. I do not know if the figure has been determined. That was today. Those retrenchments will take effect at the end of June. If the surveillance contract is extended, I am advised that the notices will be rescinded. I do not think a greater effort could have been made to try to influence the Commonwealth Department of Transport to extend these contracts. It is a matter that has been going on for many months. The Chief Minister made representations to the federal government, as we have done through our own office. Mr Speaker, I have no answers. Representations have been made by the Northern Territory government and we will have to see what happens in the next day or so.

TIO Insurance against Flood Damage

Mr BELL to TREASURER

In the wake of the recent floods in central Australia, has the Territory Insurance Office received any requests for quotes for flood insurance protection and, if so, has he any details?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no details before me of any approaches that have been made by Alice Springs residents to the TIO for flood coverage. I suspect that there would have been some approaches following the unfortunate reminder Alice Springs' people had recently that many of them in that town are, indeed, within zones where their homes could be flooded. Certainly, we would encourage them all to find out fully, from their own insurance companies or from the Territory Insurance Company, what coverage is available to them and at what price. I point out that flood coverage probably will vary from place to place or zone to zone as the likelihood of flooding is assessed on each individual property. I do not have any details on how many people have made approaches for such information.

Palm Leaf Beetle Control

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

What is the present position with regard to the spread of the parasite that was introduced to control the palm leaf beetle?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I undertake to provide an answer for the honourable member in tomorrow morning's session.

Electric Fencing in Douglas-Daly Area

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Is it true that a substantial amount of electric fencing was erected in the Douglas-Daly farms area prior to the survey being carried out? Is it also true that, now that the survey has been carried out, the fencing has to be relocated at a cost of about \$100 000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is my understanding that there is a considerable amount of electric fencing in the area. I have no details at the moment as to whether the fence is in the right place or whether a cost is to be incurred in order to move it. I will undertake to obtain this information for the member and let him know as soon as possible.

Northern Territory Aerial Work Standards

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Does the government require that Northern Territory Aerial Work maintain a standard of service based on RPT requirements for the provision of aerial medical services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would question the honourable member's reference to RPT service. The Aerial Medical Service does not provide an RPT service. It provides an aero-medical and evacuation service to those remote communities that are in need of that type of service. RPT routes are allocated by the Northern Territory government to those charter operators who are willing to pioneer routes over various areas of the Territory. Of course, this is of financial benefit to themselves. Her question is somewhat ambiguous in that she referred to the Aerial Medical Service having RPT routes.

Proposed Berry Springs Zoo

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Can he give me details of the present position regarding the establishment of the Berry Springs zoo?

ANSWER

I can give the honourable member some information. The honourable member for Sanderson raised the issue of the Berry Springs zoo last Thursday. She asked if a conceptual plan is available for the zoo. Mr Speaker, if one of the attendants could distribute these papers to honourable members, I would be grateful.

In answer to the honourable member for Tiwi's question, at the moment a site office has been established there. The boundary line has been totally cleared. Preliminary documentation of the proposed water supply and sewerage system has been received from consulting engineers. A dirt entrance road has been established between the Darwin River Road and the entrance fence. The reservoir earthworks have been completed. Three bores have been sunk to an average of 30 m and one is activated with a pump and a tank has been attached. Two km of service road have been formed inside the zoo and tenders for the reticulation of water, the installation of a sewerage system and the erection of a boundary fence will be called for during the 1983-84 year. I believe

honourable members will accept that a fair amount of work has been done on the establishment of the zoo. The Conservation Commission would be very pleased to receive any comments that honourable members might have to make on the conceptual plan that it has arranged. I have found the commission very conscious of the public's views on things. I am sure that, if honourable members wish to make a contribution on that, the Conservation Commission would be only too pleased to hear from them.

Northern Territory Aerial Work Standards

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Does the Northern Territory government require that Northern Territory Aerial Work maintain its aero-medical aircraft to RPT standards?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a certain level of airworthiness is required by the Commonwealth in relation to the licensing of any aircraft that is to be used in the Northern Territory.

Sale of Housing Commission Houses in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Has any department in the Northern Territory government reached any agreement with Nabalco which would enable Housing Commission houses in Nhulunbuy to be sold to tenants?

ANSWER

I have recited the problems involved in this matter for the benefit of this Assembly on several occasions. To the best of my knowledge, the Northern Territory government has still not reached an agreement with Nabalco that would enable us to sell Housing Commission homes. I have asked the Housing Commission and the Department of Law to expedite this matter on a number of occasions. Our people have used their best endeavours to resolve this matter. Nonetheless, it seems that achieving agreement with the various parties involved in what I think is called the Gove joint venture is an almost impossible task. To the best of my knowledge, it is not possible at the moment for us to sell the houses otherwise we would be doing so, as previously indicated.

Public Bus Services

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS.

Can he give an assurance that public bus services will not be curtailed as a consequence of the review of the Darwin bus services which is currently being undertaken?

ANSWER

There was a very interesting item on the ABC this morning that said that bus services in Darwin would deteriorate as a result of proposed changes by the Department of Transport and Works. The secretary of the TWU accused the department yesterday of becoming involved in a political decision over the future of the Darwin bus service. He said that a letter circulated last week to drivers from the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Transport and Works stated that the present costs of subsidised public transport would be better spent on other community requirements.

Mr Speaker, for the benefit of members, I will read that letter into the public record. This letter was sent to all drivers. It states the government's position. It was discussed with me before the deputy secretary of the department sent it out. It was sent out on 23 May and it reads:

*I am writing to people employed in the Darwin Bus Service to let everyone know of the problems which we have and the actions which we intend to take. We estimate in this financial year the bus service will cost the government (the community) some \$3.15m. This figure is the difference between the costs of providing the service and the revenue we collect. The difference has been growing each year despite our efforts to hold costs down and to attract customers. The cost is equivalent to the payment by the government of \$1.73 per trip for every person carried by the bus service during the year. Most public bus services are subsidised but the average level in Australia is equivalent to around 60¢ per passenger carried.*

*While there are some reasons of location and city development which increase our costs, I think you will agree that we are not doing well by comparison with other bus systems. I do not believe that we can expect the government or the general community to continue to pay out this amount of money. All governments are now faced with constraints on available funds and the level of subsidy to the bus system reduces the money which could be better spent on other community requirements.*

*We have already commenced looking at the costs of servicing and repairing our buses and of administration of the bus service. Next month we intend to start looking at different ways of running the services we now provide. Salaries, wages and related costs make up more than 70% of our costs and this is an area which we will have to examine closely. This is not to be read as a threat that those currently employed will lose their jobs as a result of the review. However, it may require non-replacement of people in present positions or changes in working arrangements. I would like to arrange meetings with small groups over the next few weeks to discuss what we are doing and to find out your views of ways of providing services to the community at lower cost. If you wish to discuss the matter personally, please contact David Smith on 89 6390 to arrange a suitable time.*

*Yours sincerely,  
N. Gordon.*

Mr Speaker, it is not the government's intention to reduce services but to look very closely at the costs and methods of operating the service.

#### Northern Territory Aerial Work

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he able to add anything to comments made by the Minister for Transport and Works regarding the termination of the contract with Northern Territory Aerial Work by the Commonwealth government?

ANSWER

In fact, I had a conversation with the general manager of operations for Ansett Transport Industries, Mr Alan Yates, 5 minutes before coming back to the Assembly so probably my knowledge of these events is somewhat more fresh than that of the Minister for Transport and Works. I notice that he indicated that my office had been lobbying the federal government very strongly for some time in relation to the renewal of the aerial surveillance contract with

Northern Territory Aerial Work, which is an Ansett Transport Industries subsidiary. I thought that the honourable member for Millner was going to ask me a question on the matter but apparently he has decided that discretion is the better part of valour. This is a matter of federal relations, an area within my portfolio.

I have been making representations to the federal government in respect of aerial surveillance since 1977. Apparently, the federal government has decided that it will not renew this contract and 32 people, not all of them pilots, are about to be served with redundancy notices. These notices must go out because the company will go into liquidation virtually unless this aerial surveillance contract is renewed.

We made representations to the previous federal government along the same lines: that Nomad aircraft were specified in the original tenders yet, on renewal of tenders some time ago, no mention was made that any particular preference would be given to Nomad aircraft. Northern Territory Aerial Work took over the Nomad aircraft purchased previously by Northern Airlines to do the same job. Northern Territory Aerial Work is now facing the end of this contract at 30 June. It is required to give notice on agreements it has with the airline pilots and the rest of its employees. The only person who can ensure that these notices of redundancy are withdrawn is the federal Minister for Transport, Mr Peter Morris. I guess that, if he wants Territorians to pay 40% of the cost of a railroad, then we are unlikely to see these notices withdrawn.

Mr Speaker, aerial surveillance is necessary around the Northern Territory coastline. What we are now seeing is the encroachment of companies from Western Australia and Queensland to do this work over the Northern Territory. This company, which at least employs Northern Territory people, is about to have its contract terminated. The Territory government supports that company with Department of Health contracts. Obviously, Airlines of Northern Australia and Northern Territory Aerial Work, as far as Ansett Airlines and its shareholders are concerned, are virtually one and the same thing in regard to the return of profits to the group. Fortunately, the profit haemorrhage of Airlines of Northern Australia has been slowed down although there is still a loss on the routes. I understand that seat occupancy ratings averaged 66% over all routes for the first time last week. Airlines of Northern Australia is starting to look a bit healthier, but the whole thing will be undermined if NTAW loses its surveillance contract. Territorians will lose jobs.

The honourable member for Millner is trying to sheet responsibility for this contract onto the Minister for Transport and Works, but the contract will be cancelled by the federal government. It has nothing to do with the Northern Territory. Perhaps he could get the boneless wonder down in Canberra, Senator 'Territory Watchdog' Ted Robertson, to ask a question of the minister in the Senate about this particular contract. Perhaps a question could be asked in Canberra about this contract because that is the appropriate place for it to be asked. It has nothing to do with the Territory government. We have been fighting to save these jobs for months.

Mr SPEAKER: I request honourable members not to use terms which can be taken as slightly offensive about people who are not in the Chamber.

Victoria River Downs

Mr DOOLAN to MINISTER for LANDS

Might the Kerry Packer group purchase Victoria River Downs Station at some future date?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is impossible for me to prognosticate in that regard. I do not know whether the Kerry Packer group will come back in respect of Victoria River Downs or not. I suspect that, after an inspection of Victoria River Downs Station, Mr Packer found some things not quite as he thought they might be. It is difficult for me to say because my conversation with him was not lengthy. He indicated that, at this stage, the company did not propose to go ahead with the purchase. I should confirm for the benefit of honourable members that the government had in its hands at the time that I made the statement to the Assembly an application signed by the Hooker organisation for consent to the transfers. The government moved on the matter only when it had a written application for consent. So far as the terms of whatever contracts existed between the 2 parties went, I know nothing of them. I have not seen them and I do not believe it is common for copies of such contracts to be received by the government. It may be that Packer will come back. He certainly expressed a great deal of interest in the Territory. He said to me that he intended to make Newcastle Waters the showplace station of the Territory and that we would certainly not regret his becoming a pastoral lessee in this area. Only time will tell.

Dingoes in Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What is the Conservation Commission doing about the increasing numbers of marauding dingoes in the rural area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did not realise that we had marauding dingoes in the rural area. I believe that they have been present there. I am aware that the Conservation Commission has examined ways to deal with the problem. However, it has advised me that it has certain difficulties in handling the problem in the rural area. In other parts of the Territory, it has been able to use baiting programs to reduce the number of dingoes which have had a serious impact on stock and calves in certain areas. The option is not available to it in the rural area. The commission has found also that the use of firearms for control of dingoes is not the most appropriate way to go about it. I will ask the Conservation Commission to be more specific about what it is doing so that I can advise the honourable member that a positive approach is being taken rather than a negative one. However, I would make the point that dingo control in an area such as that covered by her electorate is not easy. The government is conscious of the problem and keen to assist in any way it can to keep the numbers down.

Yirara College Principals

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware that Yirara College has had 4 different principals in the last 6 months?

ANSWER

I appreciate that there have been some changes at Yirara College over the last 6 months. I do not receive details of actual numbers of changes of principals in our educational institutions around the Northern Territory. If the honourable member assures me there have been 4 changes, I accept that.

Wildman River Station

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for LANDS

What was the purchase price for Wildman River Station when it was acquired recently by the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have that figure in my head at the moment. The purchase was effected by tender 6 to 8 months ago. I think it was obtained from the mortgagee in possession at the time. I am pretty sure it was not at auction. The Territory government, of course, wanted to purchase Wildman River Station for several reasons. It has areas that are suitable for agriculture and horticulture. It has areas that are suitable for preservation in terms of conservation and it has areas that are suitable for recreation. Naturally, with so much of the land around Darwin especially, and elsewhere in the Northern Territory, locked up it is one of the objectives of the government to provide as much access to recreational land as is possible for the people of the Top End and of Darwin in particular. I understand that if it has not done so already, the Conservation Commission will shortly make available to the public certain areas of Wildman River Station for recreational pursuits. I believe also that an area may be set aside for safari purposes. A safari operator, Wimray Safaris, had certain rights from the former owners which were registered against the title by way of caveat. It seems equitable for the government to recognise those interests. Whilst I cannot guarantee the accuracy of this answer, I think that the purchase price was in the order of \$300 000. If the honourable member for Nightcliff wishes to pursue the matter further, she has only to drop me a line.

Katherine Water Quality

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I ask this question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. What is the government doing to overcome the problem of water quality in Katherine?

ANSWER

Some complaints have been received from residents of Katherine about discoloured water in the town supply since treated water from the Donkey Camp pool was introduced into the system. Our investigation has found that the water treatment plant in the reticulation system is not the source of the problem. Discolouration appears to occur in domestic pipes between the meter and household taps and is more prevalent in galvanised iron pipes. At this stage of the investigation, it seems that a scale formed in the pipes by the previous bore supply has combined with the iron in the pipes and is now being broken down by the soft water from the Donkey Camp supply. This causes discolouration of the water but definitely does not present any health threat. The problem is most noticeable first thing in the morning after the water has lain dormant in the pipes overnight. The discolouration disappears after about 10 litres of water has passed through the tap. Two hundred sample bottles have been distributed around Katherine to get public assistance in resolving this problem. Fifty of those bottles have already been returned to chemists from the Department of Transport and Works, who are in Katherine at present analysing the samples to try to find a way to eliminate the problem. The honourable member can be assured that the Department of Transport and Works will continue its efforts to ensure that the water is brought back to a satisfactory standard.

Aerial Medical Services in Darwin Region

Mrs O'NEIL to MINSITER for HEALTH

If Northern Territory Aerial Work withdraws from the provision of aerial medical services in the Darwin region, will the government replace those services with ones provided by air charter operators?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, until such time as provision is made by NTAW, through its major company ATI, to withdraw its services, I am unable to answer that question.

Jabiru Town Development Authority

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

What changes, if any, are proposed in the operations of the Jabiru Town Development Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I attended a meeting of the Jabiru Town Advisory Council 2 or 3 weeks ago with a view to discussing any matters of interest that members of that council might have wanted to raise with me. It appears that the Jabiru Town Advisory Council is functioning pretty well and has the Jabiru Town Development Authority firmly under control. It really did not have any great problems to discuss with me. The one area it wanted to discuss, aside from the provision of a motel and camping ground in the town which it seems to consider a desirable objective, was the progress of Jabiru towards further local government, particularly bearing in mind the apparent decision of the federal government to suspend any activity in terms of opening new uranium mines. Jabiru, as members would appreciate, was originally planned to accommodate people who would be working at the Jabiluka mine not so far away. It would be further away than Ranger but it was expected that, when Jabiluka came into production, the size of Jabiru would more than double. The provision of so much housing would be an enormous benefit to the Territory and Australian construction industry.

Apparently, the Sydney Morning Herald carried an article this morning indicating that new or fresh contracts for the sale of uranium have been approved by the federal government. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this. The contracts relate to Ranger and Queensland Mines or ERA and Queensland Mines. One wonders, if these contracts can be approved, where the federal Minister for Resources and Energy stands because he said that there was no market for uranium and ...

Mr B. Collins: Don't you want them approved?

Mr EVERINGHAM: I am delighted to have them approved, Mr Speaker. We are just examining the rationale behind the various statements that we have heard. We have been told that there is no market for uranium and yet 2 new contracts have now been approved. That is terrific. Obviously, if there are 2 new contracts out there, there could well be more. I am wondering why approval for Jabiluka to go ahead was withdrawn by the government within days of the federal election. I am wondering what the hold up is in relation to approval for Koongarra to get out into the market place. As we know, the majority of the traditional owners there want to develop the project. I understand that they were asked by the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Clyde Holding, to defer any action for a period of 3 months. I hope that these signs

of approval of contracts with existing mines, which means, I would have thought, the expansion of those mines, presages a turnaround in federal policy. Hopefully, we may shortly see the injection of \$1000m into the Territory economy and the consequential growth and jobs that that would create. Hopefully, too, that will mean that Jabiru will grow to a much greater level of population.

Mr Speaker, at present, Jabiru has a population of about 1200 people. I have asked the town advisory council to come forward, in consultation with the Jabiru Town Development Authority, with a proposal to the government for local government if that is what they wish. It is now up to them to come forward with this proposal. When it is formulated - hopefully in consultation with myself, as the minister responsible for the Jabiru Town Development Authority and the advisory council - I will put it forward to Cabinet. We will see where it goes from there, Mr Speaker. It may be that it will decide not to do anything. At the moment, it has carte blanche to come up with a proposal for its own future government provided it can secure the agreement of the development authority which, of course, largely represents ERA at this time.

#### World Demand for Uranium

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Has he any information pertaining to the federal government's and the opposition's claim that the world demand for uranium is now declining?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, what a remarkable coincidence that is. The honourable Chief Minister has just been advising the Assembly and the public, through Hansard and the press, that there is a great demand for uranium throughout the world. The honourable Chief Minister has just cited the Sydney Morning Herald as a paper which produced an article on this very matter. By an equally extraordinary coincidence, the Australian of 31 May 1983 carried a very similar article. Of course, both of these articles bear out the very thing that the Chief Minister and I have been saying for the last several months: that it is nonsense to suggest that there is no market for uranium throughout the world.

Let us look at the headlines: 'Looming US uranium shortage spells good news for miners'. Of course it would, if we did not have a federal Labor government. Nonetheless, let us have a look at the facts. The article goes on: "'For the first time in decades, the consumption of uranium in the United States is outrunning domestic supply", one of the major sources of information in the uranium mining industry said. This trend is likely to accelerate as a great deal of US capacity has been taken out of production and is unlikely to be recommissioned'. These are the very things that we have been saying, not only in respect of the United States, but also in respect of the diversification program in Canada. It continues: 'US consumption in 1982 was 9483 t of uranium oxide while production was 30% lower than in 1981 - 11 751 t. Consumption is rising steadily and will reach 13 793 t next year. But, in the meantime, production is continuing to fall and will drop to only 5445 t next year. The US has a stockpile until 1988, when inventories will amount to 2 years' supply. The country is expected then to become a major new importer at this point'.

Mr Speaker, as I said before, this government has been trying to get the message through to the Commonwealth that there is a very significant market for Northern Territory uranium overseas. It is nonsense to suggest otherwise. The mere fact that 2 further export contracts have been agreed to by the Commonwealth is indicative of that. We are talking about the requirements of major utilities which will use this resource in energy for the next several

decades. The facts speak for themselves. Firstly, consumption in the major industrialised countries that have any uranium resources at all is slipping beyond production in those same countries. Korea is having to go to Canada whereas, logically, in transport terms, it would come to Australia. Canada itself is trying to diversify through companies like Denison which is a Canadian parent company. It is anxious to get into uranium production here to diversify its sources. Whilst that major Canadian company is following that line, Korea is turning to Canada to try and get the resources necessary to warm its homes, cool its buildings and provide refrigeration, light and power for the various essentials of an emerging industrial nation.

Clearly, there is a set of circumstances of increasing use and decreasing production of uranium oxide by these industrialised nations. Surely, it is a matter of conscience, if not common sense, for this country to provide those resources to overseas buyers. In these circumstances, for the federal government to try to pretend - not only to the people of the Northern Territory but to all Australians - that this very valuable and vital world resource does not exist here, is a classic example of the behaviour of the ostrich.

#### Yirara College Staffing

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to his previous answer in relation to senior staffing at Yirara College. Does he find the rate of turnover that I mentioned in that question unacceptable in a Northern Territory school and will he undertake to investigate it?

ANSWER

I do not think it is simply a matter of finding the rate of turnover unacceptable. I would suggest that most staff turnover in schools is detrimental. One of the big problems in the education system in the Northern Territory is that we have a turnover rate which requires us to recruit between 300 and 400 teachers every year. We even have to recruit headmasters.

Teachers in the Northern Territory have relatively good conditions of service and remuneration. However, as in many areas of the community, some people accept employment in the Northern Territory but do not really intend to stay. That is one of the advantages of living in a free country. A person can come to the Northern Territory and work and, when he wants to, return to where he came from. We will be stuck with that until such time as we can build a greater permanent workforce and put through our own educational institutions, like the Darwin Community College, many more Territorians who are likely to stay here for some years. Only then will we have the benefit of continuity that stems from Territorians being trained in our institutions and making their lives here.

I do not think it is a question of whether I am satisfied with the rate of turnover. Any turnover rate is detrimental and it is unfortunate. But it is also a fact of life, and it will occur from time to time. In some institutions in the Northern Territory, the teacher turnover rate is much greater than in others. I guess there are quite a number of reasons for it. One or two institutions are almost notorious for staff not wishing to stay there for any great length of time. Others do not have such a high turnover rate. However, it is a subject that we have in our minds almost all the time. The Northern Territory Teaching Service Commissioner is constantly looking into the question of teachers, their conditions, their complaints, their reasons for resignation and ways to recruit people who are likely to stay a little longer than others have in the past. Certainly, we will continue to investigate those avenues.

Mentally-ill Prisoners at Darwin Prison

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

Could he advise the current position with the psychiatric proposals for Darwin Prison? Will the prison officers be consulted before they are implemented? Could he advise particularly as to the arrangements that will be made in respect of the medical staff provided for the facility?

ANSWER

Discussions are taking place with officers of the Department of Health and also with representatives of the Prison Officers Association. At this stage, it is uncertain what the attitude of the Prison Officers Association is. A meeting was held during this week with Dr Chalmers, Mr Donnelly and members of the association in relation to the problem. This morning, the Minister for Community Development approached me with a view to setting up a meeting between ourselves and officers of both those organisations to see what arrangements can be made to satisfy the Prison Officers Association. The situation is that a couple of points are still outstanding. One of them is the query of the Prison Officers Association concerning a mentally-ill prisoner in the prison hospital. An occupational therapist would be on duty most of the day but not for the full 24 hours. Very little occupational therapy would be required at night except for an emergency. If prisoners were really sick, they would be in Darwin Hospital. There are some problems. We are trying to talk them out. Apart from being mentally-ill, a person might have a heart problem or a blood disorder. If he had a particular problem, he would go to hospital. It is a very complicated issue. We are trying to solve it.

Yesterday, I received a letter of reply from Dr Cornwall, who is the Minister for Health in South Australia, about our request for South Australia to look after those types of people. The letter was encouraging. At this stage, it is being assessed by the department. Hopefully, by midday, I will have a brief regarding the contents of that letter and whether our chronically mentally-ill people can be placed in South Australia. The Northern Territory government has taken all the steps that it possibly can to overcome this problem. As I said earlier, discussions are to take place between the Minister for Community Development, myself and officers in regard to the problems that the prison officers, and presumably some of the nursing staff, are having with the implementation of this proposal.

Facilities at Katherine for RAAF Squadron

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he advise me on progress in the development of facilities at Katherine relating to the relocation of the RAAF 75 Technical Fighter Squadron?

ANSWER

Honourable members will be aware that the squadron of RAAF Mirage fighters is scheduled to be withdrawn from Butterworth Air Base Malaysia by 1987. Developments at Katherine involve not only the upgrading of Tindal to a standard necessary for F18 operations but also infrastructure in Katherine such as roads, housing and an increased capacity for water supply. The construction phase for the project at the air base would take about 2 years, preceded by a period of assessment, planning and decision making. On 18 April 1983, the Prime Minister gave me an assurance that the Commonwealth government was pressing ahead with investigations into the feasibility of using Tindal air base. He said that, in the context of the forthcoming budget, the Commonwealth government expected to consider a specific proposal from the

Joint Government Consultative Committee. The Prime Minister added that if in the Commonwealth government's opinion the costs appeared excessive, alternatives would need to be examined. If the Commonwealth government gives the project budget priority, an announcement could be made later this year. Because of its magnitude, the project would then have to undergo scrutiny by the federal Public Works Committee. It appears that this would be unlikely to occur before the second half of 1984 because of the backlog of projects that the committee has to look at.

One hopes that some urgency might be attached to this project if the federal government takes the decision in the budgetary context and that a hearing before the Public Works Committee may be scheduled at an earlier date than it otherwise might were it considered to be just a routine project. At present, it is very difficult to get any firm indication from the federal government of what will be happening with that project. I think a firm decision is unlikely before the budget.

Housing Commission Allocations

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HOUSING

I refer to his statement yesterday which did not indicate the number of unsuccessful applicants for out-of-turn allocation accommodation who are living in inadequate and socially undesirable circumstances. Will he undertake to advise on the numbers of families and people who are involved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I give that undertaking.

Mining Leases in Pine Creek Area

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Concern has been expressed about the length of time involved in obtaining mining leases in the Pine Creek-Mt Wells area. Is he aware of this delay and that, in many instances, prospectors and small companies are being refused leases in this area?

ANSWER

I have heard the gentlemen who have re-established the Small Miners Association - I am not sure what the exact title is now - mention figures of up to 4 years. That is distinctly possible. I am aware of a number of applications for mining licences in that area that have been outstanding for some time. One must look at the reasons. It is not necessarily inactivity on the part of the department. In that area, there are a large number of people with exploration and prospecting interests who wish to convert those interests into mining tenements. There is a wide range of conflicting interests in the area. I understand there are conflicts between various claimants. Generally, it does not take anything like that time to issue mining leases.

I have asked the department to establish the best possible working relationship with the small miners as quickly as possible. The department is held in high regard by the big mining concerns and I would like to see that relationship extended to people who have a local interest. By and large, a great regard is held for the Department of Mines and Energy by the smaller operator. However, there has been some public comment from 1 or 2 people, particularly Mr Ken Day who is very active in the area. We welcome Mr Ken Day into the field. He has been at it a long time and has put a great deal of effort into trying to make good in the Territory. A detailed survey of the region is now

being conducted with a view to identifying the difficulties and overcoming any backlogs. The Department of Mines and Energy is anxious to overcome these delays and have people satisfied wherever possible.

National Tuberculosis Advisory Council

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

In view of the fact that the Northern Territory has the highest rate of tuberculosis in Australia, why does the Department of Health not intend to send a representative to the 34th Session of the National Tuberculosis Advisory Council to be held in Canberra next week?

ANSWER

The Department of Health sends officers to various conferences throughout Australia and, on occasion, they attend international conferences. I am not aware of the particular conference to which the honourable member for Fannie Bay refers. However, I will endeavour to make some inquiries and find out what the reason is for not supporting an invitation to attend that conference. I will let the honourable member know privately.

Proposals for Retirement in Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS

Will he inform me of the results of the study commissioned by the Department of Lands in March this year into servicing of land as proposed by the Rural Old Timers and Friends Association at Fred's Pass?

ANSWER

I am advised that the study addressed 3 specific types of development: a standard suburban residential development, a rural village-centre development and a low-density retirement village concept. The first option would need some \$5.5m for internal servicing and is not a desired option as it loses the rural concept. The second option would require some \$1.4m on internal works only and the third option would require some \$0.5m on internal works. The cost of services to the site has not been included and the cost of buildings and facilities has not been estimated. An area of land has been set aside by the Department of Lands and the Department of Health is examining the needs and wants of elderly people in the rural area so that a final proposal can be considered and a decision taken.

Stamp Duty on Purchase of Rural Blocks

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I understand a review is being undertaken to determine if stamp duty exemptions should apply to the purchase of 8 ha blocks in the rural area by first home buyers. Has any decision been made on this?

ANSWER

Decisions have been taken. I am not fully aware of the details but, no doubt, they will be announced at an appropriate time.

Criminal Code

Mr D.W. COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Could he indicate when he hopes to commence the Criminal Code and what allowance will be made for police training which will be necessary on the introduction of that code?

ANSWER

The member's question raises 3 matters: the commencement date of the Criminal Code and any complementary legislation, the legislative timing that I have in mind and training of police. We need a very definite commencement date set to which we must adhere without fail. Any date in my mind for the commencement of this important legislation is not good enough. It must be firmly fixed in the public mind so that the public will not become confused. To me, Sir, the only date that could possibly fit that need would be 1 January 1984. Not only the Criminal Code would commence then but also the wide range of complementary legislation which would be needed. As to legislative timing, it is obvious to honourable members that I have not yet even presented the complementary legislation which flows from the Criminal Code itself. The earliest time that that could be done would be at the August sittings. Those sittings commence on 23 August. It is conceivable that, at the August sittings, we may not be in a position to deal fully with the Criminal Code itself. However, the possibility of a further deferral is remote.

As the honourable member for Alice Springs implied in his question, there is a distinct need for training. If those 2 pieces of legislation were left until the October sittings, particularly if we allowed all parties involved in this to string out the matter unnecessarily, the 2 months remaining could well be insufficient to train the police in this new and fairly complex piece of legislation. In most cases, however, police officers would be aware of the nature of the criminal law anyway. There are no radical departures on what is a criminal activity and what is not. There is a different approach to many of those issues. Nonetheless, it is conceivable that there would not be sufficient time between October and 1 January in which to commence the act.

I propose to discuss this matter in detail with my officers in the Department of Law, in conjunction with the Chief Minister, who is the minister responsible for the police, and with the Commissioner of Police, to see what assistance the Department of Law people, the Queensland law school and the like can provide. Nonetheless, it is possible that, through the Chief Minister, I may have to approach you, Sir, for a special sittings to deal with this very vital matter some time between the August sittings and the October sittings. If one were to introduce the legislation and comply with Standing Orders, 28 days after 23 August would be something like 20 September. I am merely floating this to the Assembly as a warning. It may be necessary to approach you, Sir, for the purposes of looking at this very important matter as a package to allow sufficient time for training to proceed and for the public to be made aware of the 1 January 1984 commencement.

Water Supply Restrictions

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Following the fairly disastrous wet season, can he indicate to the Assembly that the capacities of Darwin and Manton Dams are sufficient to supply water without restriction? By restriction, I do not mean the normal save-water campaign but specific restrictions.

ANSWER

The aspect that the honourable member raised in her question has not been raised with me by the department as a matter for concern. Now that she has raised it, I will take the suggestion back to the department and ensure that the information is made available for her.

Rent Subsidies for Teachers in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

As he is no doubt aware, teachers in Nhulunbuy held a stop-work meeting this week. Are there any proposals to subsidise those teachers' rents? I believe that was the cause of the stoppage.

ANSWER

The question of rent levels at Nhulunbuy for teachers or other public servants is really one for the Chief Minister. The matter has been under investigation. However, I can inform honourable members that, over the last few weeks, as the Teachers Federation knows, this matter has been examined by the Public Service Commissioner who makes recommendations to the Chief Minister. Also complicating the situation in Nhulunbuy is the fact that the Housing Commission has general public housing there. It is not occupied by public servants. Therefore, there is that additional level of rent paid by the community at Nhulunbuy. Nabalco applies a considerable subsidy to housing for its employees, making a further complication to the whole equation. However, I suggest that the honourable member address further questions on this matter to the Chief Minister.

Rent Subsidies for Teachers in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

I redirect the question to the Chief Minister. If he has any further information, I would certainly appreciate it.

ANSWER

I discussed this matter with the Public Service Commissioner again this morning. I took the risk of having a meeting with the Public Service Commissioner despite the fact that it may appear that I was interfering in the administration of the public service. Be that as it may, I think I can safely say that there is reasonable news in the pipeline. I will be in a position to make an announcement within the next couple of days that should please the people concerned and perhaps even a few others.

Staff Turnover at Yirara College

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer him to my questions and his answers in relation to senior staffing of Yirara College. If he finds the tenure of 4 principals in 6 months acceptable at Yirara College, what rate of turnover would he find unacceptable at Yirara College or any other school?

ANSWER

I do not think that I indicated yesterday that I found the turnover rate mentioned by the honourable member acceptable. Could I say in explanation that Mr Deslandes was appointed as principal at Yirara College for this year but is now absent on approved long service leave. Mr Benz was brought in to replace

Mr Deslandes while he was on long service leave. Because of reasons which I will not go into here, Mr Benz decided that he would not stay on. He has left and a new acting principal, Mr Allen Phillips, has been brought in. He has taken over until such time as Mr Deslandes long service leave is over. Those changes are really somewhat beyond the control of the Department of Education. I understand the secretary of the department is in charge of the stationing of the teachers and principals around the Northern Territory in various institutions. However, a number of things that might happen cannot always be foreseen. Health can be a factor as can unexpected leave applications. These things occur from time to time. They are the sorts of things we have to accept in administration generally and not just in regard to principals.

Upgrading of Alice Springs Airport

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is happening about the necessary upgrading of the Alice Springs Airport?

ANSWER

In June 1982, the Northern Territory government asked the Commonwealth to expedite the upgrading of passenger terminal and aircraft movement areas in Alice Springs. The Commonwealth advised the Chief Minister in September 1982 that it would conduct a feasibility study on local ownership. This proposal was put to the Alice Springs council on 11 November and accepted. The council and the Northern Territory government restated at that time that neither was in favour of local ownership. The council appointed a consulting firm, Airport Planning Pty Ltd, which recently submitted a report to it recommending local ownership. Officers of the Department of Transport and Works carefully examined the report and revealed a number of deficiencies which indicated that the airport might become a heavy financial burden to the council. On 31 May 1983, the Alice Springs council rejected the concept of local ownership of the airport. It called on the Northern Territory government for assistance in endeavouring to have the federal government proceed as early as possible with upgrading works. I will be happy to help in this regard. In another move, which has affected future airport plans in other places, the federal Treasurer on 19 May 1983 indicated that some changes to local ownership procedures may take place but he has not supplied any details so it appears that this system may also be under review by the government at present.

MV Islander

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

It is important that a vessel the size of the MV Islander be retained in Darwin for future tourist activities. This vessel has been losing between \$40 000 to \$60 000 a year. Has an approach been made to the Chief Minister for assistance to retain the MV Islander in Darwin? Would the government consider subsidising the MV Islander to see the vessel through its current financial difficulties?

ANSWER

I cannot recall receiving any application for assistance for the MV Islander but, if I did, I would have referred it directly to the Northern Territory Development Corporation. To the best of my knowledge, I have not been asked to provide a subsidy for this vessel and I was not aware of the extent of its losses. Certainly, they surprise me. One would assume that a loss of \$40 000 or \$60 000 a year must consist largely of salaries paid to staff. One cannot imagine that the fuel bill would be enormous for a vessel running

harbour cruises. It may be that there is money owing on the vessel. I am not sure of that. I am loath to indicate any support for a subsidy arrangement for this sort of enterprise because I think it would open the floodgates to a huge influx of requests for subsidies. These sorts of propositions should be capable of showing themselves able to operate viably.

I will take the expression of concern and the inquiry of the honourable member for Port Darwin on board. It may be that I can, by way of discussions with the Director-General, if it does not represent too much of an interference with the administration of the Department of the Chief Minister, request him perhaps to lend support to the vessel in terms of using it for government functions or for harbour cruises for visiting VIPs. However, he may say that I am interfering in his job and tell me to go and dip my eye in fig jam, Mr Speaker.

Possible Extension of DMZ to Broome

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Does he intend to support moves by the Western Australian government to have the DMZ of the northern prawn fishery extended along the Western Australian coast as far as Broome and, if so, what effect does he anticipate this action will have on the Territory-based prawning industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all I can say to the honourable member at this time is that we are seeking to hold discussions with the Commonwealth, Western Australian and Queensland governments on the management of the northern prawn fishery. In our view, the excessive effort in the fishery, which has been allowed to develop over the last few years by the federal and state governments against the wishes of the Northern Territory, is doing a great deal of damage to the prawn fishery. Certainly, it needs to be reviewed. The Northern Territory has taken a very firm and extreme stance on the matter. The Commonwealth and Western Australia do not regard that as a practical proposition. Nevertheless, those discussions have to continue with Western Australia and the Commonwealth government on the management of the fishery. Whether the boundary for the fishery is extended one way or another is really academic. The most important thing that we need to do at the moment is to reduce the effort in the fishery by about 50%.

It was put to me recently that the prawn fishery would have to produce 17 000 t of prawns a year for the 298 licensed operators to be able to exist without even making a profit. The reality is that the fishery produces between 4000 t and 8000 t a year, depending on the season. It is pretty obvious that the dilemma of the fishery will not be overcome by moving a boundary one way or another but only by reducing the effort. The sooner we succeed in our efforts to convince Western Australia and the Commonwealth that the present policy is a stupid and futile one, the better the whole of the northern prawn fishery will be.

Degree Courses at Darwin Community College

Ms LAWRIE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Successive Australian governments have not been able to indicate a starting date for the Northern Territory university. Could he indicate if further degree courses are being considered for the Darwin Community College and, if so, which degree courses and when would they be likely to commence?

ANSWER

At present, I am not considering further degree courses at the Darwin Community College. I am not sure whether or not the community college itself is putting together proposals to submit to the government. I have not asked the college or the Post-School Advisory Council to examine this question with a view to making recommendations to government. The government is proceeding with its submission to the Tertiary Education Commission for a university for the Northern Territory. Indeed, hearings will be conducted in Darwin in July this year. The Territory submission will be supported by verbal evidence to the TEC from a number of parties. The TEC will report to the federal government on the matter in next January or February.

Bridges over Rapid Creek

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Each year, the bridges over Rapid Creek at both Trower Road and McMillans Road flood after particularly heavy rains. Does the government have any plans to ensure that at least one of the bridges can provide access even after the heaviest rainfall?

ANSWER

There was serious flooding this year but we had one of the most unusual seasonal patterns that I have ever experienced in the Northern Territory. Obviously, upgrading would have to be weighed against the amount of money available. I undertake to examine the matter and I will advise him by letter.

Nhulunbuy Air Services

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise the Assembly of any proposed changes to Nhulunbuy air services and the future of those services generally?

ANSWER

As I indicated last week, I have written on a number of occasions to Ansett, TAA and the federal Minister for Aviation requesting action to improve these services by spreading the number of flights more evenly over the week to provide a greater frequency. Both the Chief Minister and myself have visited Nhulunbuy and we have arranged with representatives of TAA and Ansett to make similar visits. Passenger loading statistics indicate that, while air services to Nhulunbuy are relatively well patronised, 25% of seats remain unfilled. The number of seats offered appears to be adequate. The problem is therefore one of improvement to onward connections and the spread of days of operation.

In a letter to me dated 11 May, Ansett put forward a proposal which is being examined. After discussions with department officials, I have decided to distribute a questionnaire to residents to determine the views of the people of Nhulunbuy on the service changes suggested by Ansett. Earlier this week, Ansett management expressed a belief to me that Australia-wide airport development projects that are not yet under construction may be curtailed or significantly delayed. This includes the work at Gove airport. In the letter from Ansett Transport Industries, Mr Yates, the general manager, said: 'Although there are some commercial and operational problems, our company would be prepared to alter the Boeing 737 schedule to provide a Tuesday Darwin-Gove-Cairns service in place of the Wednesday schedule. This would be achieved by the B737 operating Darwin-Port Headland-Perth and return on Monday Tuesday in

place of the current Tuesday Wednesday operation'. In another part of that letter he said: 'If the control tower is constructed at Gove and 737 DC9 flights are doubled, as is suggested, there would be no F28 services to Gove and services to Groote Eylandt would be jeopardised also. By an all F28 operation, the total services for Arnhem Land would be improved and so would the economic stability of Airlines of Northern Australia'.

Mr Speaker, if the Gove control tower is not constructed, the Department of Aviation may withdraw its approval for 737 DC9 flights into Gove which have been operating under dispensation because Gove does not have controlled air space. This would mean that ANA may have to provide the sole service to Gove. That is the reason for the questionnaire so that the attitude of residents of Nhulunbuy may be determined in respect of this serious matter.

Forest Areas of Howard Springs

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What plans have been made for the future use of the forest areas at Howard Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is no proposal to release marauding animals in the Howard Springs Forest Reserve. The Conservation Commission is awaiting final survey descriptions before declaring the reserves under section 12 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Act. Once this is done, plans of management for the areas will be available for public input. Basically, the areas will be developed as recreation forests to supplement the existing Howard Springs Nature Reserve.

Child Care Course Through Darwin Community College

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

When will a child-care course be offered at Darwin Community College similar to the one available in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

I do not have details with me but I understand that the Darwin Community College is proposing to introduce a child-care course. I am not fully aware of its actual commencement date but I can find that out for the honourable member and advise her.

Review of Role of Vocational Training Commission

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has the government ordered a review of the role of the Vocational Training Commission and, if so, what terms of reference will be used?

ANSWER

I can assure him that I have made no request for a review of the role of the Vocational Training Commission. At present, I understand that a staffing review is being conducted within the ranks of the Vocational Training Commission by the Public Service Commissioner. That is not an unusual occurrence. In fact, the Public Service Commissioner conducts staffing reviews, in whole or in part, of departments and statutory authorities continually. As to the actual role of the Vocational Training Commission, I am not quite sure what the honourable member means.

Palm Valley Gas to Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What is the proposed date on which Palm Valley gas will flow into Alice Springs and the powerhouse?

ANSWER

I do not think that anyone could give a precise date for the arrival of gas in Alice Springs. The contract between NTEC and Magellan was executed on 12 October 1981 at an agreed wellhead price of \$1.12 kJ CPI adjusted quarterly. As at 5 May 1983, 44 km of pipe had been laid and 2772 wells completed. The scheduled date for transmission of the gas is 31 August 1983. However, I do not think that anyone could rely on that as being an exact date. To date, the progress on the pipeline has been very encouraging and has been handled very well by the contracting company. I have been informed, however, that a small problem has arisen in relation to the exact survey definitions of the kilometre-wide corridor which is the subject of agreement between the Northern Territory government, the company undertaking the construction and the Central Land Council, with the concurrence of the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Given all that, one would hope that there are no major difficulties to be overcome.

If there were, having regard to the need for all the parties to be in agreement and signatories of any leasing or agreement arrangements for the purpose of the pipeline, one could yet see very significant delays occurring. My department is doing everything it can. The CLC has been extremely cooperative in this matter, particularly in the last year. I am quite sure that the Central Land Council will be as anxious as any of us to overcome the minor difficulties which are now seen in relation to the exact definition of the corridor. It seems as if part of that corridor may have been established in an area which may not be conducive to the laying of the gas pipeline. We do not know who was responsible for that and, quite frankly, I do not think that anyone is concerned as to whose fault it is. We hope to overcome the problem in the very near future. I have no doubt at all that we will have the cooperation of all parties in this endeavour. There is no reason, at this stage, to fear that these temporary difficulties will result in a delay because the pipeline is not being laid in that sector of the route at this stage. We had hoped to see the pipeline flowing gas at the end of October or very early in November.

In relation to the NTEC side, a contract has been let to Hawker Sidley Engineering and APE for the purposes of upgrading the various plants in the Alice Springs power-station. A contract has been let to APE Australia for conversion of Nos 6 and 7 engines to dual fuel operation and to Hawker Sidley Engineering for the conversion of Nos 3, 4 and 5 engines. Hawker Sidley Engineering are also responsible for the construction of the gas distribution system within the power-station. The contract was awarded on 14 March 1983 to APE Australia for the supply and installation of No 8 generating set which will be the third 5 to 7 megawatt dual fuel Pilstick engine installed in Alice Springs. As honourable members in Alice Springs would be aware, the other engines there are Merlees. The Pilstick won the recent competition through the tendering system very narrowly over the Merlees. Both of them are excellent plants which have been well proven world-wide in both marine and fixed plant operations. It was very difficult to pick between the 2 tenderers who put forward excellent propositions to provide No 8 generating plant. It went to Pilstick on the basis of a spare parts capacity and a proven record of response to maintenance problems. That is not to say the agent for the Merlees, Hawker Sidley, is not also an excellent company in terms of backing up its contracts and agreements. On balance, having regard to the expected

20-year life of the equipment, Pilstick was the successful company.

Solar Ponds in Alice Springs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Could he report on the solar ponds experiment in Alice Springs and comment on its possible future commercial development?

ANSWER

It is far too early to comment on the possible future commercial development of a solar pond technology in the Northern Territory. Nonetheless, it is an encouraging system that is new to us. Of course, the technology is well known to the Israelis. However, advances have been made in Alice Springs which could teach the Israelis a thing or two. A pond of some 2000 m<sup>2</sup> to a depth of 2.5 m<sup>2</sup> was set up in Alice Springs for 2 reasons: the very high incidence of sunshine in that location and the availability of salt, which is an essential ingredient in the construction of a solar pond. The salt has varying layers of density, depending on depth, to prevent the effects of convection. That is the principle upon which it works. A gas form is then taken which will turn from liquid into gas and is pumped through a gas turbine.

The one in Alice Springs has the potential to drive a 20-kilowatt turbine generating system with which the developers hoped to power the vineyard, restaurant and house complex at Chateau Hornsby. The temperature required is in excess of 80°C at the base of the solar pond. In October 1981, the temperature reached 82°C. Recently, we had very heavy rains which could be described as almost monsoonal and which allowed water to get between the polythene layer and the soil. That resulted in a very rapid conduction of heat away from the last place one would expect: the bottom of the pond. The whole technology is designed to prevent radiation and convection of heat away from the top. New systems are now being developed to prevent this loss of heat from the bottom which brought the temperature down to 50°C which was insufficient to drive the turbines successfully.

Mr Speaker, new soil drying techniques are now being applied. It is a joint project which has been funded by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments. Naturally, we were grateful for the previous Commonwealth government's contribution to this project. I have little doubt that we can look forward to the same sort of support from the present government for this very exciting project in Alice Springs. Total funds made available between 1980 and 1983 by the Commonwealth have been \$178 000 with \$81 469 from the Northern Territory government. Hopefully, in the long term, benefit will flow to the public from this technology.

Technical Education

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it proposed that the roles of the VTC and DCC in the policy and planning area of technical and further education will be considered by the government?

ANSWER

The question is not being further considered by the government. Over the past month, I have clarified for the Darwin Community College, the Department of Education and the VTC the role of the VTC in TAFE policy formulation and coordination. As members will find in the act, the VTC has a very real role

in this. However, there was a small area of confusion. Perhaps some people did not want to believe what the words said and I clarified it for them. A couple of people may have had their noses put out of joint as a result of that clarification. However, this was certainly a proper role of the minister and not an undue interference in the public service in any way.

Sadadeen Subdivision

Mr D.W. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Has he been able to ascertain the turnoff date for the first blocks of land from Sadadeen stages 1 and 2 as promised earlier this sittings?

ANSWER

I obtained the answer to this question but I seem to have mislaid it at the moment. I seem to recall that the turnoff date is September 1983.

East Point Reserve

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for LANDS

In March, he advised that the Northern Territory government would shortly vest East Point Reserve in the Conservation Commission. Has that happened and, if not, what are the management arrangements at the moment for East Point Reserve?

ANSWER

At the moment, East Point Reserve is still run by its trustees. The employees of the trustees are continuing to maintain the reserve. I was a bit late for the performance of Antony and Cleopatra the other night so I took the opportunity to have a look around East Point. It seemed to be in pretty good shape from what I could see by the car headlights. The grass seems to be mowed. There are plenty of wallabies leaping to get under your wheels. We only wanted the Conservation Commission to take over the East Point Reserve as a last resort, not that we believe the Conservation Commission is a last resort by any means. We believe the reserve is truly the responsibility of the Darwin City Council. Unfortunately, the council, through its Lord Mayor, sought a sum of \$5m and, after picking myself up off the floor, I said that it just could not be done. There was a well-publicised dispute as to what would happen. We said: 'If you will not take it, we will give control of it to the Conservation Commission and make what funds we can available to it over the years to improve it slightly'. Mind you, I do not think we should create something artificial out there. I think we should leave it pretty much as it is. We could perhaps add a few facilities and maybe upgrade the roads. It will not be in my hands; it will be in the council's hands.

The problem is that the Northern Territory government is already contributing by far the lion's share of funding in this city for urban development. I forget how many million dollars we are to spend this year in beautification work throughout the city, especially in the new northern suburbs - planting median strips, parks and the whole bit. I am not belittling the council's contribution, but the NT government, for instance, is funding, and in fact initiated, a 3-year program to upgrade the Botanical Gardens. There will be provision for an area of rainforest and waterfalls, duck ponds, lakes, lagoons etc, that will add greatly to the beauty and attraction of the gardens when completed. The rainforest is well advanced. I think that the government is making a more than reasonable contribution to the beautification of Darwin. I believe that the Darwin City Council is close to agreement with the Minister for Community Development regarding management

of East Point. I have heard though that it will receive \$250 000 as a one-off capital grant and then a certain sum each year towards maintenance of the reserve.

Library Books for Darwin Community College Students

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Given what appears to be an extraordinary internecine struggle that is going on, to quote one columnist, 'in the halls of academe at the Darwin Community College', what is the precise situation in regard to the provision of library books for Darwin Community College students?

ANSWER

I am certainly aware of an internal wrangle going on in the Darwin Community College over library services. The chairman of the college council will report to me tomorrow morning on that very question. As soon as the matter came to my attention I asked her personally to investigate the matter thoroughly. Tomorrow I will receive a report on that. I understand that the Darwin Community College has had about \$1m worth of books supplied to it since its inception. As honourable members would be aware, that is a very substantial sum for books alone. I am not talking about buildings or staff; I am talking about books.

However, it has to be appreciated that, in an educational institution like the college, quite a number of books very quickly become dated because of technological advances in the various courses and the content of those courses and books must be updated fairly regularly. I am advised that, as a result of commencing the Bachelor of Arts course at the Darwin Community College, there is an obligation upon the college to provide additional books to its library to the tune of \$30 000 per annum for 5 years to cover the requirements of that course alone. That is rather a surprising figure to me, Mr Speaker, but I am assured that it is largely correct. It is based on the fact that, as people progress through the Bachelor of Arts course, the books that are required become more sophisticated and expensive. Whilst I do not have definitive figures before me on the numbers of books in the Darwin Community College library, I can assure honourable members that it is a very handsome establishment. It has a very effective indexing system which is probably more modern than that in most other institutions in Australia.

However, there is a dispute between a couple of factions within the Darwin Community College. I aim to get to the bottom of it as soon as I possibly can. If there is any substance in the allegations, then the government will certainly look at them. Following information I receive tomorrow, it may be necessary for me to engage outside people to examine the situation to see what action needs to be taken. I can assure honourable members that this matter has my interest and will continue to receive my attention until it is resolved.

Youth Needs in Northern Suburbs

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for YOUTH SPORT and RECREATION

When can we expect some government action to implement the recommendations of the Manzie report on youth needs in the northern suburbs?

ANSWER

The Chief Minister and I exchange memos on a weekly basis regarding the 4 recommendations that came out of the public meetings. One was that

community support services be established in the northern suburbs. There was a proposal by the YWCA - which had been successful in obtaining some land from the department - to construct a youth facility in the area. When this proposal was first put to the Northern Territory government, we agreed to a 3:1 level of funding in view of the government's policy to provide financial support to community organisations which wish to provide youth facilities. Of course, it began as a \$170 000 exercise and the YWCA was to put in its share. Subsequently, the YWCA amended its building program and the Northern Territory Housing Commission became involved and provided its expertise. The cost to build increased to about \$210 000 which meant that the YWCA would have had to put a greater proportion of funds into the project. However, we agreed to provide additional funding to the YWCA for the construction of that particular facility on the land allocated by the Lands Branch. I had discussions with the YWCA regarding its operation and agreed to proceed.

The collapse of the trustee company in Victoria would have knocked that on the head anyway. However, about a month ago, I had discussions with the Director of the YWCA. Because of the YWCA's financial constraints, we offered the old Northern Territory Housing Commission site office for use as a youth drop-in centre. She thought it was a good idea. I am unable to proceed with that at the moment because that particular facility has not been zoned. A memo is being drafted to the Chief Minister explaining that the need for zoning is delaying occupation of the facility. I have also had informal discussions with the Chairman of the Town Planning Authority who said that, if we are to proceed with the old site office, it is his opinion that a zoning change might be necessary. Those are the complications in that area. That would have given us our second area in the northern suburbs. With the change in mind of the YWCA and the problems with the site office, we may have to go back to the drawing board. I asked the Director of Youth Sport and Recreation to see if he can find space that could be rented in the northern suburbs to provide this facility. That investigation is being carried out now. Some suggestion has been made that the Casuarina Plaza could be a possible location.

Regarding the second recommendation, the government intends to enclose part of the Casuarina High School and turn that into a community facility. That is being designed at the moment and the government is anxious to complete it as soon as possible and has attempted to include it on the 1983 capital works list. It has been listed on an informal basis until such time as the Departments of Education and Transport and Works work out what the extensions are to be. The third recommendation related to transport. The Minister for Transport and Works has asked the bus service to come back with a proposal to provide a mini-bus service. At this stage, no firm arrangements have been made. The fourth recommendation related to the setting up of a coordinated volunteer youth organisation within the area. That has been done.

The recommendations have been assessed seriously. I think that a couple of points need to be driven home a little bit harder by myself in the next couple of weeks. The Chief Minister is anxious that those recommendations be carried out. There are those difficulties: the change of mind by the YWCA and the zoning problem with the old site office. The Chief Minister has said that he will fix that and we will have to wait and see how it will pan out. If we cannot find a location to build on immediately, I would be quite happy to rent a certain area in one of the northern suburb community shopping centres to get this thing off the ground.

Aboriginal Teaching Assistants in South Region

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it correct that a directive has been issued by the department to

Aboriginal schools in the southern region that would result in Aboriginal teaching assistants being removed from those schools that have one teacher only?

ANSWER

I am not aware of that directive. If he could provide me with more details, I will seek information from the Department of Education.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TUXWORTH (Conservation)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition asked me to advise whether the Conservation Commission for the Northern Territory employs an experienced shooter. With the exception of those only recently appointed, all rangers are competent in the use of firearms. The Conservation Commission uses a wide selection of firearms for specific duties. The majority of rangers are above-average marksmen. Some have a much higher degree of marksmanship than others: for example, Queen's Shoot Prizewinner, ex-police marksman, ex-serviceman etc. The Conservation Commission conducts a firearms course once a year to have those rangers who lack the necessary expertise brought up to the degree of competency required by the commission. The Conservation Commission presently employs 86 rangers of whom approximately 80% are experienced marksmen. There are a number of other persons within the commission's structure who are also experienced marksmen. These persons can be called upon to perform field duties with firearms at any time should the need arise.

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