

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II.
Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.
An asterisk preceding an entry in the index indicates
that an answer has not yet been received.

From 5 June 1984

Admiralty House

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

Connellan Airport - Funding

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

Alice Springs - Rural Tourist Development

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

Ilpiye-Ilpiye - Lease

- 10 Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS
- When will he make a decision in relation to the lease application made by the Ilpiye-Ilpiye Housing Association in central Australia?

Gas Turbine - Alice Springs

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

Criminally Insane Offenders

- 12 Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL
- How many offenders have been deemed to be criminally insane during (a) 1983, (b) 1982, and (c) 1981?

NT Development Corporation - Overdue Loans

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

Housing Act - Waiving of Interest Payments

20 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING and CONSERVATION

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

Bradshaw Primary School - Enrolments in High Schools

24 Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

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

Staffing - NTPS

25 Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

How many (a) Aboriginal and (b) non-Aboriginal people are employed by the Northern Territory Public Service, (c) at what levels are these staff employed, and (d) how many are employed (i) on a full-time basis, and (ii) employed on a short-term contractual basis?

Staffing - Department of Health

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

How many (a) Aboriginal and (b) non-Aboriginal people are employed by the Department of Health, (c) at what levels are these staff employed, and (d) how many are employed (i) on a full-time basis, and (ii) employed on a short-term contractual basis?

Staffing - Department of Community Development

27 How many (a) Aboriginal and (b) non-Aboriginal people are employed by the Department of Community Development, (c) at what levels are these staff employed, and (d) how many are employed (i) on a full-time basis, and (ii) on a short-term contractual basis?

Christmas Island Trip

28 Mr EDE to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. What was the total cost in terms of salaries, fares, accommodation, expenses, etc. of the trip he made to Christmas Island?
2. How will this benefit the administration of the Northern Territory?

Larrakeyah Primary and Pre-schools - Relocation

29 Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

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

Yuendumu - Aboriginal Teacher Aide and Literacy Workers

30 Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. Is it true there were 12 Aboriginal teacher aide positions and 1 literacy worker at Yuendumu in 1975 and in 1984 there are only

- 5 Aboriginal teacher aide positions and 2 literacy workers?
2. If so, why?

Monitoring of Leprosy Cases

31 Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

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

Forestry - 1981-82 Expenditure

1 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HOUSING and CONSERVATION

1. How much of the \$2.05 million spent on forestry in 1981-82 went on
(a) research activities outlined on pages 19 and 20 of the Annual Report of the Conservation Commission for 1981-82; (b) Melville and Bathurst Islands operations; (c) Murganella operations; (d) Darwin district operations; and (e) central Australia operations?
2. Of the \$2.17 million for park development how much went to (a) Darwin; (b) Alice Springs; (c) Katherine; (d) Tennant Creek; and (e) other centres?
3. Was any planting done at Melville and Bathurst Islands in 1981-82?

ANSWER

1. (a) Research activities \$441 000.

The forestry research program concentrated on 3 main areas associated with plantation development and maintenance, native forest studies, and utilization of forest resources.

The plantation research work was directed primarily at establishment of *Pinus caribaea* on Melville Island with the aim of creating a resource base for private industry to supply local demand. This involved the maintenance and measurement of some 50 experiments with emphasis given to tree breeding, development of nursery techniques, land cultivation and fertilizer application. This research was found to have a number of broad applications, for example, in the local nursery industry, where the forestry work has led to improvements in several areas such as nutrition and containerization.

The broad objective of the native forest and ecological research program is to provide information that will assist multiple use management of native forests including timber production, wildlife habitat protection and public recreation opportunities. Such research work has also provided essential basic information for mine rehabilitation throughout northern Australia, and is an essential requirement in developing appropriate strategies for dealing with local bushfire problems.

The utilization of resources research covers market investigations, resource assessment, protection of timber in use, investigations into properties and uses of plantation and native timbers, and extension assistance and advice to Aboriginal communities.

- (b) Melville Island and Bathurst Island operations \$583 000.
- (c) Murganella operations \$184 000.
- (d) Darwin district operations \$410 000.

This includes the executive and support function for both forestry and park development. It also includes supervision, programming and logistic support for activities such as Melville Island and Murganella; fire protection and development for recreation at Gunn Point, Holmes Jungle and Howard Springs; liaison with Aboriginal communities, local councils and similar population centres; and provision of appropriate support to other commission units.

(e) Central Australia operations \$432 000.

Arid zone operations were aimed at providing suitable plant species, land management techniques and research supported information for use by local urban, pastoral and Aboriginal communities for a number of applications.

Examples of practical applications included reduction of calf mortality through improvement in shade tree establishment techniques on the Barkly Tablelands; the provision of alternative firewood supplies to Alice Springs, Yulara and smaller communities; beautification of many communities and homesteads; and programs to create habitats to conserve rare wildlife such as the 'bilby'.

2. (a) Darwin	\$ 1 963 000
(b) Alice Springs	\$ 155 500
(c) Katherine	\$ 30 000
(d) Tennant Creek	\$ 12 500
(e) Other centres	\$ 6 000
	<hr/>
TOTAL	\$ 2 167 000 *

* (The total figure of \$2 167 million comprised the \$1 964 million NT government appropriation and \$203 000 for special projects on behalf of other departments.)

Funding to local councils

In Darwin, some 40 parks were developed by park development before being vested in the Darwin City Council. The Darwin Botanical Gardens was a joint project between the commission and the Darwin council. Funds were paid direct to the council for those aspects handled by their engineering staff, in particular, work related to pond and waterfall construction. In Katherine, funds were given direct to the local council to carry out park developments designed and costed by the commission, and this approach was also used in Tennant Creek. This was to maximize the efficiency in employing local contractors and labour where the commission did not have sufficient infrastructure to provide as efficient a service.

In Alice Springs, most parks were developed by the commission prior to handover to the council. The only exception was of part of the banks of the Todd River, where the council was funded directly to develop areas near the town centre.

3. One hundred and sixty-eight hectares were planted on Melville Island, 50 hectares of research experiments with the remainder being on-site preparation and establishment trials.

Upgrading of Dump and Wambiaia Camps

2 Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What steps are being taken to provide basic facilities to the Dump and Wambiaia camps in Tennant Creek?

ANSWER

The 2 Aboriginal camps mentioned, the Dump and Wambiaia, are only 2 of several semi-permanent and occasional camps within the Tennant Creek township boundaries.

The town council with some financial assistance from the NT government is developing a new camp at Karguru for the use of transient Aboriginals who do not wish to take up residence in the 3 permanent Aboriginal living areas of Mulga Camp, Blueberry Hill and the Village.

There has been no application by any group to have these 2 camp areas designated as Aboriginal living areas. Hence, there are no plans to provide essential services or other services by the NT government to these areas.

Electric Lighting - Warrego-Tennant Creek Intersection

3 Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Given that ore traffic from east of Tennant Creek to Warrego is due to commence in the near future, will he advise when the Warrego Road-Tennant Creek intersection will be supplied with electric lighting?

ANSWER

My department has contacted Warrego Mine to ascertain the likely traffic volume when ore production commences towards mid-1985.

A maximum of 18 road train crossings of the highway per day (in both directions) is anticipated and as sight distance are quite good at the intersection, this is not considered to warrant the installation of lighting. Warning signs will, however, be placed on the highway and mandatory give-way signs on the ore road.

Upgrading of Stuart Highway

4 Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Do plans exist to upgrade the Stuart Highway between the Seven-Mile Homestead and the Three Ways in order to reduce congestion on this relatively densely trafficked section?

ANSWER

It is planned to upgrade the entire length of the Stuart Highway to national highway standard. The section in question is tentatively programmed for 1987-88, however, firm programming will depend on the relative priorities accorded other sections of the highway and also on the allocation of federal government funds.

The Member for Stuart will be aware that the federal Minister for Transport, Mr Peter Morris, is currently withholding approvals for 5 major Stuart Highway projects to the value of approximately \$10 million. Tenders for these projects have either been received or are about to close and the withholding of approvals is causing serious delays to the Stuart Highway upgrading program in addition to jeopardising the position of contractors and their employees. Despite repeated representations no reason has been given for this deferral of approvals.

Australian Institute of Management Courses

6 Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How much is spent by Northern Territory government departments on Australian Institute of Management courses?
2. To officers at which levels are these courses provided?
3. How are the officers who attend these courses selected?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS RECEIVED

ANSWER

1. In 1983, \$44 601.87 was spent by Northern Territory government departments on Australian Institute of Management courses.
2. Participants included tradesmen, foremen, technical officers, engineers and administrative staff ranging from the A3 to the E4 level.
3. The selection procedure is evenly divided between self-nomination and nomination by supervisors.

Detailed returns from all departments and authorities are as follows:

AIM COURSES TABLE

<u>Department/Authority</u>	<u>Expenditure</u> (Question 1)	<u>Range</u> (Question 2)	<u>Selection Criteria</u> (Question 3)
Darwin Community College	Nil	Nil	N/A
Transport & Works	\$ 3 515.00	Tech Officer Gr 1 Foreman Engineer Cl 3 Admin A4 A5 Work Supervisor Supervising Draftsman Snr Tech Officer Gr 2	Advertised through Department Nominations approved by Branch Head
Housing Commission	Nil	Nil	N/A
Community Development	\$ 2 890.00	A3 A8 E2	Self-nomination or Divisional Director has nominated employee
Health	\$ 2 995.00	A3 E2	Direct nomination Self-nomination
Police	Nil	Nil	N/A
ADMA	Nil	Nil	N/A
Treasury	\$ 1 735.00	A5 A8 E4	Self-nomination or Divisional Head has nominated employee
Public Service Commissioner's Office	Nil	Nil	N/A
Lands	\$ 3 395.00	E3 E1 A3 A5 SAS1	Potential, work experience to date and the perceived need to improve present and future work potential
JTDA	Nil	Nil	N/A
NTDC	\$ 880.00	A3 A4 A7	Self-nomination with Supervisor's agreement and final approval by Chairman
Vocational Training Commission	Nil	Nil	N/A
Law	Nil	Nil	N/A

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS RECEIVED

<u>Department/Authority</u>	<u>Expenditure</u> (Question 1)	<u>Range</u> (Question 2)	<u>Selection Criteria</u> (Question 3)
NT Teaching Service	Nil	Nil	N/A
Liquor Commission	Nil	Nil	N/A
Auditor-General	Nil	Nil	N/A
Museums & Art Galleries	Nil	Nil	Self-nomination or direct nomination
Legislative Assembly	Nil	Nil	Direct nomination
Chief Minister & Co-ordinator General	Nil	Nil	N/A
Port Authority	Nil	Nil	N/A
Racing & Gaming Commission	Nil	Nil	N/A
Ombudsman	Nil	Nil	N/A
Conservation Commission	Nil	Nil	N/A
Primary Production	Nil	Nil	Circulation of advice, then personal choice
Education	\$ 27 661.87	E2 + above A9 - E1 School based Darwin South Office personnel	Direction nomination or selection following expression of interest
Mines & Energy	Nil	Nil	N/A
University Planning Authority	Nil	Nil	N/A
NTEC	\$ 1 530.00	1 x Elect. Foreman 1 x Linesman 1 x W/shop Foreman 1 x Mech. Foreman 1 x Communications Supervisor 1 x Finance Officer	Discussions with training staff

Revenue - Casino Gaming Operations

8 Mr BELL to TREASURER

I refer to the Fourth Annual Report of the Racing and Gaming Commission, page 12 and the section headed 'Government Review of Casino Gaming Operations', and ask -

Of the revenue derived under the headings of (a) gaming licence fees; (b) tax on gross gaming wins; (c) unclaimed Keno prizes; and (d) casino operatives licence fees, how much was derived from (i) Mindil Beach Casino, Darwin; and (ii) Alice Springs Federal Casino?

ANSWER

The split of casino gaming revenue between Alice Springs and Darwin is as follows:

	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1981-82</u>
Alice Springs		
- Gaming licence fees	Nil	Nil
- Tax on gross gaming win	\$ 128 432	\$ 97 846
- Unclaimed Keno prizes	\$ 20 447	\$ 10 874
- Operatives licence fees	\$ 255	\$ 640
Darwin		
- Gaming licence fees	\$ 30 000	\$ 30 000
- Tax on gross gaming win	\$ 1 613 789	\$ 1 530 911
- Unclaimed Keno prizes	\$ 94 951	\$ 19 850
- Operatives licence fees	\$ 360	\$ 565

Special Educational Services - School of the Air

13 Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

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

ANSWER

The number of parents of School of the Air children who have indicated that their children may have learning difficulties is as follows:

<u>Alice Springs School of the Air</u>		<u>Katherine School of the Air</u>	
Pre-school	2	Pre-school	6
Transition	1	Year 3	1
Year 1	1	Year 5	1
Year 2	2		
Year 5	2		
Year 6	1		
Year 7	1		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
TOTAL	11	TOTAL	8
	<hr/>		<hr/>

These figures, totalling 19 children, refer to the last 12 months.

Tempe Down Pastoral Company - Lease Arrangements

14 Mr BELL to MINISTER for HOUSING and CONSERVATION

Have any arrangements been made between Tempe Downs Pastoral Company and the Conservation Commission to lease back to Tempe Downs Pastoral Company areas of Kings Canyon National Park which was declared last year?

ANSWER

A condition under which Tempe Downs Pastoral Company released land for the creation of a Kings Canyon National Park was that a portion of that land, approximately 250 square kilometres, was to be leased back to the company for pastoral use.

The terms of the lease-back, including environmental safeguards, have been the subject of discussion between the company and the Conservation Commission. The terms of lease-back are shortly to be considered by the Conservation Land Corporation, which currently holds the area, before the lease-back is finalised.

Community Welfare - Allocation of Positions

15 Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. How many positions in the Community Welfare division were allocated to (a) the remote area office in Alice Springs, and (b) the town office in Alice Springs on (i) 1 October 1982, and (ii) 1 October 1983?
2. How many of these positions were (a) filled, and (b) unfilled on the dates indicated?

ANSWER

On 1 October 1982 there were 5 positions in the remote areas office of Community Welfare Division, Alice Springs, of which all were filled, and 11 positions in the town office, of which 10 were filled.

On 1 October 1983, the 2 offices had been amalgamated into a single regional office, to achieve more efficient service delivery to both town and remote populations in the region. At that time there was a total of 18 positions, of which 16 were filled.

These details include all positions attached to the Alice Springs Regional Office, except for homemakers.

1983 Conference of Aboriginal Communities - Resolutions

16 Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I refer to a resolution of the 1983 conference of Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory held at Batchelor College on 20-24 June 1983, at which the following resolution was passed:

'That immediate action be taken by the Department of Community Development to ensure that basic facilities such as power, water storage and reticulation and funds for the provision of basic management facilities for the Imanpa community are provided.', and ask what steps has he taken to give effect to this resolution?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory government has already carried out some works at Imanpa and will continue to program works subject to the availability of funds and the priority of the work in relation to the requirements of other outstations and pastoral groups.

A sum of \$176 000 has been spent over the last 3 years upgrading the water supply and storage. Work worth \$20 000 was commenced in April to further upgrade the water reticulation. Four bores, all unsuccessful, were drilled in 1983 in an attempt to find an additional water service.

A sum of \$42 000 has been spent in upgrading the access road. Funds amounting to \$29 000 have been made available for a tractor and trailer, part-time labourers and for fuel, stores and materials. Funds will continue to be available in future years for the latter type expenditure.

Further work on internal roads and on water reticulation are being programmed for 1984-85. Currently there is no firm program to build a powerhouse.

Funding of positions

17 Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. How many employment positions are currently funded by (a) TPU funding,

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS RECEIVED

(b) other NT departments, (c) federal departments, (d) non-government organizations, and (e) other, at (i) Docker River, (ii) Papunya, (iii) Hermannsburg, (iv) Jay Creek, (v) Santa Teresa, (vi) Maryvale, (vii) Finke, (viii) Imanpa (Mr Ebenezer), (ix) Mutitjula (Ayers Rock), and (x) Walunguru (Kintore)?

2. How many positions were funded under the above categories on (a) 30 June 1983, and (b) 30 June 1982?

ANSWER

The information sought in relation to the Department of Community Development has been collect and is provided below.

The details relating to other departments and agencies should be sought from the relevant Ministers.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

	T M P U			Community Welfare Division		
	30.6.82	30.6.83	Current	30.6.82	30.6.83	Current
Docker River	25 F/T	19 F/T 3 P/T	11 F/T 8 P/T	2 P/T	-	-
Papunya	33 F/T 5 P/T	35 F/T	28 F/T	-	-	-
Hermannsburg	21 F/T	24 F/T 4 P/T	29 F/T	-	-	-
Jay Creek	8 F/T 5 P/T	7 F/T 1 P/T	6 F/T 1 P/T	-	-	-
Santa Teresa	54 F/T 1 P/T	39 F/T	35 F/T 5 P/T	-	-	-
Maryvale	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finke (Apatula)	6 F/T 4 P/T	4 F/T 10 P/T	6 F/T 6 P/T	-	-	-
Imanpa (Mt Ebenezer)	-	-	3 P/T	-	7 P/T	7 P/T
Mutitjula (Ayers Rock)	-	-	-	-	16 P/T	16 P/T
Walangurra (Kintore)	-	-	4 F/T	-	-	-

F/T = Full time
P/T = Part time

Sales Tax on Freight Scheme

- 19 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

- Which companies are currently participating in the sales tax on freight scheme?
- How long has each company (a) been in this scheme, and (b) how much has each company received from the scheme?
- Which companies have withdrawn from the scheme?
- How much did each of these companies receive from the scheme?

ANSWER

Fourteen companies have received a reimbursement under the scheme since its inception in 1980. Of these, 10 are still submitting applications for reimbursement at regular intervals and are considered to be participating fully in the scheme. The remaining 4 have not submitted claims within the last 12 months. These 4 may be considered as non-participants at this time. However, they have not notified their withdrawal from the scheme and they are still considered eligible for rebate if they choose to submit details of sales tax paid.

A list of the companies which have received subsidies is shown hereunder. As at 9 April 1984 a total of \$648 092.93 had been paid to claimants under the scheme.

Amounts paid to each supplier are confidential because release of the information may allow competitors some knowledge about the operation of another company which would otherwise not be available.

In these circumstances I will make details available on a confidential basis to the honourable Member.

Sales Tax on Freight Subsidy Scheme

COMPANIES CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING

<u>Company</u>	<u>Period of Participation</u>
Baruwei Enterprises	July 1980 - June 1983
C & R Distributors Pty Ltd	July 1980 - November 1983
Port Darwin Motors Pty Ltd	July 1980 - November 1983
NT Musical and Electrical Pty Ltd	July 1980 - November 1983
QUF Industries	July 1980 - January 1984
Nautical Supplies	July 1980 - January 1984
Hickman Holdings Pty Ltd	July 1980 - November 1983
R. Hoy Trading Company Pty Ltd	July 1980 - November 1983
Ted's Bridgestone Tyre Service	November 1981 - April 1983
Barry Humphries Pty Ltd	July 1980 - December 1983

COMPANIES WHICH HAVE NOT LODGED CLAIMS WITHIN LAST 12 MONTHS

<u>Company</u>	<u>Period of Participation</u>
B.C. Enterprises Pty Ltd	July 1980 - June 1981
Auto Colour and Supplies	July 1980 - December 1981
Mases Meat Company Pty Ltd	July 1980 - December 1981
Kelair	July 1980 - April 1981

TIO - Legal Opinion on Actions of Former Employees

21 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Has he received the legal opinion on the actions of the former employees of the Territory Insurance Office said to be involved in \$2.2m loss for 1982-83 in the field of general insurance?
2. If so, have either civil or criminal proceedings been instigated or are they being contemplated?
3. If not, when does he expect to receive the legal opinion?

ANSWER

As part of my explanation to the Assembly regarding the TIO loss I mentioned that advice was being sought as to possible proceedings against former employees. I did so so that honourable Members would be aware of

the circumstances leading to and arising from the losses being examined. However, having said that, it is not appropriate that I should say anything further concerning any possible court proceedings, for to do so may be prejudicial to the TIO and indeed the other persons involved.

TIO - Claims under Motor Accident Compensation Scheme

22 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

The 1982-83 Annual Report of the Territory Insurance Office showed that claims incurred under the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme amounted to \$11 513 520.

1. Of that amount, how much as (a) paid out in common law awards to non-Territorians and how many claims did this involve, (b) set aside for common law awards to non-Territorians and how many claims does this involve, (c) paid out under section 5 of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and how many claims did this involve, (d) set aside for claims under section 5 of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and how many claims does this involve, (d) paid out under section 13 and how many claims did this involve, and (f) set aside for claims under section 13 and how many claims does this involve?
2. Of that amount, how much can be attributed to mature claims from accidents in preceding years?
3. Excluding common law awards to non-Territorians, how many payouts by the TIO under the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme involved benefits in excess of the limits set in the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act?

ANSWER

1 July 1982 - 30 June 1983 (1)

CLAIMS INCURRED	No. (2)	\$11 513 520 \$
1. (a) Common Law - Non-Territorians Payments	9	47 555
(b) Common Law - Non-Territorians Outstandings as at 1.7.82	N/A	See Note 3
30.6.83	78	1 089 544
(c) Common Law - Non-Territorians Payments	62	305 765
(d) Common Law - Non-Territorians Outstandings as at 1.7.82	N/A	See Note 3
30.6.83	483	5 987 760
(e) S. 13 Payments	463	415 200
(f) S. 13 Outstanding as at 1.7.82	N/A	See Note 3
30.6.83	257	10 351 402
 2. <u>Accident Year</u>	<u>Incurred Movement in 1982-83</u>	
1979-80		\$ 262 639
1980-81		\$ 237 311
1981-82		<u>\$ 208 492</u>
		<u>\$ 708 442</u>

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS RECEIVED

	No.	\$
3. Benefits paid in excess of limits per MACA (Other than Common Law)	1	10 000

NOTES:

- (1) These figures do not include adjustments for IBNR, IBNER and actuarial adjustments.
- (2) Particular care is needed in interpreting the statistics of numbers of claims as many claims appear under more than one head of benefit and in many-cases the same claim would appear under both "outstandings" and "payments".
- (3) Figures disaggregated by head of benefit are not now available at these dates as the computer system in use at the time was a continuous update system which meant that historical data was continuously replaced by current data. An attempt has been made to recalculate the figure by estimation, and this has yielded an aggregate figure of \$7.9m for the three missing items contained.

TIO - Claims under Motor Accident Compensation Scheme

23 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. For the period 1 July 1983 to 30 March 1984, in respect of claims incurred under the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme, how much was (a) paid out in common law awards to non-Territorians and how many claims did this involve, (b) set aside for common law awards to non-Territorians and how many claims does this involve, (c) paid out under section 5 of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and how many claims did this involve, (d) set aside for claims under section 5 of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and how many claims does this involve; (e) paid out under section 13 and how many claims did this involve, and (f) set aside for claims under section 13 and how many claims does this involve?
2. For that period, excluding common law awards to non-Territorians, how many payouts by the TIO under the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme involved benefits in excess of the limits set in the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act?

ANSWER

	1 July 1983 - 30 March 1984 (1)	
	No. (2)	\$
1. (a) Common Law - Non-Territorians Payments	10	53 750
(b) Common Law - Non-Territorians Outstandings as at 1.7.83	78	1 089 544
30.3.84	120	3 391 074
(c) Common Law - Non-Territorians Payments	54	956 259
(d) Common Law - Non-Territorians Outstandings as at 1.7.83	483	5 983 760
30.3.84	665	8 053 002
(e) S. 13 Payments	546	446 607

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS RECEIVED

(f) S. 13 Outstanding as at 1.7.83	197	5 930 466
30.3.84	257	10 351 402
2. Benefits paid in excess of limits per MACA (Other than Common Law)	1	10 000

NOTES:

- (1) These figures do not include adjustments for IBNR, IBNER and actuarial adjustments.
- (2) Particular care is needed in interpreting the statistics of numbers of claims as amny claims appear under more than one head of benefit and in many cases the same claim would appear under both "outstandings" and "payments".

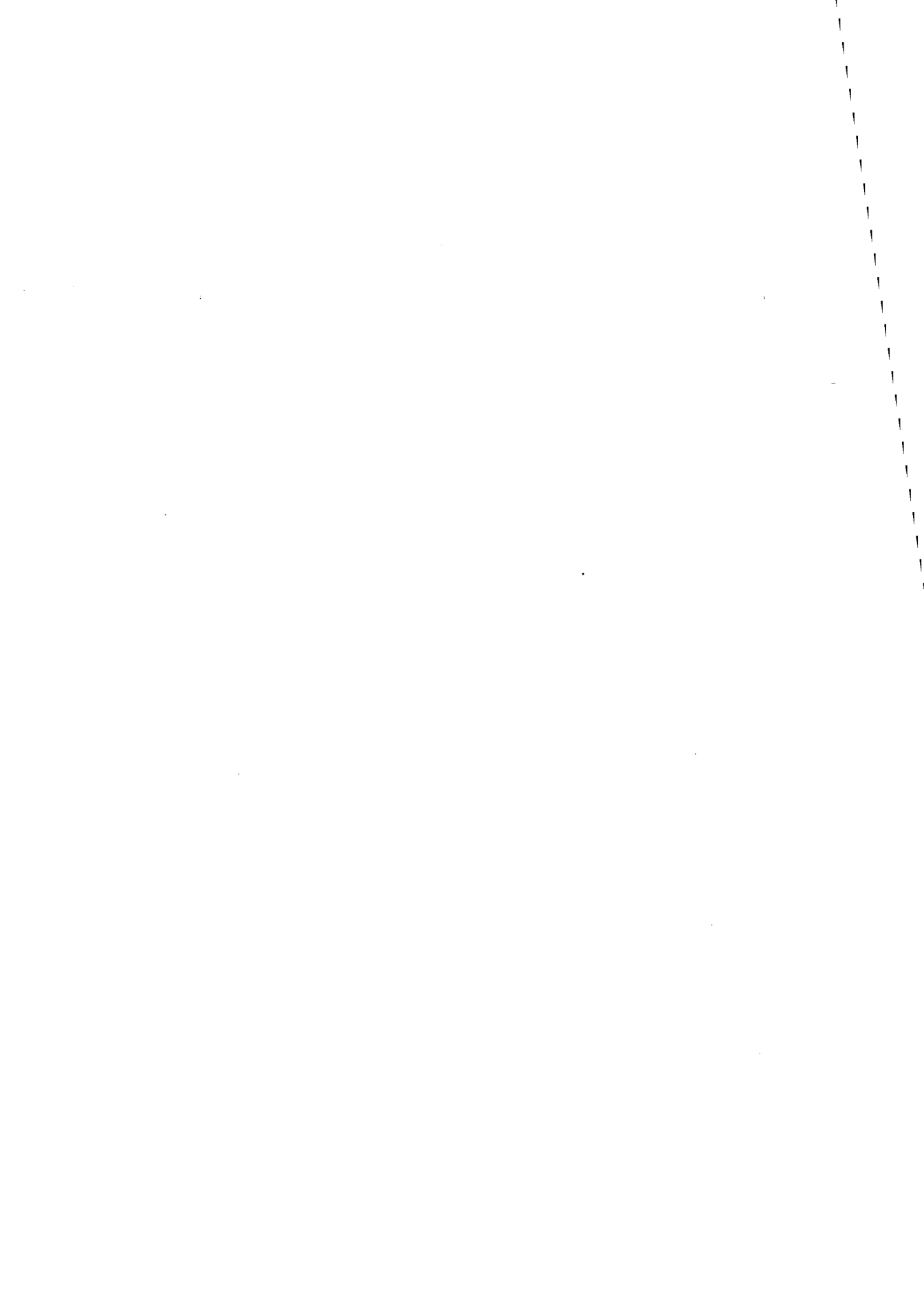
Leader of the Opposition - Air Travel

32 Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many trips did the Leader of the Opposition take on commercial aircraft in the Northern Territory from 1 June 1981 to 31 May 1984?
2. How many of such trips were (a) first class, and (b) economy class?

ANSWER

1. 62.
2. (a) 12, and (b) 50.



Alice Springs Recreation Lake

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the inquiry into the proposed lake in Alice Springs been completed, and when does he anticipate receiving a copy of that report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot help the Assembly with regard to the inquiry itself. For all I know, the inquiry may still be proceeding. I saw the chairman of the inquiry into the proposed recreation lake for Alice Springs whilst I was in Alice Springs last week for the consecration of the new Anglican Church of the Ascension. In the crowd of people, I did not have the opportunity to speak to the chairman of the inquiry so I was not able to find out what the situation was. But I have been told that it is likely that the inquiry will have its report ready for the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and for the Northern Territory government by the end of July. That is the situation as best I am aware of it at the present time.

NT Government Contingent Liabilities

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Will he undertake to provide this Assembly with a brief outlining the total contingent liabilities entered into by the Northern Territory government in respect of its loans, guarantees, deferred payments scheme and whatever to date and, in light of the current negotiations in respect of further developments, also provide the projected total contingent liabilities expected by the end of the 1984-85 financial year?

ANSWER

I can undertake that the Assembly will be advised of certain information relating to the contingent liabilities of the government in the period up to date. The honourable member mentioned matters which might relate to agreements currently under negotiation. As I understand it, the proposals he is referring to are indeed under negotiation at this time. It would be inappropriate to try to assess the extent of government contingent liability when these matters have not been finalised. Of course, that does not apply to other projects which the government has announced and entered into agreements on in its attempt to improve the Northern Territory economy by the expansion of tourism infrastructure and other economic development proposals. I will undertake to provide information to the Leader of the Opposition during the course of the sittings.

Ashmore Reef Fishing Area

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

What is the current status of the Ashmore Reef area in relation to commercial fishing by Northern Territory fishermen? I understand that the Australian government last year proposed that the area be closed to us and that Indonesians only be permitted to fish the area.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as honourable members will be aware, the status of the Ashmore Reef area and Cartier Islands has been a matter of concern to the Northern

Territory government since 1 July 1978. I think it was on 30 June that year that the Commonwealth, with a smooth sleight of hand, took those islands out of the jurisdiction of the Northern Territory where they had been for some time. We have always maintained the position that the islands should be placed back under Territory jurisdiction for administrative purposes.

The notice of intention to declare the reserve was published by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service in the Northern Territory News on 8 February 1983. The reserve was proclaimed in Commonwealth Gazette G32 of 16 August 1983 and comments were sought from the Department of Primary Production in the Northern Territory by a letter of 15 November 1983 in regard to the future management of the reserve as far as fisheries were concerned. The Department of Primary Production responded to the request by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and made the following points for consideration in the management program: firstly, to provide for the continuation of commercial development of demersal reef fish and pelagic fish resources within the proposed reserve area; secondly, to note in the zoning of the reserve around the islands for commercial fishing that demersal reef fish resources are located in water depths that are less than 15 m and that the pelagic fish resources, in the main, are highly migratory and not specific to the reserve area; and, thirdly, to recognise the exercise of appropriate Commonwealth, state and or Northern Territory fisheries legislation under which commercial fishing activities are regulated within the proposed reserve area. That is pretty reasonable because fleets from the states would be involved in fishing in that area.

Mr Speaker, the upshot of all that was that the area was proclaimed as a reserve on 16 August 1983. As a result, Australian commercial fishermen are not permitted to fish within the boundaries of the reserve. However, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Indonesian governments, dated 7 November 1974, Indonesian traditional fishermen are still permitted entry to the reserve area. The reserve, I might add, has an area of about 580 km².

Mr Speaker, the matter of great concern to our government is that our own fishermen are precluded from the area in an unreasonable and arbitrary way. The process of consultation that we very sincerely wished to become involved in was no more than a request for advice. When the advice was received about our concerns, it was set aside. For all the talk about consultation that goes on in Canberra, there are a few people around in that bureaucracy who still have not got the message from the Prime Minister that consultation is a part of his government's modus operandi.

Financing Arrangements for Hotel-Casino Complexes

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister recently made some statements on ABC radio relating, in a broad way, to the financial aspects of the financing arrangements of the new hotel-casino complexes. I want clarification of this. Do the financing arrangements in respect to the hotel-casino complexes in Darwin and Alice Springs require the Northern Territory government, either directly or through any of its agencies, to provide substantial loans at reduced rates of interest and or direct equity involvement in the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the Treasurer said a few minutes ago, negotiations in relation to this project are still going on at this time. In fact, officials

of the Northern Territory government, the Northern Territory Treasury, the Northern Territory Development Corporation and lawyers appointed by the Northern Territory government are presently sitting around a table in London attempting to refine the various broad proposals that have been agreed to in principle between the NTDC, Federal Hotels and the 2 groups which are proposing to enter into a partnership to be the new operators of the casino. They are the Sands Hotel Casino from Atlantic City, which is a subsidiary of the Pratt Hotels chain of the United States, and Aspinalls of the United Kingdom. Of course, over all that, provisions must be made for the establishment of a property trust. That is the thinking at the present.

However, as I think I said on radio or, certainly, at the press conference when I announced these proposals, although the current thinking is for a property trust, after the operation has been set up and has been running for some time - I think 7 years - the broad mass of Territorians, and for that matter Australians, will have an option to enter into the project by the issuing of shares publicly. That could take place. It may be decided in London, for all I know, that the property trust should be floated immediately. Obviously, it would take something like 12 months to carry out the necessary prerequisites to a public float.

On the other hand, the meeting in London this week may decide that a public company is a better vehicle than a property trust because 1 or 2 of our advisers think that a public company would be a better vehicle. Mr Speaker, it is a very complex arrangement. As I said on radio, it is like a pot of soup. Certainly, we have some water in the pot and we have most of the ingredients on the table nearby ready to put into the pot but a tremendous amount of negotiation has yet to occur. As I realise now, I optimistically and ambitiously said that I would like to have a seminar in relation to this project for all members of this Assembly as soon as possible after this sittings. I think that it is very likely that it will take several more months even to reach the heads of agreement stage in these negotiations. The major problem is the distance between the parties as 1 party is in France, 1 party in London and another party in the United States.

Mr B. Collins: I do not want to hear about your social life.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I wish I was going to some of the parties. But for you keeping me here, Mr Speaker, I could be at this negotiation in London laying down the law.

The various parties to this agreement are widely scattered. The difficulty is bringing them together. We have managed to get them together in London this week and they are all talking. I expect that substantial advances will be made. I was phoned this morning by the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation who advised me that the terms of an agreement with the operators were getting closer to finalisation.

Might I just digress, Mr Speaker? I heard somewhere in the last week that there is concern in relation to the houses on Myilly Point. When I say the 'houses on Myilly Point', I mean the old houses. Let me say this: 1 house belongs to the National Trust and the Northern Territory has said that, come what may, that house will be preserved. Another block of land belongs to the Northern Territory and the rest belongs to the Commonwealth. We are negotiating with the Commonwealth about the future of those properties. I can assure members that, when I know what the results of those negotiations are, I will be happy to inform the people of the Northern Territory and, for that matter, the members of this Assembly if it is sitting. At this stage, nothing final can be

said about any of the properties other than the one known as Audit House which will be preserved on Myilly Point.

The Leader of the Opposition wanted to know if there would be an equity contribution by the Northern Territory. What the Leader of the Opposition is referring to is whether the Northern Territory government will actually put any of the taxpayers' money into this project. I would have thought that, as a good member of the Australian Labor Party, he would have been delighted if the Northern Territory government were to take an equity in this project. I can say that there are no plans, at this stage, for the Northern Territory to inject any cash into the project on a long-term basis. It may be that the Northern Territory government will have to borrow funds in the early stage of the project to provide a float for it. Any amount of money that the Northern Territory government borrows or provides in any way - for instance, funds for roads or other service facilities for the project - will be charged against the project. Whilst one could not say that the Northern Territory government will not put any money into the project in that sense, at this stage it is not contemplating investing in the project. The Northern Territory government would be looking to recover any funds put into it as a charge against the project. In an interim phase, which may be of several years, probably the Northern Territory government will also have to underwrite certain loans to the project because it will not be an income-earning situation, at least on the old hospital site. Certainly, we hope that, when the new operators move in to occupy the existing casino in Darwin, some changes will be made that will improve the situation there - perhaps improve the cash-flow situation and the viability and profitability of the Mindil Beach Casino. It is also hoped that it will be marketed effectively to what might be called a higher level of financially-equipped clientele.

Mr Speaker, I hope I have answered the specific question the Leader of the Opposition asked me. The Northern Territory is not proposing to invest in this project at this stage. The Northern Territory will be seeking, as far as possible, to recover any outgoings that it may have as charges against the project in terms of guarantees and so on for an initial period.

Financing Arrangements for Hotel-Casino Complexes

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I direct a supplementary question to the Chief Minister. I am sure that, when I remind him of what he said on ABC radio, he will understand why the question needs to be clarified.

The Chief Minister said on ABC radio, and he has just confirmed it, that there is to be no equity involvement and that we will do this, that and the other. What he said was this: 'We are going to have a marginal involvement in the project. We may have to build a few roads and things and, for that, we are going to receive a third of the profits. That is a really good deal for the Territory'. Mr Speaker, I am sure the Chief Minister will agree that that is a very intriguing statement. Could he clarify how he can be so specific about the level of profits for no investment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I said in my earlier answer to the Leader of the Opposition, and as I said on the same radio program, at this stage the whole project is a pot of soup with the ingredients. Negotiations are going on at present and the Leader of the Opposition may rest assured that we are attempting to get the best possible deal that we can for the Northern Territory.

Mr B. Collins: I would like to know how you get a third of the profits for no investment because I would be in that like a flash?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I will be delighted to make a detailed statement in relation to the project just as soon as I can but it is impossible to do so at present because I expect the negotiations to take several further months to complete. As I said, the Northern Territory will be seeking to gain every possible commercial advantage whilst obviously having to bear in mind that the project has to be commercially viable as far as the other participants are concerned.

Protection of Flora

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer to some recent public comment in respect of a certain banyan tree in my electorate. Does she have any plans to introduce legislation to protect trees and native flora?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I too have heard about the incident regarding this grand old tree and I understand that another tree was chopped down in the city area. It was with some personal regret that I heard about these incidents. Mr Speaker, native flora in the Northern Territory is protected by existing law only in part. Vegetation is protected on parks and reserves declared under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act. However, there is need for some specific regulation. On other land, various acts provide some protection. For example, the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, section 99, provides protection to plants in certain areas, including parks, plantations, orchards and private gardens. The Summary Offences Act provides broader cover making it an offence to steal virtually any plant without the landholder's permission. Even with the landholder's permission, other legislation gives some protection; for example, the Forestry Act when the plant can be said to produce timber or some other forest product. However, the Conservation Commission has recognised some legal deficiency with regard to flora protection and has sought approval recently to submit proposals for amending legislation. I anticipate receiving that advice shortly, Mr Speaker, and it is likely that a bill dealing with flora protection will be introduced later in the year.

Teacher for Outstations in the Utopia Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware that the only teacher providing education to children on outstations in the Utopia area has been removed without any consultation with the community? Given that all these children are once again not receiving any schooling, when does he intend to get a teacher out there?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will answer that question at a later time.

Walanguru School

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What arrangements has he made to provide desperately-needed facilities for the Walanguru school in the Kintore Ranges?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for giving me some warning this morning that he would raise the issue of Kintore. The issue goes back to 1981 and I do not want to get involved with the actual history of it. I am sure that most members in the Assembly would be aware of the on-going saga of the Kintore community in relation to the provision of facilities. I guess that there is still concern about the stability of that particular community, and there are indeed a number of anthropologists who probably would argue that the community itself is a mobile one.

But leaving that aside, when I became the Minister for Education, I decided to visit all the schools in the Northern Territory, particularly the outstation schools. One of the concerns that I had in relation to the outstation movement was that to provide schools in those particular areas was a very expensive exercise. It costs something like \$1.7m to provide a school in some of these outstation areas. On top of that, there is also a problem in relation to vandalism. Bearing that in mind, I asked the department to look at ways of establishing schools in these isolated communities in a responsible manner so that the communities themselves and the children in those communities would be able to receive adequate education.

We came up with a concept for providing education facilities in those communities that would take account not only of local input but would also satisfy some of the concerns that we had as a department. The member for MacDonnell may ask why something has not happened to date. At the end of April, I wrote to Senator Susan Ryan asking for approval in principle in relation to this proposed concept. I hand delivered that letter to Senator Susan Ryan on 27 April when I attended an Australian Education Council meeting. Sitting next to Senator Ryan was Dr Peter Tannock, the Chairman of the Schools Commission. I made it quite clear to Senator Ryan that I needed approval in principle before we could actually discuss the proposal with the communities themselves. It would be no good becoming involved in discussions with a community if we could not obtain approval in principle from the Commonwealth Minister for Education. All I required to get things moving was some response from the minister and then we would have acted.

As far as the current situation is concerned, Kintore is approximately 280 km west of Papunya and was established in 1981 when the Pintubi Luritja people moved there from Papunya. In February this year, there were just over 300 people at Kintore. The long-term prediction is for a permanent population of approximately 200 with a number of outstations clustered around Kintore. For the last 2 years, the community has had the services of 2 visiting teachers from Papunya operating out of a shed erected by the community. To meet the educational requirements of people at Kintore, the following model is proposed: a head teacher and an adult educator together with a substantial number of Aboriginal teachers. These teachers would be qualified under the existing arrangements for Aboriginal assistant teachers whose training is provided through the Batchelor College program and would be located in Alice Springs to facilitate the provision of teacher-training in the region. A school of this type would be in keeping with the philosophy behind the outstation movement in that the bulk of the education would be provided by local people and basic buildings would be built by the communities using as much local material as possible, with guidance from the adult educator. The adult education centre would be built first and consultancy advice from the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs, which is already being used by the Kintore community, would be available. I am sure the member for MacDonnell is aware of some of the appropriate technology that is being used

out there and the use that has been made of that particular facility in Alice Springs. The school buildings would be multi-purpose so that the community could use them when the school was not operating. They would be controlled by the Northern Territory school councils legislation. The major role of the head teacher would be teacher training.

At Kintore, using this model, I would propose one head teacher, one adult educator and 7 Aboriginal teaching staff. In addition, a training package is proposed which would be as follows. While the community is building the school, they would release 7 staff to attend a RATE program at a suitable location - for example, Papunya or Yuendumu - so that, when the school is ready to open, there would be 7 Aboriginal staff with at least 1 year's training. Whilst this was going on, the visiting teacher would still be employed plus the 3 teaching assistants employed now under DAA funding. The community would then undertake to send 3 of the 10 teaching assistants away each year to Batchelor for training so that, at the end of 5 years, there would be a full complement of 3-year-trained Aboriginal staff.

Mr Speaker, Kintore is on top of the list of capital projects for which we are seeking funds from the Schools Commission under its program of capital grants for projects in Aboriginal communities. The Department of Education is planning to make provision for recurrent funding of education facilities at Kintore in the 1984-85 budget. I might say here that, since I visited Kintore, I have provided some of the items that were requested. I have already provided a cabinet for the storage of books and also poisons to deal with problems that they are having with white ants. Also, we have looked at the problems visiting teachers are experiencing in relation to accommodation. If the honourable member for MacDonnell is aware of anything that I say that I will do in those areas that is not carried out in a reasonable period of time, I ask him to contact me because I am not able to keep close contact with those particular communities. As far as the establishment of education facilities at Kintore is concerned, this government is interested. We have a responsibility to the people to provide education facilities in those areas. If Senator Susan Ryan would answer my letter, we might be able to get on with the job.

Expenditure on Upgrading of Stuart Highway

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the federal member's claim that the Stuart Highway is in need of upgrading, can he advise the Assembly of the total amount of money spent on upgrading the highway in recent years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not think that we really need the federal member, Mr Reeves, to tell us that the Stuart Highway needs upgrading. Indeed, it was his meddling for political purposes which caused a great hiatus in the cash flow in respect of that project. I would like to touch on a couple of rather frightening issues which arise out of that meddling. However, to answer the question specifically, contracts let to date are as follows. On the Stuart Highway, between the 915 km and 945 km marks north of Tennant Creek, the contract was awarded to SBS Constructions for the sum of \$2.342m. This represents a 4% increase over the previous lowest tender. For those listening, this is all with the compliments of one John Reeves. The Stuart Highway, 489 km to 517 km near Larrimah, was awarded to Tripodi Constructions for \$1.817m, representing a 7.2% increase on the previous lowest tender. The Stuart Highway between Howard Springs and Batchelor turnoff went to Henry and Walker for \$4.72m. We were able to negotiate the original tender price. Mr Speaker, in respect of the

Stuart Highway from 1323 km to 1344 km near Aileron, this has now been awarded to McMahon Constructions for the tender price of \$1.755m, representing a 13.3% increase on the previous lowest tender price. The net result of all this, apart from those massive imposts which have been placed upon the public, has been - thanks again to Mr Reeves - a shortfall of expenditure this year as a result of approvals not being ready before May of this year instead of 12 months ago and a lack of spending on these projects in the order of \$2.5m this financial year alone. I give thanks once again to the person who is supposed to represent the Northern Territory in Canberra.

There is a further project: the Stuart Highway between 647 km and 686 km near Dunmarra, an area that is in desperate need of upgrading. The original tender price for that work was \$2 151 441. The lowest negotiated possible price as a result of the meddling of Mr Reeves and the connivance of the federal Minister for Transport, the Hon Peter Morris, came in at a cool \$2.657m which represents an increase of 23.5% on the original tender price. If the member for the Northern Territory thinks that that sort of slug on the taxpayers' purse is acceptable to him and the federal Minister for Transport thinks it acceptable, it certainly is not to me. I have embargoed the issuing of the contract. In conscience, I feel I have absolutely no alternative but to re-tender that project in its entirety in the hope that we can get a more balanced and sensible price in the interests of Northern Territorians.

Mr Speaker, as a result of the activities of the federal member and his collusion with his Commonwealth ministerial colleague, not only have we seen a delay in expenditure, a cost in jobs, a cost in cash flow to the Northern Territory, a cost in money circulating throughout the Northern Territory in excess of \$2.5m this financial year alone, we have seen also an increase of probably another \$1.2m in respect of slugs on the taxpayer because of this stupidity.

Alienation of Gosse Bluff

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to my question during the previous sittings in which I asked whether it was the government's intention to alienate Anarula or Gosse Bluff. Also, I refer the Chief Minister to his answer in which he informed this Assembly, inter alia, that the government had not alienated Anarula. Why did the Chief Minister mislead the Assembly in that way and will he apologise forthwith?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have in front of me a transcript of what I said at the last sittings but I would be happy to study it at some later time and see if I did mislead this Assembly. I seem to recall having heard some sort of report by the member for MacDonnell that I did this earlier this year. From memory, at that time, I had a look at the position and checked out whether in fact this particular place, Gosse Bluff, had been alienated. At the previous sittings, I think I made it pretty clear to the honourable member for MacDonnell that I did not, in fact, know the exact position. I know now that it has been alienated. Mr Speaker, if I did mislead this Assembly, which I certainly would not admit to at this stage without looking at the transcript again, then any misleading was inadvertent. Perhaps the member for MacDonnell could mark it and send it over to me since he is waving it around like some sort of talisman over there. If he would be good enough to put a marker in the page, I will study it without delay and we will see what happens then.

Freight Handling Costs within Northern Territory

Mr LEO to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Has the freight inquiry yet been successful in gathering the information that it requires in regard to freight handling costs between Darwin and other ports in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately I have to say the freight inquiry has not yet completed its full investigation due to problems in obtaining information from certain barge operators. I have been informed by the chairman of the inquiry that now only one particular company has to give information to the inquiry.

Mr Smith: There were only 2 of them.

Mr MANZIE: That's right. Half of it has been done; it is a 50% success rate at this stage. However, the chairman assures me that he believes the inquiry will be completed by the end of this month and he will be able to provide the report at that stage. Unfortunately, circumstances beyond my control have caused this inquiry to run on for such a long time. I think that, when it is completed, it will have been a most exhaustive inquiry.

Sales Tax on Freight

Mr D.W. COLLINS to TREASURER

What response has he had to his request to the federal Treasurer for the removal of sales tax on freight costs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member refers to the imposition of sales tax on the freight component of goods sold in the Northern Territory. At the last sittings, I undertook to write to the federal Treasurer and ask when the election undertaking, given by the ALP prior to the last federal election, to abolish sales tax on freight would be implemented. On 28 May, I received a response from the federal Treasurer. It consisted of a couple of pages telling us about the problems involved - problems which we were pretty much aware of, Mr Speaker. This government has been concerned about this unfair imposition on Territorians for a long time. On a number of occasions, we raised the matter with previous federal governments without success.

If I may have the Assembly's indulgence, I will read 2 paragraphs of the letter which sum up the Treasurer's point of view:

The matter has been examined exhaustively, not only by various governments but also by the 1975 Taxation Review Committee under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Asprey. The committee's view was that equity could not be achieved in the matter of freight charges without sacrificing simplicity and certainty and without unduly increasing compliance costs and the costs of collection of the tax. The committee recommended that no change be made in the present law.

That was in 1975.

A further consideration in relation to the exclusion proposals would

be the substantial cost to revenue, especially as any proposal would not necessarily be limited to freight costs incurred in transporting goods to isolated areas. The proposal would have to cover all goods and all geographical areas. In view of the difficult budgetary circumstances which face the government, I am not confident that the implementation of such a wide-ranging proposal will be possible in the near future.

Mr Speaker, I guess that really says no to my question: 'Is the government going to fulfil its election undertaking?' I think the disappointing part about it for Territorians is that, firstly, there is nothing new in the Treasurer's letter about the administrative difficulties involved in not charging sales tax on the freight component of the price of wholesale items. It has all been known for a very long time. The Treasurer himself quoted an inquiry in 1975. So nothing new was brought to light by his explanation. One wonders why some governments persist in making undertakings - flat, unequivocal, unconditional undertakings - as the Labor Party did prior to the last federal election that, if the ALP were elected, it would abolish sales tax on freight. You do not have to be very intelligent, Mr Speaker, to see that the promise was in no way clouded by any 'ifs' or 'buts'. There was no 'subject to its practicality'. There were none of those things - just a flat statement that it would abolish sales tax on freight. Now we have a letter that simply says it is all too difficult. It very politely says: 'I am not confident that the implementation of such a wide-ranging proposal will be possible in the near future'. I expect that Territorians will accept this sad news with the same sort of distaste for governments which make these promises as they did for the whole list of other promises that the ALP gave to them prior to the last federal election when it sought their votes.

School Truancy

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What is the Department of Education doing to combat the increasing incidence of truancy amongst schoolchildren and are there any plans to employ full-time truancy officers?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question. Truancy is something that we, as a government, are very concerned about. I do not think it occurs only here in the Northern Territory. Truancy is a very real problem. It relates not only to urban schools but also to Aboriginal communities. Because we are concerned, we have decided that, from next semester, we will introduce an intensive television, radio and newspaper campaign. The reason for this is to alert students and parents to the anti-social nature of truancy. It has been a problem for some time. At this stage, we do not intend to appoint full-time truancy officers. But, once the campaign starts, we will have authorised officers.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, of saying to parents that they have a responsibility as far as the education of their children is concerned. There is no doubt that children who attend schools benefit markedly. This is something that I have found in the Aboriginal communities particularly. In answer to the honourable member's question, a campaign will be commenced at the beginning of the next semester. At a later date, we will be looking at truancy problems in relation to Aboriginal communities.

Darwin Police Centre Project

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Is it correct that variations to the value of more than \$2m to the contract on the Darwin Police Centre project have been approved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as you would know, I am always keen to answer questions because I receive so few of them from the honourable members opposite. It is with a great deal of reluctance that I pass the responsibility for answering any question that is addressed to me to the minister who is rightfully responsible. In this case, I think that I will have to, Mr Speaker. It gives me great pain to do so but, as the honourable member for Millner will be aware on reflection, the administration of contracts in relation to the construction of buildings such as the police headquarters lies within the responsibility of the Minister for Transport and Works. Unfortunately, expenditure of the nature referred to by the member for Millner would be authorised by my colleague rather than myself.

Darwin Police Centre Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, I redirect the question.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not know exact figures but there has been a significant rise and fall on this project. This building had a project cost of some \$12.8m - that is, the project cost on the tender documents. Of course, rise and fall never means literally what it says. All it means is rise and rise. Very rarely have I known a contract to actually fall in respect of the tender price. But, given a \$12.8m project price, a rise and fall in the order of \$2m over an 18-20 month project period could possibly be a real expectation.

As to it being a result of variations, I am not certain of exact details but I would not be surprised if there have not been variations to the building. It is very standard. I cannot recall a single school built in the Northern Territory before my time as Minister for Education, during it and after it, where there were no variations made at the request of the Department of Education, teachers' advisory groups or parent groups. When he was general secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers' Federation, the honourable member would have been the first to argue for such variations and the first to condemn us if we did not grant them. It is the normal procedure. If, indeed, it is in the order of \$2m - and let us call it a \$13m contract - that would not be unusual. If the honourable member wishes to push the point for a particular reason which escapes me, I can provide him with details if he wishes.

Road Safety Council Appointments

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise me when the appointments of the new chairman and members of the Road Safety Council will take place?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the honourable member's great interest in the Road Safety Council. He has been a member of that council and served it very well for quite some time. I understand his concern. You can only appoint people to those councils where membership is called for via a public advertisement and people appropriately representing the community apply. There were a good number of applicants for positions on the Road Safety Council. However, all governments and ministers try as much as they can to provide a balanced representation, not only in respect of people of particular skills and from different backgrounds but in respect of particular geographical locations in order to have a Territory-wide basis. That has been the difficulty. I am not querying the standard of applicants; that has been very good indeed. It is just that there has been some difficulty in providing for a balanced representation on that council. I intend to hold a meeting with the officers this afternoon or tomorrow to try to finalise this matter once and for all. I expect to inform people of their membership or otherwise of the council by the end of this week.

Darwin Performing Arts Centre

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Has the Territory government been asked to intervene in or be guarantor in any way for the outstanding debts incurred by Asia North, the developers of the Darwin Performing Arts Centre project?

ANSWER

The subject of government guarantees is referred normally to the NTDC, the arm of government which handles this form of business, rather than to myself as Treasurer. I suggest that the question be directed to the Minister for Industrial Development.

Darwin Performing Arts Centre

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, I redirect my question.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, just before I answer this question, something occurred to me in relation to the question asked by the member for Millner regarding police headquarters after I sat down. The term 'variation' rather than 'rise and fall' registered with me. I recall now that either the Fire Service Headquarters or the Emergency Service Headquarters has been added to that contract since its commencement. That was for an amount of either \$750 000 or \$850 000. I wanted to pass that information on as quickly as I could. It is something that I know about because I had to sign an application for a certificate of expediency at the time. I should say that that was approximately 6-9 months ago so I hope that any lapse of memory will be excused by the honourable member for Millner.

Mr Speaker, the situations in relation to the Darwin complex and the performing arts complex are quite separate. The performing arts complex is being built directly at the cost of the Northern Territory government. The funds are paid into a trust account and paid out to the contractors as they perform in

accordance with certificates that are, no doubt, certified by the clerk of works on the job. Asia North has approached the government from time to time in relation to financial support for the hotel project. Asia North has seen its position alter since the commencement of the project. Its financial acceptability to lending institutions has altered as a result of the fact that the government, together with other entrepreneurs, has since been instrumental in establishing the Sheraton Hotel project on the Manolas site adjacent to the Northern Territory News in Mitchell Street. Of course, recently, we have seen the announcement of the old hospital site development which the Leader of the Opposition questioned me about earlier this morning. I think it has to be borne in mind that the assistance that the Northern Territory government gave to the Esplanade project was relatively minimal. We made a loan of \$800 000 or thereabouts. I think we provided one of the household blocks of land that we owned or closed a road. I am not sure. But it was something like that.

Of course, the financiers with whom Asia North has been dealing have queried the situation because of the announcement of additional major hotel projects in Darwin. Bankers and financiers tend to become extremely nervous. Unfortunately, they do not have the confidence in the Northern Territory government's ability to develop the tourist industry in the Territory that I am sure that all honourable members have. After all, the clamps have been put on the mining industry in the Territory in one way or another through various policies and pieces of legislation and the tourist industry provides the only effective short-term method of creating jobs in large numbers. Indeed, by the hue and cry that is being raised in relation to tourism training at the moment, it would seem that there is a massive demand in the industry for the training of people to work in it.

Suffice to say that what has happened is that Asia North - if that is the company and I am not sure it is - has had its situation changed and not entirely of its own volition. I should add here that Asia North has, I am informed, injected upwards of \$25m of capital into the project from its own sources. I say that as information conveyed to me; I do not have hard evidence of that. Should I need to, in due course I will seek hard evidence that Asia North has put \$25m - not \$25m that it has borrowed from someone else - subscribed by its shareholders into the project. As I understand it, Asia North's bankers - and no formal approach has been made, I hasten to add - are feeling rather nervous that circumstances have changed. Mr Speaker, it is possible that the government may receive an application from that company for some sort of support to enable...

Mr B. Collins: 15 minutes. I knew it was coming.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I believe that you and other honourable members are entitled to know the background of this project. I think the Asia North project started back in 1979 or 1980 and things have changed since then. I might add that, as I understand it, Australian banks have been approached to lend money to the project. I am told that the shareholders have subscribed up to 50% of the total capital required for the project and Australian banks have refused. Mr Speaker, usually you can borrow money if you are prepared to subscribe upwards of a third or perhaps even a quarter but Australian banks apparently have so little confidence in the Territory that they have veered away from support for this project. I will not name any of them here although I understand that the 3 largest Australian banks have been approached over the years. The financial institutions with which the company is dealing at the moment are a Swiss bank and a subsidiary of the largest bank in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. As I say, I do not have knowledge of any formal approach but I believe that the company may well be approaching the government not for cash but for some comfort in relation to the situation that the bankers say that they have found themselves in.

BTB Scheme

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

At the moment the Commonwealth government is withholding \$1.6m in compensation payments for the BTB scheme until the matter is finally resolved in the Northern Territory. Can he finally break his complete silence on this matter to give this Assembly an explanation, either during question time this morning or by way of a ministerial statement, as to how the gross mismanagement of this scheme occurred and \$2m was overspent, and give a report on the progress of the police investigation into the matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to advise the honourable member that the earlier problems that the government had with the BTB program and the relationship with the Commonwealth have been resolved between myself and the federal Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Kerin. A series of meetings have been held between myself and the federal minister and our officers to resolve the difficulties that we both perceived and which had to be overcome so that this year's program could proceed. At the most recent meeting, 2 or 3 weeks ago, the federal minister agreed to release \$6m which is the Commonwealth portion of the program. \$4.4m of that was to be made available immediately and \$1.6m was to be withheld until final audit and investigation was confirmed on some of the properties involved. The federal minister was looking for an undertaking from the government that the funds were spent, in fact, on the BTB program, and quite rightly so. Some people have made allegations that the funds were spent on other programs. That was totally incorrect. We are now going through a process of finalising the audit on the properties involved and the Northern Territory hopes that the remaining \$1.6m required to put the program into the best possible position will be forthcoming.

Mr Speaker, as honourable members would be aware, the Territory is committed very heavily to a substantial program this financial year. We are also committed very strongly to putting to rest some of the nonsense that is spread around the countryside by the current federal member and others who have a great interest in putting the Northern Territory down and trying to reduce our funding at every possible turn. To this end, I will brief honourable members on some of the things that are happening to ensure that the federal government, the cattle industry and other people who ought to be involved are aware of what the Northern Territory is doing about BTEC this year.

In February, in Perth, I proposed to the Western Australian, Queensland and federal ministers that the 4 of us should make an investigation of the practical problems of implementing BTEC in the north of Australia. There is no doubt that the 3 states involved will be very seriously affected by the implementation of the program because some of them will not be able to sustain the program financially. There is no doubt that some properties will become welfare cases. It is important that the federal government and the states be aware of where these properties are and the extent of the problem. All ministers agreed that there was a need to make such a tour and get a feel for the problem. From the Northern Territory's point of view, I was very concerned that the state and federal ministers should understand the practical, geographical and physical difficulties that we have to contend with. At the same time, I was also very concerned that other people involved in the program by virtue of their commitment to funding understand the difficulty with buffalo in the Northern Territory and the need to address that as a separate issue. They should not just say to the Northern Territory that buffalo has nothing to do with them; it is neither a cow nor a beast and does not belong in the BTB

program and that it is the Northern Territory's problem and it can find the money for it. That is a totally unreasonable stance to take.

Mr Speaker, to this end, I have invited the federal minister, the Western Australian minister, Mr Evans, and Mr Turner from Brisbane to meet with the Northern Territory government in Darwin and inspect some of the properties in the program. As well, the Cattle Council of Australia will be meeting in Darwin and the BTEC committee will also be meeting here. We have asked that all the groups come together to have a look at the properties and the difficulties we have. In a telex, I proposed to all of these people that we meet in Darwin, break into groups and visit various parts of the Territory, including specific areas where problems with buffalo exist, so that everybody can be aware of exactly what we are doing.

There is a great myth abroad that the Northern Territory has not done the right thing with its eradication program. I have had to admit that we did get ahead of ourselves but also I am the first to say that everything was done with the desire to eradicate these diseases. It is important that people in Australia, such as members of the cattle industry, who poured millions into this program by way of kill levies, and other governments understand that we are working hard to solve a problem and that we are not squandering money or lying under trees in the bush having a good time. There are people, such as the federal member, who are only too pleased to put forward the view that the Northern Territory is doing the wrong thing.

Mr Speaker, I would like to point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the program in front of us now is becoming one of housekeeping and, to that end, the department has begun a series of seminars. We have brought in people from the South Australian Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Animal Health to participate in these seminars. The first one was held in Tennant Creek a week ago and there will be a further 2 in the Top End shortly. These seminars are being held in-house so that everybody, including those of our neighbours who are part of the program, can be certain about what is happening and the great myth that we are doing the wrong thing can be dispelled. I have to say that the South Australians have not been our greatest supporters in this program. From the first discussions that we had with them last week by involving them in our in-house workshops, we found that not only did they have a lot to contribute on some of the successes that they have had but that they learnt a lot from what the Northern Territory has achieved. We have achieved great things in some places. The program will continue for another 6 or 8 years. We shall find problems as we go because nothing will remain stable for very long. As we make progress and get further down the trail, as happens with any disease control program, the measures have to become tougher and the determination has to become greater in order to eradicate the disease totally.

As to the other matter that the Leader of the Opposition raised about my access to the police report, I have discussed this with the federal minister involved and with the Chief Minister. As soon as the Chief Minister, as minister responsible for police, or the Attorney-General is in a position to lay any charges that could come as a result of that report, I will have access to a copy of it. In the meantime, it will remain a matter for the police.

School Crossing on Larapinta Drive

Mr VALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In view of the concern expressed by parents in the Morris Soak area of

Alice Springs concerning the safety of their children who have to cross Larapinta Drive during peak traffic periods, will his department, in conjunction with the Alice Springs Town Council, be constructing a school crossing on this road?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot advise the member for Braitling if my department, the council and or the Department of Transport and Works will construct a crossing on that very busy road. We are concerned about the safety of children crossing these busy roads. At this stage, I have formed a working party which involves the director of the southern region. I have written to the council asking that it provide 1 member to work with him. I have written also to the Minister for Transport and Works to ask that he address the problems that have been raised in relation to the safety of children crossing these busy roads in the Alice Springs area.

I might say that it was perhaps unfortunate that there were many people using the bus services in Alice Springs who were not entitled to use those services. When the government came to policing policy, those people felt that it was taking something from them which was their right. That is not the case. All the government is doing is policing policy. It is not taking anything away from those children who have a legitimate right to travel on the bus free of charge. When people who have been using a particular system for a period of time are not pulled into line, they see it as a right and, when it is removed, an extremely emotional situation results. I emphasise that there has not been any change in bussing policy. Those people who live outside 1.6 km from a feeder school are entitled to free bussing.

At this stage, I should perhaps read a brief which I have distributed to people who have contacted me and to the Alice Springs Town Council. It spells out this whole situation very clearly. The current policy recognises that it is desirable that parents should be free to send children to schools of their choice. However, if the school chosen is not the one designated by the department as serving the area of residence, then parents are expected to take full responsibility for getting their children to their chosen school. Free charter buses or passes on public transport, where available, are provided for children who live more than 1.6 km away from their designated school. The policy of providing free bussing was jeopardised in Alice Springs because students were travelling on buses when they were not entitled to, either because they lived within the 1.6 km radius or because they were travelling to a school other than their designated school. The department was faced with the situation where overcrowding of a number of runs meant that some buses would have had to be taken off the road for safety reasons or additional buses provided. To provide an extra bus for people travelling outside the policy guidelines would have been unacceptable and, in any event, funds were not available.

Unauthorised use of school buses was posing a safety threat. Because of spiralling costs, there was a threat to the policy itself which is the most generous in Australia. To control usage so that the free bus policy could be preserved, the department began issuing passes to students who had an entitlement. It is important to stress that there has been no change in the bussing policy. The existing policy is simply being enforced. Perhaps I should sound a word of warning to people in the Darwin area that, as far as free bussing is concerned, the policy of the government will be policed from the beginning of the next semester. I would ask all of those parents whose children travel on school buses and who are not legitimately entitled to do so, to consider the matter

before it actually becomes an issue at the beginning of the next semester. It is important. We have a free schooling system; parents are able to send their children to any school of their choice. In order to keep that policy in operation and to allow all of those children access to a school with free bussing, it is important that that policy be policed. I sound a word of warning that the bussing policy of the government will be enforced from the beginning of next semester.

BTB Scheme

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

I failed to get an answer on this question at the last sittings. Leaving aside the police investigation, why and how has his department overspent its BTB budget by 100% or \$2m? If he will not provide that explanation, would he advise this Assembly that, in its role in scrutinising the government's expenditure of public money, it is not in the interests of this Assembly to be given an explanation as to how that occurred? There may indeed be an explanation that I am prepared to accept but I have failed to receive a response to this question despite its being asked 4 times since the beginning of this year. Can he explain how his department overspent its budget by 100% or advise this Assembly as to why it should not be told about it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can say to the honourable member that there were a series of issues that led to the overexpenditure of money on the BTB program. Those issues resulted in a report which was compiled by officers of Treasury and the Public Service Commissioner's Office. I think the report is about an inch thick. To satisfy the honourable member, I will provide him with a written statement - as soon as I can, but certainly in a week or so - of what transpired and how it has been overcome.

Mr B. Collins: It's taken 6 months to get this much.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the honourable member says it has taken him 6 months to get this much. The investigations went on for quite some time and the remedial checks and balances that needed to be put into the system have been progressively put into place over that time. Probably, it has not been appropriate up until now to let him have the information.

Assistant Teachers in Aboriginal Schools

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What is the situation regarding the provision of assistant teachers in Aboriginal schools in light of Commonwealth funding reductions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is my intention to ensure that we are able to continue to provide the best possible education services in outback communities. I have made that quite clear to honourable members on other occasions. The lack of a decision in relation to continued funding for assistant teachers is of grave concern to us. Indeed, I have written to Senator Ryan about this particular problem and the Chief Minister has written to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the issue. It is important that we have funding on this particular project. I will be making a statement this morning on this issue, Mr Speaker.

NTEC Subsidy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The NTEC subsidy formerly applied to Nhulunbuy. When will the subsidy be reapplied?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I wrote to the honourable member last week advising him that discussions are continuing between NTEC and the company concerning the subsidy and other matters he has raised with me in the Assembly. If the discussions are complete, I will be happy to advise him forthwith about the results and, if they are not, I will let him know as soon as the results are available to me.

Public Transport in Alice Springs

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer him to a previous question in relation to pedestrian crossings across Larapinta Drive and to his answer about school buses in Alice Springs. What public transport does the minister envisage for Alice Springs?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is out of order.

Highways Control Plan

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for LANDS

Could he explain the effect of the new highways control plan?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members may have noticed that notification was given in the press recently that planning control now exists over most of the Territory highways. The notice was of an intention to gazette the formalised procedures. The intention is to control development within 500 m on either side of the Territory's main roads. The roads concerned are the Stuart, Barkly, Victoria, Plenty, Lasseter and Carpentaria Highways and the Gorge Road at Katherine. Those towns and areas throughout the Northern Territory which are already covered by town plans are not included in this particular action. Land uses which will be permitted by the highways control plan are agriculture, detached dwelling, forestry, sports and recreation. All other uses, including advertising structures and service stations, will require a development application to be made to the Minister for Lands for consent. Development which existed prior to the introduction of the highways control plan will be unaffected by the new plan and may remain in use indefinitely. However, should a person wish to expand existing development, ministerial consent will be necessary except, of course, where that expansion is a use which is permitted under the new highways control plan.

The reason the government thought it necessary to take such action is that there are a couple of blatant examples on our highways already - wrecking yards which are usually developed out of towns and close to highways because that is where their best access is. Once these establishments get into place, normally they are terribly untidy and unsightly. We have been spending a great deal on beautifying the approaches to towns in the Northern Territory over the past few years and we will continue to do that.

Our highways tend to meander through the natural scrubland of the Northern Territory. Not all of it is attractive but at least it is more sightly in its natural state than the likes of junk yards and transportation depots. We are not saying that, under this highways control plan, such activities will be totally prohibited within 500 m each side of a highway. What we are saying is that an application must be made and a request must be put forward for the plans of the development so that we can adequately screen what are considered to be visually undesirable activities by physical barriers or landscaping or whatever. In some cases, we may be able to encourage owners to set them a little bit further away from the highway than they would otherwise propose. That is the sole reason for this plan. The government takes this action somewhat reluctantly.

Certainly, I am not looking for any additional work as Minister for Lands in requiring applications of this nature but we feel that it is in the interests of the Northern Territory. Once a scar like this appears, it is usually there for decades and becomes increasingly annoying both to locals and passing traffic. We are sure that, with not a great deal of expense at all, most developers can provide conditions which will be sufficiently attractive for us to allow their activities to proceed.

Waste Water Treatment Plant at Ludmilla Creek

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, my constituents have had an ongoing concern for a considerable number of years. What are the current proposals to eliminate odours from the waste water treatment plant at Ludmilla Creek and when will an alternative process be utilised for treating the sewage at the plant to an acceptable standard to allow watering of reserves and ovals in the vicinity?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, last year, the Department of Transport and Works carried out very extensive theoretical studies on all forms of sewage treatment. No doubt, those studies will continue. As he quite rightly points out, the particular problem raised by the honourable member has been of concern to his constituents for some time. As we would all be aware, the wet season in the Top End causes grave difficulties with the removal of effluent. What was not realised until fairly recently was that the dry season in the Top End, which in effect amounts to a drought just about every year, also has an adverse effect on the disposal of effluent. The very low flow rates in sewerage lines, which are presumably designed to cope with the wet season, cause a build up of salt intrusion during the dry season and, as a result, a very rapid build up in hydrogen sulphide which is H₂S or 'rotten egg' gas. That is causing the problem.

Mr Speaker, the sewerage line in Coconut Grove will be replaced completely. Contracts are being issued now to do that. We are also equipping the area with odour control equipment which is designed specifically to overcome the problem as far as possible. We are also exploring the possibility of installing additional chlorination and oxygenation equipment to further overcome the problem. Initially, the answer is to replace the sewerage lines themselves, then tackle the problem from an engineering and chemical viewpoint.

Housing Commission Penalty Interest Exemption

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING

Is it a fact that, in June 1981, the Housing Commission sold a house at 22 Conigrave Street to a Mr Frank Gaffy for \$78 000 and 2½ years later, in December 1983, purchased the same house from Mr Gaffy for \$185 000 and, is it true that the minister waived the penalty interest provisions that apply for a property sold within 3 years of purchase?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I might be pretty good but I do not think I could be expected to carry all the details necessary to answer the question fully. The subject of waiving penalty interest has presented some anomalies. Nevertheless, all cases that have come before me since I took up this portfolio have been given due consideration. Each case is considered on its merits.

Assistant Commissioner for Equal Employment Opportunity

Mr FINCH to CHIEF MINISTER

With regard to the status of women within the public service and the government's objectives in the area of equal employment opportunity, what steps are being taken in regard to the appointment of an assistant commissioner for equal employment opportunity in the Public Service Commissioner's office and what interim measures are being undertaken pending the filling of that position?

ANSWER

Quite a lengthy process of recruitment has been undertaken in relation to the position of Assistant Commissioner for Equal Opportunity in the Public Service Commissioner's office. Of course, the Public Service Commissioner is extremely anxious to recruit someone of a particularly high standard, bearing in mind the fairly onerous responsibilities that the position will cover.

Eventually, the job was advertised throughout Australia. Unfortunately, that was because the Public Service Commissioner's interview panel was of the opinion that none of the applicants from the first series of advertisements, which I think was restricted to the local service, were of a sufficiently high standard to warrant appointment to the position. I think it would be about 6 weeks ago now since a further series of interviews took place with a short list of the applicants who responded to the national advertisements. Two of the persons on the short list were eventually brought to Darwin and, in fact, I met one personally. Unfortunately, the other is presently overseas and, I believe, will be returning to Australia in the course of the next couple of weeks. It is hoped that negotiations will be able to be commenced with that person with a view to formalising the recruitment because it is felt that the most suitable applicant is that person. It would be unwise of me to be any more specific about the appointment at this stage because one never can tell in these situations. It really struck me as strange when I first moved into government to find that people sometimes apply for jobs, are interviewed and then decide that they do not want to accept the position after all. I had not found that in private enterprise but that could be the case here. However, I would hope that, given this level of appointment and the level of responsibility presently held by the most suitable applicant, this would be a serious application and recruitment and appointment can take place in the course of the next 4 to 6 weeks at the outside. Perhaps lengthier notice may have to be

given to that person's current employers.

Mr Speaker, the member for Wagaman asked me what steps are being taken in the interim to assist positively the position of women in the public service. The Public Service Commissioner has discussed methods of doing this with the various departmental heads and heads of statutory authorities in the Northern Territory Coordination Committee. I understand that a range of measures are to be implemented in the very near future. For example, 2 management training seminars exclusively for women will be held between now and the end of this calendar year. Guidelines will be issued by the Public Service Commissioner's office. I emphasise that these will be guidelines and not orders. The Public Service Commissioner issues what are called 'orders' but these will be guidelines. These guidelines will provide that women must be involved in the recruitment process, in the appeal process and also, I think that, in disciplinary matters involving a woman, a woman will also be the inquiry officer, at least in the first instance. A whole range of initiatives is proposed and I hope that it will result in upward advancement, as it were, of women through the public service. I think there are more women than men in the public service. Certainly there are more women than men in 2 of our major departments: Health and Education.

Management training is now available in the public service. It may not be well or widely known to honourable members, Mr Speaker, that the Public Service Commissioner's office has a personnel development section which conducts seminars and courses for the public service, especially at the middle-management level. One is fairly regularly approving travel and study at business management courses at places such as Mount Eliza in Victoria, the University of New South Wales Business School and so on. As I recall it, the public service participates in the Australian Institute of Management development courses. Indeed, I think that the public service supported the Australian Institute of Management to the tune of about \$50 000 last year in terms of fees for management courses. To me, it seems only reasonable, Mr Speaker, that women be given the same opportunity as men to develop themselves through the public service. I think that the range of initiatives that the Public Service Commissioner is proposing to introduce for a 12-month trial period will be of fairly positive benefit to women making their careers in the Northern Territory Public Service.

Lajamanu Tanami Road

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he aware of the deplorable state of the Lajamanu Tanami Road at the end of the current upgrading works, and of the many hundreds of people who use that road to go to the Yuendumu sports in early August? Is he prepared to ensure that a grader is put through before the end of July?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am quite certain that the previous member for Stuart used to raise that question around about the time of the Yuendumu sports program which, I might say, is a wholly supportable and desirable event for that district. It is widely supported by many hundreds of people and I will certainly examine the possibility of making sure that the road is up to standard to carry people to that event.

Water Fun Park at Marrara

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS

What is the current situation regarding portion 2710 Hundred of Bagot and a proposed water fun park at Marrara?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will not start at the beginning of this story, otherwise we will be here for a considerable time. Of concern to myself and quite a number of other people has been the lack of progress on a development lease which was issued at Marrara for a water fun park and related activities. In fact, that development would be very attractive and very desirable in Darwin should it ever proceed. Over the last month or 2, I have written a number of times to the person who holds the lease. He lives in Western Australia although he has local agents acting on his behalf. I have been pressing him very hard. Whilst the terms of the covenant require that, in the first stage, a couple of million dollars be spent by 30 June this year, and that time has not expired, it is quite clear that the owner will not be able to perform in the time that is left available to him and that he will be in non-compliance after that date. I have told him that the government will take this matter most seriously. It is a prime block of land for which other interest has been expressed should it ever become available. We will be taking a fairly dim view of the matter come 30 June.

His representatives have come back to me with an extended story about problems, depression and finances. Principally, the reason put forward is that such a leisure and recreation park would cost millions of dollars to complete, and the financial institutions around this country are supposedly taking a fairly dim view of it all. They regard it as a blancmange sort of an industry, unfortunately, much as they regard certain aspects of tourism. Because you cannot evaluate some of these projects fully, which means that they require a degree of faith, they have taken a dim view about lending him a great deal of money for the project. He claims that he has been to many establishments but has been rejected. This has taken time which is why he is in the position that he is in today.

His group has applied to me saying that it believes it now has firm finance arranged and has sought an extension of time for compliance with the covenants to 8 months after 30 June. Quite clearly, if it is to proceed with the project, it must have an extension of time or it will be in non-compliance and no lender will give it a cent. As Minister for Lands, I must now consider whether to grant this extension or decide that these people have had a long enough bite at the cherry and that the block should be forfeited, in which case it would become quite a serious matter. They face the possible loss of their total investment to date. I think some hundreds of thousands of dollars have been paid for the right to lease the land and they have spent considerable sums on development plans and specifications.

I have asked them to come back to me with absolutely unequivocal evidence that funding is available. I expect a visit fairly soon. I am not interested in being told that people will consider funding. I want an absolute assurance that total funding will be available to complete the covenants within the 8 months. Only then will I be prepared to consider such an extension. I expect them to come back to me within a few days with that evidence if they can obtain it. If they cannot, they are in trouble.

Hospital Usage Since Medicare Introduction

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

Have there been any noticeable changes in hospital usage in the Territory since the introduction of Medicare?

ANSWER

To be honest, there has been a marked increase in hospital usage throughout the whole of the Northern Territory since the introduction of Medicare. There has been a levelling off in the Tennant Creek area. Nhulumbuy and Katherine show a steady improvement in numbers using both in-patient, outpatient and hospital wards. In general, there has been a marked increase in the most populated areas where we have these facilities. At the same time, I would like to place on record that the Department of Health has coped with the increase of patients in both Darwin and Alice Springs.

TAB in the Northern Territory

Mr LEO to TREASURER

When will he make a definitive statement on the future of the introduction of TAB in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

This morning I propose to table the Racing Industry Working Party's Report and make a short statement which I think will cover the honourable member's question.

Braitling Primary School

Mr VALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In view of the proposed Dixon Road residential development, what additional facilities will be constructed at the Braitling Primary School to allow for the anticipated increase in children in that area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the issue of the Dixon Road subdivision has been brought to my attention by the Braitling School Council. The information that I have available to me is that the Braitling Primary School has a capacity of 480 pupils. With the demountables that are available on site at present, there is room for a further 60. The current enrolment at the Braitling Primary School is 407. I am advised by the Department of Lands that this proposed subdivision will only create a further 80 primary and 10 preschool students from that particular area. The department does not see that there is a need for increased facilities at the Braitling Primary School at the moment. We will be monitoring the situation. I have notified the school council about the government's stance and I will keep in touch with the member for Braitling on this issue.

Larrakeyah Primary School Students

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What provisions were made, and at what cost, to convert the old Darwin hospital into a school for the purpose of accommodating temporarily the students from Larrakeyah and why wasn't an empty school, the Darwin Primary School, used for the purpose?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I answered a similar question at the last sittings. He asked who had made the decision to move to the old hospital site. On that occasion, I told him that it was arranged entirely at the request of the parents and teachers of Larrakeyah Primary School. What should also be remembered is that the decision to upgrade the Larrakeyah Primary School was made last year. I can recall the Treasurer mentioning in his budget speech that upgrading would be undertaken this year at a cost of \$1.4m.

The decision to move to the old Darwin hospital site will save the taxpayer a great deal of money. It will ensure that the children do not have any worries as far as safety is concerned. This was an issue that the parents of that particular school were very concerned about. At the time when the decision was made, the Darwin Primary School was still open. As I said on that occasion in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, the parents of Larrakeyah students were given the option of placing their children in various primary schools throughout the Darwin area. The decision to move to the old Darwin hospital site was entirely up to those parents. Quite frankly, the cost saving to the public will be considerable. The term of the contract will be reduced by several months and the upgraded facilities will be open for the beginning of the 1985 school year. The amount spent on the upgrading of the old hospital site was \$70 000. I believe that it will result in a considerable saving to the taxpayer because the actual work in relation to the upgrading of the Larrakeyah Primary School will be brought forward by several months.

Northern Cement Pty Ltd

Mr COULTER to the CHIEF MINISTER

Did the Northern Territory Development Corporation provide financial assistance to Northern Cement Pty Ltd for the new clinker grinding plant opened recently at East Earm? If so, under what terms and conditions was such assistance provided?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am a little surprised that the honourable member has to ask me that question because the NTDC's annual report was tabled at the last sittings and it contained within it a schedule setting out a complete list of all loans and guarantees granted by the Northern Territory Development Corporation. Indeed, I was surprised that journalists appeared to have overlooked this as well. I seem to recall a question being asked of someone this morning on a certain ABC radio program as to whether a particular block of units in this city had been given a loan of \$2m by, I think, the Northern Territory Development Corporation. A quick reference to the annual report of the Northern Territory Development Corporation would make the journalists involved quite aware of the facts. It was pointless to ask the question although, no doubt, starting hares is part of the business of that particular radio program.

In any event, no financial assistance was provided by the NTDC to Northern Cement, although it was what one might describe as a pioneer industry and could well have come within the guidelines of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. It is the first clinker grinding and cement manufacturing plant to be established in the Northern Territory. It was built, at a cost of \$9m, entirely from the resources of the partners in the concern, a Mr Gus Trippe, Burns Philp and Adelaide Brighton Cement. It is only the first stage of a proposed complete cement manufacturing and quicklime plant which, when completed, will cost a total of about \$50m.

Mr Speaker, I know that all honourable members would join with me in congratulating Mr Gus Trippe. I think I can say without any doubt that he has been the key man in putting this development together. I know that members of the opposition were present at the opening. I am sure that they, just as much as members on the government side, welcome the provision of such a modern facility as this. It also marks the highlight of Mr Gus Trippe's career in commerce in the Northern Territory, although he is still retaining his pastoral interests and will be active in them. Mr Trippe has been trading for many years in the Territory. He is almost ready to retire from Northern Cement where he has been managing director for quite a number of years.

Whilst the NTDC probably would have entertained an application for a loan from Northern Cement in respect of this project, obviously the companies involved chose to undertake the provision of the necessary finance for the project from their own resources. Where we are not asked for support, we rarely offer it.

Waiver of Penalty Interest Provision on Sale of House

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING

For what reason was a waiver of the penalty interest provision given to the owner of the residence at 22 Conigrave Street?

ANSWER

It was given for private reasons on which I do not wish to elaborate at the moment. Also, the person who owned that house ceased employment in the Northern Territory and left the Northern Territory.

Superannuation Entitlements for NTEC Employees

Mr DALE to CHIEF MINISTER

What steps were taken by the government to provide improved superannuation entitlements for NTEC employees in trade-related categories of staff and for police personnel?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question of superannuation occupied much of the time of the last Assembly. No less than 3 draft bills to provide a system of superannuation for Northern Territory public servants were introduced into the Assembly. Unfortunately, none of those bills were proceeded with. Of course, this was a result of a breakdown in negotiations between the government and the local unions in relation to provision of a complete system of superannuation for the whole of the Northern Territory Public Service. Currently, the Northern Territory Public Service is covered by the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Service Superannuation Scheme. Many people who have that cover are, of course, reluctant to change horses in midstream.

I think it was fairly generally realised that the provisions of the Commonwealth superannuation scheme are particularly generous and the unions took the opportunity to attempt to negotiate even more generous terms with the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, it has reached the stage where it is now pretty well beyond the capacity of the taxpayer to extend additional superannuation benefits. We are beginning to see glimmerings of measures in the federal sphere to come to grips with what, in the next generation, will be one of the most serious problems facing Australia; that is, trying to deliver benefits to the various people covered by numerous government and semi-government superannuation schemes throughout Australia. The capacity of this generation, and certainly future generations, to deliver those benefits as presently committed is probably something that occupies the minds of a considerable number of economists and financiers in this country.

Be that as it may, the negotiations for a general Northern Territory Public Service scheme have broken down although it had within it benefits which were better than the Commonwealth scheme in that the provision for commutation in the Territory scheme was apparently much better than that provided in the Commonwealth scheme. Nonetheless, the proposals were rejected

by the unions' side and the Northern Territory government decided that it would not pursue a public service superannuation scheme. We will continue to avail ourselves of the Commonwealth scheme which will continue to be a worry for the Commonwealth in future and not a worry for the Northern Territory.

In relation to NTEC employees and police, some separate provision had to be made. The government has had a long-standing arrangement with employees on the technical side of NTEC and with police that steps would be taken to cover the rather different position that they are in as regards superannuation. The NTEC employees are not all the type of long-term employees that one envisages under a public service superannuation scheme. They were interested particularly in the provision of benefits under what is called a provident fund arrangement whereby they could pay in more money over a shorter period and then, when they decided to leave NTEC, they could take a lump sum with them. If they joined NTEC at a later stage in life, they would be able to pay into the provident fund and still receive a reasonable amount at the time that their employment terminated.

The police are in a different position again. Their compulsory retirement age, from memory, is 55 or 60 depending on rank whereas the retiring age for public servants is 65, although it is possible to opt for 60 or perhaps even earlier. In any event, the police requirements are different.

What the government has done is to continue to have the Commonwealth superannuation scheme apply to those employees of NTEC who consider it is more suitable for their needs. Those employees of NTEC whom we call the trade side, generally speaking, have opted for membership of the NTEC provident fund. In fact, the other day, I received a letter from the Professional Officers Association in relation to a group of engineers at NTEC who want to join the provident fund as well.

The Treasury will administer the 2 separate superannuation schemes - the police and NTEC schemes - and no doubt investments under the schemes will be managed by Treasury officials. The schemes are being established under deeds of trust. I do not think these deeds of trust will need to be approved again by the Commonwealth Minister for Finance because they are supplementary schemes to the overall Commonwealth scheme. I do not think that Northern Territory legislative action will be necessary to enable the schemes to operate.

Larrakeyah Primary School

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

He explained that the parents of students at the Larrakeyah Primary School had been offered a wide range of options and they had chosen the old hospital site. Could he confirm that the Darwin Primary School was one of the options offered to the parents?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I explained to the Leader of the Opposition before, 3 options were given to the parents. The first was that the students be distributed amongst other primary schools in the Darwin area. The second option was that the children remain at the Larrakeyah school during the upgrading work and the third was that they occupy part of the old Darwin hospital site.

Planning Act and Trees

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LANDS

Does the Planning Act contain powers to protect existing trees on sites or to control the removal of trees from sites?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the subject of trees is of considerable interest to most of our citizens. The subject was raised yesterday or the day before in this Assembly by the Minister for Conservation. The Northern Territory Planning Act has powers within it under which the Planning Authority may issue declarations in relation to individual trees on land. I am not sure whether this power has ever been exercised. I recall that the provision was put there so that particular trees of significance to a town, such as large banyans, which are sited in places where the populace would generally like them to stay, could be included in the protection provisions of the plan.

The Planning Act provides that a planning instrument that is made by the Planning Authority can permit or control the carrying out of any development in relation to that land. Under the definition of 'development', one heading relates to the cutting down or lopping of trees on that land. Those provisions are not very much use in a situation where a private landowner levels his site, including any trees on it, and then makes a development application to the authority. In such a case, the act is of no use to protect trees. Where the trees are on public land or where a development application is submitted and trees are still on private land, the authority may draw up in the instrument of determination a condition that a tree is to remain in its present state. I do not think the authority has ever used that section of the act. Perhaps it has never been put to it that it should in relation to any matter that has come before it in the past. But, there is certainly provision there.

Teachers' Federation Dispute over 41-week School Year

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What is the current situation with regard to the Teachers' Federation dispute on the so-called 41-week school year?

ANSWER

I should throw my hands up and sit down. The non-issue of the 41-week school year has been heard by the full bench of the Arbitration Commission and a decision will be handed down in the next 2 weeks or so. Actually, an interesting situation has arisen because the executive, seeing that it has not had a great following in relation to the 41-week issue, has decided to change direction. It is now using the erosion of working conditions as a reason for industrial action. Many of the concerns that it is putting forward to its rank and file are not correct. I will be addressing that particular issue later in the sittings.

What has annoyed me, many other people and some of the teachers as well, in relation to the 41-week issue, is that the federation executive has referred continually to the fact that teachers are losing a week's leave. They still receive 6 weeks leave and 6 weeks stand-down, which is 12 weeks. If they were only receiving 11 weeks leave, then there would be something for them to moan about. It should also be pointed out that, last year, there

were 27 pay periods as compared with the normal number of 26. We did not hear any comments made on that particular occasion.

I guess my main disappointment is the fact that many teachers do not agree with what the federation is trying to put forward. I do not want to interfere in the decisions of teachers. That is entirely up to them. All that I would ask of teachers is that they examine their circumstances very closely. The conditions that they have in the Northern Territory are good. They are equal to any in Australia. Before taking industrial action, I would ask them to consider that particular fact.

Public Transport for Alice Springs Schoolchildren

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What public transport does he envisage for Alice Springs children who have been excluded from the use of school buses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is rather difficult to work out what the honourable member means. Is he implying that the Department of Transport and Works ought to overrule the policies of another government department, that of the Department of Education? Is he suggesting that, as a result of the enforcement of a long-standing policy of the Department of Education, the Northern Territory government should set up, on that basis alone, a duplication of the Darwin Bus Service in Alice Springs? Of course, we all know that that bus service has an annual deficit of millions of dollars. That would be an absurd proposition for this government to entertain but I doubt very much if it would be an absurd proposition in the mind of the member who asked the question.

Natural Gas in Alice Springs Power-station

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is the conversion of the Alice Springs power-station to natural gas going according to plan? When will all generators be switched to and utilising natural gas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am able to provide the honourable member with the information he requires. I am mindful that, for many years, the honourable member has had a very strong interest in and a great deal of enthusiasm for the use of centralian hydro-carbon products. Given that we had a period of dislocation in the Alice Springs power-station when gas initially came in, his concern is a very genuine one. The conversion of the whole station to gas generation is scheduled for late June 1985 when set 6 conversion and commissioning will be completed. Following the 1-month gas pipeline shutdown that occurred last month because of initial teething problems, the conversion program is approximately 2½ months behind schedule. However, we expect that this loss will be recovered by the middle of September 1984 when sets 3, 5, 7 and 8 will be operating on gas.

Mr Speaker, the commissioning of sets 3, 5, 7 and 8 will enable at least 75% of the Alice Springs power-station demand to be generated by gas. Set 5, the first set to be commissioned on gas, has been running continuously, except for minor maintenance checks, since the delivery of gas recommenced on 20 May

this year. The conversion of set 3 is complete and diesel fuel reliability trials have commenced. Set 7 gas commissioning is progressing well. The installation and commissioning of set 8 will be completed by 17 July this year - that is for oil and distillate. Following the completion of set 3 diesel fuel reliability tests, all sets will be available for diesel fuel operation to meet maximum winter loads. The conversion of set 4, the next set to be converted, will not commence until late August to ensure security of supply during the winter maximum-demand period.

Mr Speaker, I am happy to say that the initial teething problems that we had with the introduction of gas into the Alice Springs power-station were technical ones and they seem to have been overcome by a great deal of effort and hard work on the part of NTEC and the gas transport people who have had the responsibility of getting the gas into the power-station. We do not anticipate that any more technical difficulties will arise. The success of the project is now there for everybody to see and I think it is a credit to everyone who has been involved.

Facilities for Imangara Community at Murray Downs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

He is aware that the people of Imangara at Murray Downs have been petitioning his department and himself for many months to obtain a small clinic and radio for their community. How and when does he intend to provide them with these very basic facilities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Health received a communication from the community in question in February of this year. In March, the Regional Director of Health, Dr Kerry Kirk, visited the community and made a recommendation to the department that a facility be provided by taking a mobile dental clinic van from Ali Curang and locating it at Murray Downs. This recommendation was made in May. Officers of the Department of Transport and Works went out to inspect the mobile van but found that it was no longer mobile because the wheels had been taken off and it had been set in concrete. Consequently, it would be very hard to move at short notice as promised to the community. I understand that, since last week, officers of the Departments of Health and Transport and Works have been trying to obtain a crane to go out to that area to lift the van out of the concrete, replace the wheels and eventually take it to Murray Downs. I assure the honourable member that we will try to have that particular facility out to the Murray Downs area as soon as possible.

Employment of Aboriginals in NT Public Service

Mr FINCH to CHIEF MINISTER

What steps are being taken in regard to the employment and training of Aboriginals in the Northern Territory Public Service and how is the government attempting to ensure a representational proportion of Aboriginal employees in that service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for quite some time, the government has been taking measures to employ and train Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory Public Service. Indeed, it is one of the objectives of this government to achieve a significant

percentage of Aboriginal employees within that service. The Public Service Commissioner has been working on the development of a strategy within the service to establish additional training courses at the Darwin Community College and the Community College of Central Australia in relation to the training of Aboriginal people to enter the Northern Territory Public Service. I think that, at present, a significant percentage of public service employees are either directly Aboriginal or of Aboriginal descent.

At this stage, I think the Northern Territory Public Service has the highest percentage of Aboriginal employees of any public service in Australia and one would expect that. One of the problems is that we have to try to make these people upwardly mobile in the public service. What is needed is what is described today as affirmative action and I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that the Public Service Commissioner is taking such action to ensure that Aboriginal people who are willing, anxious and desirous of working in the public service are trained for it and that, once they are in the public service, they have opportunities to move upwards through its ranks. I cannot remember offhand the percentage, but we have an objective of reaching a certain percentage of Aboriginal employees within the public service by the year 1990.

Toilets at Wharf in Frances Bay

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Is he aware that the toilets at the new wharf provided for the fishermen in Frances Bay are closed at nights and weekends and that this is causing great pain and distress to the fishermen involved? Is it possible to make a better arrangement than the one currently operating so that those very commendable facilities that have been provided can be fully utilised?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, contrary to any perception that the Leader of the Opposition may have that I spend my weekends inspecting waterfront toilets, I would advise him that the use and the state of the toilets available for fishermen does not really fit into my...

Mr B. Collins: It has been in the paper recently, Ian.

Mr TUXWORTH: ...area of responsibility. Mr Speaker, 3 or 4 government agencies are involved in the administration...

Mr B. Collins: I should have asked Noel about the public toilets at the fishermen's wharf.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, if the honourable member could contain his mirth for a moment, I was going to say that 3 or 4 government agencies - and the Port Authority and Transport and Works are but 2 - are involved in the administration of the waterfront. It would be perfectly reasonable to address the question to those authorities. I hardly think, Mr Speaker, that it is an important item of business for this Assembly.

Appointment of Ombudsman for Northern Territory

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the present situation regarding the appointment of an Ombudsman in the Northern Territory to fill the advertised vacancy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the member for Braitling - the very blatant honourable member for Braitling - has raised this question. I had intended to raise the matter myself during this sittings. The appointment of an Ombudsman is, of course, a parliamentary appointment and the current incumbent, as I informed this Assembly at an earlier stage this year or perhaps last year, has signified his desire and intention to quit the office in November of this year. For that reason, the government caused an advertisement to be inserted in newspapers around Australia calling for applications for the position of Northern Territory Ombudsman. We had many applications. There were maybe 40 or 50; some of them were good and some of them were not so good, Mr Speaker. I prepared a short list and I went with the Director-General to interview the 7 or so who were on that short list. We interviewed them in various cities around Australia in the course of the last fortnight or so.

I am satisfied that 5 of the 7 are worthy of further consideration. I now suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that we follow the procedure that we adopted when the current Ombudsman was selected. I am not sure whether the current Leader of the Opposition was Leader of the Opposition then. However, at that time, we formed an unofficial committee of 3 members of the Legislative Assembly to reinterview people after my interview with the Director-General. Therefore, I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to nominate a member of his side of the Assembly to join 2 members of the government side to interview these 5 or so people in the course of the next 2 to 3 weeks. I feel that we must try to conclude the process fairly speedily and at least give the successful applicant the assurance that he or she has the position and the unsuccessful applicants will be taken out of suspense. I hope that arrangement is satisfactory to all honourable members, including the Leader of the Opposition. It seemed to work reasonably well last time. I cannot see any point in a number greater than 3 so I will await the advice of the Leader of the Opposition as to the person that he would like to nominate.

Duplex Units at Palmerston

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING

Is it true that a tender was awarded recently to construct 6 duplex units at Palmerston and that, after the concrete slabs were laid and associated plumbing work done, it was found that the land was zoned R1 and work had to stop? If this is the case, what is the cost of this to the Housing Commission?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not doubting the intentions of the honourable member in asking this question. Obviously, he wants some information but, to expect me to carry all these intimate details in my mind, is to ask a little bit much. I will endeavour to give an answer during the course of this sittings.

Sulphur Dump

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What is the current situation with regard to the sulphur dump located in the Hundred of Strangways?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I assume that the honourable member is referring to the

Ranger sulphur dump on the corner of the Arnhem Highway and the Stuart Highway. As honourable members would know, this is in my electorate. There have been some complaints about the sulphur being on this particular block of land because it affected water quality downstream. Ranger was notified of the adverse effects on the water supply. Together with the Department of Mines and Energy, the Department of Transport and Works and Water Division officers, Ranger did everything it felt necessary to rehabilitate the area downstream. Neutralising agents were applied to the ground. The damage that had occurred as a result of the rather high acid content of the water downstream was checked and something was done about that. Also, Ranger undertook some tree planting.

Mr Speaker, the desirability of the sulphur staying at this area has been questioned. Through inspections by Ranger, the Water Division and the Department of Mines and Energy, the situation is being monitored continually. If necessary, changes will be made. I had a complaint from a couple of my constituents about sulphur being blown by the prevailing south-easterly winds at this time of the year. They said the sulphur was blowing across the highway. I suggested that the environmental officers of the Department of Mines and Energy should check the situation. The situation will be monitored continually. I know that Ranger checked the situation daily during the wet. Water Division officers checked weekly and also received reports from Ranger. They are quite active in following up any complaints received from people living nearby.

Tourism

Mr HATTON to CHIEF MINISTER

The community has been made aware of a huge increase in beds to be generated by new hotel developments in the Territory. What else is being done to ensure that sufficient tourists come to the Territory and that they are given sufficient things to do whilst they are here?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I agree that it is very important that a whole range of additional supportive infrastructure be provided to ensure the success of the tourism industry generally and new hotel developments in particular. Obviously, the way to make money out of visitors is to keep them for as long as possible in a particular area. People will not stay unless the facilities and attractions are good. There should be a wide range of attractions. I am talking about the sort of facility that my friend and colleague, the Treasurer, is associated with - Aquascene and the fish feeding.

Mr B. Collins: Give someone else a plug.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Charity begins at home.

Mr Speaker, as well as that, it is important that the whole range of tourism facilities, such as caravan parks, are of a standard that will attract and keep people. Unfortunately, whether it is true or untrue, particularly north of Katherine there is a widely-held opinion amongst the caravan and camping fraternity around Australia that Darwin is a place to stay away from as far as caravan parks and camping are concerned. That reputation may well have been true and accurate some years ago but I believe that the situation with caravan parks and camping in the Top End has changed greatly. Obviously, it is going to change for the better even more because the government has granted a development lease, under stringent conditions, to establish on Lee

Point Road what will probably be Australia's best-equipped tourist park for the caravan, camping and coach-type fraternity. That is the sort of thing we have to make provision for.

I think it is appropriate too that I should mention the discussions that will take place with airlines in early July in Alice Springs. Initially, these discussions were arranged to alert airline companies to the major developments occurring in the Territory to enable them to turn their minds to the need for more frequent and more numerous flight connections into and throughout the Territory. I am aware that, at this stage, there is great interest by overseas airlines in providing additional services to the Territory and also in joint-marketing arrangements with Qantas for attracting prospective tourists into the Territory.

Mr Speaker, much depends on marketing. I can assure all honourable members that the Tourist Commission has never been more alive to the need to increase our share of the domestic and overseas markets. We cannot do that until we have the beds. That is the reason why hotels are needed. We cannot fill the beds till we have the flights. It is very much a chicken and egg situation. It does not seem possible to interest the international and domestic airlines until the hotels are here. The hotel operators are always worried because there is never the flow of tourists to seemingly justify hotel construction at the time of building.

Mr Speaker, we are attacking the whole problem on a fairly broad front. I hope to announce a whole range of additional measures that the Northern Territory government will be taking in the field of tourism marketing and development at the next budget sittings of this Assembly.

Transportation of Sulphur to Ranger Mine

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware that there is an additional problem with sulphur in that at least some carriers are transporting it from the dump in the Minister for Housing and Conservation's electorate to Ranger without covering the loads? It is causing a lot of annoyance to people who get this stuff all over their vehicles when they follow the trucks. Could he seek some assurances from either the company or the subcontractors that sulphur loads will be covered at all times?

ANSWER

The cartage of sulphur for processing uranium is fairly heavily controlled under the Environmental Control Act. I hear what the honourable member is saying. I will take the matter up with the Department of Mines and Energy and also with the Minister for Transport and Works, whose officers have an interest in the matter. If what the honourable member says is true, and I do not have any reason to doubt his statement, we will move pretty quickly to see that it stops.

Nhulunbuy High School

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

When will tenders be called for extensions to the Nhulunbuy High School?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have that information. I will provide it later during this sittings.

Alice Springs Power-station

Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I refer to his previous answer about the use of Palm Valley gas at the Alice Springs power-station. The gas-powered turbine at the power-station failed in its operation during this year. How long has the turbine been out of service and what arrangements have been made with the supplier of the gas and NTEC while gas is not being consumed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there were some engine failures at the Alice Springs power-station because of the unacceptable quality of the gas that was delivered to the power-station. The technical difficulties surrounding that were resolved over a series of conferences and experiments were carried out by people involved in the delivery of the gas and the maintenance of the power-station equipment. During the period that the gas was not available, the power-station reverted to the use of oil.

Discussions are being held at the moment to determine where responsibility for payment for the oil and the non-delivery of suitable quality gas lies. As with all of these things, it is not a matter of somebody being right and someone else being wrong. A whole range of technical issues are involved. As I said earlier, I was pleased that the matter was resolved because the ramifications for the Northern Territory could have been quite serious if the problem had persisted. It was resolved in a fairly short period of time. What made the problem more difficult to solve was that no authority that we contacted which used gas in converted diesels had experienced a similar problem. For that reason, we were unable to pick anybody else's brains to obtain an overnight solution. The technical people overcame the problem but the matter of responsibility has yet to be resolved. In the meantime, we are generating on gas and saving the consumers as much money as possible.

Detoxification Centre for Alice Springs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

When will the sobering-up shelter planned for Alice Springs open?

ANSWER

Late last year, the Department of Health made attempts to obtain premises in Alice Springs. A particular premises was identified but, unfortunately, members of the community of Alice Springs were not really happy with the particular site chosen by the Department of Health through the Drug and Alcohol Bureau. Therefore, in the last 3 or 4 months, efforts have been made to obtain alternative accommodation. I am happy to say that arrangements have been entered into by the Department of Health to purchase a property in the Schwarz Crescent area. Once these negotiations have been finalised and the department has taken over the property, it is hoped that, after some staff recruitment and other administrative arrangements, the sobering-up shelter will become functional by the end of this year.

Participation and Equity Program Funding

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Earlier this year, the federal Minister for Education announced that the Northern Territory would be allocated some \$195 000 for the Participation and Equity Program in government schools and almost \$300 000 for TAFE programs. This is a total of almost \$0.5m. If he is not in a position to do so now, could he undertake to advise the Assembly during this sittings as to the kind of projects this money will be allocated to in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in order to do this subject justice, I will provide an answer later during the sittings.

Stuart Highway through Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is the present construction program for the Stuart Highway through Alice Springs on schedule? Bearing in mind that the road goes through his electorate, my electorate and that of the member for Sadadeen, in which electorate will the opening ceremony take place?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must say that I am not particularly concerned whether there is an opening ceremony much less where it is held. I am more interested in having the road completed. Technically, the road is 1 or 2 months behind schedule at the moment due to a wide range of difficulties which inevitably arise in a complex realignment and reconstruction of this nature. However, it is anticipated that that delay will be overhauled in the very near future and the realignment of the so-called north-south arterial road will be completed on schedule. As to the last part of the question, Mr Speaker, I await the representations of the honourable member for Braitling.

Parklands on Vanderlin Drive

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What are the Conservation Commission's long-term plans for the development of parklands on the northern side of Vanderlin Drive from the council depot to McMillans Road?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has asked me this question knowing that the Conservation Commission has done a lot of work in the northern suburbs as well as other parts of Darwin and in other centres of the Northern Territory. I am very pleased to see that he is interested in what the Conservation Commission does because I hope that what it does towards urban beautification is appreciated by everybody. I think the honourable member is aware that the Conservation Commission has cleaned up the area on the northern side of Vanderlin Drive and has planted grass and a belt of trees to screen the suburbs from the swamp and dump area. These trees are still juveniles but when they grow they will serve the purpose for which they were planted. This area is low and subject to inundation and the commission's plans are to make it easy to

maintain and pleasant to look at without going into extensive expensive high-grade development. The McMillans Road end of Vanderlin Drive adjoins Holmes Jungle Reserve which is being developed as a major park for the northern suburbs. At the moment, I think the entrance to Holmes Jungle is not in the best condition. Unfortunately, that is due to vandals and some filthy people in our community who dump their domestic rubbish wherever they think they can get away with it as long as it is not in their own front yards. I had occasion to get into Holmes Jungle last weekend. It was well nigh impossible because of the rubbish that had been dumped there. On the one hand, we have people who are concerned about urban beautification and, on the other hand, people who are doing their darnedest to negate any efforts that the Conservation Commission makes.

Nevertheless, the Conservation Commission will press on. Its plans for the development of the Holmes Jungle area include the consolidation of picnic areas, lookout areas and informal playing areas for children. This will be on the ridge tops. There will be walking trails through the jungle itself. Fire protection and controls to restrict damage to the jungle are priority concerns and current work is concentrated on these problems.

Student Assessment Program in Primary Schools

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer him to his press release of 24 March 1984 in which he revealed details of the criterion reference approach to a student assessment program to operate this year in Territory primary schools. Exactly what is a criterion reference approach?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the half-yearly conference of COGSO, I gave information in relation to this assessment process for Year 5 and Year 7 in relation to mathematics and English. I can obtain the information for the honourable member and give it to him later. The information is available and I am sure that members of COGSO are well aware of that. He is able to obtain it from the department.

Housing Commission Penalty Interest Exemption

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING

Is it a fact that the present Co-ordinator-General, Mr Allan Morris, purchased a house at 20 Packard Street from the Housing Commission for \$90 000 on 2 March 1983 and sold it back to the Housing Commission 8 months later for \$130 000 and that Mr Morris was given a penalty interest waiver on this sale?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. It is in line with a question of a similar nature that he asked last week. As has been indicated in the media, the whole question of waiving penalty interest has been under review since March. Previously, the honourable member for Millner sought information on exemptions from the imposition of so-called penalty interest under section 29(3) of the Housing Act. I have been reluctant to divulge this information, not from any wish to cover up what is a less than attractive situation but from a desire, so far as possible, to protect people's private matters. I say the 'so-called penalty interest' because it is really no penalty, just merely the normal bank rate.

I have come to the conclusion that, because public money is involved and because there is a degree of public interest in this matter, the best way to handle it is to table the documents involved. I am happy for the conduct of the former Minister for Housing and myself to be judged from these documents.

I should say a word too at this time for the Chairman of the Housing Commission. This gentleman suffered severe health deficiencies during the previous year which involved his absence on sick leave for many weeks at a time. It seems that the Housing Commission, despite a caution addressed to it on 12 September 1983 by the Hon Nick Dondas, has taken the granting of these exemptions as the rule rather than the exception. Honourable members will see that about 70 exemptions have been granted in 12 months or so. I was mistaken in my belief in March, when I withdrew the delegation to the Housing Commission, that only people of influence could get these exemptions. Certainly, the Housing Commission has not been stern in its approach. I think it might well have been more discerning in its interpretation of the guidelines. I have come to the conclusion that it would be better if there were no such power of ministerial discretion. After all, people take the decision to sell and, if they know they will have to pay normal interest, that will be another factor they will have to weigh in reaching their decision. I will give notice of a bill to delete section 29(3) from the Housing Act tomorrow.

I table correspondence between the Minister for Housing and the Housing Commission relating to this matter over the period 21 March 1983 to 27 April 1984. I can assure honourable members that my administration of the Housing Commission will be marked by equity for all comers.

Funding for Traeger Park Football Oval

Mr VALE to MINISTER for YOUTH SPORT and RECREATION

Has any timetable been set for funding to provide lighting at the Traeger Park football oval in central Australia?

ANSWER

I am unable to provide a timetable for the lighting of the Centralian Football League's headquarters at Traeger Park. However, I can inform honourable members that over the last 4 years the Northern Territory government has spent considerable amounts of money in upgrading Traeger Park. In fact, the baseball headquarters have been established there with sufficient lighting to enable night competition. The tennis area has been upgraded with financial support from the Northern Territory government, as have the hockey facilities. Another development that will take place this financial year is the construction of the basketball stadium in association with the Alice Springs Town Council.

With regard to the lighting of the Centralian Football League headquarters, at this stage I am unable to advise the honourable member of the timetable for that particular installation. It would probably be at least 2 or 3 years away.

Jabiluka Mine

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Presuming it gets the green light, what effect on the future of Jabiluka will the selling of Texaco and Getty Oil shares in the mine have?

ANSWER

I have been concerned for the past week by the announcement made by Texaco that it is about to call a tender throughout the world for the disposal of the mining interests that it acquired during the takeover of Getty Oil. As honourable members would be aware, one of the largest corporate takeovers ever recorded in the world took place in America a month or 2 ago when Texaco took over Getty Oil. In doing so, Texaco acquired about a 35% interest in the Jabiluka project. Because Texaco was stuck for cash, it decided that it would strip the oil and gas interests from the takeover and sell off the mining interests. While this may have some financial appeal to Texaco, it is a matter of concern to the Northern Territory government that Jabiluka - a prize project by any standard in the world - should be lumped in with all the other Texaco Getty interests and disposed of in America in some auction or tender when Australian interests have had very little opportunity to get into the act.

It would seem that there are about 8 major international corporations interested in taking over the mineral interests that Texaco has acquired. I do not have any knowledge of who they are. In a conversation I had with the principals of Getty Oil in America last week, they were in no hurry to divulge what was happening other than that the First Boston Bank had charge of selling the whole of Texaco's interests and that it was not interested in splitting the parcel in any way at all. Under the agreement between Pancontinental and Getty Oil, Pancontinental has the first option to buy the 35% that Getty Oil owns and, in any event, 10% of that 35% has to be transferred into Australian hands before the mine can even become a goer. As a community, we have a vested interest in how the matter is handled.

I am pretty concerned as to who might finish up as the end owners of the Jabiluka project. It would be a pretty fair comment to make that, if large Canadian uranium interests took over the Texaco mineral acquisition, we could say goodbye to any early development of the Jabiluka project because the last thing that the Canadians would want to see on the world uranium market at the moment is the emergence of Jabiluka as a producer. By virtue of its size and

its grade, Jabiluka is one of the best ore bodies in the world and it would make it very difficult for Canadian interests to compete in the international market if Jabiluka were there. It would be most disadvantageous to the Northern Territory for Canadian uranium interests to be the end owners of a large percentage of the Jabiluka project. Setting that aside, we may well find that Getty and Texaco, in disposing of their copper and coal interests, may just throw Jabiluka in as the cream on the top to a group of people who have no interest in seeing any uranium mined anywhere because it may not fit into their corporate plan.

As I said, Mr Speaker, this is a matter for concern that everybody in the Northern Territory would share in and I am sure the federal government is very concerned about it although, with the political problems it has with uranium at the moment, it is probably not in any mood to pursue the matter actively.

Mr B. Collins: Problems? What problems?

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition says: 'Problems? What problems?' I suppose it is all a matter of perception. If you are buried too deeply in it, you may not even see it. Currently, the government is looking at the options that it may have to ensure that the Jabiluka project is not disposed of in some bargain-basement sale. To that end, I believe that the Northern Territory government, the land councils, the Australian community as a whole and the Australian government have a vested interest in seeing that Jabiluka is taken out of the Texaco tender being arranged at the moment by the First Boston Bank and is disposed of in a manner that is satisfactory to the Australian community. At the least, we have to be sure that the 10% is achieved that needs to be acquired by Australian interests to bring the Australian equity up to 75% and, secondly, it is absolutely essential that the government, the land councils, and Pancontinental, which has the management of the project, are satisfied that their new partners are good corporate citizens who have a vested interest in seeing the project go ahead.

Mr Speaker, I will be negotiating to this end with all the parties concerned as soon as I can. I do not believe we can stand by idly and watch the First Boston Bank of the USA auction off or tender, to people of whom we have no knowledge, 35% of one of the greatest ore bodies in the world and then send us a letter in a fortnight's time telling us what the result has been. The whole thing is preposterous. It is time that we moved on it and we will be doing so.

Housing Commission Penalty Interest Exemptions

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH

Whilst he was Minister for Housing, did he authorise penalty interest waivers for senior public servants including Messrs Gaffy, Morris and Stanley and, if so, why, and is it a fact that, whilst he was Minister for Housing, penalty interest waivers were approved by Housing Commission officers without his knowledge?

ANSWER

To answer the last question first, power was delegated to officers of the Housing Commission to allow the interest penalty to be waived upon sale of property within 3 years of purchase. The documents that have just been tabled by the Minister for Housing set out quite clearly the procedures as authorised

by me in correspondence with the Housing Commission. In fact, a letter dated 2 September 1983 contained the following comments:

1. *The Housing Act provides for repayment by a borrower of interest subsidy should he sell the property within 3 years of purchase subject to that property having been purchased after 31 December 1980.*
2. *The act also allows for the minister, at his discretion, to exempt a borrower from those provisions.*
3. *The commission proposed, and you approved, certain administrative arrangements - Ministerial No 375 (copy attached) - which basically allowed commission officers to determine whether or not the penalty should apply and that you would then endorse the action following discharge. To date, this procedure has been practised and 2 schedules have been presented to you for endorsement. Following receipt of the July schedule, you have requested further details to support non-application of the penalty provisions.*
6. *A schedule presenting greater details is attached together with guidelines describing the approach taken in making determinations.*
7. *Perusal of the detailed schedule points to the fact that 4 of the discharged loan accounts have no justification for exemption of penalty.*
8. *These errors are regretted and it can only be said that they are the result of insufficient control of required procedures.*
9. *Procedures must have been amended to the effect that the director responsible shall personally determine and authorise all future exemptions when applicable.*

Mr Smith: What is all this?

Mr DONDAS: The purpose of the exercise is that the honourable member has had these papers tabled for him. Other members and the press are interested in this.

Mr Smith: I know but what's this waffle?

Mr DONDAS: The paper goes on:

It is recommended that you approve continuation of the procedure set out in the Ministerial No 375 (attached with the amendment) that the Director of Home Loans and Sales determine and authorise all discharges that are subject to exemption from the penalty provisions allowed for in the Housing Act and endorse a methodology and approach taken in making determinations of exemptions as described in the attached guidelines.

I approved that, Mr Speaker, on 12 September with a cautionary note to the chairman: 'Please ensure that these applications are not treated too lightly'. In the last few days the honourable member opposite has made great play of these exemptions and the Leader of the Opposition called out a few moments ago that it is a scandal that this was allowed to happen.

At the same time, we must give officers within the public service some powers of delegation. Late last year, we accepted new procedures to ensure that people who were not entitled to these waivers did not get them.

Unfortunately, names have been mentioned by the honourable member for Millner - Gaffy and Morris - but, as they were cited to me, the waivers were justified, as the honourable member will be able to see. One document gives the reasons for sale and repurchase by the Northern Territory Housing Commission. I know that the purchaser may have paid \$90 000 for the house and we may have bought it back at \$130 000 but it is much the same situation as that of Mr Gaffy, who bought a public service house for about \$85 000, upgraded it, doubled its size, made all kinds of improvements and sold it for \$160 000 or \$170 000. He was entitled to make a profit. He upgraded the house. He took a standard government house, spent large amounts of money to provide reasonable accommodation for his family and then, for personal reasons, decided to sell his house. The Valuer-General valued the house. Every house that is purchased has been valued by the Valuer-General. In some cases, we may not agree with the Valuer-General's valuation and an independent valuation is obtained. But people are entitled to improve their houses and sell them for profit.

Maybe the Housing Commission should not have purchased that house. But there is certainly a demand for high level officer accommodation. In some cases, \$170 000 or \$180 000 on today's market is cheap to provide accommodation for senior public officials because, on the open market, a reasonable house varies between \$130 000 and \$250 000.

Mr B. Collins: Well, they obviously move in circles...

Mr DONDAS: Your house today would probably be worth about \$125 000 and you paid about \$80 000 a few years ago.

Mr B. Collins: Are you interested in buying it? Is that an offer? I'll take cheques.

Mr DONDAS: The important thing is that the opposition has been attacking the Minister for Housing over waivers and the exorbitant profits being made.

Mr B. Collins: \$80 000 in 8 weeks is not bad.

Mr DONDAS: He probably spent \$70 000 in doing it too. That has not been said by the opposition. To answer the honourable member, yes, I did waive the penalty interest.

Department of Education Dating System

Mr VALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Why is his department adopting a dating system contrary to the usual format; that is, all in numbers, with the year followed by the month, followed by the day; for example - 1974-01-19?

ANSWER

The honourable member has warned me of this question. The dating system used by the Department of Education complies with the official Australian standard as determined and promulgated by the Standards Association of Australia. This standard, in turn, is consistent with that set by the International Standards Organisation, which has been adopted in the United Kingdom and Canada. The adoption of the new system by the Department of Education has met with a degree of criticism, probably because the department seemed to be going it alone.

The department referred the matter back to the Standards Association, asking if the system was being adopted generally throughout Australia. The

association acknowledged that, Australia-wide, the rate of change had been very slow and, as a consequence of apparent resistance to the change, a special committee is to be reconvened later this year to review the matter. The honourable member will be pleased to know that the Department of Education has started to revert to the former system and will continue that way unless this government decides that all Northern Territory government departments will change.

Mental Health Act Review

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

What action has been taken by his department to complete and implement the recommendations in the 1981 review of the Mental Health Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member and I discussed this last week and we decided that, for the purpose of the public record, he would ask this question this morning. The act commenced on 1 April 1980. At this time, no recommendation has been made. The department will provide me with a Cabinet paper to put to my colleagues for consideration in about November.

External Lighting at Anzac Oval and Anzac Hill

Mr VALE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Following an undertaking given by his predecessor to the Alice Springs Youth Centre to provide additional external lighting to the car-park on Anzac Oval and to the base of Anzac Hill, when is it anticipated that this lighting will be installed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I believe the honourable member made representations to the former minister regarding the inadequate lighting at the Anzac Oval car-park and at the base of Anzac Hill around the area of the youth centre. Apparently, additional lighting has been discussed with the Alice Springs Town Council in relation to that car-park. I have been informed that the situation will be rectified in conjunction with car-park extensions which are expected to occur later this year. The need for the lights is due to misbehaviour by people outside the youth centre in the Anzac Hill area. Apparently, they have a tendency to throw stones and other material at people who are attending the youth centre. I have instructed officers of my department to ascertain the cost of providing suitable lighting at the youth centre itself which could be directed towards the base of Anzac Hill area and which may prevent some of the problems which are occurring. I am still awaiting that information. I will be able to inform the honourable member of what is occurring in regard to that matter at a later date.

NT Government Contingent Liabilities

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Will the brief being prepared by the Treasury for the Assembly on the government's contingent liabilities include details of the government's deferred financing schemes, and when can we expect to receive the brief?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure the honourable member that he will receive information relating to the government's contingent liabilities. I understand the Chief Minister will be making a statement in relation to undertakings he has given to this Assembly previously. If it does not have details about commitments under the deferred payments system, I can have those details brought together quite quickly and provided to the honourable member within the next day or so.

Speech Therapy Services

Mr DALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What is the current position on the provision of speech therapy services to students in the Northern Territory and what positive steps, if any, have been taken to overcome the shortage of trained speech therapists available to the Department of Education?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. He has been concerned about the provision of speech therapists for some time. I have had information from one of my officers who recently attended the Australian Education Council meeting in Melbourne on my behalf that this problem is experienced right throughout Australia. At present, we have 6 speech therapist positions within the department and 4 of those are filled. In an effort to gain additional speech therapists, the department has advertised nationally. We have approached the Australian Association of Speech and Hearing and all training institutions. It is very difficult to attract speech therapists. The Department of Education has approached the Department of Health and an agreement between those 2 departments has been reached to try to overcome the problem.

Subsidised Taxi Scheme for Disabled Persons

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

When does he expect that the subsidised taxi scheme for disabled people will extend to Territory centres outside of Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member would be aware that this scheme has been operating in Darwin for a couple of months now. When we have ironed the bugs out of the system and have it working well, a decision will be made on when to apply it to other centres.

Classification of Aboriginal Communities

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

He would be aware of the incredible frustration in Aboriginal communities caused by duck-shoving over their classification. Will he undertake to provide during this sittings the criteria used to differentiate between an outstation and a community?

ANSWER

That requires a rather detailed answer. It will serve the purpose better if I undertake to provide that information at a later stage.

Electricity Services in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Does he have any power to direct the suppliers of electricity in Nhulunbuy to provide increased services, such as extra street lighting, should investigation prove that to be necessary?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I believe there is a power so to direct but I understand that it takes with it a responsibility for the Northern Territory government to pay. The company does not have to pay if it has been directed. I will confirm this for the honourable member and let him know in the next day or two.

Study Awards for Teachers

Mr DALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The President of the Northern Territory Teachers' Federation has claimed that study awards for teachers have been reduced considerably in recent years. Is this the case?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is obviously another effort by the President of the Northern Territory Teachers' Federation to try to gain support for its proposed industrial action on 18 June. It is another example where the president has taken matters out of context. Whilst there are fewer full-time study awards, it has to be borne in mind that in-service and study assistance programs have been expanded considerably. One of the reasons for doing this was to broaden the base so that more teachers would be able to benefit.

Mr Speaker, let me indicate some of the areas where study leave on full pay has been granted. I refer to short-term courses. In 1983, we had 16. This year we have had 36 and we are only into semester 1. There were 16 reimbursements of travel costs in 1983 and that has increased to 36 in 1984. Part-time study at the Darwin Community College has increased from 24 to 31. Teaching is a respected profession and it is a pity that there are a few people who are trying to discredit that particular profession. Most teachers care about their students and I trust that they will see through the efforts of the Northern Territory Teachers' Federation to bring about industrial action. I reiterate that the conditions enjoyed by teachers in the Northern Territory are equal to the best in Australia.

Berry Springs Zoo

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What progress has been made on the construction of the Berry Springs Zoo?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a major contract for water and sewerage reticulation facilities has been relet to Wolpers and Flowers Constructions. The contract is for \$492 517 and is one-third completed now. The fencing of the southern front boundary of the site is nearing completion at a cost of about \$100 000. A contract for additional fencing materials for the eastern and western boundaries

has been let to ARC Engineering for approximately \$60 000. The security compound has been completed at a cost of approximately \$10 000. Contracts for 2 staff houses have been let for about \$175 000 and one fifth of this work has been completed. A contract has also been let for the prefabrication and supply of 2 industrial sheds which comprises machinery and feed storage areas. This has been let for about \$27 000 and the delivery date for that is 11 June 1984. Contracts have been let for the domestic water supply stage 1 to Wolpers and Flowers Constructions for about \$50 000. Stage 2 has been let to Southern Cross Machinery at \$146 000. The 2 contracts will be undertaken concurrently due to the site layout. Earthworks costing about \$8000 have been completed.

Mr Speaker, all contractors are on site and work is proceeding to schedule. The interest of the Conservation Commission in this project is evident from the fact that it is doing all in its power to bring the Berry Springs Zoo to fruition so that the public at large can see what it has done for the conservation of our native fauna. There will also be displays of flora and exotic animals there.

School Buses

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of a community view that school bussing costs might be reduced if separate tenders were called for individual bus routes, thus increasing the element of price competition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I spoke about the issue of Alice Springs school buses the other day. The provision of a bus service has been examined and all I can do is reiterate that, as far as the Department of Education policy on bussing is concerned, the government will not deny free travel on buses to anyone who has a legitimate right.

Alice Springs Dump

Mr VALE to MINISTER for LANDS

Is there any forward planning for, or has consideration been given to, relocating Alice Springs garbage dump and, if so, can he supply details?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Lands and the Alice Springs Town Council, with assistance from the Conservation Commission and the Department of Health, have spent some time investigating potential sites for a new rubbish tip in Alice Springs. Lot 6386, which comprises nearly 37 ha adjacent to the western boundary of the existing tip, is considered to be the most suitable option and the council has been offered a 20-year Crown lease over the area so that Alice Springs will have a place to continue to dispose of its refuse.

Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is it the Northern Territory government's intention to introduce amendments to the Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Act that will enable the licensing of plumbers without formal trade qualifications to practise their trade?

ANSWER

This is a timely question. Indeed, the government has been very actively pursuing the policy and practical difficulties to do just that. I have had draft legislation prepared to achieve that end. However, on further examination it became clear that to do so would have very serious ramifications, particularly for apprenticeship training. If a person, no matter how experienced, wanted to operate legally as an advanced tradesman, then the rules of the game would be such that he could take on apprentices. While such a person would be quite capable of doing the work out in the field, clearly he would not have the theoretical knowledge to do justice by a person in his charge. To simply say that, because a person has been practising the trade of a plumber, regardless of the fact that he may have no theoretical knowledge whatsoever, is sufficient grounds for all purposes, would fail in logic. The result would be a very unfair situation to young people who are training in the plumbing and drainage spheres.

It is not now the intention of the government to introduce amendments to achieve that purpose. The position in relation to those who have worked in the fields of plumbing and draining will be exactly the same as it has been since 1971; that is, a person in that position is a journeyman but cannot have young people charged to him for the purpose of apprenticeships.

Housing Programs for Locally-Recruited Aboriginal Teachers

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

When does the Northern Territory government intend to change its present policy in relation to housing programs as it affects locally-recruited Aborigines, especially those who have been successful in the Batchelor training courses?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question. He has in fact written to me in relation to a problem that he has out at Gapuwiyak in relation to one of the Aboriginal teachers in that particular area. It is government policy that teachers who work in their local area are responsible for their own housing. I have indicated that to the honourable member in a response to his letter. Europeans would apply through the Housing Commission. Aborigines would apply through their local councils. I realise that it is a serious problem. Perhaps the honourable member could speak with the local councils and people in those areas to see if they can assist in the housing of Aboriginal teachers.

The policy of locally-engaged people finding their own housing is a reasonable one. If a person living in an area obtains a job in that particular area, one would expect him to have accommodation. In this case, all I can say to the honourable member is that the government is not looking to change the policy at this particular point. We are aware of the problems that are being experienced in some Aboriginal communities. I ask the honourable member to contact the various councils to see if they can assist. Where Department of Education houses are available, we will accommodate locally-recruited teachers until those houses are required by teachers from outside the particular local community.

Nyirripi Airstrip

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I will preface my question by complimenting him on the speed with which he organised a grader to clear the Nyirripi airstrip after the last sittings. However, is he aware that no rolling and consolidation was carried out, no wind sock or markers installed and that regrowth is now covering the airstrip? Will the airstrip be made fully operational before the end of this financial year and, if not, when?

ANSWER

The honourable member has mentioned his concerns in this area to me. I have made some detailed inquiries as to exactly what the situation is. As the honourable member for Stuart pointed out, he asked me a question at the last sittings regarding the Nyirripi airstrip. A contract was let to Henry and Walker who formed an airstrip between 2 large sand-dunes. The particular area is very sandy. It has been found that the strip itself is rather soft in some spots as a result. I have also had information that the amount of money involved to compact the strip at this stage would be in excess of \$100 000. Obviously, the provision of funds in relation to that would have to come from another area, and would probably deprive a number of communities of much needed money. However, things are not all as grim as might appear on the surface. A roller will be provided to the community which will allow the community to use its plant to compact the surface of the strip. Obviously, this will be rather a long process...

Mr Ede: They don't have a tractor.

Mr MANZIE: Well, the one that they had must have disappeared or broken down. However, because of lack of moisture, compaction of the strip surface will be a rather hard task until the rains come. I have inquired about the provision of water in relation to compaction, but the bore water is insufficient to enable the compaction to be carried out before the rains come. Therefore, the surface will not be compacted until later this year.

However, in regard to the strip itself, the Department of Aviation has issued guidelines for authorised landing areas and a contract will be let shortly for the provision of navigation aids: wind socks etc. The guidelines for authorised landing areas are as follows: any strip can become an authorised landing area provided it is constructed to Department of Aviation standards, which basically set out the width, approach, departure requirements and minimum navigation aids in wind socks and boundary markers; no specification is set down for the length or surface conditions of the strip; notification to or inspection by the Department of Aviation is not required; and the pilot of an aircraft landing on any authorised landing area is completely and solely responsible for his decision to land and any consequences which may arise from it. All that is required is that he has the owner's permission to land and no responsibility is transferred to the owner even if he indicates that the area is suitable for an aircraft to land and, unfortunately, that is not the case. The decision to land and the ultimate responsibility remain with the pilot.

As I said earlier, it is a matter of priority with the spending of money. I have been informed that the airstrip is considered serviceable by the pilots who fly in the area. I do not consider it a priority to spend \$100 000 on the airstrip when it will be serviceable by the end of this year. The information

I have is that it will be completely and utterly compacted and in reasonable condition. In answer to the honourable member's question, the strip should be compacted before the end of this year.

Fire Prevention in Palmerston Area

Mr COULTER to CHIEF MINISTER

Does the Chief Fire Officer have responsibility for fire prevention in the Palmerston area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am going to have to find this one because it is a gray area but...

Mr B. Collins: Especially after...

Mr EVERINGHAM: No, gray in respect of Palmerston. Of course, the honourable Leader of the Opposition does not know that because I do not think he has been down that way. The Fire Service is responsible for fire prevention in the Palmerston area. I believe it shares the responsibility in the vicinity of Palmerston with the Bushfires Council. Offhand, I am not quite certain of the actual boundary of the Darwin fire area but, in any event, the Northern Territory Fire Service obviously has a general responsibility throughout the Territory for fire prevention. A fire station has been provided in Palmerston and I understand it is in the process of being equipped and that it will be staffed in the relatively near future. That service will be available for call-out not just in the town of Palmerston itself but throughout the rural area. It will be available to back up the bushfire services and also the volunteer fire services especially in relation to grass fires and bushfires that are caused during the dry season. I can assure members that, considering its size, Palmerston will have a very good fire service in quite elaborate quarters and with more than satisfactory equipment.

Upgrading of Vanderlin Drive

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is the Department of Transport and Works planning the widening or duplication of Vanderlin Drive from Lee Point Road to McMillans Road and, if so, when is it anticipated construction will commence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently, the government completed improvements to the intersection of Lee Point Road with McMillans Road. I understand that, in August, we will be calling tenders to do similar upgrading on intersections from Mueller Road to the McMillans Road roundabout. As to the question of the duplication of Vanderlin Drive, I assume that that would be determined largely by increased traffic flows as they occur in the coming years. We have done preliminary design work on it and, as circumstances arise, that design work can be brought forward. Given present traffic growth projections, I would anticipate that we would be looking in the order of 1987 to 1988 for the Lee Point to Leanyer Drive section and probably 1988-89 for Leanyer Drive to Mueller Road. If increased traffic flows occur, naturally that program can be accelerated as required.

Poker Machines in Casinos

Mr LEO to TREASURER

Does a formal or documented agreement exist between the Northern Territory government and the present casino operators that restricts poker machines to casinos and, if such an agreement exists, will it apply to any future operator?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, from recollection, this question has been asked a number of times by the opposition. The answer is still the same: no.

Running Cost of Araluen Arts Centre

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Has he estimated the yearly running cost to the government of the Araluen Arts Centre now that the Alice Springs Town Council has refused to become involved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have approved preliminary estimates of \$300 000 for the Araluen Cultural Trust in 1984-85. However, based on advice I have received from the Trust Director, there might be need to have another look at this particular figure. In refusing to become involved, the Alice Springs Town Council said that the scale of development vastly exceeded community expectations. This is probably incorrect, Mr Speaker. There were many months of consultation with the community during the design phase before a single brick was laid. I think that members would agree that Alice Springs now has a fine facility for use by the local community which will be a pretty good attraction for tourists.

Government Advertising

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Why has the government advertising trust account been abolished and in what form is information on government advertising now kept?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot provide him with details of this matter off the cuff. I will be happy to obtain information and provide it during the course of the sittings.

Report on Alcoholism in Tennant Creek Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Why has the report on alcoholism in the Tennant Creek area, prepared by Miss Maggie Brady and due for release earlier this year, not yet been released and when will he see fit to release this report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will provide that information to the honourable member during this sittings.

Nightcliff-Rapid Creek Area Planning Study

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LANDS

Is there any possibility that a planning study will be carried out on the Nightcliff-Rapid Creek area in the near future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have given instructions to the Department of Lands that a planning study should be undertaken on the Nightcliff area. I don't think I said: 'the Nightcliff-Rapid Creek area'. I am prepared to have a look at that again. In the past, a study was undertaken over the older suburb of Stuart Park which was completed about a year ago. It involved a review of the whole area with a view to determining the future course of an old suburb, the loads which are placed on services, such as sewerage and water lines, how traffic patterns have developed over years of rezoning and redevelopment. In the Stuart Park Area it proved to be a very useful exercise. At present, a similar study is under way in relation to part of the Fannie Bay area where considerable redevelopment has taken place and traffic problems have emerged.

Some time ago, the honourable member for Nightcliff asked me to address my attention to some of the problems that have arisen in Nightcliff as a result of redevelopment. Parts of Nightcliff are very intensively developed today compared to just a few years ago. A number of traffic problems are evident to anyone who drives around the Nightcliff Shopping Centre and the intersection of Dick Ward Drive and Progress Drive. I have asked the Department of Lands to take these matters into consideration to see whether any amendments should be proposed to the Town Plan which might limit further intensive development in some areas of Nightcliff so that the problem does not become worse. I hope that such a study will be completed well before the end of the next financial year.

Gas Pipeline and Road Projects in Central Australia

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I draw his attention to 2 projects in my electorate: firstly, the proposed gas pipeline from the Mereenie oil field down to Yulara and, secondly, the proposal for a road from Ayers Rock up towards Kings Canyon, which would follow approximately the same route. What information is he able to provide to the Assembly about these 2 projects?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can tell the honourable member emphatically that, thanks very much to the Commonwealth Labor government's policy on fuel excise levies, we are now in a position to justify the cost of the pipeline to Yulara. I guess some good comes out of bad. In relation to the second part of the question, I think he is probably talking about the difficulties on Aboriginal land rights.

Mr Bell: I did not mention that at all.

Mr ROBERTSON: Once again, the government must go through certain procedures to obtain access to land for essential purposes which are in the public interest. Quite obviously, in order to carry out either of the 2 proposals that have been put forward, both of which I strongly support, the government will now have to talk to the Central Land Council and relevant traditional owners in respect of land...

Mr Bell: We know how you hate that.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, isn't it amazing? He shakes his head in disgust when he does not get every call. When he gets a call to ask a question, he does not let me answer it.

Mr Speaker, it is a matter for the government, through its various agencies, to talk to the Aboriginal people affected by corridors through their land, and, of course, by corridors through land which is now under claim. If Mr Justice Toohey's recommendations in that area are imposed upon us, and land under claim is to be taken as being land for the purposes of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, then we will have to negotiate those required corridors with the land councils notwithstanding that no traditional attachment has yet been found to that land. These discussions will be undertaken largely, I presume, through the Office of Aboriginal Liaison in the Chief Minister's Department and my people in my department.

In respect to the road, there is absolutely no doubt that considerable benefit would flow to Aboriginal residents of that area from the provision of that communication link from the Lasseter Highway through to the canyon area. We want to talk with the Aboriginal people about the matter. Given the nature of the Land Rights Act, it should only be done with their concurrence. Therefore, as these agreements are reached, we will try and program the required budgetary subventions to make this road available to the tourist industry. The main object of the road, apart from providing a new means of communication, is to provide a loop for tourist traffic to enter the Lasseter Highway from the south. Once the South Road is sealed, a great increase in traffic numbers can be expected. When that occurs, tourists can enter the Lasseter Highway, visit Uluru National Park and drive by the ring route via Kings Canyon and back to the Stuart Highway and thereby not have to traverse the same track.

Nhulunbuy Electricity Supply

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Under what terms are the suppliers of electricity at Nhulunbuy licensed to provide and sell electricity in that community?

ANSWER

I have no problem with the honourable member's request. I will try to get the information for him in the next day or two.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Berrimah Police Headquarters Complex

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): For the benefit of the honourable member for Millner, and for other honourable members, I have sought this information from the Police Commissioner. The honourable member for Millner indicated that there had been quite a serious cost overrun in relation to the construction of the Berrimah police headquarters complex. I think he mentioned something in the order of \$2m.

I am told that the original programmed provision for the police headquarters itself was \$11.5m. Subsequently, it was decided to incorporate the Fire Service headquarters within the complex. The original programmed provision for that was \$650 000, making a total of \$12.15m. The estimated total completion

cost is now \$12.8m which is an increase of \$650 000 or 5% over the original sum. Also, I am told that, in a project as complex as this one, particularly from the security aspect, it is not unusual for unforeseen requirements to be encountered during the construction phase. This project has been no exception. However, an increase of only 5%, including rise and fall, is not considered to be excessive.

The project is running ahead of schedule, even though the major variation of adding in the Fire Service headquarters accommodation was made. I am told that it should be handed over to the client - presumably the Department of Transport and Works - next month which is a month before the contract completion date. Of course, it will need to be furnished after it is handed over, which will add to the time.

Dixon Road Subdivison

Mr VALE to MINISTER for LANDS

When is it estimated that the first block in the Dixon Road subdivision of Alice Springs will be available for development?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the proposed 19.5 ha subdivision in Dixon Road in Alice Springs, for which applications from private developers were invited recently, has the potential to yield 123 R1 lots and 3 R2 lots. I expect the first lots to be turned off in December this year. In addition to this subdivision, 8 R1 lots in Dixon Road are to be serviced in August and made available for sale over the counter.

Housing Commission Penalty Interest Exemption

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HOUSING

From the information supplied to us from the Housing Commission, it appears that a Mr or Mrs Massicks sold his or her house in February 1983 yet it was shown that that person received a penalty interest waiver. How did that occur when the scheme was not introduced until April of that year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has asked a question regarding dates in February and April 1983. I would have to check the records to find out the exact details of this particular case. I will obtain this information and give it to him later today or at some time in the near future.

Racing Industry Working Party Report

Mr DALE to TREASURER

What action is proposed in respect of recommendation 12 of the Racing Industry Working Party Report; that is, that the Racing and Gaming Commission take a direct interest in the affairs of the Darwin Greyhound Association and take whatever immediate steps are necessary to place greyhound racing on a sound footing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in the process of assembling information to put before Cabinet in relation to the working party's report, I had a meeting with the committee of the Darwin Greyhound Association a couple of evenings ago with a view to discussing with it the report's recommendations that the government take some direct involvement to try to improve the greyhound industry's public image and its administration. At present, the Darwin Greyhound Association, which runs the Winnellie Park greyhound track, has a committee of 9 persons. That committee acknowledges that it has some difficulty running that organisation. Despite the fact that most of the committee members are involved because of their love of greyhounds and greyhound racing, they are, in fact, running quite a substantial business. They are turning over some hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Any business of that order needs a strong hand at the wheel and quite a bit of autonomy to look at the whole question of greyhound racing in the Territory.

Together with the Chairman of the Racing and Gaming Commission, I met with the committee to discuss the problems that are perceived by the commission and by the working party in relation to greyhound racing in the Territory. They passed a motion agreeing, in principle, that the government should seek to find a suitable person to be an administrator of greyhound racing for an interim period to try to pick the game up completely. The intention would be that later the administration would be handed back to the Darwin Greyhound Association. There are precedents for this sort of activity. Apparently, in Western Australia, greyhound racing was suffering smaller attendances than had been the case in the past and generally was in a bad way. The government established a small management team which picked the game up very considerably. Most people who know anything of the Western Australian situation indicate that it has been a very considerable success.

Being armed with approval in principle from the Greyhound Association that it would not object to government trying to pick the game up, I can make recommendations to my colleagues on that aspect of the working party's report. It was important that I obtain that approval in principle before I proceeded because, as I mentioned to the Greyhound Association, it could tell us to go fly a kite and continue to do its own thing under its own legal constitution and try to improve greyhound racing in the Territory to the best of its ability. I certainly gave it that option. I was not there to try to heavy it in any way but I think that the members all felt that it was in their own interest to accept the suggestion that an administrator be sought for this particular task. They would like to see a thriving business, more greyhounds, higher-quality racing, better stake money and more people involved in training greyhounds and activities related to greyhound racing. Whilst the industry is fairly small in the Northern Territory, being based solely in Darwin, it is likely to spread to other areas in years to come.

Channel Island Power-station

Mr EDE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer to her press release on 9 April 1984 regarding the Channel Island Power-station in which she stated: 'I shall be examining conservation measures in actuality and comparing them with the recommendations made in the project's environmental impact study'. How do conservation measures in actuality compare with the recommendations made in the project's environmental impact study?

ANSWER

The Channel Island Power-station construction is a major development project in the Northern Territory at the present time. As such, certain environmental conditions are prevailing. The environmental impact statement went into the project in some detail. I cannot remember all the details at the moment but, from memory, all of the environmental problems that could arise were covered. Different situations were considered, including possible effluent discharge from the power-station and the preservation of certain environmental conditions in that area. The Conservation Commission is continually monitoring the situation, having regard to the extensive mangrove areas in the vicinity of Channel Island Power-station, the tidal flows, popular recreational fishing spots and the live coral reef in the area. The honourable member can rest assured that the Conservation Commission is alert to all the problems that could arise. We hope that no problems will arise. Nevertheless, Conservation Commission officers are alert to any problems that can arise. They are working with NTEC staff and the construction companies involved on the project. I feel certain that there will not be any deleterious effects to the environment in that area.

Katherine Bookmaker

Mr PALMER to TREASURER

My question is asked on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Why was a shop bookmaker in Katherine refused permission to field at the Katherine races last weekend?

ANSWER

We have an unfortunate situation in relation to at least one of the registered bookmakers in the Northern Territory inasmuch as I understand he was refused permission to stand at the Katherine race meeting recently. He is a licensed off-course bookmaker and has fielded at the Katherine racecourse in the past. The problem started last year. Races were held at Mataranka. As most honourable members will be aware, country races are a feature of the Northern Territory. They get quite a gathering and a good time is had by all. The Mataranka meeting was not a registered race meeting. That meant that they ran races that did not have formally-registered racehorses. No official steward was there at the time. Under the Australian Rules of Racing, apparently, any bookmaker who fields at an unregistered race meeting risks being barred from fielding at any official race meeting thereafter. I think that this is a very unfortunate matter which has arisen in the Territory. We will need to look at it more closely.

Normally, the Darwin Turf Club administers the Australian Rules of Racing in Katherine and Mataranka. The official mechanism is for a country race meeting to be held under the auspices of the Darwin Turf Club which ensures that there is at least one race at the meeting which has registered racehorses competing, and that a steward is provided to ensure fair play in regard to starting, finishing, appeals etc. The situation at Mataranka developed fairly rapidly last year. It came to my attention quite late in the piece that an unofficial race meeting was to be held. It would not have been very wise of me to attempt to stop the Mataranka races. As a matter of fact, I do not think any politician could have stopped those races. I was faced also with the awkward situation of the Darwin Turf Club saying that no bookmaker who fielded at that unofficial race could field subsequently at official races. I could not see us allowing this country race meeting to be held without a registered bookmaker present because, without question, we would simply have forced people to engage in illegal betting. Therefore, by enforcing a law of the Northern Territory, we would have put quite a wet blanket over the whole show. The Racing and Gaming Commission took the only sensible attitude and issued authority for a bookmaker registered in Katherine to stand up at Mataranka on that day.

One of the absurdities of the situation is that, for the situation to be legal under the Australian Rules of Racing, there would have had to be only a single registered race at Mataranka with perhaps 3 registered horses running around under the supervision of the stewards. That would have made everything official. They could have run another 25 races with hacks from the bush and from cattle stations. That is where all the fun is because no one really knows who will win in those sorts of horse races. Betting could have been conducted quite legally on all of those unofficial races. I have asked the Darwin Turf Club to review its decision to refuse permission for the same bookmaker to field at his local racecourse in Katherine. Obviously, this is quite important to the individual concerned. At present, Katherine has only one bookmaker. It normally has 2 and 1 off-course bookmaker. A significant part of his business is to field on the rare occasions that Katherine runs races in its own town.

Within the Territory, we must have organisations like the Darwin Turf Club which is empowered to administer these rules in the Northern Territory. I think it has to temper its decisions in these matters with the view that country meetings are a part of the social structure of outback life in the Northern Territory, rather than applying the absolute letter of the Australian Rules of Racing.

This matter remains unresolved. I propose to take it up further with the Darwin Turf Club and hope that I can prevail upon it to see reason and remove any bans it has placed on this particular bookmaker and to sort out, once and for all, the situation in regard to future races. I notice that there is a request by a group in Borroloola to run races there. I would like to ensure that we have registered bookmakers standing up at Borroloola if there are races there this year in order not to force the citizens of that very fine town into a situation where they might be placed in a shadow in regard to the law.

University for the Northern Territory

Mr COULTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to the recently-released Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Report and the recommendations contained therein. Since it would seem that no funds will be forthcoming for a Northern Territory university in the next triennium, what is the government stance now in relation to the establishment of a university in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, whilst the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Report did not support funding for a university in the 1985-87 triennium, a number of encouraging comments were made in the report. As honourable members would be aware, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Report involves only recommendations which are put forward to the government. The government is due to hand down guidelines in relation to that report in July. At that time, I will be making further comment in relation to a university.

BTB Eradication Campaign

Mr BELL to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Have any pastoralists in the southern region made representations to him because the viability of their leases has been threatened by the administration of the BTB eradication campaign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question because it is a very pertinent one in these times. I have not had a particular representation from pastoralists in central Australia but I am anticipating that hardship will be caused to some people in some areas of the Territory, including central Australia, the VRD area and the Gulf district and possibly elsewhere in the Top End. The introduction of the campaign will place some people at a great disadvantage because they have managed their land in an open range situation over a long period without cattle production management. Because of the need to control disease, they will have to introduce management. That will be very difficult for some of them because the nature of their properties is not susceptible to that. Some of the people are quite incapable of doing it any way, and I do not say that unkindly.

It will be a difficult period for the Territory, Western Australia and Queensland. During the next few years, we will have to identify what we call welfare cases in the cattle industry. We have to decide what we will do. To this end, the ministers from Queensland and Western Australia have been invited to join me on a tour of the Territory, Western Australia and Queensland so that we can report back to the federal minister on what we believe should happen to these welfare cases. We believe there needs to be a provision in the BTB scheme for exactly this type of problem. At the moment, it does not exist because it has not been identified in specific terms.

Mr Speaker, I think it is fair to say, and the honourable member would probably know of places himself, that there are stations which were allocated as long ago as 80 or 100 years which have been able to operate on a laissez faire basis. The people on these really just exist. We are now saying to these people that they must have fences and management. They must muster and test and do a range of things to ensure disease eradication. It is quite impossible. In my own electorate there are areas in the Gulf region where the terrain makes it impossible to do this. The boundaries that we gave people 50 and 80 years ago run across the middle of watercourses. For some parts of the year, the cattle we are trying to contain behind fences roam free because the rivers knock the fences down every time the Wet comes. That is another problem that we must address. I can say for the benefit of the honourable member that, in the Victoria River District, we are looking at the possibility of realigning some of the boundaries so that they follow natural terrain and give us better disease control management.

In conclusion, I would say that there will be welfare cases in the cattle industry. The government will treat them with a great deal of care and consideration. We need to maintain stations and try to build up their viability rather than see the work of the last 50 years set aside and areas become unused. If there are particular places that are of concern to the honourable member or to others, or if he is aware of properties that he believes could use special assistance, I would be pleased to hear from him. It is only by treating these cases on an individual basis that we will be able to work our way through them and try to ensure that we have a disease-free herd by 1992 and that as much of the Northern Territory as possible is productive.

Aerial Surveillance Contract

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What effect has there been on local specialist employment in the aircraft maintenance industry in the Top End following the award of the aerial surveillance contract to Sky West?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not precisely sure of the number of people formerly employed by Northern Territory Aerial Work who are now employed by Sky West. The position is that the bulk of maintenance for Sky West is carried out at Port Hedland and Townsville which are the major bases of both search regions. The position so far as Darwin is concerned is that there are 6 pilots and 10 observers. Only 3 of those 10 observers were employed previously by Northern Territory Aerial Work. One would assume that, since all the maintenance is done in 2 locations outside of Darwin, whereas it was previously done here, the effect on the employment of engineers would have been rather drastic. Nonetheless, in talking around the air industry, I understand that the new arrangements may well lead to requirements for additional maintenance skills by some of our

local operators such as Air North. I understand that a number of those engineers have been able to be picked up.

I do not think I have raised the subject of the demise of Northern Territory Aerial Work in this Assembly so I might very briefly do so now. When the original contract for aerial surveillance was let, a tender was accepted from a company. I think it may have been a group called Ansett Transport Industries. That successful tender was withdrawn subsequently on the insistence of the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hayden, that the aircraft types used be of Australian manufacture. Well, of course, since New Zealand took over Victa Air Tourers, because Australia would not support the industry, we have produced only one aeroplane that was suitable: the Nomad. Northern Territory Aerial Work was forced by a decision of the then federal government, at the behest and with the 'approval' of the then opposition, to force that company to use Nomad aircraft. The Nomad is very expensive both to operate and maintain. Northern Territory Aerial Work was forced to use an aircraft which was vastly more expensive to operate and maintain than any other equivalent twin-engined aircraft which could be used for the purpose of aerial surveillance.

What happened then? Along came the 'you beaut' federal Labor government which said the whole question was open slather. Companies could tender to take over the surveillance runs with any type of aircraft from anywhere. Northern Territory Aerial Work - a locally-based company employing Territorians as observers, pilots and engineers - could not possibly compete with the aircraft which were made available subsequently by Sky West. This is an incredible situation. The Commonwealth government insisted upon a company using an aircraft which subsequently ruled it out of all contention for renewal of the same Commonwealth government contract. That is nonsense.

Parks in Leanyer Electorate

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

When does the Conservation Commission expect to commence work on the development of parks at lots 6548, 6533 and 6534, between Manunda and Copra Crescents, Karama; lots 6426, 6428 and 6429 at the corner of Wearing and Brazil Crescents, Karama; and lots 4041, 4127 and 4126 in Killuppa Crescent and Leanyer Drive, Leanyer?

ANSWER

I am very pleased to say that the honourable member is vitally interested in the workings of the Conservation Commission in his electorate. I would like to see all other members follow the example of the member for Leanyer and be proud of and interested in the work of the Conservation Commission in their electorates. Because of the interest he has in the workings of the Conservation Commission in his electorate, the honourable member has given me prior notice of this question. Therefore, I am able to reply in full this morning.

Funds are being made available to carry out park development on lots 4041, 4127 and 4126 Killuppa Crescent and Leanyer Drive, Leanyer. This will enable site preparation to take place during this dry season in readiness for planting in the 1984-85 wet season. I believe that the other lots mentioned - 6548, 6549, 6533 and 6534 between Manunda and Copra Crescents, Karama and lots 6426, 6427 and 6429 on Wearing and Brazil Crescents, Karama - are about to be rezoned as open space which will facilitate future development, hopefully in the coming wet season.

I would like to add that, whilst the Conservation Commission is in full agreement with people who wish to beautify their surroundings, it must be pointed out that rezoning is being sought because it is very difficult to maintain these blocks, if they are single blocks or perhaps dual blocks. It is very difficult to get machinery in to maintain parks in the condition in which we like to see them. Very generally, the Conservation Commission maintains its parks during 2 wet seasons and then hands them over to the relevant government body. In this case, I think it will be the city council.

Mr Speaker, while I am on my feet, I would like to reply to the honourable member for Millner. He asked me a question about a Mr, Mrs or Ms Massicks and the purchase of a house. I have been informed that there is a typing error and '1983' should read '1984'.

School Bussing Policy in Alice Springs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he willing to put off his hard-line implementation of the school bussing policy in Alice Springs until the end of the year to allow discussion on the alternatives proposed? If not, will he have Year 10 certificates of those students affected by this policy endorsed to the effect that the results shown were adversely affected?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have made it quite clear to honourable members that nothing has changed as far as the policy of government is concerned in relation to school bussing. As far as Year 10 students are concerned, I might say that, in the Northern Territory, we are fortunate in that students are able to attend any school of their choice. They will not be affected; they can still attend those particular schools. I intend to comment on the school bussing issue this afternoon in the adjournment debate but I emphasise, once again, the need for the Northern Territory government to oversee policy. Nothing has changed whatsoever in relation to school bussing. What has happened is that a number of people have been using the services without entitlement. This caused overcrowding.

One of the reasons why the issue had to come to a head at this stage was that the bus services in Alice Springs were threatened with closure. The Department of Transport and Works indicated to the Department of Education that, unless the numbers on the buses were reduced considerably, those buses would cease to run. It is my responsibility as the Minister for Education to make sure that our policies are implemented to benefit the people who cannot afford \$2.50 or whatever is being proposed as a user-pays system. Those people who cannot afford that will still have the opportunity to get to school on free buses.

As I said last week during question time, that policy will be enforced in the Darwin area as well, at the beginning of next semester, and I call on all parents at this stage, if their children are using buses which are designated outside their feeder area, to consider other ways of getting their children to school in the next semester. Bus passes are being issued at this time and the government will be policing its policy. We want to retain a free school system. We do not want zone schools. We want also to give those people the opportunity of getting their children to schools without paying a fee. I am not a minister for welfare or a minister for transport and works; I am the Minister for Education and, in order to keep those policies in operation, this government will be enforcing its policy at the beginning of the next semester.

Mineral Exploration

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

What are the comparative figures for the value of mineral exploration carried out on Aboriginal land or land under claim and the remainder of the Territory over the past 6 years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in 1978, \$13.7m was spent on exploration on Crown land and nil on Aboriginal land or land under claim. The figures were: in 1979, \$17.6m on Crown land and nil on Aboriginal land or land under claim; in 1980, \$21.9m on Crown land and nil on Aboriginal land and land under claim; in 1981, \$29m on Crown land and nil on Aboriginal land; in 1981-82, \$32m on Crown land and nil on Aboriginal land or land under claim and in 1982-83, \$17.1m on Crown land and \$0.115m on Aboriginal land. In the period from 1978 to 1983, \$131.3m was spent on exploration on Crown land and \$0.115m on Aboriginal land and land under claim. Those figures have been rounded off.

Australian-Thai Fishing Venture

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Is it correct that John Hickman, Gus Trippe and the proprietor of Henry and Walker Pty Ltd are among those Darwin businessmen who will provide the Darwin connection for the Australian-Thai fishing venture that the minister described to the Assembly yesterday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my understanding is that those 3 gentlemen are currently negotiating with the Thais for the establishment of a joint fishing arrangement in the Northern Territory. The final arrangements for that negotiation are not in place because there are FIRB considerations that have to be approved by the federal government. Also, there are provisions that have to be approved by the federal Minister for Primary Production.

I must say that I welcome the entry of Northern Territory business and fishing interests into such joint venture arrangements because, as I have said in the past, I believe our future in the development of fisheries lies in such operations and that we have much to gain by learning from people and having the benefits of their markets. Thais should be good partners for the Northern Territory.

Ludmilla Electorate Intersections

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I understand a planning study of the intersections of Dick Ward Drive, Ross Smith Avenue and Phillip Street in Fannie Bay in my electorate was completed last year and remedial construction work was to commence this dry season. What will be the extent of that work and when is construction likely to commence?

ANSWER

Every time I drive through that intersection in the honourable gentleman's electorate, it rather reminds me of the hotch-potch one encounters when one goes

down Bradshaw Drive in my electorate to Gap Road intersection. Over the years, I have seen many different proposals for the Gap Road intersection to solve the traffic problems there. One would think that we could eventually find one that suited. It is a very difficult intersection to organise in terms of engineering and traffic flows. I would suspect that the one in the honourable member's electorate is much the same.

My understanding of the present state of play is that we are well advanced in studies in relation to traffic and engineering solutions for that difficult intersection. Of course, we would be very anxious to get it right this time. I think it appropriate that I ask the department to put out planning solutions in a draft form in order that people like the honourable member may examine them. The city council, which has been closely involved in the analysis of that difficult intersection, should have further input. I think that it would be worth while to consult with people who drive regularly through that intersection and we would be looking for input from them too.

In this exercise, we would not want to delay the badly-needed realignment and reconstruction of the intersection unduly. I would be looking to a tender target date of about September this year. We will put these ideas in motion and see if we cannot find a design solution quickly.

Housing Commission Rental Accommodation in Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HOUSING

What progress has been made on the air-conditioning of Housing Commission rental accommodation in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

As part of its election campaign, the government ratified the decision of the Northern Territory Housing Commission that all existing new housing within the southern region would be provided with evaporative air-cooling units. In January 1984, the total number of general public dwellings - that is, houses and flats - in Alice Springs without air-cooling was 1111. As at 5 June 1984, contracts were let for the installation of 212 air-cooling units at a total cost of \$397 827. It is anticipated that, over the next few years, \$1m per year will be committed to the program and this should allow for the installation of more than 500 units per year. All contracts for construction of new rental stock provide for the installation of air-cooling units during construction.

The commission is also purchasing air-cooling units installed by tenants in rental dwellings where the units are considered suitable for purchase. Up to a few days ago, 14 air-cooling units had been purchased from tenants at a total cost of \$13 856. Originally, the installation program was expected to take 5 years to complete. Subject to funds being available, it is now anticipated that it could be completed before this time.

Incident at Dripstone High School

Mr DALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of what I believe to be a despicable incident that occurred at Dripstone High School yesterday involving Northern Territory Teachers' Federation members and students at the school?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for the question. I must say that I was disgusted at the incident that occurred at Dripstone High School yesterday. The incident involved some members of the Northern Territory Teachers' Federation. They lined up at the exits of the Dripstone High School and forced many students to run the gauntlet through a picket line.

Mr Speaker, I believe that very few teachers indeed would support that course of action being taken, and I am disgusted. The issue that the teachers have been on about for some time has been debated at length. I have no problem with protests being put forward to me and this government. It is part of our democratic system. I have raised the issue of the Northern Territory Teachers' Federation dispute in this Assembly on other occasions but I really believe that this is taking the issue too far.

When federation members asked if they could distribute leaflets to the students of that particular school, the acting principal told them that they could do so provided it was outside the school grounds. There is nothing wrong with that. If they wished to do that, it is entirely up to them. The trouble at Dripstone High School is that there is no fence around it. The acting principal told them that, if they wanted to continue to distribute these leaflets or whatever, then they had to do it outside on the street. They did not listen to that. They went to the only 2 exits at Dripstone High School and all the students had to run the gauntlet to get outside and go home. In so doing, they had leaflets forced upon them.

I have mentioned on a number of occasions that the conditions for teachers in the Northern Territory are extremely good. In answer to a question yesterday in relation to study awards, I said that study awards have been reduced. However, the overall expansion in relation to study assistance is quite remarkable. The reason why the Northern Territory government has done this is to broaden the base so that more teachers are able to benefit.

The 41-week issue has been canvassed ad nauseum and I am not going to go over it again. I believe that this action that is being taken and the efforts of the federation to engender feeling in relation to the proposed industrial action on Monday is not supported by the majority of teachers. I have asked those teachers to intervene in this debate, particularly after the efforts yesterday of some members of the federation. It is despicable that members of a profession that is respected and regarded highly in the community can go so low as to picket schoolchildren.

Mr Speaker, the department issued a directive that no letters or material was to go home via students. That has been contravened in 2 cases. In this particular case, it is a disgrace. I believe that many teachers will be ashamed of the action that has been taken by a few. I call on all teachers once again to sit down and rethink. They have very good conditions in the Northern Territory, as I have said on many occasions. Those conditions are equal to if not better than conditions in many other teaching services in Australia. I ask them to stop this rot and get on with the job of teaching children.

Parks in Mataranka Area

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Does the Conservation Commission have any plans for recreation parks in the Mataranka area and, if so, will the park or parks provide access for the public to Roper River?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. As you know, Sir, the Roper is one of the largest Northern Territory rivers. It is spring fed and its upper reaches are remarkable for water clarity and dry season flow. The river within the Mataranka and Elsey pastoral leases has been a major recreation site since the Second World War when rest and recreation areas were established on the river. After the war, the river became popular for recreation for local people and, more recently, has become a tourist destination. It attracts fishermen and campers, it is readily accessible from the Stuart Highway and it is the first major Top End river system encountered by north-bound tourist traffic as a major tourist rest and stopover point. The river has a succession of waterfalls, lagoons, palm groves and other features which meet tourist aspirations for photography and experience of Top End scenery. The small Mataranka Pool Nature Park is serviced by a camping ground under private management and is currently visited by approximately 85 000 people per year.

An agreement has been reached with the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority on boundaries of the proposed national park on the upper Roper River. This park area of 150 km² includes the existing Mataranka Pool Nature Park and will provide a vastly expanded regional, recreational and tourist resource. The area includes a series of attractive waterfalls and limestone formations.

In addition to this, adjacent areas on Elsey Station have been identified as having park value. Formal discussions with the management of Elsey Station indicate that acquisition of the areas involved may take some time to resolve. Nevertheless, this particular national park comprises the Mataranka Pool Nature Park, Red-lily Lagoon and Goose Camp. On Elsey Station, sections of the Roper River and other areas are all under consideration for a nature park. Unfortunately, to date I have not visited the area. It is one of the few areas that the Conservation Commission has anything to do with or that is of natural interest that I have not visited in my capacity as Minister for Conservation. Now that the Dry is with us, I hope to go down to this area very shortly.

Mr Speaker, when we first came to Darwin, it was one of the first places we saw in the Territory of any interest. We stayed at the old Mataranka Homestead. I can distinctly remember my impressions of that old homestead and also of the thermal pool. I have not been down there since. It was many years ago. But I know that the Conservation Commission is interested in this particularly beautiful area. Many people in the community, as well as tourists and yourself, Sir, are interested to preserve the places of interest in this area.

Shopfront Premises for the Office of Women's Affairs

Mr BELL to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to an announcement in this Assembly during the March sittings that the Northern Territory government would establish shopfront premises for the Office of Women's Affairs both in Darwin and Alice Springs. I refer him to the statement that they would be opened in 3 months from that date. Is he able to advise of progress about the establishment of those shopfront premises?

ANSWER

In some respects, the Chief Minister has advised other ministers of progress regarding the establishment of 2 shopfront premises for the Office of

Women's Affairs. I understand that it is a matter of finalising negotiations for premises both in Alice Springs and Darwin. However, I notice on the Notice Paper that the honourable member opposite is proposing a motion regarding anti-discrimination. By that time, I might have further information.

Street Lighting in Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In view of the fact that many Alice Springs residential streets are less than adequately lit, can he advise what plans the Northern Territory Electricity Commission has for the upgrading of these streets, particularly in the older residential areas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I guess it is a matter of perception about whether the streets are well lit or not. I have no immediate knowledge of whether all the streets in Alice Springs are well lit, very well lit or badly lit. The honourable member certainly has referred to the older areas of the Alice Springs town. As an occasional visitor to Alice Springs, it would be my view that the streets of Alice Springs are fairly well lit. It is a matter that we should be taking up with the council because it will pay for the lighting if any additional lighting is made available in the town. I am happy to tell the honourable member that NTEC would like to receive from him a list of those streets he believes are not well lit and perhaps then we could discuss with the Alice Springs Town Council how it feels about paying any additional moneys that may be required to have the street lighting upgraded. If he has any other aspects of street lighting that he would like raised at the same time - at crossings and the standards of lighting - we might get it all out of the way at the one time.

Australian-Thai Fishing Venture

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

The question is consequent upon the answer he gave to my previous question. Is he aware that the Northern Territory branch of the Australian Fishing Industry Council, of which Mr Hickman is the chairman, has in the past 2 years rejected 2 such proposals as the minister advised the Assembly yesterday? Is it correct that both the Territory and the federal Labor governments have pledged to local fishermen that, before any such joint venture is agreed to, consultation with local fishermen will occur? Can he advise whether such consultation has occurred as a result of the pledge that was given by his government? If not, will he assure the Assembly that such consultation will take place before these agreements are completed? As far as the federal government is concerned, I will take that up with my own colleagues.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I take the honourable member's point and I think it is perfectly valid. I too would say that consultation is absolutely necessary, and not just from the point of view of people being made aware of what is happening. If we are to gain the support of the fishing industry in toto towards the direction that we are going, consultation must proceed in a very detailed way right across the board.

It is fair to say that, when this matter was first raised a couple of years ago with the fishing industry, my understanding was that Territorian fishing

interests rejected the proposition because they could not see what was in it for them. They did not understand how they would become a party to it. I think it is fair to say that, from the point of view of the smaller fisherman, it would be very difficult for him to get into a joint fishing arrangement with an international trader because there is a fair amount of wheeling and dealing and probably millions of dollars involved in putting these things together. The Northern Territory fishing industry does not have that level of sophistication. However, some of the local fellows started to realise that the impetus in this direction will continue and that, if we wish ultimately to survive and develop our fishery and have some control over it, we must move in this new direction.

The honourable member mentioned Mr Trippe, Mr Hickman and Mr Walker as 3 independent Territory people who have come together for the purpose of forming a joint venture arrangement with the Thais. This is the first example of how we are now moving in the other direction. Rather than have a situation where there are a few fellows in it but most out of it, we want to have all the industry moving in the same direction and participating in joint fishing arrangements.

The benefit of joint fishing arrangements is that they give us access to markets. The carving up of the international boundaries some years ago caused quite a trauma in some quarters. I will give you an example, Mr Speaker. There are some small groups of islands in the Pacific that now find themselves the owners of large fishing areas that they have no interest in but have the rights over. People like the Thais lost a fair swag of their Gulf of Thailand. In effect, they lost a catch of 400 000 t a year for home consumption. People like the Thais have to replace that catch. They have to deal with people like ourselves and our neighbours to get access to the fisheries so that they can continue to bring home the level of catch they need. It is important that we understand that other people have interests and we join with them. It is not my understanding that the foreign interests are proposing a rape of the fishery. They are proposing to take in whatever interests are available to allow them to participate in a joint venture and to be recipients of the catch. Our particular difficulty at this time is that we are unsophisticated and our fishing industry is small and has not developed to the degree that we would like. Certainly, it is not as large as Western Australia's.

I take the honourable member's point. I am really keen to see that everyone in the fishing industry understands and supports what is happening. If we can get them into these joint ventures, then we should be trying to do it because it is from that base that we will build into something much bigger.

Senior Secondary Schools

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Could he report on the present status of the proposal to introduce senior secondary schools into the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question. There is no proposal at this particular time in relation to the establishment of senior secondary colleges in the Northern Territory. I am sorry that I have not been able to get a paper before Cabinet before this. There have been some problems. A Cabinet submission has been prepared on the principle of the establishment of senior high schools. I hope that that submission will come before the next meeting of Cabinet.

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