

## PART II

### THE QUESTION PAPER

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II.

Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

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

NOTICE GIVEN ON DATE SHOWN

From 6 March 1984

Legal Representatives

1 Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Which legal firms and companies represent or are retained by Northern Territory government departments or statutory bodies and, specifically, how many departments or statutory bodies retain or are represented by Morris, Fletcher and Cross?

Leased Properties in Alice Springs

2 Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS and HOUSING

1. Which properties within the Alice Springs town planning area are leased by Northern Territory government departments or statutory authorities?
2. Who is the owner of each of the properties referred to above?
3. On what basis is the cost of the lease determined?
4. What is the cost of each lease referred to in (1)?



Part Closure of Alice Springs Hospital

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Why has the Alice Springs Hospital been forced to shut down the outpatients clinic on one Friday every 4 weeks and, as a result of that closure, shut down the general clinic and the specialists clinics, including the eye, ear, nose and throat clinics, and also ward 7? What steps, if any, will be undertaken to solve the problem?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think the honourable member has certainly outlined the difficulties so there is no need for me to re-canvass them. I think we must address ourselves to the cause. Honourable members ought to be aware that, on 14 February, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission handed down the long-awaited 38-hour decision for employees of the public service known as group 4, which includes nurses. Incidentally, I do not think anyone could dispute the justice of that decision. Why should anyone in the employ of the Public Service have lesser conditions of service than those in the clerical ranks? Nonetheless, it has had considerable impact right throughout the shiftworker labour forces of the Northern Territory's public administration. That decision was back-dated to 10 January which automatically triggered 2 extra days leave for existing staff.

The position as at 27 February, which is the last readout I have for the staff positions in our hospitals, was particularly disturbing to say the least. I think it is worth while elaborating the position. The Royal Darwin Hospital has an establishment of 416 registered nurses and 82 enrolled nurses. It has currently a shortfall of 44 in the registered ranks and 7 in enrolled nurses. Alice Springs has an establishment of 166 registered nurses and 67 enrolled nurses. It is 23 short in the first category and 3 in the second. Tennant Creek, in those 2 areas respectively, has 32 and 6. It is 13 short in the registered nurse category and is up to establishment in enrolled nurses. Gove District Hospital has 24 and 15 respectively, with a shortfall of 4 and 2. Katherine Hospital has 38 and 12 with a shortfall of 3 and 2. Community health figures would reflect a similar position, particularly as a result of the new industrial award.

Of course, Mr Speaker, it is not solely as a result of the new industrial award that these shortages have occurred. There is a very severe national shortage of trained and registered nurses, and indeed enrolled nurses. While the Northern Territory has an excellent program of nurse training which is highly regarded throughout this country, we are quite unable as yet to provide sufficient staff for our own needs. Hopefully, that situation eventually will be reached. We would like to see that in all areas of education, particularly primary education. I doubt we will ever see it in secondary education.

Clearly then, there is a national shortage of nurses. Where there is a national shortage, the chances of our successfully recruiting the required 103 are not all that bright. Nonetheless, the shortages which we are currently experiencing do not result from a lack of trying. All members would be aware of the multiplicity of advertisements which were placed in our local papers and in national papers commencing last December. We have been running them constantly ever since with some degree of success, but not the level of success which we clearly need to overcome this deficit of trained staff. Naturally, we are now looking at other methods of recruiting. Needless to say, I will need to discuss

the broad issues of accommodation and terms and conditions of accommodation etc with my colleagues. There is a limit to what the taxpayer can bear. There is also a limit to recruitment when people simply are not available to be recruited.

Mr Speaker, we are now looking at the possibility, in cooperation with the Commonwealth in so far as its immigration laws are concerned, of recruiting in England. This is the most logical place to recruit because it has a very similar system of registration and academic qualifications for registration. I do not know whether there is any real merit in looking to America or New Zealand for assistance. All these avenues will be explored by the department but, initially, we are looking at England. That necessarily involves a cooperative attitude from the Commonwealth in terms of its current immigration policy.

Mr Speaker, the difficulties at Alice Springs will be reviewed regularly and there will be a full review on 4 April. At that time, we will examine where we are. In the meantime, the regional director is considering a range of options which may be available to him and which would involve such things as transferring long-stay, high-dependency patients to other hospitals either within the Territory or out of the Territory, ways to increase recruitment and plans for the earlier discharge of some patients in consultation with community health staff. There is a further problem in that, if we do not have sufficient community health staff, we cannot expect the community health staff to carry a greater workload as a result of earlier discharges. Thus, it is not at all simple. A further option is alternative accommodation for very low-dependency patients who usually are more of a welfare problem than a medical problem. That is the present position.

#### Water Release from Ranger Uranium Mine

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In view of the fact that the Sessional Committee on the Environment, the watchdog of this Assembly, is looking at the whole question of water management in the uranium province, and given that this committee has yet to receive information on appropriate release standards as against receiving water standards, will he undertake to delay making a decision on water release from Ranger until this committee has completed its deliberations on this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter of approval for any controlled release of water from the Ranger uranium mine has been the subject of quite intensive activity among various interest groups for several months now. An enormous amount of technical work and consultation has been undertaken. I understand that the Sessional Committee on the Environment is being kept informed of progress in this regard. I understand that the Alligator Rivers Region Coordinating Committee, comprising the representatives of all the principal interested parties, is meeting today to discuss questions associated with water management and possible controlled water release. I hope to receive a report, either later today or tomorrow, on the outcome of those deliberations. Following that, I will consider the situation further.

As the honourable member mentioned, the 2 critical areas to be clearly established prior to any approval being given for controlled water release are the standards of releasing water and the standards of receiving water. I understand that negotiations have led to considerable agreement on both of those

questions between the respective interested parties. I am aware that the Department of Mines and Energy people involved have proposed a standard of releasing water which is considerably more conservative than that proposed by the Office of the Supervising Scientist. I am comforted by this. The attitude of the department is that whatever is recommended to me as the approving authority should be thoroughly justifiable and err on the conservative side. I believe that the Office of the Supervising Scientist was established by the federal government when Ranger was given the approval to go ahead and mine in the area. The Office of the Supervising Scientist was established to be the community watchdog. He is the expert with no vested interest in regard to whether the mine goes ahead or not. He is there simply to monitor the situation and to report to the federal government from time to time. I am sure that he takes his job most seriously. His staff are very highly regarded. One of the principles that I will be using when considering my responsibilities in regard to uranium mining and environmental control in the Territory will be to make sure the Supervising Scientist's opinion is obtained in all cases where it is particularly relevant. This is certainly one of those. I will seek his assurances in regard to proposed courses of action.

I can assure the honourable member that the total resources of this government are available to ensure that the Sessional Committee on the Environment is kept abreast of events in the region. It will certainly be kept abreast of material that relates to any decision I take.

#### Tanami Export Services

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What progress has been made on behalf of Northern Territory customers in regard to the recently failed Tanami Export Services?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Wagaman has been involved in this matter for some time now. We have had discussions from time to time on this particular subject. Tanami Export Services was a door-to-door sales home freezer plan company that operated in the Northern Territory until December 1984. The operations of Tanami Export Services have recently been taken over by an Adelaide-based company called Granny's Choice. This company purchased Tanami's parent company, Tesco South Australia Pty Ltd, its finance arm, Tesco Credits, and the rights to Tanami customers' credits in the Northern Territory.

Customers who have financed their contracts through Tesco Credits or purchased their meats on a cash on delivery basis will continue to be serviced by the new operators. Unfortunately, customers who prepaid contracts, either in cash or through one of the well-known credit companies who have provided credit for the plan, have no recourse on Tanami whatsoever. Those who obtained loans will have to continue to service that debt. People who arranged finance through Custom Credit, whilst being sympathetically looked after as far as payments are concerned, still have to pay back those loans. I am advised, however, that the new company will be offering special discounted and sympathy prices for those people who have been caught up in this Tanami frozen food business.

Honourable members will be pleased to note that my first ministerial conference was on consumer affairs and credit legislation. During that meeting, proposed national legislation for door-to-door salesmen was agreed to. Part of that proposed legislation is the provision for a cooling-off period of 10 days for door-to-door sales.

Adoption of this national policy is in the pipeline. People will be able to cancel goods over a period of time if in fact the goods are not as they were stated in the original contract. At the moment, it does not look that good for some of the people who have been tied up in this bulk-food-buying package deal. I will be keeping honourable members advised of the progress that is being made in this regard.

\$2.5m Contribution to Casinos Purchase Price

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he inform the Assembly if the \$2.5m contribution to the purchase price of the casinos was made under section 21 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act?

ANSWER

I do not have the answer to that in my head but, by the end of the morning, I will be able to provide it to the honourable member. If any of my staff are listening, I would ask them to bring it over straight away.

School Facilities for Yarralin Community

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What action is being taken by the Department of Education on the request from the Yarralin community near Victoria River Downs for post-primary or secondary school facilities there?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Members will be aware that the Department of Education has 2 trial secondary programs in operation, one at Barunga, which was previously known as Bamyili, and one at Yirrkala. As far as Yarralin is concerned, we are looking at having post-primary facilities made available in that particular community. Unfortunately, we have struck a snag. The department has put forward programs to the Commonwealth Schools Commission in relation to the establishment of post-primary facilities in a number of Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory. In that submission was the provision for accommodation for the teachers who would be necessary to provide instruction in those schools. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth has seen fit at this stage - and the department is still continuing to consult with it to try to resolve this issue - to withdraw the residential component from the submissions that were put forward. That is of grave concern to us in the Northern Territory because we are trying, wherever possible, to ensure that the necessary facilities are provided in communities right throughout the Territory. The cost of providing residential accommodation in these particular areas is very expensive and the Northern Territory government cannot afford to take up that particular component.

Unfortunately, at this time, we are still negotiating with the Commonwealth in relation to the provision of post-primary facilities at Yarralin as well as post-primary facilities at a number of other communities in the Northern Territory. Once we do come to grips with the provision of accommodation in those particular communities to cater for the staff that will be required to service those facilities, we will be able to progress. At this stage, we are still talking with the Commonwealth about funding.

Purchase of Casinos

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Was he aware, on 28 November 1984, that moneys from accounts appropriated for the 1984-85 Northern Territory budget had been used to acquire the casino from Federal Pacific Hotels?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think that, on 28 November, I was the Treasurer and I would have authorised the use of any funds by Treasury for the purchase of the casinos under the act.

Dick Ward Drive and Ross Smith Avenue Intersections

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is the present situation with respect to the proposal to change the Dick Ward Drive and Ross Smith Avenue intersection?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there have been considerable problems with traffic movement in that area. There has been a liaison with local residents and the local member has been involved in those consultations. We are looking for a design that will allow the traffic to flow far more freely and safely in that area. There has been a definition of what is required in relation to the new work. I have been advised that tenders will be called for the work in late March or early April.

Course Syllabi in NT Schools

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Are syllabi of courses in Northern Territory schools readily available to parents and students?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the documents are available in all schools throughout the Northern Territory on request to the principal or the acting principal. The core curriculum and almost all other recommended curricula are obtainable from the library. We have not been able to distribute the documents to the community generally because of the enormous cost. If members are having difficulty in obtaining the material, which I believe is readily available, then they could contact me or my office and I will make it available to them.

Interest Rates in Casino Agreements

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

Is he able to explain the rate of return of 14% which is recorded at line 55 of schedule 3 of attachment F of the agreement? That is the rate of return available for the investment by the Northern Territory Property Trust. Can he explain why a rate of 14% has been allowed to achieve an agreed return on investment to the property trust when he himself indicated in public statements that the return for our short-term loans to Henry and Walker from the NTDC was less than 13%?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has asked 2 questions. In a recent press statement, I said that a short-term loan of some \$21m was arranged by the NTDC through the Treasurer's Advance. The information that I had at the time was that the Treasurer's Advance funds that were given to the NTDC as part of the loan to the property trust were given to that organisation at the same rate that Treasury could have obtained on the short-term money market. I think the term used was a '180-day bill rate'. In the agreement, as I understand it, it is not 14% guaranteed investment. I was under the impression it was 13% - 10% is the guaranteed investment rate of the organisation that has sought units in the trust and the government is picking up the shortfall on the other 3%.

Mr B. Collins: You are still signing documents without reading them aren't you?

Mr DONDAS: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says that I am signing documents without signing them.

Mr B. Collins: Even you can't do that!

Mr DONDAS: I cannot remember the full text of every line in that particular agreement. As the acting Treasurer for a short period, it was necessary that those documents be signed in order to allow the NTDC to enter into the arrangement with the groups mentioned in the particular contract. I put out a press release saying that the Northern Territory Treasury would not lose any money on its short-term investment of \$21m and I said it was almost 13%. In fact, I think the rate finished up being 12.3% or 12.4%. However, as we have said on many occasions, the money that was advanced to the NTDC for that loan of \$21m was at the same rate that Treasury was getting at the time. On the second question, in relation to the 14%, if my memory serves me correctly, it was 13% and not 14%.

#### Acquisition of Melacca Swamp and Black Jungle Swamp

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS

Has the government plans to acquire, or has it already acquired, Melacca Swamp and Black Jungle in Koolpinyah Pastoral Lease No 547?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, both Melacca Swamp and the Black Jungle area are proposed for acquisition by the Northern Territory government for the purpose of establishing conservation reserves. In fact, it was announced in early January that agreement has been reached in respect of the Melacca Swamp area and the boundaries have been finalised. The acquisition has not been completed at this stage. However, by agreement with the pastoral lessee, an area of Melacca Swamp, which is a unique and extensive breeding area for crocodiles and is very important to the future protection and management of crocodiles in the Northern Territory, has been brought under the control of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission for management of the area. We are now proceeding with fencing and bringing that area under proper conservation management.

In respect of the Black Jungle area, there are some unique and rare palms there. It is proposed that the area will be turned into a conservation zone. In that vicinity, there is some excellent horticultural land and we are determining

between the Conservation Commission and the Department of Primary Production areas which should be preserved to ensure the protection of the palm species whilst, at the same time, making other land in the vicinity available for the purpose of developing horticultural activities.

Mr Speaker, the Koolpinyah matter is, to say the least, very complex. There are quite a significant number of current issues in respect of Koolpinyah. I have had 2 separate sessions with the lessee of the property to try to resolve all the issues surrounding its current and future development. In many ways, it has been a sad story in the Northern Territory and it really is time that all the issues were resolved. The lessee has undertaken to provide me with a complete program of all his proposed developments with respect to that property. I will be working through, in conjunction with the lessee and the department, to try to overcome a very complicated mishmash of problems and concerns. I hope that documentation will be available to me by the end of March and we can then proceed towards the resolution of the multitude of issues involved.

#### Adherence to School Syllabi

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What guarantee does the minister have that school syllabi are actually taught in full and according to the time allotted?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, from the questions that are being asked today, I would presume that the honourable member has read a recent article in the Australian titled: 'The lies they teach our children'. I guess that many people in the community felt that that particular article hit home. The quality and the quantity of the actual programs that are taught in schools are the responsibility of school principals and are overlooked by the regional superintendent and also the regional senior education officer of curriculum. Quite frankly, short of sitting in the classrooms, I could not give any assurance that the actual programs that have been set down are, in fact, being taught. If parents are concerned about what is being taught in our schools, and I believe that perhaps there is some room for concern with the school-based curriculum, then they should involve themselves with the school councils and actually take part in decisions relating to the school-based curriculum within a particular school. This Assembly has passed legislation creating school councils which provide an avenue whereby people can become involved with the education of their children. I would suggest that, if people do have concerns, they should become more active on those councils.

It is also very disappointing to see that some people see our education system as lacking. The results do not bear that out. A great deal of work has gone into setting up our education system. The previous Ministers for Education, Jim Robertson and Marshall Perron, spent a great deal of time and effort in bringing us to the stage we have reached today. For the first time last year, we completed core curriculum up to Year 10 and the results speak for themselves. We had a 70% pass rate in matriculation which is better than in many other places. We also had very good pass rates in senior secondary certificate courses. Incidentally, the name of those courses has been changed to school-assessed subjects and those results are also very encouraging.

If parents are concerned about the school-based curriculum that is being taught, they have every opportunity of making their views known to the

particular school council. I wish that more people would think positively about education. The results are good. If they were not good, I would be concerned and be jumping up and down. Whilst the results are good, I do not intend to address the matter any further.

Wharf at Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Is he able to provide a date for a start on the proposed new land-backed wharf in the Gove harbour?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this matter was included in the capital works program for this financial year. Unfortunately, when the matter went out to tender, the prices came in some \$200 000 more than the budgeted estimate for that project. Consequently, we have had to go through a process of negotiation and restructuring to try to ensure that we are getting the best deal for our money so far as that proposed port is concerned. To that end, one of the main users of that port, V.B. Perkins and Company, will contribute a proportion towards the cost of construction of that port. That has eased the problem. The gap has been narrowed down to some \$130 000.

Mr Speaker, through the Department of Ports and Fisheries, the government has been undertaking evaluation aimed at the comprehensive development of fishing resources in northern Australian waters and the provision of a strong base for a fishing industry in the Northern Territory. This is being done through a consulting company, Norgaard. Twelve months ago, it presented us with a base-line study which indicated major fish resources available in the Northern Territory. The consultants are currently finalising stages 2 and 3 of the study to develop strategy plans for the development of fisheries in the Northern Territory. A significant part of that consideration is the development of wharves, ports and other land-based facilities to attract and support the effort of fishermen in the offshore fishery.

As a consequence of that development and to ensure that we are not doing things on an ad hoc basis, decisions in respect of the Gove port development - at what was known as the old mission jetty area and where the current barge-landing facility is - were delayed to give us time to consult with Norgaard, to ensure that any developments would be consistent with our proposals for the long-term development of shore-based facilities for the fishing industry. Gove has the potential to become a significant outport in the future of the fishing industry in the Northern Territory and it is important that what we do is consistent with that. I have discussed the matter with the consultants and am advised that the proposed port development is quite consistent with stage 1 of the Norgaard proposals. The matter will now be referred back to Cabinet to ensure that the finances are available to proceed as soon as possible with the development of that port.

Interest Rates in Casino Agreements

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

I ask a supplementary question after the clarification that has been sought from me by the Chief Minister. I refer the minister to the agreement to which his signature is appended; I refer to schedule 3, attachment F of that agreement. At line 54 of that schedule, detailing the financial returns to the Northern

Territory Property Trust, is the entry 'return to equity - 10%'. We know that that return is guaranteed by the good old Northern Territory taxpayer. At line 55, we have 'return to loans' - that is, loans made by the trust - 'at 14%'. Is the guaranteed return on loans at 14% guaranteed by the NTDC in the same way as the previous entry of 10% of equity is guaranteed? If so, can he explain why the trust can get a guaranteed return of 14% on its loans whereas the money we lend it attracts 12.3%?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition asks a question about an agreement that was signed several months ago and expects me to keep that information in my head.

Mr B. Collins: Is 14% guaranteed by government?

Mr DONDAS: As I understand it, without accepting the interjection by the Leader of the Opposition as such, the property trust has some financial arrangement with the NTDC to ensure that the operators will not lose any money. The Leader of the Opposition quite rightly says that the trust has been assured a 10% guarantee on its investment. I have quickly read line 55 which says: 'Similarly, only a 6-monthly loan interest payment occurs in the first year'. The property trust, in obtaining financial assistance to enter the trust, has had to pay a higher rate. It may have paid 13%. As I understand it, the NTDC has guaranteed the shortfall between the 10% and 13%.

Casino Takeover

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In a statement to the Assembly in regard to the casino takeover, he said that the loan from the Northern Territory Development Corporation to the trust proved less expensive than an extension of the Australia Bank loan. Could he explain to the Assembly the nature of the additional expenses that would have been involved, whether they were in the nature of interest payments or legal expenses, and to whom those expenses would have accrued?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the honourable member, the decision as to whether to use an Australia Bank loan or a Treasury loan involved the following consideration. If Treasury funds had been used, they would have attracted the rate that Treasury would have received on the market by investing the funds in any other investment portfolio. I believe the return to Treasury would have been a point cheaper for the NTDC than if it went through the commercial route of the bank because the bank's rate would have been slightly higher. By borrowing the money through commercial arrangements such as through the Australia Bank, there would have been additional costs: the documentation costs and the flat-rate fee that is paid for loans that are advanced by banks under those circumstances. I can obtain the exact comparisons of costs for the honourable member if he would like them. The honourable member has agreed to meet with officers of the government on Friday for a briefing on details such as this. So far as I am concerned, there is no big secret about it. That is the sort of detail that he can raise at the time and we will only be too pleased to provide the information to him.

Appointment of Additional Magistrate

Mr DALE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Can he inform the Assembly if he has taken any action to appoint an additional magistrate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am sure honourable members will be interested to learn of actions that we have taken, particularly since the Leader of the Opposition raised this matter in the adjournment debate yesterday and there has been considerable interest in the media. Unfortunately, the Territory has 2 of its magistrates, including the Chief Magistrate, off work on medical grounds and we are not quite sure how long that situation will prevail. The government is proposing to appoint an additional magistrate for the Northern Territory, bringing the total number to 8. As a result of the situation we have found ourselves in since Monday of this week, when the Chief Magistrate took sick leave, I am pleased to advise that His Honour the Administrator this morning has appointed as an acting magistrate, a Mr A.J. Cavit, who will act as a magistrate until the end of December of this year. I hope to be in a position in the not-too-distant future to make further announcements about other acting magistrates appointed to help us over the current difficult period. I advise that Mr Cavit has almost 15 years of post-admission experience comprising 4 years of civil litigation, 3 years of mixed civil and criminal experience and 8 years working exclusively in the criminal field. For the last 4 years, he has been working with the Department of Law in the Northern Territory. I believe that he will

bring credit to the magistrates court and I am sure will do an honourable job for us all.

Mineral Content of Alice Springs Water

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In the adjournment debate last week I used these 2 jug elements to demonstrate the problems associated with the mineral content of the water in Alice Springs. Could he advise whether he has had his department investigate the problems associated with this mineral content with a view to installing some type of treatment facility on the southern edge of town?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I referred yesterday to the deplorable set of circumstances that the member for Braintree brought to the attention of this Assembly in relation to what is occurring to his taps and electric jug elements. However, I think that the question should be redirected to the Minister for Mines and Energy who has responsibility for location and quality of water.

Blood-Alcohol Limit

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the notice paid to the question recently, does the government have any plans to change the legal blood-alcohol limit from 0.08 to 0.05 and, if so, what are the reasons?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was quite amazed to see a newspaper article a few weeks ago in relation to this matter. The reason for my surprise was that, as far as I was aware, nobody in government circles had made any firm suggestions in relation to changing the blood-alcohol level from 0.08 to 0.05. Obviously, there has been a fair amount of work done, not only in the Territory but in a number of states, in relation to finding a suitable level of blood-alcohol concentration above which it is considered dangerous to drive a motor vehicle on a public street. At present, 3 states and the Territory have a limit of 0.08 and 4 states have a limit of 0.05.

In the Territory situation, statistics show that people who have been involved in accidents, and who have had higher than the prescribed alcohol level, are well over the 0.08 level. Such people apprehended by the police and tested in relation to their blood-alcohol level are found to have a reading well in excess of 0.08. Some of the levels that are being found in the Territory are extremely high in comparison with national levels. Sometimes they reach levels whereby the person should be considered clinically dead. I refer to some readings well over 0.35. Statistically, it has been shown that people who are apprehended after accidents have readings around 0.15 and 0.25. It is extremely rare to find people with only 0.08, 0.09 or 0.1 blood-alcohol level.

It indicates that the problem is not the concentration of alcohol but rather the attitude of the drivers. Irresponsible people consume alcohol without any regard to the other road users and their responsibilities in relation to them. Those sorts of people are reaching extremely high blood-alcohol levels. Responsible people seem to take advice from advertising and

other available information. Those people do not partake of the amber fluid to such an extent that they reach dangerous blood-alcohol levels. Statistically, it has been found that it will not make any difference whatsoever if the blood-alcohol limit is decreased from 0.08 to 0.05 or whatever. The fact of the matter is that drivers must act responsibly in relation to the use of alcohol. Until such time that individuals decide that drinking and driving is anti-social, the figure that we select will make no difference. It is a matter of education. At this stage, we do not intend to lower the limit.

Member for Sadadeen's Vineyard Operation

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Did the member for Sadadeen make representations to ministers of his government to prevent Territory Grape Farms Pty Ltd commencing a commercial vineyard that would compete with his own private vineyard operation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can say with great honesty that the honourable member for Sadadeen and all honourable members in my party have been, are and will continue to be great supporters of all horticultural industries that are developing in both central and northern Australia. I think it is commendable that a member of the Assembly has an outside interest such as the development of grape growing in central Australia. The horticultural development of central Australia really is in its pioneering phase. I think all honourable members would accept that it is quite commendable. If the honourable member for MacDonnell wants to pursue any interest that he believed would develop the centre of Australia, he would find us willing supporters. In the 5 years that he has been in here, I cannot recall that he has ever supported anything that was worth doing. The development of the grape project at Pine Hill is one that the government has supported since day one and, only recently, Cabinet asked the Department of Lands to expedite the excision of land from the station so that the agreement between the potential horticultural developers and station owners can be settled and development can proceed as quickly as possible. One of the great potential exports from central Australia is the grape harvest for the tables of southern Australians because our product comes on the market 2 or 3 weeks before the rest of the grape harvest in this country. That is one of the grape producers' greatest assets.

Aboriginal Assistant Teachers

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he able to report to this Assembly on the current position of the funding of the Aboriginal assistant teacher positions in outstations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this issue was of great concern to the Northern Territory government. We were concerned that the funds to maintain an ongoing program were being withdrawn from the Northern Territory government. We needed to have negotiations with the federal government to address the problem. However, I could not allow the Territory government to totally fund teaching assistants. There will be a debate later this morning on this issue. It is of very real concern to the Northern Territory government and it should also be of concern to the people of the Northern Territory. Clyde Holding had discussions with me

about the funding of teaching assistants. At that meeting, it was decided that we would set up a joint working party to examine outstation education in general. I was very pleased to hear the comments made by the member for Millner the other day about assistance in obtaining more funds from the government for disadvantaged schools programs. I would also ask that the opposition assist the government in making representations to the Commonwealth for increased funds for teaching assistants.

We have exchanged letters concerning the conditions and membership of the working party. Time is running out. We must have some decision before the end of June 1985. The representatives on that working party are the FEPP group, which is the Aboriginal education group in the Northern Territory, the National Aboriginal Education Committee, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Northern Territory Department of Education. It is important that the people involved on that particular committee are really au fait with Aboriginal education generally because it will continue to be a problem as far as funding is concerned. In answer to the honourable member's question, a working party has been set up. We will be discussing the issue and, hopefully, we will be able to resolve it by the end of June this year.

#### Supply of Electricity to Farms in Ti Tree Area

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I ask this question of the Chief Minister because he was previously the Minister for Mines and Energy. Did the Northern Territory government, at a cost of about \$90 000, provide an electricity supply to 2 grape farms in the Ti Tree area without receiving any request for that supply or was the connection requested by the member for Sadadeen, the owner of one of those farms? Did he write subsequently to the owners of the grape farms seeking a contribution towards the cost of electricity supply and, if so, what contributions have been received from the member for Sadadeen or others?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am only too pleased that the honourable member has raised this matter again and directed it to me. He had a bit of a swipe yesterday about the same issue and, as usual, he is more on a muckraking kick than dealing with the truth. I would just like to bring to the honourable member's attention a couple of facts in relation to this matter. Firstly, when I was Minister for Mines and Energy and for Primary Production, I received a representation from Mr Dahlenburg during a visit to his farm. He requested assistance from the government in several forms. One was access to electricity because one of the most expensive costs that Mr Dahlenburg was facing on his property was the generation of power and the use of diesel fuel to pump water. That seemed to me to be a pretty reasonable request for somebody who has a major investment and is really pioneering the development of a horticultural industry that will serve the central Australian region well in the years to come. Even the member for Stuart would be prepared to concede that point.

The honourable member suggested that there was some sort of irregularity in extending the power to Mr Dahlenburg. I would just like to pick that up because Mr Dahlenburg, in our view, should have some support. We run a powerhouse in Ti Tree and we extended that power to an Aboriginal camp 6 miles south of the road. We provided all of that at no cost to the Aboriginal community. How could we then say to a guy who is working his butt off, trying to do something for the place and really giving it a go ...

Mr B. Collins: Talk about the benefits you are going to get from it Denis.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I am only too pleased that the honourable member is starting to raise it with the connotation that he wants to put on it: that there is some sort of impropriety. Let us deal with that as we go. I said to NTEC: 'Can you put the power on?' It said: 'Yes, we can put the power on, and the cost is X'. One of the benefits is that we might get up to a dozen more farmers in that region. New farmers have been prevented from coming because of the cost of oil and the inability to subdivide because of the economics of the project. The provision of electricity in that region, just as it did in the Darwin River Dam region and scores of other areas around the Northern Territory, will open up the region.

Mr Speaker, let us consider Mr Dahlenburg's contribution towards the cost. At the time Mr Dahlenburg approached me, he was in serious financial straits. There was no possibility at that time of Mr Dahlenburg's writing NTEC a cheque. There was every chance Mr Dahlenburg would go down the drain and the whole thing finish. To the government, to the Department of Primary Production and to ADMA, there was a very good reason for us to try and support Mr Dahlenburg: to make sure that he survived and became viable and to make sure that further farmers entered the region and developed.

I am not up to date with whether Mr Dahlenburg has been asked to contribute to the cost of his power. That extension was made well before the rural provisions were put in place. That was one of the reasons why we made an arrangement for the provision of power to rural people. I had the same thing in my own electorate where people 500 m outside the provision of town power were not able to get an extension because it was going to cost them \$100 000 for transformers etc. NTEC's role in the community, whether the honourable member for Stuart wants to support it or not, is to provide power to as many people as possible for the cheapest possible price. That has been the object of the exercise.

Mr Speaker, in your own area in Katherine, you would be the first to admit that NTEC's contribution of probably \$2m or \$3m in the next year or 2 to supply power to all the rural people on the western side of the town is a very good contribution by the government to the community to ensure that expansion and development continues. I cannot expect the rest of the community to have electricity to make their businesses viable and then turn round and say to a farmer that, because he is a farmer, and he raises goats and pigs and grows watermelons, he is not entitled to power and, if he goes broke, he is a mug and should not be out there anyway.

Mr B. Collins: You really should go and talk to Jim Sullivan about his negotiations with NTEC. He would love to read this. He has been farming for 20 years.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, that is the mentality of the honourable member for Stuart. That is the way he likes it. The object of the exercise is to provide power to as many people as possible and to give them the benefit of that power so that they can grow and develop, whether they are Aborigines, whether they are farmers, whether they are miners or whatever they are.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition interjects about the provision of power to Mr Sullivan. I see Mr Sullivan pretty regularly. He has never raised with me the provision of power to his block.

Mr B. Collins: I will talk to you about it later.

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member may wish to talk to me about it later. If there is a problem and an injustice, and there is something reasonable that we can do to see that power is provided so that more business and the growth of the horticultural industry can ensue, then we want to be in it.

Let me just pick up another very important point for the honourable member. If we are to have a horticultural industry in the Northern Territory - whether it is ADMA, Pine Hill or Ti Tree - we will probably be able to grow a lot of things without a great need for power. But the crunch will come when we start to turn out the volume and we need cold-room facilities all over the Territory to handle the product so that it does not rot in sheds. The potential cost of that infrastructure to a farmer who is spending every penny he has just to get the stuff out of the ground will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Setting aside the costs of domestic power generation, diesel for pumping water and a range of other things, there will be a need for us to measure up to the provision of cold-storage facilities to hold the product before we ship it.

Mr B. Collins: We've been telling you to do that for years.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the honourable member says that he has been telling us to do that for years. That is the first time I have heard him support it so I do not know who has been telling a fib.

Mr B. Collins: Have a look at our primary industry policy document.

#### Juvenile Detention Centre in Darwin

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What is the current situation with a proposal to establish a juvenile detention centre in Darwin?

ANSWER

The member for Jingili has expressed in this Assembly and, indeed, within his own electorate on numerous occasions his concern and interest in the matter of juvenile detention centres. The Northern Territory government was proceeding to build a juvenile detention centre within my own electorate. A site was identified in Boulter Road, Berrimah. Honourable members may remember when a detention centre was established in Berrimah. It is now part of Youth Hostels of Australia. The proposal for the youth detention centre went as far as requesting preliminary sketch plans for development of the centre. But at that stage, the juvenile detention centre situation in Giles House in Alice Springs was not running anywhere near capacity. It was decided to delay the development of such a centre until it could be clearly identified what the needs and the population might be for such a centre in Darwin. As of 26 February, Giles House was running at near capacity and a large percentage of the juveniles detained in that centre were from the northern region. Recently, I established the Juvenile Crime Task Force and one of its terms of reference was for it to make recommendations on how the government should address the problem. One of those recommendations might well be the establishment of a detention centre. I would like to make it very clear that putting juveniles in concrete cells and locking the door is not the answer to our problem. The recidivism experienced through that type of treatment of our juveniles can only lead them into a life of institutionalisation. It would just become a training ground for our prison system within the Northern Territory.

We have a corner of Blatherskite Park that the juveniles at Giles House are using as a farm area. One of the things that they are growing is grapes. I am not sure if they have the power on in that area. I will be making investigations into that within the next couple of weeks. From the comparative analysis that we have done of overseas countries, the trend seems to be that a behavioural modification centre should include some type of activity for the juveniles. Largely, this takes the form of farms or bush camps. Indeed, the matron of Giles House has considerable experience in this area. We will be looking at all the available options and the latest technology in these types of centres. I look forward to the findings of the Task Force on Juvenile Crime to give the government some clear indication on the direction that we should be heading in.

Darwin Airport

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the reported cutbacks by the federal Department of Housing and Construction in relation to the Darwin Airport project, is he aware of the federal government's intention to cut back next year's budget not from the rumoured \$38m to \$18m but to less than \$10m?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there have been rumours for some time now in relation to a slow-down of the construction of the Darwin Airport project. They have caused myself and all members of the government a great deal of concern. Obviously, the infrastructure that is being developed in the Territory in relation to tourism certainly requires that we have an airport able to provide first-class facilities and service to tourists and to Territorians. There would not be a member in this Assembly who would speak highly of the present situation at Darwin Airport which is an absolute disgrace. It is imperative that the development of the Darwin Airport terminal proceed to enable it to be finished as quickly as possible. The viability of the development of tourist infrastructure in Darwin itself would certainly be interfered with if that airport project does not go ahead.

Mr Speaker, in relation to stories regarding the slow-down of the project in question, I have addressed a letter to the Minister for Aviation in Canberra and I would like to read that letter to the Assembly:

*Dear Mr Morris,*

*I note with some trepidation the following statement in the Bosch Report in relation to the Darwin Airport redevelopment project: 'Some of the other major airport projects presently under way, Darwin being a particular cause for concern, may also not be justified on economic grounds'. In view of the prominence being afforded the Bosch Report in federal government circles, and your own heralding of the report as a landmark document, I am concerned that the federal government may be influenced by Bosch on economic grounds to scale down the scope of works currently approved for the Darwin Airport project.*

*To expect justification of the project on purely economic grounds is ridiculous. We are talking about Australia's northern international gateway. We currently rely on a passenger terminal*

that was built as a RAAF hangar in 1945, which has seen little modification since. A further major factor to be taken into account is the moving of the entire civil aviation operation in Darwin to the northern side of the runway, which is predicated on military not economic grounds.

Also of considerable concern are the reported activities of the razor gang, being carried out by your colleague, Senator the honourable Peter Walsh. This raises fears in the Northern Territory that contract works on the Darwin Airport project may be deferred as part of the federal government's austerity measures. There are obvious and compelling reasons why the Darwin Airport project should proceed according to the original construction timetable to bring the new airport complex into operation by late 1988. To delay the project timetable in any way now must surely result in cost penalties overall.

I seek your assistance that the Darwin Airport redevelopment project will proceed in accordance with the original approved construction program for the new airport complex to become operational by late 1988.

As well as writing this letter, the Chief Minister has also made written representations to the Prime Minister in relation to the apparent rumours and projected slow-downs of the Darwin Airport project. We are so far from the rest of Australia, without a railway and without any other means of interstate or overseas transport, except by air. All Territorians should find it intolerable that there is talk of slowing down the development of the Darwin Airport terminal. I hope that they are rumours.

The Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and I will be speaking to Senator Peter Walsh later on this month in relation to the development of the Darwin Airport and also in relation to Alice Springs Airport.

I would just like to say again that, if that development does not proceed, it will affect all Territorians and the development of the Northern Territory. I think that all members of this Assembly have a duty to encourage that development to proceed forthwith and without any slowing down. It appals me that it is even being contemplated.

Drug and Alcohol Overnight Shelters

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

When does he expect the Drug and Alcohol Service Association in Schwarz Crescent, Alice Springs, will open as an overnight shelter? In the light of recent events at Ti Tree, has the government any intention of opening up a similar shelter in that place?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not certain what the honourable member refers to as recent events in Ti Tree. If he is referring to events which gave rise to conduct of the violent nature, of course, drug and alcohol shelters are not designed for that purpose. To answer the last part of that question first then, the incidence in the Ti Tree area, to the best of my knowledge, has been very low. I think that is commendable for the area because previously there were quite a few problems in that area. Obviously, the community attitude there is improving markedly. My recollection is that, in the last 12 months, there have been only 8 detentions of that nature. I understand there have been detentions of another nature but only 8 detentions of non-violent people in need of assistance due to alcoholism or being drunk.

As for the centre to be established in Schwarz Crescent, Alice Springs, the government recently provided funds necessary for the upgrading of the old home there. Additional toilet and shower facilities are needed and construction work is now proceeding. The very active committee is headed by Hinton Low, a businessman who is devoting a great deal of time and a great deal of his own potential for earning a living to the affairs of that committee. He is being paid what one would describe as a mere retainer by the Department of Health to assist the committee as its executive director. The committee has called for applications for a manager for the centre and I understand that interviews for that position are to be conducted soon. I hope to see the centre operational within about 4 weeks.

Justices of the Peace

Mr FIRMIN to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is there any move at federal level to reinstate justices of the peace to a situation where they are permitted to certify applications for passports and immigration documents and, if not, will he take this up on behalf of the Territory justices of the peace?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the first meeting of Attorneys-General since I became Attorney-General in the Territory will be held in a couple of weeks time. I am not familiar at this stage with the agenda for that meeting. I am unable to advise the member whether the matter is currently under investigation. However, I will undertake to have the matter examined and advise him. If the federal authorities are not examining it, we may well raise it with them.

Purchase of Casinos

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

This is the same question that I asked on Tuesday morning and he undertook to give me an answer by lunchtime that day. As far as I am aware, I have not

had an answer. Was the \$2.5m contribution to the purchase price of the casinos made under section 21 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my apology to the honourable member. I have carted the answer in and out of here for the 2 days since he asked me and I should have given it to him. The short answer is no. Section 21 allows for grants to be made and this was not a grant. The money was paid under a provision of the Territory Development Corporation Act which assists small business.

#### Northern Territory Prisons

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What is the policy of the government regarding rehabilitation and recreation for prisoners in the prisons in the Northern Territory, especially at the Gunn Point Prison Farm?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I share the concerns of the member for Koolpinyah who has a prison establishment in her electorate. I have the Berrimah Prison in mine and she has the Gunn Point Prison Farm in hers.

The recreational, industrial and hobby pursuits at the farm have been referred to from time to time. I would like to foreshadow to the Assembly that the Apsey Report which my predecessor, now the Minister for Transport and Works, received when he had responsibility for correctional services addresses that particular problem. It addresses some of the issues which have been raised about Gunn Point. I will be tabling it at the next sittings. I would just like to remind members of the high cost of keeping people in cells in the Northern Territory. It is a growth industry that the Northern Territory could well do without. The construction cost per cell is \$50 000 and it costs \$90 a day to keep a person in prison. It becomes quite ...

Mr Dondas: Put them in the Travelodge.

Mr COULTER: That would be a little cheaper.

These are the types of issues that we will have to address soon. I have made some efforts to increase the effectiveness of community service orders. Honourable members will know the trouble I had when I tried to organise the prisoners to do a little work under community service orders. In fact, we put them to work at the Darwin Institute of Technology library. We will be addressing the matter of recreational and hobby courses and security on prison farms. We will be moving towards involving prisoners in worthwhile pursuits so that they pay their debt to the community by being involved in endeavours that will benefit the community at large. I have been in touch with the trade union movement to ask it to identify projects that we may be able to engage prisoners in for the benefit of the community as a whole and at the same time not deprive other persons of worthwhile employment. They would be projects that would not proceed if such a labour force were not used.

I would like to pay tribute to the type of work that the prisoners at Gunn Point have been involved in. The boat ramp at Leaders Creek was a Department of Correctional Services initiative which was completed by the Conservation Commission. The cleaning up of the northern beach at Gunn Point was done by the

prisoners. In fact, the water supplied to the ablution block comes from the Gunn Point Prison Farm. Maintenance on the southern road is also done by the Gunn Point prisoners. There are farming activities out there, as the member for Koolpinyah will be well aware. Gunn Point is in fact the food bowl of the prison system in Darwin. Costs are exorbitant and we will be looking at ways in which we can contribute more without actively competing with private enterprise. That will also provide worthwhile pursuits for prisoners to enable them to serve a worthwhile purpose within the community. We cannot just keep juveniles locked up in concrete cells and throw away the key. If we institutionalise people, the level of recidivism is extremely high. People just keep coming back into institutions. As I said, I foreshadow to honourable members that some of the recreation and industrial pursuits of prisoners will be actively pursued by this government. I will be addressing that issue a little later on.

#### Transfer of Government Funds

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

Can he tell the Assembly, as he foreshadowed he may have to do, whether he will be seeking a transfer of funds under section 13A of the Financial Administration and Audit Act and will that transfer be to division 23 of the Northern Territory Appropriation Act 1984-85? In explanation, that is the \$2.5m hole which was left in the NTDC vote which the minister said he may have to refill at some later stage.

ANSWER

At this stage, the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation has not given me any paper work requesting a transfer to that division. Of course, we are only into the month of March. There are still several months of this financial year to run. If the chairman does make such a request, I will inform the Leader of the Opposition.

#### Braitling School Extensions

Mr VALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can he advise the Assembly when the permanent extensions to Braitling school will be commenced?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has been at me for some time to do something about this problem at the Braitling School. I met with representatives of the school council, the school principal and the honourable member when I was last in Alice Springs. There was a meeting between the council and the department held on 15 February relating to the project to which the honourable member refers. It involves the construction of 3 classrooms and ancillary areas. The project was admitted to the 1984-85 design list. My understanding is that the project will be completed by December 1986. The honourable member for Braitling will say that they cannot wait that long. That date was agreed to between the school council and the department.

Mr Speaker, I might also add that, where there is a need for increased facilities to cater for increased enrolments, some councils and groups will say to me as the minister that they do not want any temporary facility and they are quite prepared to have overcrowding until we are prepared to pay the full amount

so that they can have a purpose-built facility. My concern with that is that it is not generally the member in the Assembly who gets the blister when there is overcrowding, it is the minister or the department. All we try to do is to make sure that the students in a particular school are adequately catered for and that there are facilities and room for the teaching to proceed in an orderly fashion. It is all very well to say that we do not worry about overcrowding but I can assure members that the government does worry.

We will be proceeding with the purpose-built facilities: the 3 classrooms and an ancillary area. Hopefully, that will be completed by December 1986. I understand also that the council of that school has requested further expenditure to be considered. I am doing that at present.

#### Protection of Vegetation in Woodcutters Mine Area

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What action is being taken by him to protect the rain forest areas and other vegetation, including pasture land, in the Woodcutters mine area that may be affected by the proposed dewatering of the mine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this important matter is quite complex. I will not take the time of the Assembly during question time with a comprehensive brief on the subject. Information is available to all members if they so wish. The honourable member and people in the region are rightly concerned for the preservation of 2 rain forest areas in the vicinity of the Woodcutters mine. I am advised by officers that the principal rain forest, which I think is visible from Batchelor Road, is about 4 km from the mine site itself. As the mine dewatering program in all likelihood will cause the creek to run permanently in the future, no damage is foreseen to this particular rain forest. In fact, the rain forest may even benefit through additional growth. Notwithstanding that, the area will be monitored continually to gauge the effects of the dewatering.

There is another section of rain forest which is less well known. It is also about 4 km from the mine in the other direction. Whilst this rain forest is not regarded to be under any threat from the dewatering, it will be monitored anyway, both mechanically and visually. The mine owners have undertaken that, if any detrimental effects to the rain forest are found as a result of the dewatering program, they will install a system which will provide permanent water to that rain forest as well. As I mentioned, it is not envisaged that this action will be necessary. Officers of the Department of Mines and Energy and the Water Resources Division are taking a very genuine and intensive interest in the mine because of a most unfortunate incident some time ago which received quite a lot of publicity. Officers of the Conservation Commission are also taking an interest in the area. The 3 groups are closely involved in the preparation of any approvals which are given by myself under the Mining Act for work to take place in the region. I have undertaken to meet with local landholders in the area in the near future to discuss problems as they see them and to see if we cannot work out some resolutions. I can assure honourable members that my personal interest in the Woodcutters mine will be ongoing.

#### Gove Peninsula Electricity Supply Conditions

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

When will this government negotiate the terms and conditions for the supply

of electricity on the Gove peninsula as is required for the licensing provisions in the Electricity Supply Act?

ANSWER

I expected that question from the honourable member. I would have been a bit disappointed had he not raised it because it has been a regular question by the honourable member to successive ministers. The situation which currently exists between Nabalco and NTEC in regard to the supply of electricity and electricity licensing seems to have reached a stand-off which I am proposing to resolve. The issue has come down to examining the legal questions involved. I think this is most unfortunate. Whilst we must all pay regard to the legalities of what transpired in the past, I think that the attitude of resorting to lawyers to establish the terms and conditions is not exactly in the spirit of cooperating to seek a resolution. At the present time, I find it most unsatisfactory that, legally, we appear not to have an agreement with Nabalco on the generation of electricity. It is also possible that it is generating electricity without a licence under the Northern Territory act. That is of concern to me. Whilst I have not been able to devote my total attention to this question in the short time that I have been the minister responsible, I propose to do so. I have had talks over the last few days with the new chairman of NTEC. I have told him that I regard it as a top priority, along with things like the pipeline and the Channel Island Power-station which are very much on our agenda at the present time. Within perhaps a couple of months, I should be in a position to take some very specific action in regard to the electricity supply situation in Nhulunbuy. I will undertake to keep the honourable member informed of progress in that regard. It probably will not be without some public toing and froing on the subject.

St John Ambulance Service in Yulara

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Can he advise the reasons behind the withdrawal of the St John Ambulance service from one of the Territory's largest and growing towns, Yulara?

ANSWER

As I understand it, the service was withdrawn on about 31 January this year. I do not know whether I would describe Yulara as being one of the Territory's largest towns. The situation at Yulara is quite unique in the Territory. The tourist infrastructure, to use that much-used word, is very concentrated indeed. The general population of the area, which has traditionally required medical services, particularly aero-medical services, is fairly static. There are very severe restrictions on traffic speeds all around the national park. The principal danger would be to the travelling public on the open highway coming to the park and Aboriginal communities remote from the national park. I do not think that the provision of an ambulance service necessarily will improve the lot of those people vis a vis the service already provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

As I understand it, the service was withdrawn by St John Ambulance because of difficulty in obtaining volunteers. I guess that really stems from the nature of the people who work and live in the national park area. Where the bulk of the work force is associated with the tourism industry, quite obviously the working pattern is very different than that which would exist in a normal non-Aboriginal urban community. These people work in the service and catering

sector of the park's operation, in the 2 major international hotels, in the bunkhouses, in the Ernest Giles Tavern and in the shopping complexes. All of these have odd hours of operation. I dare say the ability to attract volunteers from such a work force is far more difficult than it would be elsewhere. One may think that the logical approach would be to appoint a full-time officer of the St John Ambulance. But then, you would have only 1 officer who would be expected to hang around for 24 hours a day. The cost of having 2 would be quite horrendous. The matter of leave would necessitate the appointment of 3 officers and the cost would become completely out of hand.

There are many people in the national park area who believe that a full-time ambulance service is justifiable. Figures to date do not seem to indicate that but it is my intention to monitor the program closely. As soon as possible, I intend to talk to communities about health needs and youth, sport and recreation needs. I will discuss the matter with people resident at the Rock, particularly the police and people previously involved in the St John Ambulance Service, to try to come up with a workable solution without breaking the piggy bank. I have no doubt that there is a demand for ambulance services in the area. Precisely what model that ambulance service should follow is something that I cannot answer yet. I will be making an effort to resolve the difficulty and to come to a solution which is satisfactory from a health delivery and a safety point of view and which is workable within the normal operational model which is used by St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory.

#### Report on Domestic Violence

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I would refer him to a press release, issued by his predecessor on 21 October last year, which foreshadowed some action to implement the recommendations put forward in Dr Peter d'Abbs' comprehensive report on domestic violence. What action has been taken to implement some of those recommendations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the report on domestic violence has been out for some time now. It has been the subject of intensive research and investigation by Cabinet. Currently, the government is investigating what resources it has at the moment to meet the needs as outlined in the report. The Departments of Education, Health and Law and also the police are looking at this particular problem at the moment. A further submission on what resources are currently available to meet the obvious needs which were outlined in the report will be put to Cabinet this month. I will be able to advise the member for Stuart more fully on the implementation of some of the recommendations in the report in the very near future.

#### Braitling School

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

To what extent are overcrowding problems at Braitling school the result of the deferral of Mt John subdivision and the consequent hasty decision to subdivide the Dixon Road area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure honourable members that there is not an overcrowding problem at this stage. If overcrowding occurs, we will install

demountables to take care of the excess enrolment. There is not an overcrowding problem with Braitling school and I do not see one occurring in the foreseeable future. We will be constructing additional classrooms to cater for increased enrolments.

#### Matriculation Results in NT

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Given the Northern Territory's need to train our own technical and professional work force, would he advise how last year's matriculation results compared with previous years and with South Australia?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, they were terrific. We have had a number of questions relating to the school courses over the last week. As I have pointed out on other occasions, our results last year were very good indeed. Our overall pass rate in matriculation was 70% and that compares more than favourably with South Australia which had a 67% pass rate. Not only have we had a good pass rate this year but it has been improving steadily over the years. It is interesting to note that the 10 top matriculants have also improved their point scores over the years. This year, the average of the top 10 matriculants is 10 points above previous years. I hope that people see the positive aspects of education rather than the negative aspects. If the results were not good, I would be concerned and I would look to address that. However, we cannot rest on our laurels. With the core curriculum reaching all stages of compulsory education last year, the results should improve even further from now on.

#### Applicants for Position of Director of Darwin Institute of Technology

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has he received any complaints from the applicants for the position of principal/director of the Darwin Institute of Technology in respect of the manner in which they were treated by the Northern Territory government and, if so, have they been considered yet by the institute council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer is no.

#### Renal Unit in Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

An announcement was made by the former Minister for Health last year on the establishment of a renal unit in Alice Springs. When will the unit be opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the first steps towards establishing a renal unit in Alice Springs have been taken. Advertisements have been placed for a nursing sister to establish such a unit and applications should be closed now or be closing very shortly. The department has had discussions with a dialysis consultant concerning the nature and location of such a unit within the town. In other words, it will not necessarily be placed within the hospital. Quite obviously,

if one is to provide a wide-ranging renal service, then portables must be provided as well. It is interesting to note that a number of community organisations, particularly service clubs, are interested in participating in the provision of portable units to be used in homes. The number of persons requiring such equipment in Alice Springs is not high but, nonetheless, there is a potential for increased numbers of such patients. Progress is being made in conjunction with community groups. I hope to be able to advise the honourable member within the next few weeks as to precisely what type of renal service we will be able to provide in Alice Springs.

Bridges in Millner Electorate

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What plans does the government have to build a pedestrian-bicycle bridge across Rapid Creek near its mouth and a second bridge linking the water gardens area with Millner?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Millner has spoken to me on this matter and it has been raised in this Assembly on a number of occasions. I cannot give him explicit details on exactly where we are in relation to building the bridges. A number of sketch plans of a bridge across the mouth of Rapid Creek have been displayed in a number of areas. I will give details to the honourable member later. The concept is certainly an exciting one. With the developments occurring in the Brinkin area and the northern suburbs on the other side of the creek, it certainly would be desirable to have a pedestrian bridge there. As with all such matters, financial and physical constraints have to be taken into consideration.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Applicants for Position of Director of Darwin Institute of Technology

Mr HARRIS (Education) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I wish to correct an answer I gave to the Leader of the Opposition a minute ago. I recall that I have received one letter in relation to the appointment of the Director of the Darwin Institute of Technology. Honourable members will be aware of the enormous amount of paperwork that flows across my desk.

Tourism and Hospitality Training

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I am interested in the area of tourism and hospitality. When will a tourism and hospitality training facility be operational in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the member for Jingili's interest in tourism and hospitality. He has made it very clear over the last few days that this is a particular interest of his, coupled with juvenile crime. One would be forgiven for suggesting that perhaps he has had some form of consultation with a certain journalist who has continually commented in relation to the government's efforts to establish a tourism and hospitality facility in Darwin. The government is very concerned about the need to provide people who are qualified to service the vital tourism industry in the Territory. We will be doing everything we can to

try to provide short-term courses that are needed to ensure that that particular industry is serviced well. As I have pointed out, and I guess the message will get through in time, we have tried to obtain funds to build a facility for tourism and hospitality training in Darwin. We were looking for \$2m on that particular occasion. Unfortunately, the TAFE Advisory Council did not support the submission that the government put forward. I have mentioned that in this Assembly before. I have also mentioned that the Gillen House, which has cost us some \$5m and is a facility that we are very proud of, will be made the major training centre for tourism and hospitality in the Northern Territory. The government does accept the industry's calls for short-term courses to be made available in the inner-city area of Darwin. By the second part of this year, we will have a short-term training facility available to people in Darwin. I will be making further comment on that at the next sittings of the Legislative Assembly.

Nhulunbuy Community Library

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Given that the community library in Nhulunbuy will need to be opened by the beginning of the 1986 school year, when will construction on the building start?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have the answer to that question before me. I will give it to the honourable member later today.

Applicants for Position of Director of Darwin Institute of Technology

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to his previous amended answer and his comments about the paperwork that flows across his desk. Would he confirm that the complaints received by the council from applicants for the position of principal were, in fact, sent to the minister as a result of his specific request to the council for such correspondence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I asked for the applications to be sent to my office, not complaints. I can have the matter clarified for the Leader of the Opposition and I will supply an answer later today but only one complaint has come to me officially in relation to applications for the position of principal last year.

ANSWER TO QUESTION  
Purchase of Casinos

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I wish to answer further a question asked of me earlier by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in relation to the matter he raised both this morning and the other day. He asked whether or not the \$2.5m paid to Federal Hotels, representing the difference between \$47m and \$49.5m, was authorised under section 21 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The answer is no, Mr Speaker. Section 21 deals with ex gratia payments. The authority for the expenditure of the \$2.5m comes from the powers of the NTDC to spend on development projects under the provisions of the Territory Development Act. The \$2.5m was part of the total appropriation of funds to the NTDC for 1984-85 as authorised under that act.

Accommodation for Single Persons

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for HOUSING

Is any consideration being given to a change in the Housing Commission's current policy not to provide accommodation for single persons in the smaller towns in the Territory? Some of these towns do not have any single persons' accommodation available from the private sector nor do they have caravan accommodation. There is a desperate need for single accommodation.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I mentioned earlier this week, I have directed the Housing Commission to look at the entire situation regarding accommodation for single people. That relates not only to the major urban centres but right across the Territory. As I explained, the provision of single accommodation is a very complex matter. We have heard in this Assembly this week that 30% of the Territory's population is still attending school. In Darwin alone, we have 5 secondary schools with at least 5000 people attending them. They are the sorts of numbers of eligible persons that we would be looking at in the next 3 or 4 years. The criteria of need for accommodation will have to be examined carefully because we may end up in a situation whereby, inadvertently, we may be encouraging young people to leave home either as a result of some disagreement with their parents or to strike out on their own without the experience in economic resources to do so successfully and therefore burdening the people of the Territory in providing a great number of single accommodation units. Under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement, we are required to provide accommodation to people on a defined needs basis without any other criteria at all. It is a problem that must be addressed. I can assure the member for Victoria River that all people throughout the Territory will be taken into consideration in defining this policy. It is my hope that the policy that is adopted will last for a long time and will be most effective in regard to the burden that will be carried by the taxpayer and needs of the private sector for accommodation.

It is probably worth while pointing out that a number of young people who move into the work force in a number of fields - for instance, in the education field or as a police cadet - start with a quite reasonable salary. Under the Housing Commission's home purchase assistance scheme, loans may be taken out with repayments at only 20% of income. That certainly enables people who are moving into the work force to make a positive decision to purchase their own accommodation and, therefore, not only add to the growth of the Territory but also remove the burden of providing accommodation from the government and the taxpayer.

Information from Council of the Darwin Institute of Technology

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has he instructed the Council of the Darwin Institute of Technology, as he is required to do under the law and as he will be required to do under the amended Education Act, to obtain for him the information he outlined in the Assembly the other day? If he has not yet instructed the council, as he said he would, could he explain why forms requesting that information have already been distributed to the staff?

ANSWER

I have instructed the council in relation to the inquiry that is to be carried out. That has been conveyed to the chairman of the council.

Housing Loans for Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HOUSING

I would like to draw attention to an injustice. Will people living in the rural area and in farming areas be able to take advantage of the home loan package offered by the Housing Commission having regard to the \$100 000 current limit and having regard to the value of agricultural land which is necessary for the earning of an income?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the total value of house and property in relation to the provision of a loan is \$100 000. With rising prices of land and the rising costs of carrying out development on that land, this may create a problem for people in the rural area. I am very much aware of the problems of a person who purchases a small number of acres just out of Darwin, Katherine or Alice Springs and carries out some minor improvements such as provision of a bore and fencing. Coupled with the normal rate of increase that is occurring at present, that can increase the value of that block from \$10 000 to \$40 000 or \$50 000 in a couple of years. That creates a problem for persons who may have similar incomes to persons in the urban areas and who wish to borrow money to build a residence of the same quality as the ones in the inner-city area. We must also recognise that land prices in Darwin, Katherine and other areas of the Territory are rising quite rapidly and the same criteria apply.

However, we must be quite clear in our minds that, if we do make a change to the present policy, it will not allow people who can well afford to use the private lending institutions the opportunity of taking advantage of concessional funds and therefore depriving people who are in need of some assistance in purchasing houses. The matter is being examined. Whatever the results arrived at, they must be in accordance with the original concept which was to provide money to people who otherwise cannot afford to take out private lending institution finance.

Feasibility Studies into Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Have the feasibility studies which the Chief Minister announced were being conducted into the Myilly Point development been completed and, if so, what were the conclusions?

ANSWER

They are completed. I have not seen them but they are very well advanced.

Possible Lake Sites in Central Australia

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

When can we expect a report on the other 2 possible lake sites in central Australia, namely, Pyberinge and Emily Creek, to be made public?

ANSWER

Centralian people are indeed interested in their prospects of obtaining a recreational lake one of these years. The answer to the honourable member's question is that a formal study to identify recreational lake sites in central Australia has not commenced yet but is about to. The Water Resources Division has been doing some preliminary studies to improve available hydrological data. It is anticipated that approval to engage a consultant will be finalised this week and work will then commence on an evaluation of Emily Creek first. Stage 1 of that report will be required by July this year. If these results are promising, stage 2 of the investigation will proceed and that report will be due by the end of 1985. If stage 1 results are not promising for Emily Creek, a recommendation will be made that the government look at Pyberinge. A 4-month delay could be anticipated in receipt of that report.

Darwin Centre

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

When will the Darwin Centre be completed? What is the anticipated final cost of the complex and what assistance is the government providing to that project?

ANSWER

I understand that the hotel complex is expected to be finished in mid-August of this year. The convention centre is supposed to be finished towards the end of September. Of course, the office block tower is expected to be completed by the end of November or early December. I understand the total cost of the Beaufort Hotel is expected to be in the order of \$55m. I understand that the total cost of the performing arts centre will exceed \$12m. Mr Speaker, over the course of construction, some \$3.5m has been advanced to the investors, Burgundy Royale. I understand that \$3.5m has been repaid to the government at a commercial rate of interest. The only loans outstanding are 2 small loans that were taken out in the very initial stages totalling some \$850 000. When talking about assistance by the government to that consortium, one must remember that the investment in the Beaufort Hotel is about \$55m and the total investment by the Raffles group is some \$71m. The loan of some \$850 000 to that consortium is certainly supported by myself and many of my colleagues.

As I said in the address-in-reply debate, the development of further infrastructure is necessary to support the tourism industry. Members would be aware of the support the Northern Territory government has provided to the Sheraton group which is moving into the Territory. One Sheraton Hotel in Alice Springs is 65% complete. The one in Darwin is up to about the third floor now. It is well known that the government has provided some financial assistance to such organisations.

Mr Speaker, the complex will be finished by November and the financial assistance to that organisation was some \$850 000.

Development in Kings Canyon Area

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his press release of 20 February 1985 in which he referred to a tourist development planned for Watarrka and the government's intention

to construct a system of roads connecting Uluru, Ntaria and Utju. I would appreciate some information about that particular system of roads.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the area that is referred to by the honourable member is Kings Canyon. It is shown on the map. The development that he refers to is the proposed tourist development at Kings Canyon and the establishment of Aboriginal living areas in and around the development for the benefit of the local families who live there. The development also includes the connection of Uluru to Kings Canyon because part of the strategy in developing Kings Canyon is for it to be an outstation or an outpost of Yulara - a one day, one night stopover. It is my personal view that Kings Canyon is a more scenic tourist destination than Ayers Rock and the Olgas. Obviously, judging from the numbers who go there today, it is a very popular place despite the fact that it is not accessible.

As we are now starting to sell tourism on the international market, we can no longer offer to international tourists destinations like Kings Canyon with substandard facilities and infrastructure. The government has taken much the same view with this destination as it did with Yulara. We believe it is of international class and interest. We believe it will attract as many as 100 000 tourists a year and, once it is marketed, the numbers will come. What is preventing that from happening now is the state of the roads and the lack of facilities for anybody to do anything when they get there except walk up and down the canyon.

In discussions I had earlier this year with the Central Land Council and traditional owners from that area, it was agreed that we needed to establish living areas for the people at Kings Canyon. They were very happy about that. We also discussed the involvement of the Aboriginals as equity participants in the project. That would be good for the Territory and good for the people if they were so interested. We also discussed the mechanisms that would be involved in connecting Ayers Rock and Kings Canyon by road.

Mr Ede: What about Hermannsburg?

Mr TUXWORTH: I will come to Hermannsburg in a minute for the honourable member if he can contain his enthusiasm for the projects.

The first problem that we have is that Aboriginals have so far shown a reluctance to have a direct road from Ayers Rock to Kings Canyon. That was discussed at the meeting although it was discussion without prejudice. The Aboriginals felt that, if it was possible, they would not stand on their digs and object to the road being a direct road. Having said that, there is also the engineering problem of running the road across the salt pans. That is not a minor consideration at all. There are big dollars involved in that. One of the other propositions is to come back down the highway, turn off at Curtin Springs and go through that way. In any event, major road development needs to be done, and in consultation with a lot of people.

It is my view that, if we can get a direct link between Yulara and Kings Canyon, that would be great. But I must accept that there are engineering constraints that may force us to make other decisions.

One proposition that has been put forward for consideration is one that most people who know the area well regard with some enthusiasm: the concept of running the road back to Alice Springs and down through the MacDonnells. I think that goes through Areyonga and back through the Palm Valley and Mereenie

fields. That is really a long-term proposition. You do not have to be terribly quick to realise that something like that is really outside our financial capacity. In terms of the 10 or 20-year development of tourism in the region, maybe it is something that we ought to consider, talk to people about and encourage participation in the area. If it is decided that, because we do not have the money or the Aboriginal community is not prepared to support it, that is different and we can reconsider the options. But I say without any reservation at all that, once an access road is made available to Kings Canyon and once there are facilities there for people to bed down in reasonable numbers and in comfort, there will be a tremendous upsurge in the number of people who will move into the area.

Setting aside all the bus traffic that will visit the area, the completion of the South Road in 1986 will see an upsurge in motor vehicle traffic from tourists in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney into that area as we have never seen it before. All we are proposing at the moment is that we work with the people, the land council, the community and within our own engineering and financial constraints to present the best face of the area that we can for the best advantage of the tourists who will go there. Hopefully, within a few years, 100 000 people a year will visit Kings Canyon.

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