

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.

Beaufort Hotel

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

What is the total amount of money owed by the Beaufort Hotel to the Northern Territory government for electricity, water and sewerage charges and payroll tax?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to give the exact details. I can give approximate figures owed by the Beaufort Hotel. In doing so, I advise honourable members that the Northern Territory government is in a secure position in that it could close the Beaufort Hotel down and regain those moneys owed to it at any time. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition was reported in an article in the Katherine Times in September last year as saying that the NT government had no option but to support Burgundy Royale, the financially troubled owners of the Beaufort Centre. He is now asking how much financial support we have provided to them by way of leniency in respect of their electricity account. I understand the figure is somewhere in the vicinity of \$800 000 for electricity. The amount owed in payroll tax would be somewhere in the vicinity of \$250 000. I do not have the figures for water and sewerage charges but I will provide them during the course of question time.

Alice Springs to Darwin Railway

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the nature of recent developments regarding construction of the Darwin to Alice Springs railway line?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is with pleasure that I take the opportunity to inform the Assembly of the position with respect to the construction of our much-awaited railway line from Alice Springs to Darwin. Honourable members will be aware that, over the last several years, our government has used every available avenue to try to promote the development of this line and to have the federal government honour its clear and unequivocal undertaking to the people of the Northern Territory, given in an agreement reached in 1910, that it would construct a railway line to Darwin. Territorians do have some patience, but I think that really is stretching patience to its absolute limits.

During the 1983 election campaign, there were clear and unequivocal promises, without qualification, by the current federal government that it would build a railway line. That promise lasted less than a month after it was elected. Despite that, we proceeded as diligently and as expeditiously as possible towards the construction of a line. Members will be aware that we formed a Railway Executive Group which prepared reports in 1986 on the financial viability of a railway line to be operated by private enterprise. That project was found to be viable in a 20-year time frame. The income generation would exceed well beyond the 20-year period. As a 20-year repayment period, it would work. I have made 2 statements in the Assembly in the last 12 months with respect to that.

Mr Speaker, recently, I visited Japan as part of the work towards the development of a private enterprise consortium for the construction of this

rail line. I know there is degree of scepticism in the community as to whether or not this will be at all possible, and there is no doubt that it will not be an easy task to achieve a private enterprise line. However, it is far from being an impossible task. I have been very heartened by the response that has arisen in the last month and I suspect that that has been stimulated further by the recent re-election of a CLP government in the Northern Territory so that people will have the confidence of dealing with a government that is in existence.

It was our first visit to Japan and we anticipated opening the subject up and that, perhaps after several visits, we might arouse interest. The interest was far higher than that and, as a consequence, we have formed what we have called a Japan Australia Transport Study Group. This comprises, from the Japanese side, representatives from the Japan Railway Technical Services, known as JATS, Japan Railway and Freight Company and the Long Term Credit Bank of Japan, and from Australia, Henry and Walker, with the involvement of 1 of its shareholders, Kumagai Gumi. The study group will be chaired by a gentleman called Dr Robert Ishizaki. He is from Japan and he will be working as a coordinator of this project in Japan without consultancy fees or other costs. Dr Ishizaki will be in Australia next month and he will visit Darwin.

I was even more pleased when I arrived back in Australia on the morning of Good Friday and received a message at the airport that TNT Ltd had expressed keenness to be involved in the operational side of the railway. I have had brief discussions with Sir Peter Abeles since that time and, after these sittings, I will be taking the opportunity to have further discussions with Sir Peter Abeles and other potential Australian participants to bring together this consortium to develop a private enterprise line. I reiterate that it is and has been our intention that this be a completely private enterprise line if that is at all possible physically. I will not exclude the possibility of some government involvement, although my objective is to have no government involvement in the line.

I might say here that the project may involve more than a railway line. The line is really the linchpin in the development of a transportation system which involves shipping, ports and rail as related transport modes. It is possible that other projects can be mixed and matched with the railway in a consortium-backed, multi-project venture which could well improve the viability of the total scheme and provide more investment opportunities for the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, we have a long way to go. I am hopeful that I will be able to make a more definite statement to the Assembly in June. I am proceeding steadily but carefully, without making any wild claims. I made the statement yesterday and I repeat it again now: we will not rest until we see the railway line in place and the first train arrives in Darwin from Alice Springs.

Meat Inspection Services

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, I asked this question of the previous Minister for Primary Production but, not having received a satisfactory reply, I ask it again. Can the minister assure me that, when contractual arrangements regarding meat inspection services are finalised between the Department of Primary Industry and the Northern Territory government, there will be no detriment to our export and local abattoirs if a Mudginberri-type situation should arise?

ANSWER

The transfer of meat inspection services has taken place between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory officers. It occurred on 15 December last by proclamation of federal regulations by the Governor-General. At that time, we amended the act in the Northern Territory to enable the Administrator of the Northern Territory to send to the federal minister an instrument requesting that the act no longer extend to the Territory. The agreement affecting the transfer was signed in March this year by the then Minister for Primary Production. However, physically, it had come into force in December last year.

To come to the nub of the honourable member's question, the agreement includes provision for the Northern Territory government to keep specific Northern Territory public servants competent in meat inspection services and to assign those officers to any establishment where the Commonwealth cannot supply domestic meat inspection services. There is also an ability for the Northern Territory to terminate the agreement unilaterally if the Northern Territory government seeks to do so.

Those were 2 conditions which the Northern Territory government insisted upon with the Commonwealth as part of the arrangement for the Commonwealth government to take over meat inspection services for domestic abattoirs as well as export abattoirs. The proposal that the Commonwealth run meat inspection services throughout Australia really stemmed from reports following the meat substitution scandals of a couple of years ago. The Northern Territory government refused to accept that it would relinquish meat inspection services in the Territory for domestic abattoirs unless 2 conditions were met. The first was that we would keep designated public servants capable of instantly taking up the duties of meat inspector and use those people in our domestic abattoirs at any time that the Commonwealth could not provide a meat inspector. The second was that, if we felt that the whole arrangement was unsatisfactory over time, we could terminate the arrangements completely.

Dangerous Chemicals Incident at Woodcutters Mine

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What were the results of investigations carried out by the Department of Mines and Energy into a report of an incident of inhalation of dangerous chemicals at the Woodcutters mine near Batchelor recently, and how has that incident affected operations at the mine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can provide the member for Victoria River with some details on the incident. He took a great interest in this incident, as indeed I have myself. The report explains in detail the incident of exposure of an employee to gases at the Woodcutters mine. It also covers actions which were taken and some of the results of investigations subsequently conducted over a period by a number of safety officers within the Department of Mines and Energy and some chemical suppliers involved with the supply of the material. The reports are quite detailed and I will make those details available to the member for Victoria River without taking the time of the Assembly to read them in full during question time.

However, as a result of the investigations and the report, I can say that a number of changes have taken place at the mine site and I believe that we have now reached a satisfactory conclusion for the continued operation of that particular mine.

Electricity Supply to Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What action has he taken to have power restored to sections of the central business district of Alice Springs, particularly to the Anzac Hill high school, and to resolve the industrial dispute which is behind the problem?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question of electricity supply seems to be very much to the forefront these days and nowhere more so than in Alice Springs. The Alice Springs situation was caused by a line fault which could have been rectified in a very short period of time. In fact, I have been told the supply could have been restored within 10 minutes. However, there was an industrial dispute and a stop-work meeting ensued. Unfortunately, I think some 9 consumers were without power in Alice Springs from lunchtime yesterday. An emergency generator was taken to the school.

It was very unfortunate that the opportunity was taken by the unions concerned to have a stop-work meeting and to stay out at a time when the power supply could have been restored quite simply. One has considerable sympathy with the Queensland Premier and some of the actions that he has taken when unions seize on opportunities such as this to inconvenience people and to have their own way. This type of opportunism should not be tolerated and I will be conducting further investigations about that stop-work meeting in an attempt to have such meetings curtailed in the future.

Federal Industrial Relations Legislation

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

He may be aware that today's National ABC radio news carried a story that the federal Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Ralph Willis, will introduce a bill for a new industrial relations act into federal parliament in 2 weeks time. The report went further and noted that this new act will negate recent amendments to Queensland's industrial relations legislation. What right has the federal government to introduce legislation that may negate state legislation, and what impact would this proposed act have on the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it has no moral right. The amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act in the federal parliament raise the old issue of states' rights. The concern that this government has had in relation to states' rights over a long period is supported by all the states. As far as Queensland is concerned, the situation is a matter for Queensland and those people have to address those particular issues.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The question is out of order because it asks the minister to comment on something that is not within his province. It is not part of his portfolio responsibility and is not even a responsibility of this Assembly.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I would like to challenge the point of order. The matter of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act is of vital importance to the Northern Territory and does impact on this Assembly and, in fact, on the responsibilities of this minister because all of our public servants are covered by that act.

Mr SPEAKER: The question seeks specific information pertaining to industrial relations within the Northern Territory and, as such, there is no point of order.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I thank you for your ruling. To continue in relation to matters within our borders, this is one of the concerns that we have in the Northern Territory because, as the Chief Minister has just said, unlike the states, we do not have industrial legislation. The federal act covers the whole of the field in the Northern Territory in respect of industrial legislation. The Leader of the Opposition is aware of that. It is a major concern and it is one of the reasons why we need statehood as quickly as possible so that we can set in place legislation which will have effect in the Northern Territory.

I am most concerned at the way in which the legislation will be introduced into the federal parliament. I have just attended an industrial relations ministers' conference in Fremantle where the issue of whether or not impending federal legislation should be made available to state ministers was discussed. Some 18 months ago, the federal Minister for Industrial Relations, Ralph Willis, said that the states would have the opportunity to view any impending legislation which would have an impact on them. However, in this case, we were not able to get hold of the legislation and, this morning, we heard on the radio that it will be introduced in a couple of weeks. It will have a vital impact on the Northern Territory and I am sending a telex to Ralph Willis today asking that copies of the proposed legislation be made available as soon as possible so that we can have an input.

The Commonwealth's centralist policy of controlling all the states is not on. Each state has a constitutional responsibility to look after the people within its boundaries. Industrial relations should be a matter for the states. I repeat that I have every right to answer questions in relation to this issue. The Leader of the Opposition may laugh, but this is a serious matter and it needs the serious consideration of this Assembly.

Development of Tolmer Falls

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is the Tolmer Falls area under consideration for development as a tourist resort? If so, what is the nature of the proposed development, and will the minister make available to the public all the studies and submissions in relation to the development proposals?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Tolmer Falls within Litchfield Park has been under consideration for development of a resort facility at various times in the past and at present. It was mentioned in a preliminary report conducted by the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory. In addition, further feasibility studies form part of a trade agreement that was reached with various parties involved with the provision of generators at the Katherine power station. As recently as last week, I dealt with the terms of reference

for that continued feasibility study into the suitability of various types of resort development within the Litchfield Park area. Tolmer Falls is not the only area under consideration. There are other areas including Wangi Falls and the Sandy Creek area. Each is subject to very tight terms of reference which protect the interests of all parties.

I do not expect to receive the final deliberations of the people conducting the feasibility study for at least another 3 months. I would certainly give an undertaking to the member for Arafura that, when it is appropriate, the proposals will be made available to members of this Assembly and the general public.

I would point out that the Conservation Commission, in conjunction with the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, has an ongoing program to develop a road link from the Berry Springs Nature Reserve to Wangi Falls and back through Batchelor, thus enabling people exiting Darwin to traverse across that country en route to Katherine or the back road to Kakadu.

Tolmer Falls area is under consideration for development of a resort and all the necessary environmental issues have been taken into account in the terms of reference and will continue to be monitored closely. I think it will be some time before we reach a decision-making stage. Nevertheless, the efforts of the government over recent years to develop these resorts in accord with proper environmental considerations stands alone. I think that we can stand on our record. The member for Arafura can be assured that the government will make the appropriate decisions in the best interests of all members of the community and its environment.

Work Health Court

Mr SETTER to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

There have been recent allegations that the new Work Health Court cannot operate because rules for the court have not yet been drawn up. Is this correct and, if so, when will the rules be put in place?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in answering the honourable member's question, I would like to express my anger at recent allegations made concerning the Work Health Court. I do not know how many honourable members are aware of what was said but the allegations were raised in a very irresponsible manner by the Miscellaneous Workers' Union spokesman, Mr Peter Tullgren. If they reflect the advice that he has been providing to his members, I feel that he should be looking for another job. The simple fact is that the Work Health Court has been in a position to hear applications since the first day that the Work Health Act commenced. That meant that any person who needed to have a claim decided by the court was able to go through that process. From the date when the act came into force to the date when Mr Tullgren made his allegations, the number of people who applied to the court or who made inquiries about applications to the Clerk of Courts, who always has been and always will be the appropriate person to receive such applications, has been zero. The number of applications to that court or even inquiries totals zero, zilch, nothing. That raises 2 questions about Mr Tullgren's claims. Either there have been no people who needed to make application to the court or people have been advised, by people who do not know or who are mischievous in their actions, against making inquiries to the Clerk of Courts. Either of those scenarios is a damning indictment of Mr Tullgren's behaviour and I suggest that members of his union replace him immediately.

The formal rules for the Work Health Court have indeed taken some time to draft. However, that was anticipated, given the complex questions and discussions which had to occur before those rules could be finalised. There has been some suggestion that those rules had not been finalised because the Chief Magistrate was too busy and had to travel to Alice Springs frequently and was unable to set her mind to the task. I am appalled that such a suggestion should be made. The Chief Magistrate is certainly extremely busy, as all members would realise. As a result, she had to put in many hours of her own time to ensure that those formal rules were drafted as soon as possible.

I must point out that the drafting of those formal rules involved considerable liaison between the Law Society, the Department of Law and the Work Health Authority. The formal rules have gone through all those processes. They have undergone final drafting by the Department of Law and they were signed by the Chief Magistrate on Friday of last week.

Members opposite are laughing. We will go right back to the beginning for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Smith: No one knows the procedures.

Mr MANZIE: He says he does not know the procedures. He is a man who has been involved with unions. Obviously, he is a man who has been involved in workers' compensation matters.

Mr Smith: If I happened to be an injured employee ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, obviously he does not want to listen to the answer because he wants to remain ignorant. He seems to be adopting that attitude quite frequently of late; he would rather not know how things work. He would rather stay ignorant because, in that way, his conscience can operate a little better. If he does not know how things work, he can throw his hands in the air or he can tell people untrue statements.

I will just go back to what I said at the start. Since day 1, there has been provision for the Work Health Court to operate in the way that court operated in respect of the Workers' Compensation Act. Application is made through the Clerk of the Courts for any action that needs to be taken in that court. That has always been the case and always will be the case. Obviously, in his union days, the Leader of the Opposition had no experience of that but, in future, when he ends up going back to union work - because, as we all realise, he will not be the Leader of the Opposition for that much longer, because that is a job based on performance and he has not shown any - he will know the right place to go to make applications relating to work health.

I would like to point out that the Chief Magistrate has done an excellent job. The claim made by Peter Tullgren was completely inaccurate. Applications could be made to the Work Health Court as from the commencement of the act. I would like to point out also that all magistrates have had considerable experience in resolving workers' compensation claims because of the previous operation of the Workers' Compensation Act. Any suggestion that people have not been able to proceed with applications to the Work Health Court is absolute rubbish. It is untruthful and it is mischievous.

Safety Inspections at Mine Sites

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Has the Work Health Authority the obligation to carry out safety inspections at mine sites and, if not, who has that responsibility and why was the power devolved from the Work Health Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the 1 area that is still being spoken about relates to mine safety inspections. Industrial safety has moved across in the rational change to integrate or collocate services. At present, we are discussing the issue with officers of the Department of Mines and Energy and, as soon as I have information on that, I will make it available to the member for Nhulunbuy.

Department of Education Reorganisation

Mr REED to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I understand that the Department of Education reorganised its supply section recently. What steps have been taken to ensure that bush schools will not be disadvantaged by that reorganisation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Education has reorganised its supply section and that move will devolve the responsibility for repairs and maintenance of audio-visual and computer equipment to the private sector at no extra cost to government. Also, the stores function has been rationalised to maximise private sector involvement.

The need to ensure that standards are not lowered and that bush schools are not disadvantaged has been one of the department's priorities in organising this move. I would take the opportunity of assuring all honourable members that we are aiming to maintain the level of services to bush schools and the department will be monitoring the new system to ensure that this aim is achieved.

I would like to outline the arrangements which will operate in relation to the department's regions throughout the Territory. First, in respect of bush schools in the Darwin south and east Arnhem regions, no change to the arrangements has been made. The local store in Katherine has been abolished. However, the department has period contractors making deliveries to schools in the region. This is in addition to trips by Darwin-based stores personnel and normal airfreight and road services. The only change is that the department will not have a storeman based in Katherine. The store and 2 storemen in Tennant Creek have been removed.

The department believes that there will be no difficulty in private enterprise taking over this role. In fact, already 1 freight business has indicated that it will definitely deliver to schools, either on a period contract or on an ad hoc basis. Other air and road freight services will be used also. Equipment needing repair will be picked up by period contractors of the Department of Transport and Works who service the region. Those arrangements have been made. On other occasions, such equipment will be collected by government department personnel who are moving through the region. Again, that is something that happens at the moment.

Schools in the Alice Springs region will still have the services of 2 stores people, a dispatch and receipts officer and a storeman. Deliveries in the region will be made by the storeman, period contractors and by normal road and freight services. The present arrangement for the collection of audio-visual equipment and computing equipment that needs repair are ad hoc. The equipment is picked up by whoever happens to be at the school at the time - stores personnel, departmental personnel, period contractors or any other government officers.

The only change will be that visits by stores personnel certainly will not be as frequent as before. However, if there is an urgent need that cannot be met under the normal arrangements, Department of Transport and Works period contractors will be used to transport equipment. I believe that there will be no risk that bush schools will be left high and dry by the reorganisation of the supply system.

It is important to point out that the actions that have been taken are consistent with the government's aim to promote greater private sector involvement in the Territory's economy. It is our aim to ensure that services are provided to the community at less cost to the government. To achieve this, the government will have to step back and the private sector will have to move in. As mentioned in His Honour's speech, that is something that we will be promoting. We also stated this aim in our undertakings prior to the election.

Tennant Creek Airport

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will the Northern Territory government reopen negotiations with Ansett Airlines for the upgrading of the Tennant Creek Airport?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question of upgrading of Tennant Creek Airport is a matter that has continued to be of concern to us. During the short period since I have had responsibility for the Department of Transport and Works, we have continued to talk not only to Ansett Airlines but to the federal government in relation to that matter. Ansett Airlines was asked some time ago whether it would like to contribute to the upgrading. The upgrading is entirely the responsibility of the federal government for a number of reasons. The most obvious is that the airport belongs to the federal government. Secondly, the federal government has neglected that airport for some 8 or 9 years. The ultimate failure of parts of the pavement resulted in the airport being precluded from F28 services.

In his wisdom, the federal minister thought that a commuter-type, light aircraft service was all that Tennant Creek was entitled to. The Territory government quite naturally was offended by that and, when Ansett Airlines was not prepared to make some contribution to ensure continued access for F28s, determined that it would contribute \$1m from NT taxpayers' funds to top up the \$1.1m that was dramatically overdue for spending on the strip to enable F28s to resume landing there. It is ludicrous that a jet airline flying that route should need to overfly Tennant Creek.

Tillair recently ran an interim commuter system from Tennant Creek to Darwin using light aircraft but found it totally uneconomic and discontinued it. The decision was purely economic and I guess was somewhat affected by

consumer resistance to travelling long distances in light aircraft, particularly into the northern part of the Territory during the wet season. Naturally enough, passenger numbers dropped off to a level at which Tillair was losing money. I seem to recall that Tillair announced through the media that it had lost around \$130 000 in the first 2 months of this calendar year. I am sure honourable members will agree that Tillair was justified in reconsidering its position. It did not want to leave Tennant Creek people high and dry, although it had no direct responsibility under the regional airline agreement, so it increased its services from Tennant Creek to Alice Springs. This meant that those people who needed to travel to Darwin at least had access to flights from Alice Springs.

The question of the timing of upgrading and of funding has been put repeatedly to the federal minister. I understand that re-documentation of the proposals is well in hand. New drawings and specifications have to be drawn up to cater for access by F28s and the project is now scheduled for completion by mid-December. Some recent discussions have been held with Ansett Airlines to ensure that Tennant Creek people are minimally disadvantaged. There have been talks regarding various types of subsidies and the question of an Ansett contribution towards upgrading the strip was raised again. Those negotiations are not yet complete. However, the honourable member can rest assured that the Territory government will continue to pursue these matters to ensure that all Territorians have access to the best possible transport system.

Government Consultation with Unions

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

On 16 March this year, the secretary of the Clerical and Administrative Officers Association, Mr Rod Ellis, accused the Chief Minister of not being keen to consult with the unions. Is that an accurate reflection of the Northern Territory government's attitude towards the trade union movement?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a grossly inaccurate description of the Northern Territory government's attitude towards negotiations with unions. My own record in some 20 years of work in the field of industrial relations clearly shows that I have never had difficulty in consulting with unions. I have not always agreed with the unions but I have never had difficulty consulting with them, discussing problems or seeking solutions to problems. Nor have I ever had difficulty in sitting down with members of the trade union movement to discuss issues of moment to the community and to trade union members.

One example occurred shortly after I became Chief Minister last year. Because of our very difficult budgetary situation and the draconian fringe benefits tax, which placed considerable budgetary pressures on the Northern Territory, we took the decision to attempt to reduce the size of the public sector by some 400 employees during the course of the financial year. I am pleased to say that we have achieved that objective. I might say that that was done in close consultation with the public sector trade unions. If my memory serves me correctly, the Interpers records indicate there has been a reduction of some 570 persons in the public sector. With the recruitment of additional teachers and the school leaver program, which we maintained in the new year, that is of the order of 400 persons or slightly below that now. The target is still a reduction of 400 persons.

I might say that I was very appreciative of the positive approach adopted by the trade unions in that process. We are all aware that that proceeded properly and did not cause any industrial disputes. Obviously, individual problems arose but those were dealt with by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner and the trade union movement. Quite clearly, we are prepared to consult with trade unions.

Mr Speaker, of course, my view with respect to Mr Ellis is entirely different as a result of an incident that occurred last year. I know that there are some honourable members opposite who have been involved in a professional capacity in the industrial relations field and they would appreciate that a crucial element in the process of consultation in industrial relations is the maintenance of trust and the honouring of confidences. Once that trust is broken between people in the industrial relations profession, it is almost impossible ever to put it back together again. Any person on either side, employer or trade union, knows that, if he deliberately breaks a trust, he does almost irreparable damage to his own position in that profession amongst fellow professional people.

Inevitably, when you are discussing complex and difficult issues, you provide information that you do not necessarily want to be made public or revealed to other people. You do this to give people background information so that they may understand your position. That situation is not generally recognised by those who do not work in the industrial relations field. Many problems and disputes are resolved as a consequence of that. Once that trust is broken, that person's ability to work is dramatically reduced.

Last year, we had an incident with Mr Ellis where exactly that circumstance arose. Mr Speaker, you will know that we had a very complex, difficult and emotive situation in respect of the attempts to create a Water Authority and bring together the various water functions as part of the rationalisation process we were working on. Some information was provided by the Public Service Commissioner to Mr Ellis on a confidential, background briefing basis. I am advised that that information was then misinterpreted and misrepresented to the public service employees who were directly affected by that. This led to an industrial dispute and, in the end, to a breaking down of the negotiations to amalgamate those functions. We are now dealing with the issue as a fresh exercise. I say that that process was broken down quite deliberately, not inadvertently. I have been advised that Mr Ellis advised senior public servants that it was done for the purpose of ensuring that there would be no resolution of that dispute and that there would be embarrassment to the government, in particular to the minister concerned, then the member for Berrimah, with the intention of supporting Mr Ellis' mates in the Labor Party because they believed that that particular member was vulnerable in the coming election.

Any trade unionist who wants to play those games with my government has broken that element of trust. We have great difficulty in providing any confidential information to Mr Ellis. We want to work with the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association and re-establish that relationship with it. It is important for us as much as it is important for public servants. As a consequence of that action, I would be very surprised if my minister were prepared to provide Mr Ellis with any sort of confidential information again.

The statements made by Mr Ellis following Cyclone Kay were equally mischievous. I have never criticised public servants or the public service over the circumstances surrounding the Cyclone Kay exercise. Following that incident, I made the point that we had some problems in our administrative

procedures and that we needed to tighten up certain things so that we could better clarify the process of advising government officers when they should close down. I might say that the Emergency Service and the Counter-Disaster Council are already working on that. It is not a matter of criticism of the public service; it is a matter of our procedures needing to be tightened up.

I thought it responsible to be honest with the community. I said that we had found a glitch and we would fix it. That was all I said, but Mr Ellis has chosen to beat this up into some giant story that I was attacking every public servant in the Northern Territory. I might say that certain members opposite tried to do the same thing. It was a falsehood to even suggest that. I say here, and I have said it to the public service people before, that they performed excellently in the course of that particular counter-disaster exercise. The Emergency Service people, the liaison groups and the organising groups within the government performed excellently. It was a very good exercise in cyclone emergency procedures.

However, in that process, we found that people in the private sector were looking for some signal that would help them to determine whether they should send their employees home. They tended to look to the public sector as a guide. No one told the private sector employers to send people home. In the public sector, there was no set procedure to advise departmental heads and public servants as to when it was appropriate for them to go home, even though individual departments have their procedures well sorted out. Those procedures are now being linked through the Counter Disasters Council and will be built into the Darwin cyclone plan, and I do not anticipate that those problems will occur again. However, I refute totally any suggestion that that is a criticism of the public service, nor do I accept that there was negligence on the part of our government over that exercise. We have identified a problem. If there is a sin, we have committed the sin of being honest with the community, and that is something which I do not apologise for.

Mr Speaker, we are continually upgrading our plans and will continue to improve them. The beating-up of these issues by people like Mr Ellis and members opposite, for some short-term political gain, does more to cause trouble and dissension within the ranks of the public service than anything our government could do. I do not think they are doing the public service or the Northern Territory community any favours by these nonsensical headline-grabbing exercises.

Generator for Chan Building

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I draw the minister's attention to an enormous generator which, at this moment, is being installed next to the Chan Building. Is this indicative of a complete lack of faith on his part in the electricity system in Darwin or have his ministerial colleagues finally decided that, just because the rest of Darwin is in the dark and has to cope with cold meals and warm beer, there is no reason why they should have to do the same? It is not a gas turbine; it appears to be a diesel generator. Does it indicate that he has knowledge that we do not and that we are in for a series of blackouts over coming days, weeks, months and years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that I do have knowledge that he does not have. I was prepared for this

because I saw the Deputy Leader of the Opposition come back into the Chamber with a big grin on his face and talk to the Leader of the Opposition. I immediately turned to the page concerning the upgrading of computer facilities for the Chan Building. I am coming to know his small mind, and the issues that strike a chord. He does not have a lot of space up there and he has to handle things issue by issue. If the truck had run over him out there today, I think this subject would have been raised earlier in question time. However, it did not. He observed it, and it has taken him an hour to bring it to our attention.

The Northern Territory government would be amongst the most computerised governments in the world. Certainly, it is the most computerised government in Australia. The member for Ludmilla may be able to assist me with a figure on how much our computers are worth. I think it is somewhere in excess of \$80m. The basement of the Chan Building is installed with the most sophisticated computers for government operation in Australia.

The Northern Territory government was faced with a decision whether or not to build a purpose-built facility to house NCOM. Costing to provide such a facility originally came in at \$8m. In fact, in January 1987, the government took a decision, based on the revised estimates of \$15m for such a purpose-built facility, to upgrade the Chan Building to accommodate the computer facility. So far, this is estimated to cost \$1.7m which represents a considerable saving to Northern Territory taxpayers.

Computers are very expensive items and they run on electricity. I will put this into first grade terms so the Deputy Leader of the Opposition can understand it, if he pays attention. The importance of continuity of electricity supply is recognised by people who install emergency generators. The generator that is being installed now will provide continuity of electricity supply to a very valuable resource, a resource which operates in every department right across the Northern Territory. We must be able to ensure that continuity of supply.

Today's question indicates once again the crisis mentality and retarded thinking of the opposition. It is the reason why members opposite are in opposition. I would have thought that, in March, they might have sat down and asked themselves why they were in opposition. Perhaps they could have come up with some ideas. They have not.

There will be considerable activity in the field of energy this year in the Northern Territory. More generators will be shifted in and out of the Territory as the \$33m Katherine power station is constructed and the \$10m upgrading at Tennant Creek takes place. Energy, as I will outline in a ministerial statement during the course of these sittings, is what the Territory will be about this year.

Certainly, we are having some problems with power at the moment, but let us not become retarded in our thinking. Let us look to the future. Let us look at bedding down some of the problems that we are experiencing now. Let us look forward to the very bright prospects that will be available to us with the computer centre opposite. Let us not deny that a basic commodity, such as emergency power, is required to upgrade a facility that will save Northern Territory taxpayers millions of dollars.

I would also like to take this opportunity to give the Leader of the Opposition some information that I promised him. He is just leaving. If he leaves the door open, I will yell it out for him. The matter is of that much

importance to him. I refer to his question relating to the Beaufort Hotel. The figure for electricity was \$925 000 I do not want him saying that I have misled the Assembly. The figure for the water and sewerage is \$50 000 or, more specifically, \$49 914 and the figure for payroll tax is \$275 000.

Mining Companies and Aboriginal Land

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

With regard to recent efforts by the Northern Land Council to extract disjunctive agreements from mining companies for entry on to Aboriginal land, what is the government's attitude to such agreements and what are the advantages or disadvantages to the Northern Territory of such agreements?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Ludmilla's question is timely indeed because I understand that, at this very moment, Pat Dodson, Director of the Central Land Council, is meeting with Clyde Holding in Canberra. I would like to be in that room to hear the conversation. It would be very interesting, taking into account Mr Dodson's stated position on Michael Mansell's recent trip to Libya. Indeed, I should imagine they will be discussing the amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. No doubt, the Minister for Mines and Energy, Senator Gareth Evans, would like to be present at that meeting because he would like to put through the federal parliament amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act to allow greater access to Aboriginal land for mining companies.

As I outlined to honourable members in the Address-in-Reply debate, there has been a 30% growth in the mining industry in the Northern Territory over the previous year. For the first time, we have exceeded \$1000m in mineral production throughout the Territory. If you will excuse the pun, Mr Speaker, we know that we have only just scratched the surface in terms of our mineral wealth in the Northern Territory, and that most of the access to prospective areas is being locked up because of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and the Northern Land Council's inability to negotiate. In fact, despite all the proposals that have been put to it, it has managed to negotiate only 1 agreement with 1 company to explore on Aboriginal land. That is a very sad track record indeed. At the moment, we have another problem with disjunctive and conjunctive agreements. I refer to the application by Queensland Mines to explore an area known as 2508, which surrounds Nabarlek.

I think Justice Toohey was the first to recommend that the act be amended to allow mining companies to explore on Aboriginal land. That is a disjunctive agreement. If they find something, they have to go back to the negotiating table and work out a whole new procedure to mine that particular area. There are great costs involved in exploration. For example, Petrel No 4 Well, in the Bonaparte Gulf, will cost \$13m to drill, and to test it will cost \$100 000 a day. In all, there will be a total cost of some \$20m just to explore. Getty Oil has spent \$40m proving up the magnificent Jabiluka gold and uranium fields. No mining company will spend that kind of money without an assurance that, if it finds something, it will be able to bring a mine into production. Thus, a conjunctive agreement is the preferred way to travel. The member for Stuart should be very pleased with the mining activity which is occurring in his electorate at the moment ...

Mr Ede: I am. On Aboriginal land!

Mr COULTER: ... in particular, with North Flinders at The Granites. If he would lift his head a little towards the horizon and have a look at some of the other mineral-rich areas in the Northern Territory and lend his weight to the development of mines such as Jabiluka, I am sure the mining industry would appreciate it. If he used the same philosophy ...

Mr Ede: Why blame the traditional owners for that one not going ahead? Why not get some facts into your argument?

Mr COULTER: ... as he uses in his own electorate.

What we need are conjunctive agreements that allow mining companies to spend millions of dollars on exploration and, if they find something, to develop a mine. In particular, the Goodall Mine of the Western Mining Company is a good example of a recent mine that has been brought into production after the company entered into a \$10m drilling program. That money is expended to explore what is in the ground. It is a very risky business with a success rate of 1 in 10.

I hope very sincerely that today is a significant day for the Northern Territory in Canberra, with Mr Dodson present in Mr Holding's office. I hope that common sense prevails, the amendments to the Land Rights Act go ahead and that Mr Holding has the courage of his own convictions because he has said on several occasions that he would introduce those amendments. Perhaps he has said that for too long because it has been going on for nearly 2 years. I hope that today there is agreement with Mr Holding and that he will agree with the Minister for Resources and Energy, Senator Gareth Evans, to allow the amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, to provide greater access to that vast area of mineralised country which currently is locked up ...

Mr Ede: The question was, would you agree with disjunctive agreements?

Mr COULTER: ... by the Northern Land Council. This government supports conjunctive agreements. The disjunctive agreement is a matter for companies to enter into as are private royalties. This government is against private royalties, and we have said so and have signed papers to that effect. Minerals are the property of all Australians. They belong to all Australians, not to any particular individual. The royalties paid by mining companies are the price they pay to exploit a resource that belongs to all Australians; they are the property of the Crown. This government prefers conjunctive agreements and is not inclined to support private royalties, on the ground that the minerals belong to all Australians.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration on the basis of equity through the purchase of new or existing shares or through the purchase of debentures previously held by Carrington Confirmers Pty Ltd or through a loan, either secured or unsecured?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to provide the Leader of the Opposition with details of the agreement that has been entered into by the TIO, but the question sounds all too familiar to me in terms of what he would use that information for.

The TIO was in competition with a number of commercial companies which had the opportunity to buy into Hungerford Refrigeration. It did so after having the company investigated by a firm of chartered accountants and, indeed, it enlisted the academic experience of a professor from a university to investigate the proposal. On that basis, it entered into negotiations to

purchase a percentage holding in Hungerford Refrigeration. In fact, it has a controlling voting power on the board. I understand that the actual paid up capital to that company was something like \$125 000 which is what it cost the TIO in terms of the capital equity that it now has in the company.

The Leader of the Opposition will come back soon and say that he thinks that the TIO invested something like \$700 000 in the operation and that, in fact, Hungerford Refrigeration was in debt for something like \$400 000 at the time. Let me see if I can pre-empt the argument of the Leader of the Opposition; it is not that difficult to do because he has a line of gloom and doom that he runs with continuous monotony. He will say that the TIO has bailed out a company in Queensland. I imagine the Leader of the Opposition obtained his information from a person who has recently been removed from Hungerford, although maybe I am wrong. We will see if that comes to light soon.

Mr Smith: I have never come across that person.

Mr COULTER: I am just trying to present the scenario that the Leader of the Opposition will paint for us. He will say that the TIO bailed Hungerford out, because it was hopelessly in debt, and and that the TIO made a very stupid, commercial decision to buy into such a corporation. The facts are simple. This was a commercial decision and the TIO was in competition with 3 other companies. The decision was made on the best of economic advice provided by a firm of chartered accountants and also on the best academic advice provided by a professor of an Australian university who investigated the Hungerford product and gave it a clean bill of health.

I have with me a heads of agreement for a \$500 000 contract under which Hungerford, operating from the Trade Development Zone, agreed to supply kenaf to Papua-New Guinea. This is only the first of many opportunities that will be realised as a result of TIO taking this commercial decision and bringing Hungerford into the Trade Development Zone. It will produce full-time jobs for Territorians and it will bear fruit in the very near future. I congratulate the TIO for its commercial decision.

Northern Territory AIDS Program

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Can he provide this Assembly with a report on the present position of the AIDS program in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I will take the opportunity to give an update on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, AIDS, at this time because I believe that it is appropriate that I take advantage of the listening audience on the various radio networks.

I would like to give a little background about precisely what is happening in the Northern Territory in terms of our management of this rather frightening disease. The number of cases of category A, or full-blown AIDS, reported so far in the Northern Territory is now 2. One of those people has died. The number of reported cases of category B, or lymphadenopathy syndrome AIDS, is 5 and, in category C, antibody positive and symptomatic AIDS, we have 17 reported cases.

Screening services are now well developed for HIV - human immuno deficiency virus. Screening is offered free of charge to all persons in the Northern Territory. Nightcliff Community Health Centre has been publicised as the main centre for screening in Darwin but an individual may present to any health facility or to a local doctor. All blood is forwarded to the Royal Darwin Hospital Pathology Laboratory. The screening is performed by consent of the individual concerned with the exception of new prisoners entering Northern Territory prisons for whom blood testing is compulsory under legislation. This is one of the areas in which the Northern Territory is leading Australia, and the current prison population in the Northern Territory is AIDS free.

Confidentiality of results is essential in order to secure public cooperation. All blood donors are screened. A statutory declaration is also required in order to cover the 'window period' during which a person may be infected with and transmit the AIDS virus whilst not having developed any antibodies. Almost all cases are antibody positive within 3 months of infection but some individuals have remained negative for up to 6 months. Pregnant women have been offered screening for AIDS for about 12 months. Compulsory screening of new prisoners in all Northern Territory prisons has been under way also for nearly 12 months.

A new program has recently been developed concerning the screening of individuals with sexually transmissible diseases who present to any health facility and this is proceeding region by region. Special clinics have been established to provide clinical facilities and screening for AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases for prostitutes and the gay community of Darwin and other centres of the Northern Territory. Counselling facilities have been developed following the visit during February 1987 of Dr Michael Ross, the National Aids Task Force expert on the psychological aspects of AIDS and AIDS counselling. Dr Ross conducted courses in Darwin and at Alice Springs in a 'train the trainer' format. Participants were invited from community groups as well as government organisations. They include representatives from the areas of community health, social work, psychiatry, the gay community, escort agencies, churches and crisis line. Subsequently, government participants conducted training courses for relevant personnel of their departments. A counselling training program is being developed by the Communicable Diseases Centre at Royal Darwin Hospital to include participants from each health centre in the Darwin region over a period of time. Staff of the Communicable Diseases Centre in the other regions are developing similar programs. It should be noted that the program was instigated on the initiative of the Northern Territory, not as a result of the national program.

In Darwin, 2 community-based organisations have been established. They will provide AIDS counselling services and education awareness programs throughout the Territory. The Northern Territory AIDS Council focuses its activities on the gay community, prostitutes and IV drug abusers. This organisation has recently received a grant from the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments, on a cost-sharing basis, to establish an office at Darwin and to employ a full-time coordinator.

The AIDS Community Awareness Group includes members from the Departments of Health and Community Services, Education, the Police Force of the Northern Territory, the Darwin City Council, family day-care centres, the Northern Territory AIDS Council, the Aboriginal community, the churches, the gay community, prostitutes and the IV drug rehabilitation program. This group has selected youth as the target for an AIDS education program and is presently planning the launch of the Northern Territory edition of Streetwise comics.

These comics are ready for distribution to young people throughout the Northern Territory. A submission has been made to the Commonwealth in the 1987-88 AIDS budget for cost-shared funding of an AIDS youth worker.

The AIDS education program in rural Aboriginal communities is well developed in all regions with mobile teams consisting of a trained nurse and an Aboriginal health worker. These teams are responsible for education of Aboriginal communities concerning the transmission and prevention of AIDS. Condoms are now provided free of charge in these communities. The first antibody-positive category C (a symptomatic) tribal Aboriginal was detected in March 1987 in the Alice Springs region, but subsequently she moved to South Australia. Contact tracing and education programs were immediately commenced throughout the area involved. A team was sent to Western Australia to provide an education and awareness program for Aboriginal communities in the area bordering the Northern Territory. Additional funding will be required to increase the number of teams in high risk areas and, in March 1987, a senior staff member of the Commonwealth Department of Health, Canberra, visited the Northern Territory to assess this additional cost. It is anticipated that funding will be provided for the remainder of the 1986-87 financial year, but a further submission will be required for the 1987-88 budget.

A National AIDS Education Program, developed by the National Advisory Committee on AIDS, NACAIDS, commenced on 5 April 1987, launched by Dr Blewett. This campaign will provide media coverage throughout Australia. The Northern Territory has developed a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week telephone counselling service for the period of the campaign, commencing on 6 April until 10 May 1987, with 5 counsellors being employed on that project. The service is available on all weekdays between the hours of 7 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock in the evening, including public holidays, and from 4.30 in the afternoon until 7 o'clock in the evening on Saturdays and Sundays.

As a result of the AIDS Grim Reaper television commercial, AIDS telephone counselling calls have increased. 75 calls were received in the first week of the campaign and the average call rate prior to that was 12 to 20 per week. There were 5 telephone inquiries and 39 persons visited the Nightcliff Community Health Centre during the first week of the campaign. Prior to this, there were only 5 phone calls and visitors per week.

The Northern Territory government has taken a very responsible attitude to trying to make the community aware of AIDS and to educate people as to how they can prevent this rather abominable problem in our community. It is my personal priority that the high risk group in the Northern Territory comprises people between the ages of 13 and 20, no matter what their colour or creed. That is where the department will be giving some priority in so far as its educational programs are concerned.

It probably has been noted by most people that the retail industry has taken the initiative and has put condoms on sale in all night garages and in independent supermarkets. I am encouraging all retail outlets to take up that initiative so that condoms are readily available to those young people when they are more likely to want to use them. It is no good having these things on sale between 9 o'clock and 4.30 pm on weekdays. That is not the time that these young people will choose to decide whether or not a condom will be required. I congratulate the retail industry for its initiative in this matter. We look to the community of the Northern Territory to take a responsible attitude towards the education of all people in the Northern Territory in relation to this phenomenon. The Northern Territory government will be very straightforward in its application of an education program.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I am seeking confirmation of remarks that he made in answer to my previous question. Did he say that TIO has a controlling interest on the Board of Hungerford Refrigeration? Secondly, did he say that the total investment made by the TIO in Hungerford Refrigeration was \$700 000? Thirdly, did he say that, at the time that Hungerford Refrigeration received some capital injection from TIO, it had debts of some \$400 000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will make figures available to the Leader of the Opposition but it is my understanding that the ballpark figures for the TIO's investment were somewhere in the vicinity of \$700 000 or \$750 000. I understand that Hungerford had debts between \$350 000 and \$400 000 on its books. The TIO does have control by way of voting rights on the board and has control of the company.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

He also said that the TIO's contribution to Hungerford Refrigeration in the form of paid up capital was \$125 000. He is now telling me that the total investment was \$700 000. What was the other \$575 000 used for?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I believe that the paid up capital is about \$125 000 and the balance of the money, as I said in the previous answer, was made available to pay out those loans which had been incorporated ...

Mr Smith: You did not say that.

Mr COULTER: I did say that, as Hansard will show. I will read it for him because he probably has difficulty with reading as well as listening! I will make the exact figures available to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Smith: So the money has been used to pay out Hungerford's bad debts?

Mr COULTER: Bear in mind the commercial sensitivity of these types of figures. This is a commercial transaction that the Territory Insurance Office has entered into. The TIO is a body that is discrete from government and enters into commercial decisions in its own right. It has policyholders to whom it is responsible and it may consider that this is of such a sensitive nature that the full details may not be made available to the Leader of the Opposition because it knows full well the purpose that he would use it for. He would simply run with it: the Grim Reaper Revisited. If ever there was an example of the Grim Reaper, it is the Leader of the Opposition, given the way he walks around with his doom and gloom and his crisis week air. He is well assisted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The fact is that a great deal of that money was used to pay out debts owed by the company. I have not spoken about the amount of money that was owed to the company. It would never enter the Leader of the Opposition's head that maybe it was owed a substantial amount of money.

Mr Smith: Why didn't it use that money to pay off its bad debts?

Mr COULTER: In the 12 months to last March, it had an operating profit of some \$890 000. There are a whole range of other figures which I will not divulge in this forum because they are commercially sensitive. They will be available in the various documents that will be produced in time. Those figures will be available to the Leader of the Opposition through the Companies Act. At the moment, he is hell-bent on creating mischief over an opportunity that the Territory Insurance Office has taken in order to bring this company to the Northern Territory to enter the Trade Development Zone and create meaningful full-time employment for Territorians.

Accommodation Development for Litchfield Park

Mr MCCARTHY to MINISTER for TOURISM

Yesterday, in this Assembly, he mentioned proposals for accommodation developments for Litchfield Park, including studies of the Wangi, Tolmer and Sandy Creek areas and a hotel motel presently under construction in Batchelor. What are the details of accommodation developments proposed for Litchfield Park and when is the development likely to take place?

ANSWER

As I explained yesterday during question time, the developments at Litchfield Park are subject to a feasibility study. While we have a general idea of the type of developments that are likely best to succeed, based on tourism projections, the types of tourists - whether they be motorists, campers, budget-type tourists or 5-star tourists - the projections, as formulated by both the Tourist Commission and the former Department of Business, Technology and Communications in conjunction with the Conservation Commission, reveal that the feasibility study is essential to identify the proportion of those visitors who would go to Litchfield Park.

An interested party has presented information to the government that identifies and puts beyond any shadow of a doubt that there is a certain segment of the market for whom the Litchfield Park will be most suitable: the exclusive tourist, the 5-star-plus. Similar developments are occurring at the moment in the jungles of Malaysia, South Africa and other parts of Africa. We are incorporating that part of the tourist market into the feasibility study as well as making allowance for the campers, the budget-type and day tourists looking to visit Litchfield Park. Prior to receiving that feasibility study, the Conservation Commission has commenced work to expand the camping facilities at Tolmer Falls, Florence Falls and Wangi Falls. At this stage, we are preparing for the opening of the road which will occur later this year.

Part of the terms of reference, which I am sure will keep the member for Victoria River happy, are to take into account the planned development of additional tourist facilities in the Batchelor area. I am as conscious as is the honourable member that the economy of Batchelor will rely largely, in future years, on the development of tourism and the tourist market. We are looking at every possible angle. However, in the short term, I can say that the exclusive market has been identified. The campers' needs are being addressed immediately and whether budget-type accommodation will exist at various spots throughout the park or be concentrated into 1 area will probably come down to a matter of economics.

One thing is certain and that is that the Northern Territory government is moving in accord with the demands placed on it by the tourists wishing to visit the Territory. It is no secret that the value of the tourist dollar to the Territory economy is becoming more and more important every day. I would compliment those in the Tourist Commission, the development arms of government and the Conservation Commission who readily make themselves available and take into account all the rapid changes that are occurring in respect of tourism. A few years ago, I am sure no one could have predicted the growth that we are experiencing today, and I take my hat off to all those involved who are able to move with the times and change circumstances to accommodate the tourists. As a final point, I might add that it is encouraging to note that the complaints across my desk are becoming fewer and fewer. Obviously, Territorians are facing up to the fact that tourists are valuable and possibly we are becoming a very friendly community.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Why was the last annual financial statement of Hungerford Refrigeration submitted to the Corporate Affairs Officer, Queensland, in 1984, and can he confirm that that annual statement of 1984 revealed that Hungerford Refrigeration was a \$2 company with total assets of \$14 000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will try to explain 1 small thing to the Leader of the Opposition before I answer his question. In today's economic situation, it is very difficult to do business. It is very difficult because of the constraints that are placed on new companies by federal government taxes, payroll taxes, awards which people are forced to adhere to, the addition of the fringe benefits tax and a whole range of other disincentives which have been heaped on pioneer industries in particular. It is very hard to get one's head up above the sand. I guess that is why the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy keep theirs in it; it is hard to get up above it and make a go of something in today's economic climate. However, Hungerford was able to do that. The export orders that it has and, indeed, the proposed orders that it has from places like China, Vanuatu and Papua-New Guinea, are excellent and they have been extremely profitable. Hungerford Refrigeration has been successful right around Australia, operating out of Brisbane to places like the RAAF base at Derby, where it obtained a \$750 000 contract. Not only has it done all that, it has developed a mechanism for and a means of chilling concrete.

Mr Hungerford's reward for this has been that he has had a cash flow problem. The tremendous growth of his company has taken place over a very short period. This innovative individual has risen above all the constraints and odds, and most of the constraints were placed on him by government. I guess that is why he is now seeking the security of the Trade Development Zone where he can rid himself of much of the red tape and bureaucracy that holds him down. I want to pledge my support and the support of my colleagues to all Australians who are trying to have a go, who are trying to rise above the bureaucracy and red tape and who are trying to succeed in spite of the attitudes of people like the Leader of the Opposition. Those people are trying to make this great country of ours a goer, and it is not easy.

As I said, the company has an operating profit this year. Its trading profit for the 9 months to 20 March 1987 was \$826 196.

Mr Smith: Where is the information? Why isn't it at the Corporate Affairs Office?

Mr COULTER: The Leader of the Opposition now asks me a question about how the company was structured in Queensland ...

Mr Smith: I asked you a question about its last annual financial return.

Mr COULTER: ... whether or not its paid-up capital was \$14 000 and whether its last financial report was made in 1984.

Mr Speaker, as I said, the firm of chartered accountants that was selected by the Territory Insurance Office to check out the figures did so very thoroughly and I am confident that the TIO would not have entered into any deal had it not been confident about the opportunities available and unless it were certain that everything was okay.

I do not have the precise information in my head, although I am sure it is in the Leader of the Opposition's head. There is probably little else there at the moment. However, if he so requires, I will provide him with the information during the course of these sittings.

Drink-Driving Sentences

Mr POOLE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Could he provide this Assembly with details of sentences on drink-driving charges handed down in the Alice Springs Magistrates Court during the months of January, February and March 1987?

ANSWER

The question requires extremely detailed information. This is indicated by the report in yesterday's newspaper that the number of 0.08 charges heard before a particular magistrate in 1 morning was 75. The question concerns events of up to 4 months ago and I would appreciate its being put on notice so that I can supply the information in detail. As I said, it will take quite a long time to compile.

Dairy Farmers

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What is being done to bring justice to a small-scale dairy farmer in the Top End and a large-scale dairy farmer in Katherine with regard to paying the dairy produce levy demanded under the federal Dairy Produce Act which came into operation on the 1 July 1986 and which will have an extremely adverse effect on this fledgling industry in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I noted that the member for Koolpinyah raised this matter in the adjournment last night. I can advise that the Territory government was aware of the preparation of this legislation by the Commonwealth. I have seen 2 or 3 letters from the then Northern Territory Minister for Primary Production, written in 1986 or prior to that, protesting to the federal Minister for Primary Industry that the proposed legislation should not apply to the dairy industry in the Northern Territory on the grounds that the

Territory had only a fledgling industry. There had been dairies here before, as the honourable member knows, but it has been a struggling industry developed by a few innovative people who were determined to demonstrate that milk can be produced successfully and commercially in the tropics.

As the member for Koolpinyah mentioned, there are 2 small dairy herds in the Territory at present, and this is a very commendable effort. No doubt the dairy farmers concerned are putting in a great deal of their time and resources. However, they seem to be having a degree of success which the Department of Industries and Development is encouraging at every opportunity. Recently, the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry took the unusual step of sending an officer from Adelaide to Darwin, at goodness knows what expense to the taxpayer, to demand that these 2 dairies should produce their records and hand over a cheque for a couple of thousand dollars. Both dairies expressed amazement and I believe they have refused to pay, although some records were handed over in accordance with the law.

As I understand it, this levy has been imposed on the industry Australia-wide on every litre of milk that is produced. A very small portion of it goes toward research and development of dairy products. The balance is used by dairies which would like to subsidise their export of milk. I presume that we have to subsidise exports of milk to compete internationally. Obviously, it would make an exporter's product cheaper to sell elsewhere and it would encourage him to export milk out of Australia. What the levy seems to be designed to do is to attempt to reduce some of the production of milk in Australia by encouraging people to export it, because there is an oversupply.

The proposed levy is not really working inasmuch as some farmers in Victoria are proposing to move into NSW to sell milk at some 8¢ per litre less than the NSW dairy producers. This has caused quite a storm and the Victorians are not going to back off. As Australians, it is their right to sell their product wherever they like. The NSW people are applying to the federal minister to have the levy taken off the NSW producers and so provide a competitive edge for NSW producers to fight their Victorian counterparts.

All this sounds pretty alien to people who promote free enterprise in the country. However, there is a question that we do need to ponder on in the Northern Territory. If we are happy to allow a complete free-for-all in the dairy industry and abolish all forms of levies or apply them in some cases and not in others, the end result may be a very large and viable dairy industry in Victoria and none anywhere in the rest of Australia. That is a possible scenario if we remove all the levies and let them go for their lives.

I have protested to the federal minister about the demand by his department for these levies from Territory producers. I believe that there are some dozen or more producers in Queensland who also have refused to pay the levy and are not being 'monstered', as it were, as much as the Territory fellows are. Perhaps they regard the Territory producers as weak-kneed because the industry is small here and, if they can push them into paying the levy, they can then move against the Queensland producers and others as the next links in the chain.

The federal minister has called a meeting on 5 June in Canberra of ministers responsible for primary production across Australia and I will be attending. The subject of the meeting is the dairy industry levy and its imposition across Australia. It will give me an opportunity to meet the minister and introduce the Northern Territory's point of view on this matter. Before doing that, I will be holding talks with both the Territory producers.

Government Centre at Katherine

Mr REED to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

As the minister responsible for property rented by the Northern Territory government, can he clarify what is happening with the proposed government centre at Katherine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members would be aware that the government called for expressions of interest in relation to the construction of a Katherine centre earlier this year. There were a number of very good applicants for the construction of that particular facility. In fact, 9 applications were received. The 9 initial proposals were the subject of deliberations in mid-April by a committee comprised of representatives of the Departments of Lands and Housing, Treasury, Transport and Works, and Labour and Administrative Services. I will be receiving a detailed report of this committee's recommendations in the near future.

Eventually, the 9 applicants will be reduced to a short list which will then be brought forward for consideration by government, and the construction of the centre should be completed by the end of 1988. It will provide a one-stop shop for the people of Katherine. The aim is to assist the public and to make the public service more efficient and effective. The people of Katherine will see the benefits once this facility is up and running. It will provide the opportunity for coordination with its inherent economies of scale as far as the government is concerned. I am very pleased to inform the member for Katherine that the facility should be completed by the end of 1988.

Grant to Katherine Racing Club

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he explain how some \$100 000 was suddenly found for the Katherine Racing Club just before the last election - a club which has only 4 meetings a year - somewhat to the annoyance of the Alice Springs racing fraternity which received \$90 000 last year even though it holds meetings almost every week? I digress. Why was this money granted when the Minister for Education finds it very difficult to raise a few thousand dollars to buy lockers for all students at the Sadadeen Secondary College who attend something like 200 times a year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the only problem the honourable member has with the question is that he has asked the wrong person. He should read the administrative arrangements orders. I ask him to redirect the question to the minister responsible for Racing and Gaming.

Television Capricornia and Imparja Television Joint Venture

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What are the principles of the proposed joint venture arrangement between Television Capricornia and Imparja Television, and what is the government's attitude towards this new proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government's position on the Remote Commercial Television Service has been consistent throughout the duration of the issue and remains unchanged. The Northern Territory government gave a commitment at the time of the hearings for the licence in central Australia that it would commit up to \$2m towards the purchase of a package of TV services for remote areas for at least 1 year, provided that the government was completely satisfied that the operator had the financial and technical expertise to provide a high-standard service. The government's attitude has not changed at any time on that.

Honourable members may be aware that negotiations have taken place recently between Capricornia and Imparja, the 2 parties who were applicants for the licence in central Australia. Negotiations between those 2 parties have been continuing and 1 of the 2 parties hopes to reach an agreement for a joint venture agreement whereby the Centralian licence takes on board the expertise and technical capacity of Capricornia as well as the input that Imparja is able to make to programming for the groups that it is particularly interested in. Should this venture arrangement come to fruition, the government's stated impediments to providing the services to Imparja would seem to be removed. My only reservation there is that, clearly, we would need to see the terms of the arrangement that the 2 parties might come to. The government is prepared then to meet its longstanding commitment and would be prepared to purchase a package of television services for up to \$2m for at least 1 year, which has been the offer all along. In talking to some media people on this matter over the last month, I noted that there had been a perception that the government had offered virtually a cheque for \$2m up front on the day on which the licence was settled in an undisputed way. That has never been the government's offer and I refer any member who may think otherwise to the submissions made to the tribunal.

Mr Speaker, I can advise members that the satellite that was to be launched by the French to provide the central footprint for the Remote Commercial Television Service for the Northern Territory, which was due to be placed into orbit in June or July this year, may not materialise. The project is in some doubt as the French have indicated that, due to delays in the project, a guaranteed date of launch cannot be given. That is sad news for the Territory government and those people in remote areas of the Territory who were hoping to have the facilities offered by that satellite, including television, at an early stage. However, I am also informed that there are no technical or managerial reasons why Alice Springs and areas on the centre route, such as Katherine and Tennant Creek, could not be provided with commercial television services almost immediately, subject to the lead times required to purchase transmitters. Such a service could be achieved with the installation of a satellite receiving dish in Alice Springs connected to a rebroadcast transmitter which is precisely the way the ABC television is delivered to Alice Springs currently and the same method used by NTD8 to provide commercial services to Darwin.

In addition to that option of transmitting via the existing satellite to Alice Springs and other centres in the Territory, there is also the possibility of the use of the terrestrial link from Darwin heading down to Alice Springs, because it is a service which is now available. Formerly, it was used by the ABC, which now transmits its services via satellite. Thus, there is a terrestrial link as well which is much cheaper, I believe, than the satellite link, and which could be used to provide commercial television services to Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs virtually within the

time taken to purchase transmitters. I am advised that could be in the order of 5 to 6 months because of the specialised nature of that equipment.

Grant to Katherine Racing Club

Mr COLLINS to the TREASURER

I redirect my previous question to the Treasurer.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether the member for Sadadeen has been to the Alice Springs Race Track at Pioneer Park recently, but I would look forward to seeing him out there for the Alice Springs Cup next Monday. I would like the opportunity to show him around the facility and explain the amount of money that has been spent by the Racing and Gaming Commission and the TAB through the Race Course Development Fund and the Industries Assistance Fund, and the amount of money that has been made.

We have spent a considerable amount of money on Alice Springs racetrack this year. We have spent the money that was made available from the TAB betting facility. We have shifted the betting ring from the fenceline into the centre field of the area to make that more enjoyable. \$78 000 is being made available for various facilities at the racetrack this year, and it is becoming a very picturesque and enjoyable place to visit. It has had a very good run this year in terms of financial assistance.

The Katherine racetrack would be one of the most dangerous racetracks in Australia today. It was built before pipe benders were available. The pipes were simply butted together and several horses have been gouged in the flanks as a result of coming in close to the rails. There is a 90° bend and it is not easy to negotiate at speed. In fact, it is quite dangerous.

For some time, I have sought the assistance of 2 very prominent racing personalities, Noel Buntine, in particular, and Richard Sallis, to go down to Katherine and get racing going again there, bearing in mind the tremendous development that that town is undergoing at the moment and the population increase there. To their credit, Noel Buntine and Richard Sallis have put a great deal of work into this. Membership is flooding in from the stations. Many people have signed up for membership and Noel Buntine, with his usual entrepreneurial skill, has recalled some past debts. With the \$100 000 that I mentioned, we have become the junior partners in the development that is occurring there. I believe they will spend somewhere in the vicinity of \$250 000 this year, with the help and assistance of business houses throughout the Katherine area and the help and assistance of some of the stations in the area. It is a magnificent tribute to the abilities of Noel Buntine and Richard Sallis that they have brought everybody together there.

I would like to pay tribute also to some of the contractors who are working on the Tindal Air Base. They have been able to pool resources and establish the facility there and I believe it will be a track worth somewhere in the vicinity of \$300 000. For \$100 000 outlay, it is a magnificent achievement and it shows that the community is prepared to help itself, get racing going again in Katherine and remove what could only be described as a very dangerous situation.

In relation to the lockers for Sadadeen Secondary College, I will take the matter up with the Minister for Education on behalf of the member for

Sadadeen, if he so wishes, and I will see if it cannot be treated as a matter of urgency.

Video Loans Scheme

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

It is rumoured that the Video Loan Scheme, which provides isolated students with the ability to receive ABC programs which are available to all urban schools as well as other video learning materials, will cease. The scheme is operated by the federal government and is a valuable support service for students of School of the Air. Has the scheme ceased and, if so, what action does he propose to take?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can inform the Assembly that the federal Minister for Education has not taken me into her confidence about this matter, but there are strong rumours that there is a possibility that the Video Loan Scheme may be tightened up or even removed. That is causing a great deal of concern. It is an excellent scheme which was initiated by the federal government. The scheme itself relates to the loan of video sets and the provision of video cassettes to supplement the normal lessons of children involved with School of the Air and who are living in remote areas of the Northern Territory. It has played a considerable role in helping children in isolated areas to come to grips with many of the complex aspects of their education. It has provided information that is available to urban students throughout the country.

As I said, I have received no official information about this scheme and I certainly intend to make contact with the federal Minister for Education to encourage her to fight hard for the continuation of the program. I hope that she is successful but 1 of the most unfortunate things we must face is that people who live in isolated areas of this country are in the minority and there has been a tendency over the last couple of years for the federal administration to cut programs for people in remote communities, especially those in the Northern Territory. Even though the federal Labor government has been particularly vindictive to Territorians, most people are aware that the Territory has been suffering this sort of treatment for years. Some governments, however, are harder on the Territory than others and the current Labor government certainly has been a little bit harder than the previous coalition government was.

Students should not be suffering because of politics and I hope that the federal Minister for Education is successful in preventing the Video Loan Scheme from ceasing. I will be doing everything in my power to encourage her to keep the program going and to encourage the federal Labor government to continue to provide that very important service to Territory students.

CAT Scan Facilities in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is it the government's intention to have CAT scan facilities installed in the Alice Springs Hospital?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at present, the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services is looking at what services we can provide right across the board for the people of the Northern Territory. I must confess that, at this stage, I have had no briefing on any time scale for introduction of CAT scan facilities for the Alice Springs Hospital. However, I will obtain that information and pass it to the honourable member before the close of these sittings.

Staff Reductions in Public Service

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the outcome to date of the statement he made on 14 July 1986 that it was the government's intention to reduce the public service by some 400 staff over a 12-month period from July 1986? Are efforts to achieve this target continuing and, if so, are the efforts being monitored and is the target of 400 achievable by 30 June 1987?

ANSWER

Since taking over responsibility for this area, I examined, over the weekend, the detailed briefings entailed for today's sittings. I must advise the Assembly that the information that I provided last week was dated. Last week, I referred to having achieved a reduction of almost 400. I think I indicated a figure of 375. In fact, as at the end of March, the service had been reduced by 305 from the figure at 30 June 1986. There are good and sound reasons for that. I will quote some figures so that members can gain an idea of what is occurring. On 30 June 1986, the public sector employed 15 456 people. By 31 December, that figure had been reduced to 14 910 which was a very considerable reduction in the size of the service. Since that time, to 31 March, it has increased to 15 151.

We sought deliberately to get the size of the service below the target of 400 in December because we were aware that there would be need for recruitment of additional teachers. There has been the effect of the recent new recruit intake into the police force and, of course, a requirement for nurses. In the rationalisation approach, it was made quite clear that, those categories of government employees such as teachers, policemen, prison officers, and nurses where there were specific formula requirements, would not be affected by the ceilings on the total number of people in those positions.

This has been a very successful program and, three-quarters of the way through the year, we are three-quarters of the way to our target of a reduction of 400. We are on track in the process of achieving the necessary reduction of 305. I have heard whispers and read newspaper articles about this being offset by everything coming off the bottom. I can advise that it has been achieved, as we indicated, by natural attrition. There have been no compulsory redundancies in the process of the reduction and rationalisation. The largest percentage reduction in the service, almost 9%, was at the CEO level. Reductions were made in the professional, administrative clerical, technical and semi-professional areas and so on down the line. In the schools area, there has been an increase.

By way of salary ranges, the largest percentage decrease was in the over-\$45 000 salary bracket, followed by the \$35 000 to \$40 000, followed by the \$25 000 to \$30 000 bracket. The largest increase was in the \$20 000 to

\$25 000 salary bracket which indicates that the decrease has been spread fairly consistently right through the public sector. The reason for the increase in the \$20 000 to \$25 000 bracket is that that is the level where teachers come into the service.

This process is being monitored carefully through the government's computerised personnel records system, which was substantially upgraded last year with the implementation of Interpers. That is providing us with month-by-month records and is enabling us to carry out some assessment of where the turnover is occurring within the service. Much more attention will be paid this year to taking that statistical data and developing programs to address problems in the turnover area.

I will give the figures without the extensive detail that is available here. The major turnover appears to be among female workers in the 20 to 39 years age group in the \$20 000 to \$25 000 per annum salary range. From other indications, particularly in relation to the teaching and nursing services, these are the categories to which attention needs to be directed.

I would think that we are, without doubt, the most advanced public sector in terms of being able to identify and direct our attention to developing modern personnel practices, addressing problem areas within the service and overcoming industrial relations problems. As a consequence, I have no doubt we will see a continuing improvement in standards and turnover in the service. Such improvements are already showing themselves in efficiency and performance within the Northern Territory public sector. I say here and now that I believe that the Northern Territory is well served by what is, in my view, the best public service in this country.

School Leavers in NTPS

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

During the election campaign the Chief Minister indicated that, at any one time, approximately 250 school leavers were employed in the Northern Territory Public Service. Is he able to confirm that official public service figures, dated 31 March 1987, in fact reveal that only 18 school leavers are currently employed in the Northern Territory Public Service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I find that an amazing statistic. I will check the details and come back to the honourable member because it is contrary to advice that I received from the Public Service Commissioner prior to and during the election campaign.

Horticultural Extension Officer for Katherine

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Having regard to the urgent need for additional government support for the promising horticultural industry, when will the vacant position of Horticultural Extension Officer in Katherine be filled by his department?

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I suggest that it be pointed out to the honourable member that, when he is phrasing his questions, adjectives like 'promising' are scarcely apposite in that they are expressions of an opinion and therefore contrary to standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no doubt, all members hold the view that the horticultural industry in the Northern Territory has a very bright future. I was concerned that the vacant position in Katherine for a Horticultural Extension Officer be filled at the earliest possible time. However, when I came into this position, action was already in train for that. I am pleased to inform the honourable member that an officer has been appointed and should take up duties today. I am advised that the gentleman, who comes from Tasmania, is very well qualified for the position. The officer will probably spend the first few days in Darwin on some orientation courses with the department before moving down to Katherine to take up duties there.

On the matter of horticultural support by government, I am hoping that, in the near future, we will be able to put at least an additional person in Katherine to assist the Horticultural Extension Officer and the Cropping Advisory Support Officer there. I am hoping to give both those gentlemen some additional support in their roles because horticulture certainly shows great promise for growth and the government should divert some of its resources to encourage maximum development of this exciting industry.

Darwin Prison

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware that Darwin Prison, which was built to house 150 prisoners, today is housing 257 prisoners, of whom 33 are sleeping on mattresses in C Block, and that there are only 2 toilets? What immediate steps is he taking to ease this tension?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether the honourable member is referring to the tension in respect of the toilets or not. It is a fact - and I have a press release prepared on this - that, at the close of business on Friday last, the Northern Territory prison system had the highest number of inmates ever recorded: just in excess of 490 prisoners. I must say that this is a trend throughout Australia. It is not unique to the Northern Territory.

It must be stated that 70% of our prison inmates are Aboriginal and honourable members would know that we have taken a great deal of notice of this fact. We have officers working in some of the Aboriginal communities to counteract many of the offences that are being committed. It is hoped that, in the near future, these facilities will be extended to other communities also.

There is no doubt about the pressure which overcrowding puts on prison officers as well as prison inmates. It cannot be denied. It must be realised, however, that the situation would be even worse but for the Northern Territory government's initiatives such as community services orders. Approximately 150 people have taken up the option of those orders and, if that were not the case, the overcrowding situation would be even worse. One must understand that we have about 50 prisoners at Beatrice Hill, a prison situation which is quite unique to the Northern Territory. Honourable members would understand that, if those 50 people had to be spread throughout our other institutions, we would have many problems.

It is my intention to introduce legislation at the June sittings concerning home detention orders. Under these, people who commit minor offences can be restricted in their free movement around the community, but they will be able to go to work and sustain their family units and they will not be thrust upon welfare institutions around the Northern Territory. They will be able to maintain the dignity of their family units. The children will not have the stigma of a parent being in an institution and the wife or husband who is left to look after the family unit will not be plunged into the welfare system. The family unit will maintain its integrity.

Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, we are leading the way in the penal system throughout Australia, and that is well and truly recognised. I am sure that that will be restated by the Correctional Services Ministers' Conference that I will be attending in a fortnight's time in Melbourne. In the Northern Territory, we stand with our heads high for the way we are endeavouring to combat the very high numbers of people going into our institutions.

I do not place any stigma whatsoever in saying this - I state it simply as a fact of life - that some 70% of our inmates are Aboriginals, and that means that we must place a great deal of emphasis on that particular area if we are to cut down the intake to our penal institutions. Given that the opposition members are responsible for most of the major Aboriginal population areas in the Northern Territory, for the first time in their existence, I would see them supporting the Northern Territory government in the initiatives that we have in place and in talking to the leaders in the Aboriginal communities about the various ways in which they can assist us in keeping law and order within those communities.

I have had a great deal of influence in introducing community government to a great number of those communities in the 12 months since I have been minister. Through my work in that particular area, I happen to know that the people in those communities are willing and able to take on responsibility for proper management of those facilities.

During the last 3 or 4 working days, a leader of one of those communities contacted me about a Department of Health vehicle being used by members of his community for running grog to the community. He was asking me for help and I intend to give it. I may have to implement some moves that are pretty unique, but I can tell the rest of the Northern Territory community that, as minister responsible for the new Department of Health and Community Services - and 'services' is the key word - I do not care to what lengths I have to go to introduce the various services that we as a responsible government know must be introduced right throughout the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I challenge the opposition, for the first time in its existence, to get behind the Northern Territory government, to get out into the communities ...

Mr Ede: We have been telling you for years what you should be doing.

Mr DALE: ... where 70% of the penal population comes from, and to help introduce a learning process into those communities so that we can, in a sensible and responsible way, reduce the number of prisoners in our system.

National CPI Figures

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to the national CPI figures issued last Thursday. Could he advise on the figures relating to Darwin compared to those for the states?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was quite surprised last week to find that, for once in his life, the Leader of the Opposition was silent when the CPI figures were released because he has gone to great pains to paint himself as a watchdog over the cost of living in the Northern Territory. He introduced a so-called price watch. All he was doing was duplicating work that has been carried out by the Consumer Affairs section of the Northern Territory government for the past 7 or 8 years. He does not take the time to examine the work that is already being carried out by the Northern Territory Public Service.

He never wants the facts to get in the way of a good story. That is quite obvious from some of the statements he has made in recent times. I think they are important when one considers the figures that were released last Thursday. He has said that the CLP government is a total and abject failure because it has failed to control prices, taxes or charges. The Centralian Advocate, in an article of 18 March said: 'Labor leader Terry Smith has urged the government to establish tax reduction goals to slow the growth of the Territory's cost of living. Mr Smith said the government should aim to slash its contribution to the consumer price index movement. Acceptable levels should be achieved by mid year'. That is what he said.

Mr Smith: Perhaps you could take my advice.

Mr HATTON: We all heard him ad nauseam during the recent election campaigns. The actual situation in relation to the cost of living became available through a document published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics last Thursday. Given that the Leader of the Opposition made great play during his Address-in-Reply speech last week of how the opposition would be fair and reasonable when the government did something good and achieved something, it should give us credit for it. Nevertheless, silence was the stern reply from the Leader of the Opposition when these figures were released which indicated that the Darwin figures were low on the national scale. Most importantly, when one examines the figures, they show that rents of privately-owned dwellings increased in all cities except Darwin. Also, there was no increase in health insurance contributions whereas these increased in all other cities.

Mr Speaker, that is fairly consistent. Only on the odd occasion since 1981 has the CPI for Darwin been above the national average. A simple examination of the CPI figures shows that there has been a reduction in the relative cost of living in Darwin since 1981. That is a fairly consistent trend. The odd hiccup where it has been higher than the national average has occurred in only 3 or 4 quarters since 1981.

Mr Smith: It goes up when there is an increase in taxes.

Mr HATTON: He is digging an even deeper hole for himself, Mr Speaker. I hope he keeps talking.

Because of policies of CLP governments and the growth that we have generated, the increased productivity in the Northern Territory, which flows

back to the community in terms of more competition and a wider range of services and goods at prices relatively comparable to those in the rest of Australia, our cost of living is consistently becoming closer to the national average. The Leader of the Opposition has been blaming the Northern Territory government for increases over and above those at the national level. He has said that the government's aim to slash its contribution to the CPI movement to an acceptable level should be achieved by mid year.

These are figures from last Thursday. There is a section on page 4 that indicates the contribution of selected state and local government charges to total changes. The figures are not available for Sydney because of strikes in the Australian Bureau of Statistics. For every other state, there has been a nil increase and, for Darwin, the figure is minus 0.01%. There has been a decrease in the government charges contribution to the CPI. I would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition, being such a fair-minded citizen and member of this Assembly, and making such a play of how fair and honest he is going to be and how cooperative with the government, would have stood up and praised the Northern Territory government for achieving reductions in the cost of living as a consequence of government charges.

Mr Speaker, the figures are for the period up to 31 March. The figures were relevant at the time of the Northern Territory election which was held in that quarter. The Leader of the Opposition's advice had already been acted on because our government has worked consistently to reduce the relative cost of living in the Northern Territory, unlike the members of the opposition who carp and criticise at every opportunity, whose only goal in life is to attack the morale of the people of the Northern Territory, the business community of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Public Service. As indicated by their cheap political moves, that is their only goal. They should examine the facts which speak loud and clear. This government is working solidly to reduce the relative cost of living. Opposition members could save themselves some time and effort with their nonsensical price watch if they read the document produced by the Consumer Affairs Unit of the Northern Territory government which has been reporting on the CPI for years and is somewhat more expert at the task than they are.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

In the Assembly last Thursday, he undertook to provide me with information on the agreement between the Territory Insurance Office and Hungerford Refrigeration. When will I receive that information?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I undertook to provide the Leader of the Opposition with some details regarding the Hungerford proposal and the negotiations that had been entered into by the Territory Insurance Office. I had several calls from the Leader of the Opposition's office and it is my understanding that that information is either on its way to him or that he has that information at the moment.

Alice Springs Traffic Planning Study

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What are the results of the traffic planning study recently conducted in Alice Springs with regard to plans for the Wills Terrace and Stuart Highway intersection?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am now in a position to advise the honourable member of the outcome of the traffic study in Alice Springs. If we could get drivers to accept their responsibility to obey normal traffic laws, we would not need to go to the expense and trouble of putting in expensive traffic light systems at various intersections in the major towns.

The intersection of the Stuart Highway and Wills Terrace has been under observation and statistics have been gathered. The police have advised that, during 1985 and 1986, reported accidents at that particular location numbered 18 and 23 respectively. Some of those accidents have been of quite a serious nature. The traffic study was undertaken principally by the Alice Springs Town Council, at a cost of \$25 000, and I gather that there is some discussion between the council and the Department of Transport and Works about some financial contribution towards the study. The outcome indicated that the intersection required some regulatory provisions through traffic lights. An estimate of \$150 000 was obtained and that item has now been included in the 1987-88 draft capital works program and will be subject to budgetary determination, as is normal.

In the meantime, design and documentation for the intersection is progressing with a contract target date of September 1987. The installation of traffic lights at that intersection should greatly improve road safety aspects, but I caution honourable members that the installation of traffic lights is not always the be all and end all. For example, in many cases, the installation of lights might be counterproductive and lead to a more dangerous situation than if they had not been installed. I am most conscious of that as, of course, are the technical sections of the department. Certainly, we need to be assessing all matters relating to road safety around towns and I commend the Alice Springs Town Council for the work that it has done in its traffic study which, I am sure, will lead to much safer roads for our people in the long term.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Was approval sought from the minister by the Territory Insurance Office Board before it made its investment in Hungerford Refrigeration?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will give the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nhulunbuy a few basic facts about the operation of the TIO under section 7 of the act. Last week, I tried to explain to the Leader of the Opposition some of the basic facts in respect of the Hungerford Refrigeration deal. I also pointed out to honourable members what I believed would be a long-drawn-out scenario that the Leader of the Opposition would enter into as a result of the TIO acquiring an interest in Hungerford Refrigeration to bring it to the Northern Territory.

The simple fact is that the TIO is responsible to its policyholders. They are the people that the Territory Insurance Office is responsible to. It has to provide a return on their investments and adequate insurance coverage, etc. It is the TIO and the TIO Board that does that, not the Northern Territory taxpayer. It is necessary that the honourable Leader of the Opposition understand that very basic point. The TIO can enter commercial deals, have them investigated and make commercial decisions, knowing that it has the full power to do so. Section 7 provides the government with the power to direct. In this particular case, the Territory government did not direct the Territory Insurance Office to acquire. The TIO made that commercial decision on information that was provided to it, as I explained last week, after the commercial aspects of the company had been fully investigated by a firm of chartered accountants and after academic advice had been obtained from a professor who is involved with the particular processes that are being entered into by Hungerford. The board then made that decision.

Mr Speaker, I would point out to honourable members another example of the vacillation of the Leader of the Opposition in what he has said about the Trade Development Zone. The Chief Minister pointed out this morning how the Leader of the Opposition changes his figures. We have had examples of it in the budget debate, in his contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate last week and in relation to the Trade Development Zone. Once again, the Leader of the Opposition has decided to change his stance. In his column in the Sunday Territorian the other day ...

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! This is not relevant to the Territory Insurance Office. He is talking about the Trade Development Zone and the Leader of the Opposition's column.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, these matters are inseparable because the TIO has invested money in a company to bring it into the Trade Development Zone and the Leader of the Opposition is attacking that zone rather than the Territory Insurance Office.

Let me point out what he said in this Assembly on Wednesday 23 August 1984 whilst speaking on the report into the feasibility of a free trade zone. He said: 'This will be one of those occasions where there is complete unanimity between the various parties in this Assembly. Hopefully, the occasion of the tabling of this report will become a quite significant day for the history of the Northern Territory. The opposition is as excited as the government in the potential opportunities of a free trade zone. Certainly, it has our wholehearted support'.

He has turned around 180° since then. In his column he says: 'Wouldn't it be good if any business company could have the same opportunities as Hungerford Refrigeration and line up at the Treasurer's office for support?' Yet, on Wednesday 23 August 1984, he said: 'Obviously, a primary benefit would be in generating economic activity in Darwin where previously none existed'. Now, because of some incentives, when the zone is in its infancy and at its most vulnerable, he starts kicking heads. We are trying to attract firms to the Northern Territory and he is trying to condemn this one before it gets off the ground. He is trying to condemn the commercial realities of the world. He is trying to suggest to this Assembly that something has gone wrong.

Mr Smith: I am trying to find out whether you have been doing your job, and you have not.

Mr COULTER: He is in more trouble than the early settlers. He really has a problem with this one because he will stand condemned by the Northern Territory for his anti-development stance. I can assure honourable members there is nothing wrong at all with the deal that has been entered into by the Territory Insurance Office.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I draw his attention to section 6(2)(n) of the Territory Insurance Office Act. The preamble to the section reads: 'Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the office may, for the purpose of carrying out its function or exercising its powers, including the powers conferred on it elsewhere in this or any other act ...'. Paragraph (n) reads: 'invest its money in any investment available to the Public Trustee under the Public Trustee Act and in investments or investments of a class of investments approved by the minister'. The Public Trustee Act certainly does not provide the Territory Insurance Office with any precedent for this. If the minister did not approve the investment by the Territory Insurance Office Board into Hungerford Refrigeration, why not? He has a clear legal obligation to do so.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have the benefit of having the act in front of me. However, what the Leader of the Opposition wants the Territory Insurance Office to do is to buy Commonwealth bonds so that it can help finance the national deficit. He does not want us to become involved in any other product or any innovative projects.

Mr Smith: Did you or did you not carry out your legal responsibilities?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I draw the Leader of the Opposition's attention to the facts that I have pointed out to him. Under section 7, the Territory Insurance office is responsible to its policyholders. The member for Nhulunbuy was talking to us the other day about taxpayers' money. He does not understand that it is the policyholders who have their money invested in the Territory Insurance office.

Mr Leo: But it is propped up by the taxpayers.

Mr COULTER: Maybe they are taxpayers as well, but not all taxpayers have their money invested in the Territory Insurance Office. It is necessary to distinguish between those groups of people.

I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that I have no hesitation in endorsing the deal that has been entered into with Hungerford Refrigeration. The point I was making is that the Northern Territory government does not direct the Territory Insurance Office to enter into any particular deals, neither should it!

Crocodile Industry

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What is the status of the Northern Territory's crocodile industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to advise the Assembly of details relevant to the Northern Territory's fledgling crocodile industry because, when I have heard the word 'crocodile' of late, I have sometimes not known whether to laugh or cry. One important point needs to be made at the outset: the Northern Territory's wildlife management program includes the development of a viable, commercial industry based on the utilisation of crocodiles. Many people often overlook the fact that the course of action that is taken under the program has the support of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, IUCN. It also has the support of its specialist crocodile group and the parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna. Honourable members will recall that the Northern Territory Conservation Commission sent quite a delegation to the convention seeking support for its moves to commercialise the crocodile industry. An integral part of that program is the protection of the species as well.

There are 3 commercial crocodile farms in the Northern Territory at the moment and 2 of them are gearing up to begin slaughtering farm stock and to build flesh-processing facilities. It has been necessary for the third farm to undertake a rebuilding program and it is unlikely that this farm will commence processing crocodile flesh before 1988. The rebuilding of this farm has come about largely because the industry has formed an association to represent all 3 farms in terms of marketing not only the flesh but also the skins, skulls and teeth. I am happy to report that the government's marketing arm, Nortrade, is assisting the association in developing its marketing expertise and ensuring that the product comes on to the world market.

One of the integral parts of developing this marketing philosophy has been the development of a quality product. To that end, the freshwater crocodile skins are being sent to France, Japan and the United States for testing and international assessment of their quality and tanning requirements. We are dealing with a fledgling industry that must have all the correct criteria attached to it. It is important to note that commercial tanning of skins and their export to world markets has not taken place officially for some time. Therefore, the product is being tested so that its value and quality are known to the association.

Prior to exporting the skins overseas to France, Japan and the United States, it has been necessary to seek approval for these trial shipments from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service in Canberra. One would assume and hope that, because of the great lengths that the Northern Territory Conservation Commission and the association representing the 3 crocodile farms have gone to to investigate the marketing of the product and to seek the support of the international organisations involved, the Territory will not be subjected to the normal delays in obtaining approval to send these skins overseas to have them tested.

I am sure all honourable members here today will be more than happy to support any move that the Conservation Commission, and myself as minister, will make to ensure that the relevant approvals are received speedily from the

Director of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service in Canberra, who is known to all of us. We are all working actively at converting him to an avid supporter of the Northern Territory. I am sure honourable members are aware of the difficulties that we face in that regard.

The Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory is coordinating approaches to state agencies so that crocodile artefacts, the by-product of the marketing and processing of crocodiles, such as skulls, claws and teeth, can be legally transported interstate. We all know that the crocodile is a protected species and we do not want any illegal shooting or processing of crocodiles in the wild to the detriment of the industry and to the detriment of many years of support and progress that have been made towards the commercialisation of the animals.

Mr Speaker, the crocodile industry, the Conservation Commission, the Department of Health and the relevant division of the Department of Industries and Development have reached agreement on minimum standards for processing the flesh which now satisfies public health requirements and allows for interstate trade. It is a very important aspect of the development of the industry and shortly I will come to the point that is most relevant: the value of the skins for export trade as compared to the value of the flesh.

The use of crocodile meat for human consumption is a side issue. As far as the industry is concerned, the prime value product is the skins. I know that recently the crocodile flesh that has been made available at 2 local restaurants has been imported into the Territory, under strict regulations and agreement between the Conservation Commission and those restaurateurs, for sampling and tasting within those Darwin restaurants. It has proved very popular and I am sure Darwin people will remember the reports in all local media which gave the restaurateurs, who were handling the crocodile flesh for human consumption, quite a boost. In fact, it was a great novelty item and I think the restaurants had quite large queues and several inquiries, especially from overseas tourists who, at that time, seemed more willing than the locals to sample some unique foods. For the benefit of honourable members, I have not had the pleasure - which I am advised it is - of consuming any of the crocodile flesh but I look forward to my first tasting. The Chief Minister advises me that it is A1.

One of the difficulties that we have with the commercialisation of the industry is a difference that relates to people who live elsewhere in Australia. They do not fully appreciate that commercial crocodile farming and production are key factors in the conservation of this unique natural resource and, of course, I am talking about the crocodile in the wild. Many people reading the local and interstate newspapers might believe that crocodiles are nothing but a very dangerous species that inhabits the wild and which has no right to be there. Certainly, that has never been the view of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission or the Northern Territory government. We believe in an ongoing education program aimed at making this reptile a valuable resource to the community. We feel that we can gain the support of the general public for the direction that the Northern Territory government is taking. The future of both species of crocodile in the Northern Territory is assured by the carefully planned and executed balance between conservation in the natural environment and farming in the commercial environment. The Conservation Commission can be justly proud of its activities in catching nuisance animals in the wild and in places that are frequented on a regular basis by tourists and local people.

Territory-based research shows that 80% of the value of the farmed crocodile is in the skins. I have had to point that out to the restaurateurs who, unfortunately, have not yet had a ready supply of crocodile meat. I have pointed out that the industry is targeted towards profitability and therefore gives highest priority to the development of its skin trade. I anticipate that crocodile skin production in the Northern Territory will be worth a conservative \$1.5m a year within about 2 years. That is why there is no great rush of crocodile flesh onto the market. The 3 crocodile farms, in forming their association, have obviously determined that, for the success of the commercial venture, priority must lie with the skins. In contrast to this conservatively estimated \$1.5m per annum value for trade in skins, the value of the flesh product over the same period is put at only \$300 000 per annum during the same period. Unfortunately, the avid eaters of crocodile flesh will have to wait just a little longer until the farms are developed further. Having said that, I expect that production will begin early in the new financial year, at least from 1 of the farms. That is not a long time for restaurants to wait for crocodile flesh to be available.

Problem crocodiles, that are trapped and removed by the Conservation Commission rangers, form a nucleus of the commercial farm breeding stock in addition to the continuing harvesting of eggs from the wild and from farm crocodile nests. We have all heard reports about many problem crocodiles. For example, many have been caught in the Gove area recently. One was taken recently at Buffalo Creek and there are other places throughout the Territory where problem crocodiles have been caught. They are not simply hit on the head or hit with a bullet. They are taken to the crocodile farms and become an integral part of the breeding stock. We all know that the industry could not survive unless it had adequate breeding stock. The egg harvest has the potential now to produce 4000 hatchlings each year and 4000 hatchlings each year from the current breeding stock is quite an incredible achievement by the industry. As far as breeding goes, we are really only talking at the moment of 2 crocodile farms with a third yet to come on stream.

I fully support the Northern Territory's crocodile industry and I think it has every chance of being highly successful. The success of the industry is the culmination of many years of research and planning. It commenced many years ago with the initiative of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission to attend the overseas organisations. I believe that this fledgling industry deserves the support of all honourable members. Not only does it add to the protection of the species but it is a very interesting step that the industry has taken and it will continue to be a major tourist attraction. I am sure I do not have to advise honourable members that that is a major point in generating income within the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, in closing, may I thank the member for Jingili for his interest.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
School Leavers in NTPS

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to respond to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition earlier in relation to school leavers. I now have the information.

In the period of the school leaver program, from 1 December 1986 until 31 March 1987, the Northern Territory government employed 246 school leavers. This figure does not include NTEC. I might say 78 of the 246 are technical trainees and apprentices. We still have 260 apprentices and technical

trainees employed through school leaver programs in past years. I would be curious to obtain from the Leader of the Opposition the official report that he is referring to so that, if there is any discrepancy, I can deal with it. However, this is the information that I had available to me previously. It is consistent with the advice I have always received and it is still more than the program the Leader of the Opposition tried to promote as his 'Youth Guarantee Program' which would have reduced the number of school leavers being employed by the Northern Territory government.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

In question time yesterday, he intimated that the Territory government had not approved the TIO entering into an arrangement with Hungerford Refrigeration. Subsequently, outside this Assembly, as I understand it, the Treasurer indicated that a minister of the government had, in fact, approved that transaction. Did a minister of the government approve a transaction under the terms of the Territory Insurance Office Act section 6(2)(n)? If so, who was that minister and what was his responsibility for the Territory Insurance Office Act at that time?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to answer the Leader of the Opposition's question. Honourable members will be aware that he was the economic spokesman under the previous Leader of the Opposition and that his responsibilities included the Territory Insurance Office. I said that this saga about Hungerford Refrigeration would be a drawn-out one. I outlined how it would go to honourable members at the outset.

The answer is that a minister did approve the Hungerford deal. The Leader of the Opposition asked what minister, at what time, under what authority. Remember, he is the shadow spokesman on economic affairs with responsibility for any comment regarding the Territory Insurance Office. It has been described best by a public servant who wrote to me last evening and said: 'Please note that Mr Smith was interviewed on the lunchtime news and said that you have not done your job because you should have been the one to sign the approval, not your Cabinet colleague, Mr Hanrahan. Mr Smith is confused'.

We all know that he is confused but it is interesting to note that the message is getting out to the public service as well. It is the responsible minister who is required to sign, not the Treasurer, and the member for Flynn was the responsible minister at the time. He was the minister who had responsibility for the Territory Insurance Office. Under the administrative order signed on 15 May 1986, he became the minister responsible for the Territory Insurance Office. He retained that position until 19 March 1987. At the time, the Leader of the Opposition was the opposition spokesman on the TIO. The agreements were signed on 13 March. For 10 months, the Leader of the Opposition did not even know which minister was responsible for the Territory Insurance Office.

Mr Smith: You did not know the answer to the question yesterday.

Mr COULTER: That is the type of representative that the Labor Party has put in this Assembly to answer questions for 10 months as the shadow spokesman. He did not even know who the responsible minister was.

Mr Smith: I did not know when the thing was signed so how could I know that?

Mr COULTER: He did not know a lot of things, Mr Speaker. I do not believe he knows what day it is.

I can advise the Leader of the Opposition that the member for Flynn, as the responsible minister, approved this particular deal with Hungerford Refrigeration on 13 March.

Mr Smith: Thank you. Why didn't you know that yesterday?

Mr COULTER: I would hope that other honourable members opposite would learn by the mistake that the Leader of the Opposition has made and avoid the sort of ignorance and arrogance that he has displayed over the last 4 or 5 days. Have a look at the administrative orders and make sure what you are the opposition spokesperson for, and get to know your portfolio areas so that we can get on with government in this Northern Territory with, at least, an effective opposition to provide some meaningful and worthwhile debate in this Assembly.

Education Department Policies on AIDS Sufferers

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I understand that the Department of Education is to develop policies in relation to teachers and students suffering from AIDS. In view of the importance of this issue, will the general public be given the opportunity to contribute to the development of these policies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this issue is extremely important. I think honourable members will be aware that information about AIDS is already included in a number of areas of the curriculum in Territory schools. However, that does not address the question of what action the Department of Education should take when it is discovered that a teacher or a student has AIDS. Certainly, it would be unrealistic to believe that that situation will never arise. Clearly, we have a responsibility to ensure that we can deal with such a situation when, inevitably, we are faced with it. It is also fair to say that we have a responsibility to ensure that the community has the opportunity to contribute to any policies or guidelines that may be established.

As a result, I have directed the department to establish a task force to consider the issue and to develop policies in relation to the matter as quickly as possible. I intend that the task force have representatives from the Department of Health and Community Services, the Department of Education and the Department of Law. I have asked that we have representation from the Council of Government Schools Organisation, the Teachers Federation, the Principals Association and the Institute of Senior Education Officers. The task force sounds a bit large and unwieldy but it is a very important issue and we must involve as many people in the community as we can. I have also said that submissions should be accepted from concerned individuals and groups in the Territory.

The first meeting of the task force has been set for 8 May. I want the matter finalised by the end of June. It is an issue on which we must act quickly and decisively but it also requires considered consultation with the community. I intend to ensure that that consultation takes place and that, when the inevitable happens, we are in a position to take steps which will result in the least number of problems. We must also ensure that the victims of this terrible disease are not discriminated against in such a manner as would cause undue stress to them and their families.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, last night, I gave the Treasurer a series of questions concerning Hungerford Refrigeration. I leave it up to him whether he wants to answer those collectively or one at a time and whether he wants me to read them out or he can take them as read.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition provided me with a list of questions and I will read them out to the Legislative Assembly and supply the answers. The first question is: 'Is Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Limited a trustee company for the Hungerford Family Trust Sheetmetal Fabrication?' The answer is no. A company by the name of Epilawn had been a trustee for the Newcombe Family Trust and the name was changed subsequently to Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd. The company ceased to be a trustee in August 1984.

The second question is: 'What form is the Territory Insurance Office's capital investment in Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd - shares, debentures or loans?' The answer is 122 500 fully paid up shares at \$1, and a loan of \$627 500.

The third question is: 'What charge, if any, does the Territory Insurance Office have over the assets of Sheetmetal Fabrication?' The Territory Insurance Office has a first floating debenture charge over the assets of Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd.

The fourth question is: 'How has the \$700 000 investment of the Territory Insurance Office been disbursed within the Hungerford corporate structure and how has the investment been secured?' Territory Insurance Office involvement will enable a complete financial restructuring of the company. Existing loans will be paid out, capital equipment purchased and working capital increased. A small portion will go towards a reduction in the trade creditors. I spoke about Hungerford's operating profit this year. The Leader of the Opposition painted negative scenarios and spoke about how much the company is in debt. There is a considerable operating profit in Hungerford Refrigeration.

The fifth question is: 'How many directors from the Territory Insurance Office have been appointed to Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd board and who are they?' The answer is 2. Mr Phillip Temple is the Chairman at Territory Insurance Office and Mr Vivian Hawke is the General Manager.

The sixth question is: 'Has the charge over the assets held by Carrington Confirmers been discharged?' The answer is that it will be lifted during the next few days.

I believe I have answered those questions in detail. I thought there were more than 6 questions. Indeed, they were taken from the list supplied by the Leader of the Opposition. However, may I put members of the opposition on notice. In future, if they ask me questions that are of a confidential nature or which follow their anti-development strategy on some of the issues which they have raised in this Assembly which have demonstrated their negative attitude towards the development of the Northern Territory, as a responsible minister, I will not be rising to my feet in question time to answer such questions as I have done in the past. I am sick and tired of the negative attitude of the members opposite. There is too much to do in terms of the

development of the Northern Territory. The opportunities are enormous and I do not intend to waste my time in debating issues which are meaningless and which undermine the confidence of the people of the Northern Territory and the companies that I spend considerable time trying to attract to the Northern Territory. I have been fortunate. When they ask me about what the alternate government is likely to be, I say: 'Don't you worry about that'.

Land Councils Meeting at Lake Bennett

Mr McCARTHY to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware of the reasons for the joint land councils meeting at Lake Bennett today?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my knowledge of the meeting at Lake Bennett today is derived from information received unofficially from Canberra and information that I have been able to glean from the media. Given that it appears that this meeting concerns negotiations on a matter of vital importance to the Northern Territory, the amendments to the Northern Territory Land Rights Act, a matter with which this government and many sectors of the community have been deeply involved for a lengthy period of time and into which they have put an incredible amount of effort, time and patience, not even to be given the courtesy of advice as to the current circumstances is a gross breach of propriety in my view.

Mr Bell: You blokes were not interested in the Land Rights Act last night.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell ought to know that the Northern Territory Land Rights Act is one of the most vitally important pieces of federal legislation affecting the Northern Territory. The proposed amendments have been the subject of intensive negotiation and discussions between the Northern Territory government and the federal government.

Mr Bell: A fundamental Territory issue.

Mr HATTON: The member opposite presumably is criticising the fact that I made some comment yesterday.

Mr Bell: You have turned through 180°.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will cease his running commentary and the Chief Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr HATTON: The member for MacDonnell is obviously perturbed that I made some derogatory comments about the member for Arafura's speech in the Address-in-Reply debate yesterday, because he was specifically addressing a federal Liberal Party Aboriginal affairs policy.

Mr Bell: Which relates to the Northern Territory.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HATTON: I made it quite clear that a federal Liberal Party policy had nothing to do with the debate in the Assembly. I felt that it was a shame that, in his maiden speech, the member acted in contravention of the

conventions of this Assembly. If a member wants to speak controversially in his maiden speech, it happens to be a convention of parliament that he advises members opposite of his intention to do so. This then invites interjection. If members opposite studied parliamentary convention, they would know that. I have no problem with members opposite debating Liberal Party policies. I would thoroughly enjoy it and I have no doubt that this side of the Assembly would win such a debate.

I was asked a question about the Lake Bennett meeting. I understand that this meeting was called last week at the insistence of the Prime Minister. I understand that it has been funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs on the instructions of the Prime Minister and that the land councils have received a direct payment in the order of \$70 000 to convene it.

The circumstances that have led to the calling of this meeting are of particular concern to me. I have had advice from pretty reliable sources which I am not at liberty to reveal. Of course, it is unofficial because I have not received any official advice from the federal government and, in fact, we cannot get responses to telephone or other communications concerning this particular meeting. For some reason, it is particularly secret and the federal government does not want to communicate officially with the Northern Territory government about it.

The situation is curious. Since 1985, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has been giving undertakings to this government and Northern Territory industries on amendments to the Land Rights Act. In April 1985, the first undertakings were given on some important matters such as stock routes, stock reserves and non-conversion of pastoral properties. Undertakings were also given in 1985 and 1986 to the mining industry in respect of special provisions in amendments to the Land Rights Act. These undertakings were reiterated as recently as 23 April this year. I understand that the proposed amendments, which were to go to the parliament, were approved by the Caucus subcommittee on Aboriginal Affairs. They received the approval of the Cabinet, but the full Caucus of the Australian Labor Party in Canberra decided that it would hand over the reins of government to the land councils of the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: You do not know what you are talking about!

Mr HATTON: I understand that the instructions ...

Mr Ede: You do not understand. You have got it completely wrong.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have already warned one honourable member about constant interjections. I now warn the member for Stuart. The next member who runs that line will be named. The Chief Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I understand that the instructions from the Caucus were: 'We do not want any arguments, justifications or cases to be brought forward. We simply want to know what the land councils want and we will do what the land councils say'. They are handing over government decisions to the land councils.

What about the views of the other 75% of Northern Territory residents? What about those other people, such as those in the pastoral industry, who have particular interests in these issues and who have honoured the undertakings they gave to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs with respect to

excisions? What about the views of the mining industry which finds itself continuously hamstrung because of the procedures required under the Land Rights Act? What about other Territory citizens who believe that they should have a right to the use of public purpose land in the Northern Territory and not have it handed across to specific individuals or groups for control and direction? These are fairly legitimate interests and they should be the concern of every person in this Assembly. What about undertakings that have been given by a federal minister of the Crown to those interest groups and to the people of the Northern Territory? Why is it that we are not invited to engage in further consultation?

Contrary to the allegations of Mr Bob Collins, the ALP Senate candidate, this is not a normal process of consultation. It is a meeting called at short notice. I could be wrong, because they keep changing the arrangements, but I believe that the Minister for Resources and Energy and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs are flying up with the Caucus subcommittee on a VIP jet with the requirement that they report back tonight to Canberra. They are coming for their riding instructions on how to handle the federal parliament. That is a disgraceful way to carry out government.

A process was undertaken concerning the development of amendments to legislation. Considerable goodwill was generated in the community and, for the first time, there were signs of cooperation on many of the very contentious land rights issues.

I noted the remarks of the member for Arafura yesterday and I congratulate him for recognising the plight of people on pastoral properties and the needs for excisions, a process which this government has been addressing with vigour. We have been far more effective than 20 years of federal government efforts on that problem. That is being undermined by this backdoor lobby.

Members know that Warren Snowden, the CLC man from central Australia, just about lives in Canberra. He spends his time running around amongst his left-wing mates, drinking in the stranger's bar at Parliament House, promoting his particular views and the land councils' views and trying to undermine considerable intergovernmental and conscientious work to resolve some of the really contentious problems in this land rights legislation so we can get this Territory going in a direction whereby we can all live together without these sorts of nonsensical fights.

It is a tragedy that this sort of nonsense continues. After 2 years, after several draft bills, and after round after round of legal opinion and consultation with the land councils, the Aboriginal communities, the pastoral industry, and the mining industry, it is about time that the federal government should honour its undertakings and introduce legislation so that it can be debated. Only in that way can this contention be removed so we can get on with the business of building the Northern Territory for everybody.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, I must make a point about the so-called confidential information and commercially sensitive information that we are seeking, including the 6 questions that I asked. If the Corporate Affairs Office were operating properly, that information would be freely available. If the TIO was aware of its responsibilities in this matter, it would have ensured that that information was available there.

Having regard to the previous answer, that TIO has 2 directors on Hungerford Refrigeration, and having regard to the fact that the latest information available to us on the structure of Hungerford Refrigeration, which was that, in 1985, Hungerford Refrigeration had 4 directors - 2 Hungerfords, a Mr Dick and a Mr Stack - how does that relate to his statement last week that TIO had a controlling interest in the company and was controlling the affairs of the company?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand Mr Stack is no longer in the employment of Hungerford Refrigeration. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition may like to confirm that?

Mr Smith: I have no idea.

Mr COULTER: He has no idea. That is not the only thing that he has no idea about. I understand that he has now left the employment of Hungerford Refrigeration. As I explained to honourable members last week, the voting rights on the board have been organised to give the TIO control of the company.

Access to Aboriginal Land for Mining Companies

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER FOR MINES and ENERGY:

With regard to statements by the Chairman of the Northern Land Council about ready access to Aboriginal land for mining companies in the Territory and, in particular, the chairman's claim that mining companies are dragging the chain in respect of exploration applications, can he clarify the situation and advise the real position?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for the question. I would like to take the opportunity to provide the facts on land applications to the Assembly, how many land applications have been requested by various mining companies, how many companies have been vetoed by the Northern Land Council and how many have been successful. There has been some misleading information in the media of late. In this Assembly last evening, the member for Stuart was trapped into making similar misleading statements. For example, he made claims about the location of the major mines of the Northern Territory today. He did not tell anybody that they were all deposits that had been explored and developed and which were governed by agreements that were entered into before 1976 - before the Lands Right Act came into force. That applied in every case and, by that, he condemned himself. That was when access to Aboriginal land ceased and it was good of him to point out just how much exploration had taken place and how much activity had occurred in the Northern Territory before the enactment of the Lands Right Act. The mines at Koongarra, Ranger, Nabarlek, Gove and Groote were all developed before 1976. The thing that stopped everything was the Land Rights Act. I would like to clarify that for the member for Stuart.

Mr Bell: Tell us about the Alice Springs to Darwin pipeline.

Mr COULTER: You will get yours in a minute too, honourable member for MacDonnell.

The NLC effectively vetoed some 32 applications for exploration licences in Arnhem Land. In marked contrast, consent has been given to 1 application only. The member for Victoria River tried to display graphically the location of some bombs yesterday evening. I am not sure how the Hansard reporters will handle this, but I will try to show a bigger bomb. For the benefit of honourable members, on this map, the areas shaded in yellow are areas of land where mining has been vetoed. Companies such as Comalco, Stockdale, CRA, BHP, United Uranium, Total, Esso and so on have all applied for land out in that area. In fact, the land that has been applied for covers some 18 554 km². The amount of success that mining companies have achieved is indicated by this little purple dot which represents a miserable 64 km² of a total of almost 600 000 km² which are now under Aboriginal or national park control in the Northern Territory.

That demonstrates the success rate of the Northern Land Council in negotiating. As I said in the Assembly last evening, the traditional owners have now lost faith and confidence in the Northern Land Council and its ability to represent their interests. A good example of that would be the Queensland Mines negotiations which broke down. I brought the parties together again but negotiations have broken down since. I received a telex today indicating that the Chairman of Queensland Mines wrote to me on 4 May saying that negotiations have broken down. It is a ridiculous situation. I received a telex from the Northern Land Council today which says it does not accept that negotiations have broken down. It is a bit like a marriage where 1 partner says, 'We are divorced', and the other says, 'We are not divorced'. It does not promise a very happy union for the future or for development if that type of situation exists.

When the honourable member spoke of the 4 major mines in the Assembly last evening, I said that he had the timing spot on. They are significant areas of Aboriginal land which have been mined but mining was stopped on the day the Land Rights Act came into force. The Koongarra agreement, of course, was based on pre-1976 discovery and, therefore, was not subject to the veto provisions of the act. 12 of the 13 which the Chairman of the Northern Land Council referred to are exploration licences on land under claim and are not agreements under the provisions of the Land Rights Act. Once again, that is testimony to the fact that, if a company wants to mine and there is a claim over the land, it is in big trouble.

In answer to the member for Ludmilla's question, the Department of Mines and Energy offered some 179 mineral exploration licences to a number of mining companies provided an agreement could be reached between them and Aborigines under the Land Rights Act. The act has failed dismally in the years that it has been in force. As the member for Fannie Bay mentioned last evening, the amount of wealth that is now locked up is incredible. 4 km² at Ranger have produced in excess of \$1000m of mineral wealth for Australia in 5 short years.

In last night's adjournment debate, I mentioned that Senator Walsh, the Minister for Finance, has said that the Northern Territory economy is parasitic but more parasitic than it needs to be because of outside influence. All we are asking of Senator Walsh is that he take his foot off our neck and give us the opportunity to mine this vast mineral wealth. Let us get on with the job of developing the Territory, creating wealth and removing this social welfare umbrella that has been created over the top of Aborigines and the industry that has been set up to ensure that a social welfare mentality is maintained and, in fact, strengthened. Give the traditional owners the right to negotiate with mining companies directly so that they can create meaningful full-time employment and extract themselves from the situation that is forced

on them by white advisers, lawyers and people who work for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs who are ensuring that these people will never rise above the poverty line. An industry has been created by these people to ensure that they keep their jobs. They would not get a job anywhere else.

A number of mining companies are actively negotiating or seeking to negotiate with Aboriginal land councils. Others have held back waiting to see what happens to those. Given the mining industry's experience with land councils, such caution is readily understandable. Mining companies have expressed considerable concern to me about the way that the Northern Land Council handles applications and the way that it claims to represent the traditional owners. There are many examples of this that can be gathered throughout the Northern Territory. We have witnessed situations like that at Coronation Hill, where traditional owners were prepared to agree to mining but where, all of a sudden, a magic sacred site appeared out of the ground. It was alleged to be a sacred site that had been mined extensively, which is why it was named Coronation Hill.

None of the applicants is satisfied that the proposals were adequately or fairly presented to the traditional owners by the Northern Land Council. I am talking in particular of those 32 applicants that have been knocked back in Arnhem Land alone. In early June, the Director of the Bureau of the Northern Land Council, Mr John Ah Kit, publicly berated mining companies in general, and BHP in particular, for being dilatory in forwarding detailed proposals. Advice of the NLC's resolution was not forwarded to the companies until early in September. In that advice, the NLC suggested that the traditional owners would like to have met with the applicants. As explained in the BHP letter, the company would have more than welcomed the opportunity to discuss the question of exploration with the traditional owners, but the NLC did not inform it of the meeting.

In the meantime, representatives of BHP had held meetings with the NLC in July. At those meetings, BHP proposed a reconnaissance of the areas to assist with the development of detailed proposals. The proposal included the use of traditional owners as guides, and was to be restricted to very preliminary assessments only. At those meetings, the NLC made no mention of the council's June resolution, nor was the traditional owners' desire to meet with the company conveyed to BHP. How can companies have any confidence or faith in the Northern Land Council? How can the traditional owners have any faith or confidence in the land councils? What has happened ...

Mr Ede: Why don't you make it a ministerial statement so that we get a chance to rebut this nonsense?

Mr COULTER: In response to that interjection, I am trying to bring home the facts.

Mr Ede: Those are not the facts.

Mr COULTER: The facts are simple, and the honourable member for Stuart pointed them out in this Assembly last evening. As soon as the Land Rights Act came into force, mining ceased. That is a fact, and he knows it. Yesterday evening, he said: 'what about the 4 major mines in the Northern Territory?' It just so happens that those 4 major mines came into production before the Land Rights Act came into force. It is farcical to say that 13 mining agreements have been concluded. It is not true.

This map says it all, Mr Speaker, even in respect of Arnhem Land alone. If you look at the 32 applications, the vetos and the approvals, it is a shame and a disgrace. This is a matter which involves millions of dollars of wealth and meaningful full-time employment for Aboriginals, which would bring them out from underneath the social welfare umbrella created by the leaders of the Australian Labor Party and propped up by mining companies because of the royalty payments they are forced to make. These royalties are paid for the right to exploit a resource which belongs to all Australians. They are paid to prop up the Northern Land Council and the Central Land Council. Millions of dollars are involved, and the companies are quite concerned that this snake they have created is biting them on the ankles with their money.

It is a suicidal situation, as I said in this Assembly last night. What are we doing to this great country? What are we doing to the Northern Territory? Give us a go, Mr Walsh. Take your foot off our neck and we will show you that we are not parasites on the national economy. We have great wealth. We have some great Aboriginal people who want to create meaningful jobs for their children. They do not want to live under the social welfare umbrella that is propped up by the white advisers, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the land councils. All they are asking for is a fair go.

Nuclear Waste Disposal Facilities

Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I refer to the member for Karama's speculation yesterday about the placement of nuclear waste facilities in the Northern Territory. Secondly, I refer him to a report emanating from his department about the prospect of siting such facilities to the north-east of Alice Springs, presumably in my electorate. Which government members have indicated their willingness to have such nuclear waste disposal facilities in their electorates?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand that negotiations are occurring between a very close colleague, who is involved in the Aboriginal movement, and the member for MacDonnell. I think the facility might be going to Libya now.

The fact is that involvement in the nuclear industry is an opportunity which should exist for the Northern Territory. Certainly, Senator Button thinks so. He has just formed a Base Metal Industry Council which is to look at ways of processing raw materials mined in Australia. There are a number of examples of this already occurring. You would be aware, Mr Speaker, of negotiations with BHP in an attempt to develop a manganese dioxide facility.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I refer the minister to standing order 113 which says that an answer shall be relevant to the question. I will repeat my question in case he did not hear it. I asked which government members have indicated their preparedness to have nuclear waste disposal facilities sited in their electorates? I do not want a rundown on the nuclear energy industry. We have had a number of debates about it in this Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The minister may answer the question in any way he sees fit, provided that his answer is relevant to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I am not sure that the member for MacDonnell is not actually getting in early with a lobby to ensure that the facility is sited in his electorate. Perhaps he is worried that competition from other members of the Assembly might result in his missing out on his opportunity to become involved in this industry. Perhaps he has taken note of my point regarding full-time employment for some of his constituents. I will bear that in mind and no doubt he will speak to me further about the issue as time goes by.

The fact is that we have to become involved in the total processing of our mineral wealth in the Northern Territory. Recently, I had the opportunity of looking at a nuclear reprocessing plant at Le Havre in France. It is Europe's biggest project. It is a \$12 000m project and employs some 4000 people. I believe there are some wonderful opportunities for the Territory to become involved not only in the processing of yellowcake but in developing and leasing fuel rods to the various companies involved. Those fuel rods would be returned to the Northern Territory for reprocessing and eventual storage. The only way we can really guarantee the safety of our nuclear material in world markets is by having total control of the product, just as Howard Hughes had some years ago with his drill bits. If we were in a position in the Northern Territory to mine, process, develop and bring the rods back to the Northern Territory for reprocessing and eventual storage, we would be able to tell if anybody was milking the plutonium out of them. We would be able to contribute much more to safety in the nuclear industry. It is simply a discussion paper but, no doubt, there will be many members in the Assembly who will now vie for the opportunity to become involved in such a venture should it happen. At the moment, it is merely a discussion paper.

Funding of FORWAARD

Mr REED to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is it true that the federal government is withdrawing funds from FORWAARD?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, FORWAARD is the Foundation of Rehabilitation with Aboriginal Alcohol-related Difficulties. I touched on this yesterday when the member for Arnhem asked me a question relating to overcrowding in Territory prisons. Over the last 12 months, I have tried to warn the Legislative Assembly, particularly the opposition, that the federal government is adopting the attitude that it must cut the social welfare budget. The most expedient way it can do that is to cut funds to the Aboriginals, the majority of whom are in the Northern Territory. This is yet another example of the federal government taking that attitude.

FORWAARD operates from premises in Stuart Park and offers a medium stay for a 6-week rehabilitation program for alcohol dependent persons. It has been funded entirely by the Commonwealth government. In February this year, the Commonwealth government decided, as a matter of policy - and I want the opposition to note that it is the federal government's policy to withdraw funding to all Aboriginal residential treatment programs - that this funding is to cease on 30 April 1987. The federal government ran the pen through it in February and dropped it cold. In a matter of 6 weeks, they run like mongrel dogs from a matter that is extremely important to 25% of the Territory's population.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I believe the expression 'mongrel dogs' is scarcely parliamentary.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr DALE: I certainly withdraw the remark unreservedly. I would like to explain that I was not referring to the federal government as mongrel dogs. I was simply indicating that the manner in which they retreated from this particular issue may be likened to the scampering feet of a dog.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw without comment.

Mr DALE: I withdraw it without comment.

FORWAARD has been directed to change its direction towards the provision of outpatient services, with particular emphasis on education and prevention services. I believe the opposition should be taking some note of this point. The implications of this redirection will have impact on the Northern Territory government. FORWAARD is the only residential program for Aboriginal people which is used by the judiciary as an alternative to prison sentences. Its closure will mean more Aboriginal prisoners and these people now make up 70% of the prison population.

FORWAARD provides a valuable social service by taking alcohol-dependent persons out of the community for a period of rehabilitation. If the residential component closes, this will place more stress on other services, including the police, emergency accommodation and welfare services in general. My departmental officers and this government are taking a far more responsible attitude to this matter. We are negotiating with the people involved in running FORWAARD to see if we are able to keep it operational.

Mr Speaker, in answer to a question from the member from Arafura yesterday, I said that I need members of the opposition to play their part in overcoming the problems relating to the penal system in the Northern Territory. What have they done in relation to this?

Mr Ede: I have written letters about FORWAARD.

Mr DALE: To whom?

Mr Ede: To the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr DALE: Good on you. Perhaps this is an example of the worth of the opposition when it comes to negotiating with their leaders down in Canberra. How many times have I stated that they are the puppets of their leaders in Canberra? Here is another example. They made representation, on behalf of the Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, relative to FORWAARD, but still the pen went through it. They are useless at representing the people of the Northern Territory, particularly the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory. They do nothing to represent their constituencies in this Northern Territory.

Beaufort Hotel's Outstanding Accounts

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Last week, he stated that he was having discussions with the management of the Beaufort Hotel about arrears in electricity, water, sewerage and payroll

tax. What was the result of those discussions and is the Northern Territory likely to recoup the cost of supplying electricity, water and sewerage services and the arrears on payroll tax?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my filing system does not seem to be working terribly well at the moment. I had a letter from the company involved. I will make a copy of that letter available to the Leader of the Opposition.

I had discussions with some of the people involved in Burgundy Royale concerning the sale of the facility. Last week, I had discussions with people from Westpac Bank which is involved in the financing of Burgundy Royale for its development on the Esplanade. A Westpac representative was in Hong Kong during the previous week negotiating the sale of the facility and Westpac is confident that a buyer will be found within the very near future, and discussions are at a point where an announcement will be made within the next 30 days.

In response to the Leader of the Opposition's question, the Northern Territory government is in a very good position to obtain the moneys that are outstanding. It has entered into an agreement with the banking company that will ensure that the Northern Territory government will be paid the amount of money that is owing to it in payroll tax and for electricity, water and sewerage services before connections are granted to the buyer. When the government controls some of the basic facilities, it puts it in a very strong position. That is the position that the Northern Territory government is in. I believe that a satisfactory resolution will be announced within the next 30 days. Indeed, the letter that I have come from Hong Kong and contained the latest information. I intended to make a statement on it yesterday.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Land Councils Meeting at Lake Bennett

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to make a correction to a position that I put to the Assembly earlier this morning with respect to the Lake Bennett meeting. I wish to ensure that I am not in any way misleading the Assembly on information that is available to me. In my statement, I indicated that the federal government's Caucus subcommittee on Aboriginal affairs was supportive of the amendments proceeding and that that was supported by the Cabinet. Mr Speaker, I am advised that I was in error in that respect. In fact, the Caucus subcommittee was opposed to the amendments going through. It was overruled by the Cabinet and the Cabinet, in turn, has been overruled by the full Caucus.

In no way do I withdraw the rest of my comments, and I would ask honourable members to think of the implications of that. Effectively, the Caucus is saying that it has no confidence in the Cabinet.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister stood up to correct a misleading impression that he said he gave, and has now gone on to advance the comments that he made earlier this morning.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I believe that my additional comments are relevant to the correction that has been made, and are important to give a complete statement in the context of the implications of that alternative information.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the point I was making was that I believe that, effectively, that is a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet. If a decision is made at Lake Bennett that the amendments should not proceed, the people of Australia will be placed in the rather awkward position, within our Westminster system of parliament, where a federal minister puts proposals of that kind to people. In these circumstances, I would think anybody in the Northern Territory, indeed anyone in Australia, would be quite entitled to say: 'Have you obtained permission from the full Caucus of your party to speak as a government minister and make undertakings on behalf of your government? If you do not, I have no confidence in accepting your word as a minister of the Crown'. That is the effect of that decision and I think that it is absolutely reprehensible. It is sufficient that, if the Cabinet is comprehensively rolled and that legislation does not proceed, then that is a vote of no confidence in the government, and it should resign and allow its Caucus to elect a new Cabinet.

Lockers for Sadadeen Secondary College Students

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has the Department of Education made provision for lockers for students at the Sadadeen Secondary College?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly the lack of lockers for the use of students at the Sadadeen Secondary College is receiving the attention of a number of members of this Assembly. The member for Sadadeen raised this matter the other day. You, Mr Speaker, have made a number of representations to the Director of Education in Alice Springs, and the member for Araluen is now pursuing the matter. I think that the sort of interest shown by local members in Alice Springs is quite worthy and appropriate. 168 lockers have been ordered and installed at the college, as you would be aware, because I believe you have correspondence that shows this to be so.

Mr Collins: For the matric students. What about the Year 11s?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will be heard in silence, and the member for Sadadeen will allow him to reply to the question.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have not forgotten the Year 11 students. I wished to tell members that the 168 lockers that have been supplied will be used by Year 12 students. There are some extra lockers which will be utilised by Year 11 students.

The principal has made a request for an additional 200 lockers in the next financial year. Obviously, I hope that we can fund those lockers but I cannot give any undertakings because that will depend on our budget allocations and Territory-wide priorities in relation to education. I can assure honourable members that I will certainly keep the subject of the lockers in the forefront of my mind. I am very sure, Mr Speaker, that you and the members for Araluen and Sadadeen will continue to make representations and keep me up to the mark in relation to lockers at Sadadeen Secondary College.

Fruit-fly Outbreak in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

He is aware that there has been a fruit-fly outbreak in Alice Springs area over the last few months. What do he and the department intend to do about that outbreak?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have details in front of me in relation to a fruit-fly outbreak in Alice Springs. However, I will undertake to obtain the information and provide it to the member during the course of these sittings.

Teachers in Outstation Schools

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

My question relates to matters raised by the member for Nhulunbuy on Tuesday. I was concerned to hear his claim that teachers in outstation schools are laid off at the end of each school year. Is this indeed the case?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must admit that I have some difficulty in answering this question, not because I do not have information from my department but because, as usual, it was very difficult to understand what the member for Nhulunbuy was talking about. First, he claimed that teachers in the East Arnhem region were laid off at the end of the school year. He then said that those teachers did not receive any holiday pay. He went on to say that the people referred to are not teachers. He then went on to say that there are often delays at the start of the new year because these teachers - the ones that are not teachers - have to wait until they are reappointed before they can start teaching again. I will try to do my best to sort out the question that I think the member for Nhulunbuy was trying to raise and which has led to the member for Victoria River's question this morning.

First, I would like to make it quite clear that no teacher employed by the Department of Education works on the basis that he or she is laid off at the end of each school year and is then reappointed at the beginning of the next school year. Obviously, that is absolute rubbish. Teachers who are servicing outstation schools automatically begin their rounds at the start of each school year and certainly there is no delay while they are re-appointed. I think the member for Nhulunbuy may be referring to the department's assistant teachers on outstation communities. Even if that is the case, he still has not got it right.

Assistant teachers are employed on a limited-tenure basis, usually for the period of the school year, but it is not true to say they do not receive holiday pay. They receive a pro rata payment which is based on the percentage of the year that they have worked. That means that an assistant teacher who works a full year receives full holiday pay. If he works half the year, he receives half holiday pay. I hope that the honourable member for Nhulunbuy can understand that concept.

Mr Speaker, limited-tenure teachers are automatically considered for re-employment at the start of each school year. That means they are not expected to reapply. They are reappointed automatically provided their prior service has been satisfactory and that their school is still entitled to the position and, of course, if they are available for reappointment. This system enables assistant teachers on outstations to begin teaching automatically at the start of each school year. Delays in reappointment and, therefore, salary payment can occur if the principal or the regional officer cannot find out if the assistant teacher is available for reappointment or if recommencement papers have not yet been submitted. If there are any initial difficulties along those lines, the department back pays those people accordingly.

The department has developed a process, which will be introduced next year, which will simplify this process even further. This process will enable the department to notify assistant teachers before the end of the school year that they will be required for the following year. I must point out that there are many problems associated with taking education to outstations.

Obviously, the problems range from teachers not being able to travel because of flooding, to students not turning up at the right time. However, the claims made by the member for Nhulunbuy seem to be extremely confused and grossly exaggerated. I would like to suggest that, if the member has any specific cases that he is worried about, he should provide me with details of those cases immediately and I will have them investigated. I would also like to suggest that, before the honourable member thinks about running off at the mouth again, he should check his facts more carefully rather than cause concern about circumstances which in fact have not occurred.

Prison Facilities

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Will he give an undertaking that he will support his department's proposal, which was put to the prison officers on 5 May, for its building of a remand facility in Darwin, a new prison in Katherine, a new industrial complex in Darwin, a prison reserve and an extension to the women's section at Darwin Prison? When can we expect the building to commence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, perhaps I ought to put the honourable member in contact with the parents of a number of disabled people who are looking to me to spend some money to build respite care facilities. Perhaps I can direct him to the aged or to the people who require child care. I have not yet received the submission from the prison officers or the department, as the member put it, but I would imagine that it has come from the Prison Officers Association. I certainly hope it has. I can tell this Assembly that it is a financial impossibility for this government to build any institution whatsoever in the forthcoming 12 months as a priority within my department. I think it is time that I took some of the Assembly's time to outline what the penal system is all about for the education of members opposite.

Let me first give a profile of our prisoner population. 95% of people in the penal system are male and 40% have not previously been in prison. 33% are married and 54% are single and I do not know what the rest are. 70% are Aboriginal and 45% have primary or lower education. The usual offence categories are driving or property offences. 74% were unemployed at the time the offence was committed. 15% are under 19 years of age and 52% are over 25. 62% were born in the Northern Territory and 60% of offences were alcohol related. 34% of sentences are for fines or estreatment of bail and average 7 days each. 64% of convicted prisoners serve less than 3 months evenly spread between urban and rural areas.

The most recent figures, obtained in the last week of April, indicate that there were then 477 prisoners held in Territory institutions as follows: Darwin Prison, with a design capacity of 150, was holding 242; Gunn Point Prison Farm, with a design capacity of 60, was holding 60; and Alice Springs Prison, with a design capacity of 110, was holding 130. The Northern Territory has the highest imprisonment rate in Australia and it is 4 times higher than the Australian national imprisonment rate. The April figures show that 926 adult offenders in the community have been placed in conditional liberty programs by the courts. Of these, 538 offenders were on probation, 131 offenders had been released from prison on parole and 246 offenders were working on the community service order program. At that date, 43 juveniles were in custody in the Northern Territory and, on the same date, there were 203 juvenile offenders who had been placed on conditional liberty orders by

the court. These included 143 on probation and 59 on community service orders.

Let me remind honourable members that the factor of 70% Aboriginal runs right through the juvenile area as well. It costs approximately \$90 per day to maintain a prisoner in custody. It costs approximately \$10 per day to maintain an offender in the community on some form of conditional liberty. The cost to build a new maximum security institution, and I hope the honourable member keeps this figure in mind, is around \$150 000 per cell. I think the figures that the honourable member just ran past this Assembly as being from the submission that is coming from the POA, or the department, as he said, would be in the vicinity of 400 to 450 cells. I would like the honourable member to do his own arithmetic on how much that would cost and what the opposition is expecting us to do in the next 12 months. Those are capital costs alone. When the figures of \$90 per day to institutionalise offenders as against \$10 per day to have them on some conditional liberty are considered, it is clear why it is common sense for this government to pursue the latter course rather than the former.

Since March 1985, prisoner numbers have increased by 45% to 480 on 18 April 1987. The current figure is some 488. This is a system peak and we are nearly 30% overloaded. Rated capacity for adult institutions is 370. There has been an increase of 71% of offenders on probation or adult conditional liberty, with numbers rising from 313 in March 1985 to 538 in March 1987. Those systems have been successful in keeping 225 offenders out of institutions. In the parolee area, there has been an increase of 72%, with numbers rising from 76 in March 1985 to 131 in March 1987. Once again, this represents a significant increase in the number of people out of institutions. There has been an increase in community service orders with numbers rising from 14 in March 1985 to 246 in March 1987 following the introduction of the legislation in this Assembly late last year. One in every 90 people in the Northern Territory is currently under some form of correctional program.

The correctional policy is: to restructure the prison system; to provide secure custody, and protection for the public; to make prisoners productive to earn revenue to offset costs; to teach prisoners work skills and ethics and to use prison labour to rehabilitate land and pastoral holdings which can be made viable as commercial enterprises; to provide conditional liberty programs acceptable to the courts and the community; and to divert as many juvenile and adult offenders as possible from the costly imprisonment custody option; to aggressively implement juvenile programs for offenders which will cause behaviour modification and subsequent diversion from graduation to adult criminal behaviour. The wilderness camp is an example of the last mentioned aim.

I will give some examples of what we are doing in the fine default diversionary program. During 1985-86, 34.6% of all persons received into Northern Territory institutions were admitted as a result of fine default. The figure was somewhat similar for the previous financial year. On 19 January 1987, the government introduced a fine default option program to divert significant numbers of these people from costly and apparently unnecessary imprisonment. Since that time, 105 persons have been diverted from fine default imprisonment to the community service order program, 266 persons have been able to work off their fine at a rate of \$100 per day for every 8 hours of community service order work performed. This program offers the courts the option of requiring offenders to perform useful, unpaid work for the community during their free time as an option to imprisonment. Currently, 89 offenders are working under the community service order program

in addition to the 157 involved in the fine default diversionary program. Notwithstanding these initiatives, prison numbers have risen from 329 in March 1985 to 480 as at midnight on 18 April 1987. As I stated earlier, they rose to some 492 late last week.

The Beatrice Hill rehabilitation project was brought on line during the last 12 months. This minimum security institution is able to take up to 50 minimum security prisoners, who are fully employed rehabilitating a rundown cattle venture which will eventually be given back to the government.

The 1986-87 appropriation for the Northern Territory correctional services is \$17.1m which is a 58% increase on the \$10.8m provided 2 years previously in 1984-85.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! We have been fairly lenient to the honourable minister on this particular question because it is of interest. But, he was asked a very specific question concerning the government's building programs in the prisons area. He has answered it comprehensively and we do have a very limited time for questions.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I think this question is the second or third that I have been asked on correctional services by the honourable member. He asked whether I would be accepting a submission put to me by the department, as he said - and I believe that would be from the Prison Officers Association and possibly the Senior Prison Officers Association. I certainly will be receiving it and I am trying to tell him how I will respond to it.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The honourable minister may reply in any manner that he sees fit, provided it is relevant to the question. However, I would ask ministers and members to keep both questions and answers as brief as possible.

Mr DALE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The simple explanation for this increase in costs is that correctional services take offenders into the criminal justice system by the order of the court. There is no function discretion.

The following programs have or are being implemented in effect to reduce the number of juvenile offenders either coming into contact with the criminal justice system or being placed in costly custody.

Pre-trial diversion: this concept will enable juvenile offenders, charged with relatively minor offences for the first or perhaps second time, to be diverted from the court system provided they enter into an agreement which will address the problem which led to the juvenile's conflict with the law and will ensure the juvenile avoids further conflict with the law.

Community care program: this program will provide accommodation in a family environment for juvenile offenders who have no proper home environment or parental control. The concept provides for a juvenile to be placed with a specially-selected, trained family rather than the juvenile being remanded in custody whilst his or her case is being considered by the Juvenile Court. Currently, it costs in excess of \$200 per day to remand a juvenile in custody in a detention centre. The payment to a care-giver family is significantly less at \$20 per day.

Wilderness camp work: this concept provides a realistic, rigid custodial treatment program for juvenile offenders. The community, particularly tourists, are benefiting from the work projects carried out by the juveniles placed on this program. While allowing for the protection of the community, this program provides punishment and self-help for juvenile offenders through their participation in every aspect of day-to-day activities at the camp - its initial construction, meal preparation, camp industries and undertaking useful community work. Young offenders placed on this program learn on-the-job skills and life survival skills with the aim of improving their self-esteem, pride, their spirit and team spirit as well. Following the success of the first wilderness camp, which operated for 8 weeks on a trial basis during 1986, the government has now given approval for the camp to become a permanent element in offender treatment programs for juveniles. A major emphasis of the wilderness work camp program is placed on education, particularly remedial education for the young offenders going through the program. Close consultation with the Department of Education is being maintained in this regard.

The home detention program: this concept is available for juvenile and adult offenders, particularly those ...

Mr COLLINS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I refer to standing order 113. I believe that the question was answered very early in the minister's reply. He said that there would be no money available for any major project. It was a very clear answer. We are listening to a prepared answer and the time available for questions is being wasted.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I wish to speak to the point of order. The question did not mention money. It mentioned the prospect of my receiving a submission from the department.

Mr Ede: It referred to building.

Mr DALE: I have been asked several questions in this Assembly and outside of this Assembly on what I am doing about various aspects of the correctional services system. I am trying to give the answer to those various questions, including the matter that has been raised by the honourable member. If the honourable member did not want me to answer the question, he should not have asked it.

Mr SPEAKER: I would remind the honourable minister and the honourable member of my previous ruling, and again request that answers be kept as brief as is humanly possible.

Mr DALE: The home detention program: this concept is available for juvenile and adult offenders, particularly those who have been convicted ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Obviously, the honourable minister is not taking any notice at all of your ruling. You ruled, quite specifically, that he should provide as brief an answer as was humanly possible. For the third time, the minister has resumed at the place in his prepared script where he was interrupted and has simply continued to read.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I most certainly wish to speak to the point of order. I am offended by the Leader of the Opposition saying that I am not abiding by your ruling. I am terribly sorry if the Leader of the Opposition believes that an answer to a question of this nature can be given in 1 minute. That is not my understanding of the seriousness of this matter. We have a

crisis situation in our prisons and I believe the matter ought to be addressed. I am addressing it and I am trying to tell the Assembly how I am addressing it. If the Leader of the Opposition is not interested, he should direct his members not to ask such questions.

Mr Leo: You can make a ministerial statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, the opposition is interested in this matter and we are prepared to extend to the honourable minister any cooperation he needs to have this matter placed before the Assembly today. However, he has been given a fair go in question time. He has been on his feet for 20 minutes and we have 35 minutes left of question time. In the view of any reasonable person, he has been given an appropriate amount of time to answer the question fully.

Mr SPEAKER: Again, I rule that there is no point of order and that the minister has the right to answer the question in the way that he sees fit. However, I would remind the minister again that answers should be as brief as possible.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I thank you very much. In the spirit of giving the opposition members every chance to make some of the feeble points that I believe they have been wasting the time of this Assembly on during the past 5 sitting days, I will cut my answer short. I want to indicate to the honourable members opposite that I have another 8 pages of comprehensive notes containing the explanation of what we are doing to address these problems. I will make those available to the honourable member and I will make a briefing available, at a time to suit him, on precisely what we are doing in relation to correctional services.

I think it is vitally important that not only the honourable members opposite, but the people of the Northern Territory, understand that correctional services do not advertise the wonderful facilities that are available for inmates. We do not commit offences on behalf of the people of the Northern Territory to build up our numbers. We do not go to the courts to be convicted and sentenced to various institutions. The Department of Correctional Services has no choice. It has to accept those people who are sentenced by the courts.

As a member of a responsible government, and a responsible minister, I have to find ways whereby we can accept those offenders into whatever facility we see as being the most viable as far as their security is concerned. We have people in institutions who need to be in institutions. Quite frankly, I do not believe the public at large would like some of the people we have in institutions to be roaming the streets. However, the dollars that would need to be spent on the proposition put by the honourable member both on television and in this Assembly, that we should simply build more institutions, make the idea almost irrational. Suffice it to say that this government is addressing all possible angles to alleviate what I confess is a crisis situation in the penal system of the Northern Territory. I say again that 70% of adults and juveniles in prison are Aborigines and I say again that the communities must play a role in managing not only people who are in the penal system but people who are likely, because of their actions, to become involved in the system. Therefore, I call upon the members of the opposition, who are representatives of the majority of the Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory, to get off their backsides. They should work with the leaders in their communities, who are only too eager to cooperate with the department in preventing their people from being placed in the penal system.

Proposed Changes to Aboriginal Land Rights Act

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Following his meetings yesterday with the federal Minister for Resources and Energy, can he outline the ramifications of the proposed changes to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and, in particular, the effect they are likely to have on the Northern Territory mining industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I shall try to be brief in answering the question, but I would like to point out to honourable members that the proposed amendments should be treated with extreme caution. I will probably be condemned by the opposition for suggesting that such caution should be exercised and perhaps even by the media and certain segments of the community, but I say it with very good reason. It worries me when people like Gayler, Blanchard and Hand, the lunatic left of the ALP, arrive up here from down south and say it has been a magnificent achievement at Lake Bennett.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will not refer to members of other parliaments in derogatory terms and I ask him to withdraw that remark.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I unreservedly withdraw that remark.

These people have public views which are known to us. They are southern experts who trespass from time to time in and out of the Northern Territory telling us what to do and how to do it. I become very cautious when I read newspaper reports like the one I read the day before yesterday. On 5 May, the NT News had a headline 'No Compromise Over Veto Power' to an article written by Mr Dave Nason. It indicated that the land councils would not compromise over veto. When I hear that 200 Aboriginal people unanimously supported the amendments and that Mr Pat Dodson and Mr Yunupingu are saying that it has been a magnificent day and a wonderful day, I become concerned.

When I heard that the mining industry supports these amendments, I rang the Australian Mining Industry Council. I was told that it had not seen a copy of the draft bill or any information, but it had been told yesterday that such action would take place in Darwin. The Chief Minister responsible for the government of the Northern Territory did not receive a copy of the draft bill and was not even told that the meeting would be held.

The rest of the community should become concerned. The headline in yesterday's NT News was 'Mining Veto To Go Says Evans'. I think that the correspondent, in particular Mr Dave Nason, has been conned because something is not just right when you consider the people involved. The Chief Minister and I were given a verbal briefing yesterday by the federal Minister for Resources and Energy. I intend to wait. From what I hear, it is his first step on a long march. I am extremely concerned that amendments may now be rushed through the federal parliament without the Northern Territory government seeing a copy of the draft bill.

One of the things that concerns me is the fact that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will have the power to decide now whether mining goes ahead or not after the land councils have negotiated with the traditional owners. Let us have a look at the current situation. Since last August, there has been an agreement on Mr Holding's desk which simply needs his signature. That has been agreed to by the traditional owners, it has been approved by the

Northern Land Council and it has remained on the desk of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs since last August. We have been waiting 9 months.

Mr Ede: How many are awaiting your consent? 41.

Mr COULTER: He talks about 41 being on my desk. This could develop into a war of words in terms of the number of applications.

The scenario is starting to build up now and the press clippings will make the picture very clear to Northern Territorians. In The Australian of 30 April, there was an excellent article by Mr Yunupingu about Aborigines and mining. The trouble was that it contained incorrect information. The member for Stuart talks about how many applications are on my desk awaiting approval. Let us have a look at some of the ones that are on NLC desks, remembering that it claims to have processed 13. We have already pointed out to the member for Stuart that the NLC has, in fact, processed 1 application.

Mr Ede: It is 17 now.

Mr COULTER: He says it is 17 now. He really must do his arithmetic. Let me explain to him, as I did in yesterday's question time that the 4 mines producing 90% of the \$1000m that is being produced on Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory were all approved before the Aboriginal Land Rights Act came into force in 1976. 12 of the 13 applications were on land under claim and had nothing to do with the Land Rights Act at that stage. These related to places such as Nicholson River. The figures are wrong.

The claim was made that there are 11 exploration licence areas over which the traditional owners have sought, but are still awaiting, proposals from the mining companies. The fact is that the Department of Mines and Energy does not have details of that claim but, even if the NLC's own figures are correct, its performance is woeful. Of 200 applications, it says that 97 are being proceeded with at this stage. This leaves a balance of 103 applications which, by implication, are being processed. Nevertheless, the NLC admits that it is negotiating only 14.

Paragraph 11 of Mr Yunupingu's statement in The Australian refers to 44 cases where the NLC is either negotiating, has entered agreements or is waiting for proposals. The quoted figures simply do not add up. I intend to make those figures available today so that honourable members can have an opportunity to do some basic arithmetic. I will give a hand to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition because I know that they are not very good at it.

Mr Ede: Have you heard of the traditional owner identification program?

Mr COULTER: The point I am making is that, as Territorians, we should take this very cautiously, and I will point out another reason for that.

Mr Ede: How do you negotiate if you don't know who the traditional owners are?

Mr COULTER: One reason for this amendment package was the inability for Aboriginal people to purchase pastoral leases and then convert them to Aboriginal land under the Land Rights Act.

Mr Ede: First tell us about all 41 on your desk.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have been fairly tolerant to date with the member for Stuart, but his interjections will cease.

Mr COULTER: I ask honourable members if they remember McLaren Creek, which was bought as a pastoral lease and immediately converted to Aboriginal title under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. It is locked up and cannot be touched now. The same occurred with Eva Valley Station. That amendment is being discussed now which means that the other 50% of the Northern Territory that is available for miners to get on to pastoral leases etc may no longer be available. I may be condemned by the opposition which means that I am on the right track. I say that honourable members should treat this very cautiously. It is like the wooden horse. Let us wait and see what comes out of its belly.

New Berry Springs School

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can he assure me that, in the building of the new Berry Springs school, the wishes and the interests of the people of the rural area regarding the education of their children have been and will be taken into consideration?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. I see that some children from the Berry Springs school are in the gallery today. I take this opportunity to assure the honourable member that the basis for building the school is to provide first-class educational opportunities to students in the Berry Springs area. That role will be carried out with maximum consultation with the community at all times. Consultation is something that our government is noted for, especially in relation to education. I can assure the honourable member that at all times we will be considering the well-being of the students in the Berry Springs area.

PubTAB Agencies

Mr LEO to TREASURER

How many PubTAB agencies have been opened since the passage of legislation allowing the introduction of PubTAB, and is it still the government's policy not to allow PubTAB outlets to open in areas already serviced by TAB sub-agencies, as was stated when the legislation allowing PubTAB was passed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nhulunbuy for his question. I would like to have a prepared briefing to give him exact details on that. I am prepared to make available to the honourable member the full details of the proposals for PubTAB. At the moment, there are many requests for PubTAB. There are 2 agencies and they are working extremely well. One is in the electorate of Palmerston and the other at Jabiru. I believe there is also provision for an agency at the Stuart Tavern in Alice Springs and I understand that is being proceeded with at the moment.

It is the government's policy not to approve PubTAB agencies where they would be in competition with existing agencies. This is of particular concern to a number of people. It is a magnificent facility and I can assure honourable members that it is working extremely well in the areas where it has been implemented. At the moment, the priority is to have it implemented in

areas where there is no agency. That is why Palmerston and Jabiru were considered first. Negotiations are continuing whereby, if an agent wants to operate out of an hotel, that application may proceed. The problem is that the number of inquiries far outweighs the amount of equipment that we have available to enable us to enter into agreements to provide the facility. Because of the financial constraints that are upon us and the limited amount of machinery that is available to us through which to introduce PubTAB across the board, agencies will be established on a fairly selective basis for some time to come.

I will be happy to provide a more exact briefing for the member for Nhulunby because I know of his interest in this matter. I will provide him with full details on that during the course of these sittings.

Daly River Road

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The government, through the Department of Transport and Works, has promised the people of Daly River for some time that the Daly River Road would be fully sealed. Due to financial constraints, the work has been delayed for several years. Can he assure me that he will do his utmost to ensure that faith is kept with the people of Daly River and beyond by completing the sealing of this road during the 1987-88 financial year as promised?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure the member for Victoria River that the Northern Territory government's commitment to road development throughout the Northern Territory will remain as high as ever. That commitment has been somewhat constrained of late as a result of a number of cutbacks, particularly in federal funding. During the Address-in-Reply debate, I mentioned the effects of the implementation of the Cameron Report and, more pertinently, the fears that I have that the Cameron Report resolutions may be carried forward into future funding. At present, the resolutions will be directed at 10% of the next 3 years' ALT program but I fear that they may be directed across the board.

The Victoria Highway comes under the national highway network and is regarded as being of fairly low priority. It is a responsibility of the federal government and is subject to federal funding. The traffic across that area has been fairly low. Despite that, a few years ago, the Northern Territory government was able to persuade the federal government to give some priority to construction of the first 15 km west of Katherine. The cost of the further extensions towards the King River, which are expected to begin in June, will be some \$5.5m.

In addition, members will be aware of the substantial commitment that we have given to ongoing maintenance to keep the road as trafficable as possible. Considerable work has been done on the shoulders of the Victoria Highway. The total cost involved in upgrading the Victoria Highway to the border would be some \$150m. Naturally enough, that work will have to be programmed over quite a few years.

The Daly River Road involves about 80 km of road of which half remains unsealed. The Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works has included in the draft 1987-88 capital works program some \$2.5m to continue works in that area. That would cover another 12 km of road. Naturally

enough, the inclusion of those works will be subject to the constraints of the budget.

The federal minister, Mr Morris, announced recently that the Cameron Report would form the basis of future funding. In the next 3 years, it will involve at least a \$0.5m cut in funding for local roads and urban roads in particular. The federal mini-budget next week may involve some more bad news, particularly for projects related to the more remote and undeveloped areas of Australia. The full impact of the Cameron Report is something that ought to be dealt with as a separate matter. The tales reflect the federal government's attitude towards providing facilities and infrastructure for people in remote areas. Honourable members opposite, who have electorates in the scrub, will be finding that the pressure will really be on to meet their needs.

In summary, the member for Victoria River can be assured that I will do my utmost to ensure the continued development of roads throughout the Northern Territory.

Alice Springs Gas Pipeline

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he report on the conclusion of the investigation into safety of the Alice Springs gas pipeline?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am in a position to advise honourable members of the safety of the Alice Springs gas pipeline. Honourable members will remember that it has been the subject of considerable debate in this Assembly. We have had people suggesting that the sky will fall in etc. I presented to honourable members recently the report of Mr Alder who was brought up from the Gas and Fuel Corporation to inspect the line and determine its safety. Since then, we have run the intelligent pig down the line. Honourable members will remember the definition of an 'intelligent pig'. They will also be aware of a pig that is not intelligent, the dummy pig. In fact, both pigs have been along the pipeline and, in some sections of the pipe, they showed 5 defects which needed further investigation. The pipe has been excavated in specific areas and honourable members will be pleased to hear that the defects that were located during that exercise were external. They were external marks on the pipe and these small problems will be rectified quite easily.

I will explain for the Leader of the Opposition just how an intelligent pig works so that he will be able to recognise one the next time he sees one. The pig actually has the capability of measuring the wall thickness of the pipe. It can measure very small indentations, external bruises or corrosion which may be occurring inside the pipe. Next time he sees one, he will be able to recognise it. I guess he comes across them from time to time.

I have written to the member for Stuart giving him a full briefing and I notice that he has been fairly silent during these sittings. I would say that those people of Alice Springs who bought bomb shelters as a result of his telling everybody that the sky would fall in, can now emerge from them. The small number of defects that need repair will be attended to. I can assure the people of Alice Springs of the safety of the line, having had these exhaustive tests carried out. The survey contractor has been requested to re-evaluate the results in light of the information that is now available to him.

School Leavers in NTPS

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, earlier this week, I indicated that there was a public service document that revealed that there were 18 school leavers employed in the public service as at 31 March. Subsequently, the Chief Minister informed us that 246 had been employed in the period between 31 December and 31 March. How many of those 246 are still employed and how many of the 246 are employed in permanent positions in the public service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must humbly apologise but I do not keep in my mind the details of the employment history of all of the 15 000 people who work in the Northern Territory Public Service. I ask that the question be placed on notice and I will obtain an answer for the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Proposals for Dam in Batchelor Area

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, land transactions and proposed developments in the Batchelor to Adelaide River area and the various proposals for new dams have caused considerable concern to persons who have settled on small holdings in the region. In some cases, people have spent large sums of money on development of land which would be flooded if proposed dams were constructed. Can he inform me and affected landholders of the government's intention with regard to future water supplies for Darwin and whether any of the options affect the Batchelor Adelaide River area and, if so, when dam developments will take place?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I acknowledge the interest of the member for Victoria River because I understand that 1 of the sites that was considered for the development of a dam was near Batchelor. The other option is to develop what is known as the McMinns Lagoon bore field. Water supply is quite vital to our survival and, in Darwin, we have 2 options. One is to use the underground water that is available to us and the other is to dam water. Unfortunately, we do not have any mountains that would enable us to avoid the very expensive cost of having to pump water. Yesterday, the member for Koolpinyah mentioned some of the problems being experienced in the Darwin River Dam area as a result of that. No doubt, she would be interested in the McMinns Lagoon bore field because that is in her electorate as well.

There are a number of options available to the government and we will be examining those in the near future. I will make available to the member for Victoria River full details of those options. Indeed, I will make them available to the member for Koolpinyah too, just to show there are no hard feelings.

Uluru Board of Management

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Whom does the Northern Territory government intend nominating to the Uluru Board of Management?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the Assembly. If my memory serves me correctly, we have already sent our nomination to the federal minister, Mr Cohen. The Minister for Lands and Housing and Minister for Conservation, Mr Hanrahan, will be the nominee. The honourable minister was one of the nominees that we forwarded to the federal minister last year. Immediately before Christmas, he finally responded to us and indicated that we could nominate only 1 person. He would not allow the Northern Territory to have equal representation with the federal government. We nominated Mr Hanrahan and that has been confirmed. The honourable minister holds the relevant portfolios of conservation and tourism.

Review of Domestic Air Fares

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What was the outcome of the recent review into domestic air fares and what effect will this review have on Territory travellers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a couple of days ago, I received a copy of a press release issued by the so-called Independent Air Fares Committee on their triennial cost allocation review. The heading of that news release was: 'Better News for Shorter Distance Air Travellers'. Therefore, air travellers from the Northern Territory, Western Australia and other more remote areas will pay increased air fares. The purpose of the triennial review is to set the formula for passenger costs for the ensuing period. That is broken into 2 components: flag fall and mileage components. It is quite obvious from the summary of the news release that the flag fall component will be reduced and offset by increases in the mileage component.

Examples given by the IAFC included 1 for Darwin. Darwin to Sydney passengers will pay an increase of 1.2%. The Sydney to Canberra route has a cut of 5.6% for those federal politicians who will be travelling between Sydney and Canberra and Canberra and Melbourne. One would have to suggest that it might be more in the national interest that Canberra be isolated altogether. That might be the way to pay for some reduction in air fares for people in the more remote areas. We probably ought to consider building a moat around Canberra and cutting off the telephones. That would be a better approach than giving them cheaper air fares to trot backwards and forwards at the taxpayer's expense. I suppose it is fairly cynical of me to suggest that relatively lower air fares to the golden triangle in election years could only be an absolute coincidence.

While this increase is only 1.2%, it means that, as future air fare increases are implemented, as they inevitably will over the next 3 years, Territorians will be paying a greater share of those increases. Not only that, they will be paying for the reductions and relative decreases in other areas, particularly the Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide triangle. We all know

that internal air fares are a prohibitive factor in the proper development of tourism in the Northern Territory. We ought all to be concerned that we are witnessing another example of a Canberra-influenced, derogatory, retrograde step.

Mr Bell: Do you mean it is bad, Fred?

Mr FINCH: It is bad. It is bad for Territorians, although it is probably good for Canberra bureaucrats and politicians. It is another example of how people in remote areas, who are working towards the increased productivity of the nation, are trodden on again. I can only suggest that, the sooner we correct the imbalance of power in the nation which leads to this sort of determination, the better it will be for all of us.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
CAT Scan for Alice Springs Hospital

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, earlier in these sittings, the member for Sadadeen asked me a question about a CAT scanner being made available to Alice Springs Hospital. I can now advise him that negotiations have been in progress for some time with a private doctor. I am extremely hopeful, whilst I am not committed to the fact, that a CAT scanner will be available in the Alice Springs Hospital in about 10 weeks time.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Fruit-fly in Alice Springs

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, I have an answer to a question asked by the honourable member for Sadadeen in relation to fruit-fly in Alice Springs. Since 1980, a regular fruit-fly monitoring program has been maintained in Alice Springs. In December 1985, an outbreak of Territory fruit-fly occurred in the east side area of Alice Springs. Following this outbreak, the monitoring program was upgraded and, on entomological advice, it was decided not to conduct any eradication and control program until the effect of the 1986 winter was assessed. This was done in October 1986. Given an estimated cost of \$250 000 for eradication of the pest, and the absence of any commercial horticulture in Alice Springs township, it was decided not to carry out a government-sponsored eradication and control program. Instead, the public were advised by the press of the measures which could be undertaken to control the pests in individual fruit trees. Monitoring of fruit-fly in the Ti Tree-Pine Hill area was intensified at this stage and no fruit-fly have been identified in that area. Regular certificates of area freedom from fruit-fly are issued for the Ti Tree-Pine Hill area and negotiations are taking place to ensure access to markets in South Australia.

Further assessment of fruit-fly spread in Alice Springs will be made throughout the year and it is expected that a severe winter may eliminate the pest.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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

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25 June 1987

2. **University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-time students are enrolled at the University College of the Northern Territory?
2. How many part-time students are enrolled?
3. How many students who completed Year 12 at Northern Territory schools are:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents at the University College?
4. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Arts faculty?
5. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Science faculty?

2 June 1987

1. Prisons - Accommodation

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Is Lot 282 Kempe Street, Alice Springs, currently being used to house prisoners from Alice Springs Prison?
2. Does the Department of Community Services propose to publish its 'Rural Venues' as an alternative to existing prison programs; if so, what are the details?
3. Will Lot 282 Kempe Street, Alice Springs, be used permanently as a prison annex; if so -
 - (a) what will be the size of the building(s) to be used;
 - (b) how many prisoners are to be housed;
 - (c) what is the security classification of the prisoners to be housed;
 - (d) what facilities are to be provided in the prison; and
 - (e) how many prison officers will be employed to operate the prison?
4. Why was Mr Devine, the former Superintendent of the Alice Springs Prison transferred from the prison?
5. Does the government have any plans to use Gunn Point Prison Farm; if so, what are the details?

ANSWER

1. No.
2. Proposals for 'Rural Venues' as alternatives to existing prison programs in the Southern Region are currently under development. One live-in community work services program in conjunction with the Ghan Preservation Society is operational at present.
3. Lot 282 Kempe Street is proposed as a temporary annexe.
 - (a) Converted 2 bedroom domestic dwelling with extensive grounds and some outbuildings.
 - (b) Normally 4 'permanent' prisoners, but able to cater for additional numbers should there be a short-term need.
 - (c) Anticipated will house all classes of prisoners. Would be able to hold maximum security prisoner/s only on a temporary basis. Disruptive prisoners would be transferred to Darwin Prison.

- (d) Usual domestic facilities (kitchen, laundry, etc); outdoor recreation and garden area; security fencing; lighting; detectors; direct communication link with main prison.
 - (e) 1 x Senior Prison Officer, 8 x Prison Officers all transferred from within existing prison establishment.
4. Mr Devine's transfer has upgraded the work performed in areas such as prisoner classification, investigation and the provision of custodian advice. His new role in Alice Springs mirrors the structure in the Darwin Region.
 5. There are no plans to alter current operations at Gunn Point Prison Farm.

Transport Study Group

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his statement during the last sittings in answer to a question on his recent trip to Japan and the formation of the Japan Australia Transport Study group and to recent press articles dealing with that same matter. Could he advise on the status of what is known as the Japan Australia Transport Study Group and the involvement in that study group of the companies that he named in the last sittings?

ANSWER

I can well understand honourable members' confusion on this matter following the barrage of misleading and confusing information and allegations that the public has been subjected to in recent weeks. The fundamental points at issue are whether there is a study group and whether the companies I named are members of that study group. I am pleased to have the opportunity of confirming my advice to the Assembly at the last sittings regarding the setting up of a study group to further a proposal to construct the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line.

Let me make it quite clear to honourable members: a study group has been set up to examine the Darwin to Alice Springs railway. The organisations mentioned by me are involved in the study group. The first formal meeting of the study group, including representatives of those companies, together with representatives of a number of other companies that I shall not name, will be held at 10.30 am next Tuesday in Tokyo. As late as yesterday, I received written reconfirmation from Tokyo of the attendance of representatives of those organisations at the meeting.

One final point I would like to make concerns the involvement of TNT in the railway project. As I said earlier, TNT has expressed an interest in being involved in the operational side of the railway and I have written confirmation that this is still the company's position. As was our experience with the Alice Springs to Darwin pipeline, I would expect that companies will move in and out of the study group as the project evolves. As I said, I do not intend to release names of any more study group participants. The lesson I have learnt from this saga is the wisdom of not providing names or details at an early stage. I do not intend to make that mistake again. Mr Speaker, I intend to put my best endeavours into seeing this dream become a reality.

Transport Study Group

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he provide this Assembly with written evidence that indicates that the Long Term Credit Bank of Japan and the Japanese Railway Freight Company have made a commitment to this government that they are prepared to be involved in the Japan Australia Study Group, as distinct from being prepared to be involved in a meeting in Tokyo next Tuesday 9 June to discuss certain railway issues?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that question is almost impossible to answer. It is like asking if you have stopped beating your wife. The meeting next Tuesday is a meeting of the study group. I have here written reconfirmation from those companies.

Mr Smith: Table them.

Mr Hanrahan: Not on your past efforts.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, those companies and a number of others ...

Mr Smith: Are you going to table them?

Mr HATTON: ... will be involved in that study group and I am happy to show the evidence to the Leader of the Opposition. I am not going to table it, but I am happy to show it to him. It reconfirms that those companies are involved in this study program and they will be at the meeting next week. I repeat that I have never given, nor will I ever give, a cast-iron guarantee that these companies will be involved in this particular project for ever and a day. At this stage, they are involved. They have been involved and I faithfully reported the facts at the last sittings of this Assembly.

Free Bus Travel

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In view of the government's stated financial constraints, why does the government, through the Department of Transport and Works, allow and in fact encourage free bus travel on private buses contracted to operate on government bus routes, in contrast to the user-pays system of payment on government buses?

ANSWER

This is a question that needs answering and I am glad the honourable member gave prior notice that she would ask it. The government does not encourage free travel on private buses operating under contract. Free travel is provided to school children if they live more than 5 km from the nearest appropriate school, if they must attend a particular school at the government's direction and it is located more than 1.6 km from their place of residence - an example would be a senior high school, if they are disabled, if they need to attend intensive migrant education programs or a special unit such as the deaf unit or if there are special circumstances approved by the director. Those are the circumstances in the Darwin rural area where members of the public do not tender a fare on boarding the bus.

Bus services from Noonamah and Humpty Doo to Palmerston primarily service the needs of school children. However, since those services are operating at a convenient time for members of the public and, to avoid duplication of service, it was decided last year to allow members of the public to travel on those buses. Since the buses are private, the driver is not permitted under the Transport Workers Passenger Vehicle Award of 1984, as defined by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, to collect a fare. Only members of the Transport Workers Union working in the public transport organisation - in this case, the Darwin Bus Service - are permitted to collect fares. To overcome this problem, the government has established period ticket outlets throughout the Darwin rural area and members of the public are required to present a current period ticket to the driver upon boarding the bus.

Beaufort Hotel Debts

Mr HARRIS to TREASURER

The minister would be aware of concerns being expressed about the outstanding debts of the Beaufort Hotel and, in particular, outstanding debts connected to electricity charges. What is the current situation regarding the outstanding debts to the Northern Territory government and what security has the Northern Territory taxpayer in relation to those debts?

ANSWER

I thank the member for Port Darwin for his question. Honourable members would be aware that I said during the last sittings of this Assembly that I would have further information within 30 days on the eventual sale of the Beaufort Hotel.

I can advise honourable members that I have been visited by a number of people during the last 30 days, including Mr Bruce Cohen from the Westpac Banking Corporation. Indeed, I was on the phone to him yesterday. Many overseas investors have also visited the Northern Territory in the last 30 days and, having included on their itinerary a review of the Burgundy Royale asset in Darwin, have subsequently gone away to put together proposals for the eventual takeover of the facility. In addition, Mr Brian Snodgrass, Chief Manager of the Loans Management Division of Westpac Banking Corporation, has been in Hong Kong negotiating with potential investors concerning the eventual sale of the Beaufort. Thus, there is action on both fronts. Westpac is certainly keen to have the matter resolved in terms of the commitment which is owed to it and, of course, this has been complicated by the liens which are now placed on the building by Jennings Industries.

I can assure honourable members that the Northern Territory government is protected in relation to the sale of the facility. As we have said, we will not be reconnecting services until the debt to the Northern Territory is paid in full. That includes the figures for outstanding amounts which I mentioned to honourable members in the last sittings: the electricity account of just over \$1m, a water and sewerage account of some \$76 000, and payroll tax of \$250 000.

There is one other complication, however, that has crept into the issue. It concerns the amount of group tax which is owed to the Commonwealth on this particular facility. I understand that quite a large sum of money is involved although the Commissioner for Taxation would not release exact details of the amount. The Northern Territory government has said it will not precipitate the closure of the hotel and throw 250 people out of work. We are looking for a walk-in, walk-out deal with the potential investors we are currently negotiating with. I can advise honourable members that negotiations are still continuing at a very senior level within the Westpac Banking Corporation and also with the directors of Burgundy Royale themselves.

The Northern Territory government, as I have said, is protected. It will not be reconnecting services until it receives full settlement. Honourable members would be aware that taxes and charges are paid out first in the case of any liquidated damages proceedings.

Exercise Sure Bet

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

A few weeks ago there was an article in the NT News concerning 2 journalists who impersonated policemen during exercise Sure Bet. I would like the Chief Minister to advise what action is to be taken in respect of those 2 journalists?

ANSWER

I am advised that a prosecution against the 2 journalists is unlikely to succeed as they claim there was implied approval for their actions by way of challenge. The 2 persons formally approached a policeman to borrow uniforms but this request was denied. At this stage, it has not been ascertained how the uniforms were obtained. I suggest it probably will never be ascertained. The question of trespass is a matter for the Commonwealth Attorney-General to consider and not a matter for the Northern Territory government.

Frankly, I found the actions of the 2 journalists rather juvenile. While they claim to have penetrated the cordoned area of the airport, the journalists attended a briefing session where the exact extent of the perimeter guard was outlined. This was on the day prior to their excursion. It is interesting that a technician involved in the exercise reported the presence of those 2 people. He considered that they were either acting irresponsibly or were intoxicated. It is a pity that the 2 journalists did not attempt their stunt on the following night, when the SAS regiment was in place, as they might have become involved to an extent that would have made them rather uncomfortable, to say the least.

I might add that, on the particular night when the breach occurred in the cordon, 5 other people were apprehended attempting breaches at locations where the cordon was in place. They were people who were deliberately sent to test the cordon where it was in place for the purpose of the exercise. It is a fact that that area was not completely cordoned off, as it would have been in the event of a genuine terrorist incident. This was simply an economic decision in terms of the allocation of resources. A cordon was in place and, for the purpose of the exercise, a cordon was presumed to be in place in other areas.

Mr Speaker, I can also confirm that, on the final night of the exercise, when I was personally observing activities in 'Sure Bet' there was at least one attempted incursion. The person was apprehended and I can assure members that I for one would not want to try to tangle with either the Northern Territory Police Task Force or the Special Air Services of the army by trying to break through cordons or carrying out other actions in those situations. I do not think anyone would find himself in a very comfortable position, particularly in a real situation.

I was debriefed by the person who spoke with the journalists and told that the impression received was that they were a couple of very irresponsible Northern Territory police officers. In fact, their behaviour had caused that person to form a low opinion of the Northern Territory police because of the way the 2 men were openly lampooning the exercise whilst approaching people. As a consequence, the person complained about the performance of the Northern Territory police. When they turned out to be journalists, the police did not have to wear that criticism.

I must say quite categorically that the Northern Territory Police Force performed quite magnificently during that exercise. From my personal observation - and I am sure the member for Ludmilla, who was actively involved, will confirm this - our police and our emergency services personnel demonstrated a high level of competence in dealing with what could be a very difficult and delicate situation. It certainly improved my confidence in our ability to handle an incident of that nature. Certainly, there were problems with the exercise and lessons have been learnt. That will only improve our ability to deal with a genuine situation if it ever arises in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I repeat my commendations to all those involved: the army, the Commonwealth people, the Northern Territory Police Force, the task force and the emergency services personnel. All performed admirably and we have learnt a great deal from the exercise. It will improve our ability to deal with this disease of the late 20th century.

Tabling of Documents

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I draw his attention to standing order 255 which reads:

A document relating to public affairs quoted from by a minister, unless stated by the minister to be of a confidential nature, or such as should more properly be obtained by address, shall, if required by any member, be laid on the Table.

Mr Speaker, as I require the documents that he referred to in a previous answer this morning to be tabled, will he table those documents?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the simple answer to that question is that I did not quote from them. I referred to them but did not quote from them. The standing order therefore does not apply.

Pastoral Industry Study

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

When will the GRM study of the Northern Territory pastoral industry be made public?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is indeed considerable interest in the pastoral industry study which has been conducted over the past 12 months in the Northern Territory. It is a very comprehensive study. At present, we are in the process of organising sufficient copies for the document to be tabled in this Assembly and for items to be made available to the many other interested parties. I am seeking Cabinet approval to table the report and I expect that that will be done next week.

Pastoral Industry Study

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Is he able to advise which public interest groups were allowed the opportunity to have input into draft stages of the GRM study?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot answer the honourable member's question specifically. I have read a very late draft of the pastoral industry study and I understand that there are only a few words changed in the final copy, which is now available for Cabinet consideration. I am sorry that I am unable to name the groups approached by the consultants who undertook the study.

Privatisation of Darwin Airport

Mr REED to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I ask him this question in his capacity as Acting Minister for Transport and Works. Could he advise the House on the possible privatisation of Darwin Airport?

ANSWER

When I first heard of the proposal to sell off Australia's international airports, I thought that possibly something might be happening with Darwin Airport at long last. However, as events unfold, it seems that, once again, the Commonwealth is about to let us down in respect of the airport because no one seems to know what is happening with the sale of international airports anywhere, let alone in Darwin. The Federal Airports Corporation, which is supposed to take over the running of our international terminals in less than 4 weeks' time and turn them into profitable concerns, has no indication of what assets there are, how much debt it will have to service or what limitations will be placed on its borrowings. That hardly augurs well for the possibility of Darwin Airport being sold off to private interests and, hopefully, being rebuilt. We are all aware of the inadequate facilities at Darwin Airport and the Territory's vital need, in relation to our tourist promotion effort, for that terminal to be rebuilt to service both domestic and tourist requirements. Until that terminal is developed, we have to put up with second-rate facilities which prevent international air carriers looking at Darwin as a possible entry point for tourists.

A number of private businesses have indicated their ability and enthusiasm to develop a terminal at the Darwin Airport in a private capacity. However, the federal government's attitude has meant that, under no circumstances, will anyone be allowed to do anything which might improve facilities there. We have already had the debacle of \$19.2m being spent on developing a new terminal at a site on the northern side of the airstrip. We saw the Prime Minister hop in a brand new bulldozer hired specifically for the occasion. What hypocrisy! He dropped the blade down and said that he had turned the first sod. After an expenditure of \$19.2m in development fees, engineering studies and works, the project was abandoned. What a waste! It is typical of the federal Labor government and the present Prime Minister whose attitude towards the Territory is one that all Territorians are well aware of. It is a great spot for a few pictures, driving a bulldozer and sightseeing at Kakadu. That is terrific, but when it comes to anything which might allow Territorians to develop our facilities and our economic base, it must not be allowed to

occur. That is what has happened with the airport. I bet that, at the end of the day, there will be a number of international terminals in private hands throughout the country while Darwin will still be stuck with a World War 2 shed which is totally inadequate now and was totally inadequate 10 years ago. That is typical.

Mr Ede: It is a defence strip.

Mr MANZIE: It is a defence strip! Mr Speaker, there we have a great example of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's attitude towards any possibility that we might be able to do something for ourselves in the Territory. Don't let development happen! The excuse is that it is a defence strip. Of course it is a defence strip. People have been living with it for years. A number of defence strips in this country have airport terminal facilities that are adequate for the use that is required of them. Townsville is a good example, and I think even in the ACT ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister was asked a very specific question. He has answered that specific question. He is now attempting to breach standing order 112(1) which quite clearly and distinctly says that questions cannot be debated. The minister has far exceeded his brief. He has far exceeded the bounds of the question that was asked of him and now he is attempting to debate a much wider issue.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would ask the minister to keep his answer as brief as possible.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, obviously there is no point of order because we are talking about development of the Darwin air terminal. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to prevent me from enlarging on the question, he will instruct his deputy to make no comments and to try not to embarrass the Labor Party any further. Members of the opposition try to stick up for their federal colleagues. The fact is that they do not want to see any development and they get touchy and twitchy when it is suggested. It is a defence airport. It already has a terminal on it which is inadequate, and \$19m has been spent on an abandoned project to build a new one. If we could privatise it, we would possibly be able to do something for the benefit of the Territory and for the benefit of young people who will need jobs in the future.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr Roger Steele and Mr Jack Doolan

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of Mr Roger Steele, the former Speaker of this Assembly, and Mr Jack Doolan, the former member for Victoria River. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome them both.

Administration of Mines Safety Control Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the Mines Safety Control Act be administered by the Work Health Authority or the Department of Mines and Energy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand the honourable member's particular concerns on that issue. I might say that the mining industry has raised the same concern

with us. It revolves around the valid desire of the mining industry to develop what it calls a one-stop-shop approach in dealings with government. Traditionally, that has been the approach with the Department of Mines and Energy concerning matters associated with industrial and mine safety. It has worked successfully over the years.

I might digress with respect to this matter because it is a fact that the mine in the member's own community of Nhulunbuy is working under a very successful program of self-regulation, and has been doing so for quite a number of years. It has worked very successfully. I know the honourable member would recognise that, particularly given the diligence of the trade union movement in the town which I can speak of from personal experience. There are a number of mines where self-regulation can work quite successfully to provide an economical and effective industrial safety management regime.

However, that is not necessarily the case throughout the Territory. The intent is to try to develop umbrella legislation in all matters associated with industrial safety, industrial health and rehabilitation, through the Work Health Authority. The administrative arrangements were made in such a way that all those areas would come under the Work Health Authority. Because of the concerns that have been raised by the mining industry, discussions are continuing between the Department of Mines and Energy and the Work Health Authority on how the administrative arrangements can work to meet both of those objectives. The matter is not resolved at this stage. Because of the fundamentally large changes that have occurred in the administrative arrangements, there is a need to tidy up areas of detail to achieve the most practical and efficient working arrangements.

I can assure honourable members that the overall aim is to ensure that the objectives of the Work Health Act, covering proper and effective industrial safety, compensation and rehabilitation programs, will be attained right across the spectrum in the Northern Territory. We want to do that in a manner which will not create unreasonable administrative difficulties and red tape for industry, workers or the community generally. Questions of day-to-day management in terms of our objectives are being addressed by the Department of Mines and Energy and the Work Health Authority. We are talking with the industry and the community in respect of that process.

Televising of National Sporting Events

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has the government undertaken appropriate measures to persuade the ABC to televise national sporting events, such as the Melbourne Cup, the VFL Grand Final, the Adelaide Grand Prix and the finals of the one-day cricket competition, to areas of the Territory which do not receive live commercial television?

ANSWER

I would have thought, as I guess many Australians do, that no lobbying would be necessary for Territorians to receive this sort of service from a national television station which receives \$400m of taxpayers' money to operate without advertisements. However, this matter has long been a sore point in the Northern Territory. The issue has been raised in this Assembly many times and I have taken it upon myself to see if the Territory can finally receive a clear resolution from the ABC regarding the broadcasting of national sporting events to which it does not hold primary rights.

The ABC has recently adopted a firm policy in relation to picking up the secondary television rights for such events. This policy states that 'in areas where no regional commercial services exists, the ABC will be willing to transmit what it regards as a suitable coverage at what it regards as a suitable time'. The ABC policy further states, with reference to broadcasting via the AUSSAT HACBSS transponders: 'Providing coverage of such events, therefore, to the remote areas, inevitably means these coverages must also be available from the ABC television regional transmitters in these states. Thus, there will be conflict with any regional commercial television stations who may hold rights to the same event'. That statement needs some interpretation. In plain English, it means that, if the ABC coverage in remote areas clashes with existing commercial coverage, there will be little possibility of the ABC taking up the secondary broadcasting rights. The ABC policy has ignored the Territory's special circumstances. Because of that, in April this year, I wrote to Mr David Hill, General Manager of the ABC, to explain these circumstances to him. I have asked him to treat the Territory's situation as a special case for the transmission of major sporting events to remote areas based on certain considerations. I use the term 'remote areas' fairly loosely because we are talking about such population centres as the capital of Centralia.

Mr Bell: Hear, hear! I've never been brave enough to say that.

Mr PERRON: These special circumstances are that the Northern Territory has only one commercial television station capable of providing live transmission and that station broadcasts to Darwin only and, secondly, according to current information, the remote television service will not be able to provide services to remote areas for perhaps 18 months. I pointed out to Mr Hill, in the light of these special circumstances, that it is easy in technical terms for the ABC to isolate Darwin for the live broadcasts of major sporting events. This has been done successfully in the past for events such as the Grand Prix, the VFL Grand Final and the Melbourne Cup. With Darwin isolated from the transmission, there is no interference with the commercial rights of the primary carrier. The ABC can then simply broadcast some prerecorded programs in Darwin for the duration of the particular event.

In most cases, the sporting events to be telecast are shown on a Saturday or Sunday and thus do not interfere with regular serialised programs or new and current affairs programs. I assured Mr Hill that the vast majority of Territorians in remote areas prefer to watch one-off national sporting events. I pointed out to him that the same issues arise every year in relation to the Grand Prix, the VFL, the Melbourne Cup and one-day cricket. The same arguments, telexes and letters ensue, with the result that there is a last minute decision by the ABC to show the first 3 events live to remote areas. The issue of one-day cricket has not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of Territory cricket fans.

Finally, I stress that it is my wish to alleviate the unnecessary middle stages of the debate and this can be achieved by the ABC making an early commitment to the broadcasting of the VFL Grand Final, the Grand Prix, the Melbourne Cup and one-day cricket finals. Other major sporting events might well occur and discussion could follow at the appropriate time. The whole issue of sports broadcasts to remote areas could be reviewed when a central zone commercial television service becomes operational across the Northern Territory. The government is hoping that the new management style of Mr Hill will enable the ABC to be more flexible and sympathetic to the needs of Territory sporting fans and that, later in 1987, we will see a departure from the ad hoc decision-making that has been noticeable in respect of this issue

in the past. I will be meeting with Mr Hill on his visit to the Northern Territory next week and will take these matters up firmly with him with a view to trying to obtain some commitment to Territorians.

Broadcast of Question Time

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the Chief Minister give the people of Alice Springs an assurance that there will be continued broadcasting of Legislative Assembly question time through the FM radio station there?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this really is a matter for you. I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has raised it. I am quite proud to advise that I took the initiative that there would be an opportunity for Legislative Assembly question time to be broadcast in Alice Springs. The objective was that the FM station would seek sponsorship in Alice Springs to continue to broadcast. It had not achieved that at the beginning of this year and I extended assistance to the FM radio station until the end of this financial year. It is the earnest desire of this government that the people of Alice Springs continue to have the opportunity to hear question time.

We find it advantageous to have question time broadcast as widely as possible so that people can hear directly the answers made by ministers and do not get half-baked stories. We are quite pleased that those broadcasts are occurring. I would certainly hope the broadcasts continue but I must say it is our desire that 8 CCC FM obtains sponsorships in Alice Springs, as it does for other broadcasts.

Mr Smith: Where do you put the sponsorship ads?

Mr HATTON: The best place to put a sponsorship ad would be during any question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, because they are so illogical and inconsequential that no one would miss them.

Mr Speaker, that is a matter that can be dealt with quite satisfactorily and I would certainly hope that sponsors can be obtained. I can assure honourable members that we will be seeking the continuation of those broadcasts in Alice Springs. It is an initiative that my government has promoted and will attempt to continue to promote.

Sadadeen Secondary College Lockers

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware that the Sadadeen Secondary College is still without the long-promised lockers? Will he undertake to find out where those lockers are and when the students will get them? Has the minister spoken to the Treasurer who promised in the last sittings to lick the barrel and find a few dollars for lockers for Year 11 students at the Sadadeen Secondary College?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am quite surprised and even shocked that the lockers have yet to arrive at Sadadeen Secondary College. At the last sittings, I informed the honourable member that the lockers were on their way and that I had been

advised that they would be installed in the very near future. Obviously, I will make inquiries to see where the lockers are.

In regard to the second part of the honourable member's question, unfortunately I have not been able to catch the Treasurer in a receptive mode. He has had a number of quite intricate financial matters pressing upon him and I considered it would have been inappropriate for me to make that specific request of him at this time. However, I assure the honourable member that I consider the provision of lockers for the students a matter of some seriousness and I will be endeavouring to follow up the matter to his satisfaction and to the satisfaction of students and parents.

Alleged Use of Commonwealth Car by Treasurer

Mr REED to TREASURER

I ask if he will indicate whether there is any truth in the story touted in the media recently that he requested the use of a Commonwealth car to take him from Canberra to Sydney after the recent Premiers Conference?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Honourable members may have watched the ABC television news program last evening and seen the Leader of the Opposition in full flight expounding on my virtues, such as arrogance etc. I have said many times in this Assembly that people who would follow the Leader of the Opposition would do so out of curiosity, simply to see where they would end up. If they do not make a decision soon, they will realise exactly where they will end up: in the political wilderness forever, under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition.

He missed some very vital points in his story and the ABC television network did not bother to give me the chance of replying or adding anything to the story. It had a story and it did not intend to mess it up with any facts. Unlike its colleagues in the radio section of the ABC, who did check with my office, the television people did not bother to check. There are 2 very crucial points that the Leader of the Opposition did not mention, and one was that there was a strike by refuellers on the evening of 25 May. Like so many of their union brethren across the country, they realised the opportunity presented by having all the Premiers in Canberra. They decided not to refuel the planes.

In addition, there was a firemen's strike predicted for the next day. This was brought to my attention by a Commonwealth driver who was driving myself and the Under Treasurer back to our hotel. He suggested that, if we wanted to travel to Sydney in order to return to Darwin - as indeed we did; we did not want to be sitting in Canberra twiddling our thumbs all day - he would obtain clearance to drive us there if we so wished. I said that we would check with the airline companies on the status of the strike and we would get back to him. We rang Australian Airlines and Ansett. They assured us that there had been trouble during the day but they were expecting all flights to be running as normal the next day. The media people may like to check with Col Krohn of 8DN Talkback who was with me and could verify that we made those telephone calls and that the matter was of real concern to us at the time.

When airline companies confirmed that the aircraft would be flying the next day, the Commonwealth driver was informed and that was the end of the story. Those are a couple of little facts and details that the Leader of the

Opposition did not bother to mention because he would not know. He expounds on my arrogance from time to time and yet he stands in front of television cameras and gives Northern Territorians yet another example of his complete ignorance. He does not bother to get the facts. The sole comment on the Premiers Conference from this apologist for the federal Labor government was the allegation that I demanded a Commonwealth car. He said nothing about the cuts and the financial situation that we are in. In 1983, we were told that the Labor Party in the Territory could talk to the Labor Party in Canberra and that is why we should all vote Labor.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister has gone far beyond the question that was asked of him. It was a very simple question which he has answered fully.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the minister to keep his reply as brief and as relevant as possible.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I think that I have made my point. In doing so, I have expounded on the ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition and his wish to stand in front of television cameras whenever he can and fabricate lies and misinformation towards ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will withdraw those remarks.

Mr COULTER: I withdraw those remarks, Mr Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition has stood in front of television cameras from time to time and fabricated stories and, in fact, made suggestions that have been proven to be untrue. Mr Speaker, I was able to leave Canberra by aircraft the following day and that was the end of the story.

Alice Springs Traffic Lights

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Have recent proposals to put more traffic lights in Alice Springs been based on any studies of present and projected traffic flows in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, they have. I believe that the question should be properly directed to the Minister for Transport and Works, who initiated the inquiry to which the Department of Lands and Housing contributed.

Very detailed studies are undertaken regarding traffic flows. I think that it has been found in practice that traffic flows are better without the control of lights until they reach a certain level of density. At that level, the statistics show that accident rates start to increase. There are particular problems relating to the time that vehicles take to navigate intersections. These studies are carried out in great detail. A company that springs to mind as having undertaken such studies in the past is Pak-Poy Lange Pty Ltd.

The purpose of studies concerning traffic lights at intersections is to determine whether such installations are actually needed. They are very expensive facilities for government or local councils - hence the need for intensive studies investigating road designs and the limitations of changing

road and intersection designs. The cheapest and most effective option regarding the control of traffic is ultimately adopted.

I can assure the honourable member that it would be ridiculous to suggest that lights are fitted at the whim of particular individuals. I can assure him that that is not the case. From my previous experience as Minister for Transport and Works, I can remember the detailed investigation and consultancies which were undertaken regarding the establishment of traffic lights.

Permit Plan Covering Exploitation of Native Fauna

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Have officers of the Conservation Commission formulated a long-awaited plan - it has been about 7 years in the making, I believe - concerning a sensible permit program for the catching, keeping, breeding and sale of protected and other native fauna of the Northern Territory, and has that plan been presented to him?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge, officers of the Conservation Commission are working on a submission to me. The government's responsibility in the area of protection of flora and fauna has been raised in several pieces of correspondence in recent times. I am not too sure of the status of any further report to government, as such, but I would be happy to take up the issue forthwith. If the member for Koolpinyah could be a little more specific about her concerns, I would find it much easier to address the matter.

Protection for Police Officers from Hepatitis B

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

He may be aware that police force strike action was threatened in South Australia last week over the handling of prisoners suffering from hepatitis B, and that that situation was eventually resolved when fairly expensive injections were given to the police officers involved. Are Territory police officers, who deal very frequently with members of the public and prisoners who suffer with hepatitis B, being given injections to prevent their catching that disease?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must say this is the first time an issue of this nature has been raised with me. I am aware of the hepatitis B issue. I am advised that hepatitis B vaccines are available but this is not an issue that has been brought to my attention directly as minister with responsibility for the police. I will check with the Minister for Health and Community Services and will advise in due course.

Cole Report on Channel Island Power Station

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

When does he intend to table the report into the Channel Island Power Station and its operations, the so-called Cole Report?

ANSWER

I intend to table the report during the course of these sittings. The report is presently before me and I have made copies available to a number of people, including all persons named in it. I have given those people the opportunity to answer criticisms or questions raised in the report. I think it is only fair for me to receive their comments before the tabling of the report. Equipment manufacturers have also received copies of the report. Those copies are now being examined very closely by the people concerned and, as soon as I have them back, I will table the report. I can assure honourable members that I have received various comments from the people I have mentioned and that I will table the report during the course of these sittings.

Frances Bay Mooring Facility

Mr PALMER to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Could the Attorney-General, in his capacity as Acting Minister for Transport and Works, advise the House on the outlook for the future use of the Frances Bay mooring facility?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is certainly a most timely and relevant question. I am very pleased to advise the House that the number of bookings that have been received for the use of the facility has totally vindicated the government's decision to construct it.

Mr Smith: You should finish it and then sell it.

Mr MANZIE: I hear a little bit of a murmur from the Leader of the Opposition. He cannot stand to see a successful development taking place in the Territory, especially when his party president stood up on television and said what a disaster it all was and what a waste of money. The opposition has no inkling of what is required to manage the Territory, let alone to accelerate the economy to create employment.

Mr Speaker, everyone saw what happened when there was a danger of Cyclone Kay coming across to Darwin. The basin was full. Obviously, the whole idea of accelerating the construction of the basin was to provide the protection that it did provide when it was needed. It is also important to know that bookings for use of the basin are currently running at 109%. In other words, we are turning boats away. We have more people who want to book berths than we have berths available. We did not build it big enough. We have 93 applications for 85 berths. Of those, 75 are fishing vessels, 10 are commercial and the remainder are private yachts. Even more importantly, 41 of the 85 berths - nearly half - have been booked on an annual ongoing basis. I think it also should be borne in mind that the basin was constructed primarily with the fishing industry in mind.

Mr Smith: You should sell it.

Mr MANZIE: I am glad to see that the Leader of the Opposition is starting to get the concept of privatisation. He seems to have embraced it with all sorts of enthusiasm, but he must learn to temper his enthusiasm with a little bit of common sense. It is good to see that he has realised some of the benefits that can be obtained if we privatise certain functions of government. We have a duty to guide the Leader of the Opposition in the manner of carrying out privatisation so it is of benefit to all Territorians and contributes to our aim of creating employment for our young people.

The government knows that the mooring basin is an important step in making Darwin the centre of the north Australian fishing industry and, given the success of the Frances Bay mooring basin to date, it is definitely clear that we are moving in the right direction to achieve that goal.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Protection for Police Officers from Hepatitis B

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, may I take this opportunity to provide a response to the member for Sadadeen's question concerning hepatitis B vaccinations for the police force. I am advised that hepatitis B vaccination shots are available to all members of the Northern Territory Public Service, including the police, on request and at no cost to those people. My advice is that it costs our government \$126 per shot for those vaccinations, but they are available on request to members of the public service who may find themselves in an exposed situation. Of course, that does include the police force.

Trade with Indonesia

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Following the recent participation by Nortrade in the Indobuild trade exhibition in Jakarta, could he advise the Assembly of the success or otherwise of our delegation and any prospects identified for developing future trading relationships with Indonesia?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government, through its trade and marketing division Nortrade, participated in an exhibition called Indobuild 87. Our participation in Indobuild, which was held in Jakarta from 12 to 16 May, was the first major trade exhibition undertaken in Indonesia by the Northern Territory. 10 companies were represented and early results are already in evidence.

I am sure the companies which participated in such a significant event would not mind me naming them. They were: Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd, Peter Morgan Refrigeration of Alice Springs, Woods Bagot Architects, V & R Carusi, Darwin Plant Wholesalers, Diamond & Watts, Island Constructions, Perkins Shipping, Bunnings, and Northbrick Industries. As a result of the trip to Indobuild, 2 companies - Hungerford Refrigeration, the first manufacturing company in the Trade Development Zone, and Peter Morgan Refrigeration of Alice Springs - are negotiating agency arrangements right now with excellent sale prospects.

The Northern Territory delegation was very well received by the Indonesians and it is possible that reciprocal visits to the Northern Territory will be made by some of the business contacts made. The Indonesian State Minister for Public Housing, Dr Cosmas Batubara, visited the Northern Territory's stand during the exhibition and later had private talks with the delegate leader.

During the visit to Jakarta, the Trade and Marketing Division carried out a preliminary market survey to identify other trading opportunities. Indonesia's rapidly developing mining industry offers companies involved in the industry, especially those with a base in the Northern Territory, an opportunity for the supply and maintenance of mining equipment, parts, trucks and the like. Other opportunities have been identified in the supply of low-cost housing; foodstuffs including groceries, vegetables, meat and fish; and communications technology and equipment. Honourable members will find it interesting that sliced bread is currently being flown from Melbourne to Jakarta. One would think that, if Darwin could not get in on such an act, there would have to be something wrong. I do not know how big the market is for sliced bread in Jakarta, particularly Melbourne sliced bread, but perhaps we could break in and get a piece of the action.

It is timely that the Northern Territory delegation visited Indonesia, as the Indonesian government is implementing some fundamental changes to its economy in order to reduce reliance on oil and gas as its principal revenue earners. Development programs which are being given high priority include agriculture and irrigation, mining and energy, communications, tourism and education. Recent changes by the Indonesian government include the 25 October reduction of tariffs on 150 items and the abolition of import monopolies for 165 products. Non-tariff barriers to imports were eliminated on more than 100 items and quota restrictions were removed on 140 categories of textiles

and steel products. Other reforms included a devaluation of the currency in September last year. The Department of Industries and Development is now developing strategies with Northern Territory companies to follow up on the information gathered during the mission to Indonesia. One could only describe it as a success and a sign of things to come in the future.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I ask the minister this question in his capacity as minister responsible for the Territory Insurance Office. It is in 4 parts. Is the minister aware that notice has been served under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act on Hungerford Refrigeration by Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd, for the discharge of a debt awarded against Hungerford by a district court on 26 November 1986? Secondly, is the minister further aware that, if this matter is not resolved promptly, Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd has instructed its solicitors to begin action to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration? Thirdly, what guarantees can the minister give, in the case of such an action, that the investment made by the Territory government in Hungerford Refrigeration is secure and will not be lost? Finally, will he give an assurance that the Northern Territory government will not provide more funds to bail out Hungerford Refrigeration?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is easy to see how one can develop a negative mentality. The Leader of the Opposition used the term 'to bail out'. To bail Hungerford out of what? It is very easy for a person to talk himself into a position of doom and gloom, as the Leader of the Opposition obviously does in the bathroom each morning as he is shaving and wondering whether to cut his throat or not. The issue of bailing Hungerford out simply does not exist, as I have said in this Assembly on many occasions. However, I will undertake to give the Leader of the Opposition detailed information during the course of these sittings in answer to his question.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Could he confirm that a firm called Hall Chadwick, a group of accountants in Queensland, has also lodged a notice under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask that that question be placed on notice.

Commonwealth Employment Program

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is the effect on the Northern Territory of the recent federal government announcement to discontinue the Commonwealth Employment Program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is an interesting one. The Commonwealth Employment Program has been operating in the Territory for 3 or 4 years, as in

other parts of Australia, and has been of great benefit to the whole of the Northern Territory. On 13 May, the federal Treasurer made a number of announcements in his mini-budget. One of these, the closure of the CEP program, will have a dramatic effect on the Northern Territory. That program has had more effect in the Northern Territory than many of the programs that the federal government has put in place.

The CEP program is to be abolished from 30 June 1987 but it will continue to fund all projects that have been approved to that date. It is anticipated that a number of CEP projects will continue into the 1987-88 financial year. The maximum duration of any project is 52 weeks and therefore it is obvious that anything that is approved before June 1987 will continue until June-July 1988. Of course, in that time, there will have to be a winding down. Currently, there are 7 Commonwealth employees employed in the CEP program in the Northern Territory and the joint secretariat also includes 2 Territory employees. The federal government is currently entering into discussions with the Northern Territory in relation to the winding down of those positions over that period and the level of funding that will be required to continue the program into 1988.

There would be little dissent from anybody in this Assembly with the view that the CEP program has had great benefits for the Northern Territory, particularly in Aboriginal communities but also in communities like Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine, where it has been used to employ people for varying terms to provide footpaths and other facilities. In a number of Aboriginal communities, it has kept a large number of people employed. It is rather disappointing to the Northern Territory to find that the program will be abolished. Its winding-down will involve the abolition of a number of positions that the federal government currently provides. Obviously, by the end of 1988, the CEP program will have ceased. I am hopeful that we can find other means of keeping people employed in remote communities. However, at this time, there is not a great deal of light at the end of the tunnel as far as a program to replace this one is concerned.

Resignation of Mr Roger Watters

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I refer to an item in 'Busranger' in last Sunday's Sunday Territorian headed 'Roger Resigns'. It relates to Roger Watters, the uranium adviser, and the honourable minister. Is the story true?

ANSWER

'Busranger', you say? I vaguely remember an item on the back page of the Sunday Territorian referring to Roger Watters' decision to leave the Northern Territory. Mr Watters has not advised me of any disagreement with myself. The last time I spoke to him was at the Department of Mines and Energy stand at Fred's Pass Show. I believe that Mr Watters' wife entered into employment in Queensland some time ago. Indeed, Mr Watters gave me his business card at Fred's Pass Show some 2 or 3 weeks before the item appeared in the press. I remember that the card had a logo depicting 2 crocodiles. He gave me notice that he intended to move back to Cairns. In fact, he recited a little bit of poetry about the beauty of the hills around Cairns and told me he wanted to return home. As far as I am concerned, Mr Watters has made a decision about his career and his commercial future. He now intends to open up a consultancy business in Queensland and I guess that he may wish to live with his wife as well. Those are all options that Mr Watters has carefully considered in deciding to relocate himself to Queensland.

DDT Levels in Northern Territory Meat

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Bearing in mind the high levels of DDT recently discovered in Australian meat exported to the United States, would the minister advise whether DDT has been found in Northern Territory meat?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, intolerable residues of DDT were recently detected in meat exported from Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia to United States markets. Although I understand that the amount of contamination was very small, this matter is extremely serious to the Australian industry. The levels detected varied from 6.7 parts per million to 103 parts per million. The allowable limit in both the United States and Australia is 5 parts per million. This discovery has the potential to place in jeopardy Australia's entire meat trade to the United States. Sales of Australian meat to the United States are already suffering and, if significant residues are found in future consignments of Australian meat, US officials are likely to totally ban further imports.

DDT is not legally banned from sale or use in the Northern Territory. It is listed in schedules 5 and 6 of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act as a substance which may be sold and used under prescribed conditions. When this matter came to its attention, the department checked around the Territory. It found one retail outlet that had a small amount of DDT in stock and that has now been taken out of circulation and is being held by the Department of Industries and Development. The Department of Health and Community Services is looking at the possibility of rescheduling DDT under the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act to effectively ban its use in the Northern Territory.

DDT was once used to control external parasites of plants and animals including cattle ticks, lice and buffalo flies. I am advised that investigations by the Department of Industries and Development have indicated that DDT has not been used on Northern Territory livestock for many years. These investigations have indicated that DDT has not been used to any significant degree, if at all, in the Northern Territory commercial plant industry.

To remove any doubt that DDT is not to be used, I intend that it be banned under section 41A of the Northern Territory Stock Diseases Act. This action has the support of the cattle industry. I will be attending a meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council in Canberra tomorrow where this matter will be discussed, in particular the reviewing of existing legislation, methods of tracing livestock to the property of origin and the programs for advising industry on the proper use of agricultural chemicals.

To answer the honourable member's question specifically, no residues have been detected in any Northern Territory meat.

Electricity Installations in Rural Communities

Mr EDE to TREASURER

When is the installation of electricity meters in rural communities expected to be completed? When will charging commence and what advice will he be giving to his department for procedures to handle billing, collection,

disconnections, reconnections and so on? Can he assure residents in rural communities that they will be charged the same rates as Territorians in urban centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in December 1984, as agent for the Local Government Division and the NT Treasury, NTEC assumed responsibility for the provision of electricity supplies on Aboriginal communities. As honourable members would be aware, before that time, consumers in these communities received electricity supplies free of charge.

I have given detailed accounts in this Assembly in relation to the cost of supplying electricity to Aboriginal communities. Honourable members will remember my suggestion that the cost of fuel alone is \$6.5m. This is just one of the costs of supplying electricity, free of charge, to Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory. The user-pays principle was very much in vogue when the government made its 1984 decision. The ramifications of that principle have been brought home to us even more strongly as a result of the recent Premiers Conference and the May economic statement of the federal Treasurer, Mr Keating.

In 1984, in applying the user-pays principle, this government set up a mechanism whereby it would take back, as a gesture of good faith and goodwill, \$1m of the cost of providing electricity services to Aboriginal communities. That \$1m goes toward the cost of fuel only and does not relate to any other costs involved in servicing the communities involved. I believe the member for Fannie Bay was the minister responsible for NTEC at the time the program to meter Aboriginal communities began, and that program has now almost reached completion. It cost about \$1m to establish metering facilities right throughout the Territory. For the first time, the Northern Territory government has a means of accurately measuring the amount of electricity that is consumed by various communities throughout the Northern Territory. That has given us an indication of what is needed to develop correct utilisation of electricity in Aboriginal communities.

We have now to look at the costs and the various facilities that burn up considerable amounts of electricity. That includes facilities such as stores, hospitals, police stations and schools. Those decisions are before me now as the minister responsible and we are negotiating agreements on how to charge for electricity utilisation within Aboriginal communities throughout the Territory. Those decisions have not been put to Cabinet at this stage.

I can assure the member for Stuart that the government is looking at raising revenue that has been forgone in the past because there was a free-electricity mentality in Aboriginal communities. I can assure him that that has now come to an end. We will no longer supply free electricity to those communities throughout the Territory. The cost of providing an electricity service will be met by the people utilising it. I will bring the manner of billing and collection to the attention of this Assembly after the it has been determined by Cabinet.

Electricity Installations in Rural Communities

Mr EDE to TREASURER

As I asked in my original question, can he give any assurance to residents that they will be charged at a rate no higher than is charged to Territorians in urban centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unlike the member for Stuart's federal colleagues, I do not have any intention of making those charges retrospective for the years when we supplied free electricity to those communities. He can rest assured of that, even though his federal counterparts charged the Territory recently for the return of money by means of what they called a 'negative special grant'. The federal government took \$14.4m from us.

I have no intention of trying to recoup those costs. The cost of providing electricity to those areas is the matter under consideration. It includes the cost of installing and maintaining generators and other infrastructure costs involved in the provision of electricity. A whole range of items has not yet been fully clarified in cost terms. The cost of getting diesel into those communities and the fluctuations in diesel prices are among the issues that are being identified at the moment and they will be taken into consideration when levels of rates are determined.

High-temperature Incinerator

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware of revitalised interest by the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian governments in the construction and operation of a national high-temperature incinerator in either New South Wales or Victoria, and does the Northern Territory government still harbour ambitions for such a project in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a timely question. Indeed, the federal government has renewed its interest. Of course, it was very supportive of the study the Northern Territory was carrying out for the establishment of such an incinerator. In fact, the Minister for Conservation contacted the federal minister. The federal government is aware that it has a problem. There is some 10 000 t of waste that needs to be disposed of. Recently, the progressive Labor governments of Victoria and New South Wales entered into an agreement with the federal government to become involved in research for the development of such a facility. They are currently trying to identify a suitable area of land down there - and one wonders exactly where that will be - for the development of such a facility. This problem is not going to go away. We cannot bury our heads in the sand. We are producing these chemicals at the rate of almost 1000 t a year.

Another progressive Labor state, Western Australia, announced recently in the latest edition of May 1987 ...

Mr Ede: They are all progressive.

Mr COULTER: I use the word 'progressive' to delineate the difference between the Labor Party in the Northern Territory and the Labor Party throughout the rest of Australia. That is the only reason that I used the word 'progressive'.

Mr Ede: I thought you compared them with yourselves.

Mr COULTER: The Western Australian government has identified an area some 460 km east of Perth. It is a ghost town called Koolyanobbing, and it was an old BHP ...

Mr Ede: If it wasn't, it soon will be.

Mr COULTER: It was probably the Labor Party headquarters in earlier days.

In fact it was a BHP smelting area. The member for Barkly would be interested in this. He was one of the early proponents for the development of such a facility which would put to good use mining infrastructure which was no longer being used. The BHP smelter at Koolyanobbing was set up to service the nearby iron ore mine which eventually closed down. Except for 2 caretakers, everybody left.

The Western Australian government intends to develop an incinerator at the Koolyanobbing smelter site. I think that is a good use of facilities that are available, and it is a pity that the Northern Territory proposal got so bogged down in political issues. There was a real need at stake, but people simply became hysterical and emotional about the subject and canned the project before it really got off the ground. However, it goes to show what can happen and what needs to happen, and that is the important thing.

We cannot just put our heads in the sand and leave this waste lying about. We have to do something with it, and it is interesting to see the southern states and the Western Australian government getting involved with the federal government on this particular proposal. I hope there is a lesson in it for us. We in the Northern Territory should not lose opportunities because of people who cannot see the forest for the trees.

Health and Community Services in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH

I ask the minister if he can assure the Assembly that there will be no reduction in health or community services in Nhulunbuy. If he cannot provide that assurance, can he at least inform the Assembly of the extent of cuts proposed by his department to services in the electorate of Nhulunbuy? The matter is causing considerable concern in my community.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is very interesting to note that the member for Nhulunbuy has once again woken up. We call him Rip Van Winkle. I wonder if he has asked his federal mates the same question. Nhulunbuy is part of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory has just had its budget slashed, even to the extent of having to pay back previous grants, yet the member for Nhulunbuy has the audacity to ask me whether I am going to consider cuts in the services of my department in the Nhulunbuy area. Suffice it to say that this Northern Territory government has the people of the Northern Territory at heart, and only the people of the Northern Territory at heart. The CLP is the only party that considers the needs of the people of the Northern Territory in a sensible and rational way, no matter what the Canberra headquarters of the Territory ALP opposition tries to do to us. We have to address very serious financial implications over the next few weeks and come down with a budget that will work for the next 12 months in the Northern Territory, in the best interests of all Northern Territorians.

I now have responsibility for a department that employs something like a third of the Northern Territory Public Service and a budget that represents a significant percentage of the total Northern Territory budget. Of course I will be looking in every nook and cranny of my responsibilities to ensure that

the burden is shared throughout the Northern Territory, even by the people of Nhulunbuy. I hope that the member for Nhulunbuy has a supplementary question to the one he has just asked me, and that he directs that to the federal Treasurer.

Implementation of Australian Traineeship Scheme

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

A number of employees in the Alice Springs area and, no doubt, the Top End, have expressed concern about the implementation of the Australian Traineeship Scheme. Will the minister advise on current developments in the implementation of this scheme in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Australian Traineeship Scheme is, of course, an opportunity for young Territorians and all Australian young people to receive formal off-the-job and on-the-job training. These things are naturally very important to us in the Northern Territory. This is a growing area of Australia without many facilities for training and providing skilled labour for the work force. The Australian Traineeship Scheme has made an important contribution in that area. As elsewhere in Australia, the initial commencement of the traineeship scheme in the Territory was impeded by difficulties in gaining agreement from the unions on such issues as rates of pay for trainees and whether or not the number of trainees would be in addition to the establishment work force of an organisation in which trainees were to be employed. The problem with the issue of compulsory union membership of trainees applied mainly in relation to the public service. It was ridiculous to put those sorts of obstacles in the way of employing trainees, but I am pleased to advise that, by and large, those problems have been overcome and the unions have relaxed their demands.

The most recent developments have been the commencement of another traineeship in the hospitality industry within the Beaufort Hotel in Darwin, and a group traineeship scheme coordinated by the Master Builders Association for some 14 trainees in the building industry. The building industry is one where traineeships have a great deal of relevance and I suspect that will be a very successful scheme. It is partially funded by the Northern Territory government, and is being conducted in a similar manner to previous group apprenticeship schemes run by the Master Builders Association. I commend the association for its initiatives. It has done an excellent job in getting trainees into the building trades which are of great importance to the Territory.

Synroc Process

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is the honourable minister aware that synroc, an Australian product invented by Professor Ringwood, has been sold off to a company called Nuclear Waste Management and is in danger of being taken overseas because of the attitude of the Australian federal government?

ANSWER

I am not aware of the information that the member for Sadadeen has advised us of this morning. I am extremely interested ...

Mr Collins: And concerned, I hope.

Mr COULTER: ... and concerned about such a problem. I had the opportunity, when I was in France last November, of looking at a similar process that was being used there. However, I understand that it is inferior to the synroc process. I know that the French were very interested and the rest of the world envied the synroc process. It has been proven to be a very safe way of storing radio-active material. I would be grateful if the member for Sadadeen could provide me with any further details that suggest that we are now selling off the process overseas as a result of the attitude of the federal government. The federal government does not do very much at all when it comes to mining of uranium. When you do not recognise that you have a uranium industry on your back doorstep, why worry about a process that could make you billions of dollars a year for the storage of radio-active material? I guess the federal government considers it to be an asset that it no longer requires.

Lameroo Lodge

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The future of Lameroo Lodge, which is situated between Mitchell Street and the Esplanade, has been under discussion by the government for some time. Has the government made a decision in relation to the future of Lameroo Lodge and, if so, when will that information be made available to the public?

ANSWER

The government has not made a decision but I am able to advise honourable members that a decision is imminent. After calling for tenders and considering the various submissions made to the government, the applicants have been reduced to 2. Subject to further negotiations, which are a matter of current correspondence between myself, the department and the applicants, I would expect to make a decision within the next month on the future operation of Lameroo Lodge. I would be quite happy to advise honourable members as soon as I make that decision.

Health and Community Services in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

This follows on from the question I asked earlier. I ask the minister to be more specific this time, in his most eloquent manner. Could he provide details of which services he proposes to cut - the Community Health Service, the dental service, the hospital service, the Aboriginal Health Worker Service? Which services are to be cut within the Department of Health and Community Services? It is a most distressing matter for my electorate.

ANSWER

After this morning's 2 questions, I would imagine that the most distressing thing for the people of Nhulunbuy is the representation they are receiving. The other honourable members of this Assembly do not need educating but, obviously, the member for Nhulunbuy does. There is a process which we will have to go through to decide how we can properly and responsibly handle the situation placed before this government by the opposition's Canberra bosses. We are going to do that in a very reasonable and responsible way. I am sure that we will have to make cuts in various service areas within

my departmental responsibilities. Those matters will be discussed in detail with my colleagues in Cabinet and we will bring down a responsible budget.

Burgundy Royale Accounts Outstanding

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Are the debts for electricity, payroll tax, water and sewerage held against the Beaufort Hotel or Burgundy Royale and will the news released this morning, that the Burgundy Royale group has been placed in liquidation, have any effect on the repayment of those debts to the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Officers of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission met with the receiver last evening and will be speaking with him again this morning regarding those particular issues. This morning, I have again been in contact with the bankers, Westpac, to further advance our position with regard to the facility. The Northern Territory government faces a number of issues at this stage, including matters relating to the Burgundy Royale investment on the Esplanade. May I have the first part of the question again?

Mr Smith: Who has the debt, Burgundy Royale or the Beaufort Hotel?

Mr COULTER: The debt is in the name of Burgundy Royale. I have been advised that it may be the federal government which will precipitate the actual closure of the facility. It is owed almost \$1m in group tax and has taken action to have the money paid out in full. In fact, Westpac moved in response to the fact that the federal government intended to take that action. As yet, I am not sure if the federal government will be taking any further action to have the group tax paid in full.

Obviously, this is a very sensitive issue which has to be worked in full consultation with the people appointed to carry out discussions on behalf of the banking organisation. I will be continuing discussions over the next week or so. Let us hope that, in the interests of the Northern Territory, particularly the tourist industry, this issue can be resolved as quickly as possible. I understand that there are a number of people who are still waiting in the wings to purchase the facility. Let us hope that we can get it up and running again in the near future. It is a shame that this has happened with the largest-ever private investment project in the Northern Territory. The \$60m invested in the facility rates even higher than the Vestey's Meatworks back in the early days. It is a sorry day indeed when we see the position that Burgundy Royale finds itself in and let us hope that the facility will be up and running again in the near future.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that officers of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission were carrying out discussions with the receiver until about 6.30 last night, and they will be talking to him again this morning.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr Rod Oliver

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of Mr Rod Oliver, a former member of the Legislative Assembly in the then electorate of Alice Springs. On behalf of all honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to Mr Oliver.

Members: Hear, hear!

Identification of Crocodiles

Mr REED to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Can the Conservation Commission make some aids available to assist in the identification of crocodiles?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I suspect that the member has his tongue in his cheek. Recent events have led me to make sure that I am never without an identikit, which I have with me somewhere, to help me tell the difference between the 2 crocodile species found in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory.

I might take this opportunity to congratulate the cartoonist at the NT News who captured the moment in a very clear picture. It is going to take some time to live it down. I am happy to blame the incident on the member for Katherine. He is a man who has had 14 years of experience dealing with and identifying crocodile species in the Territory. Another tongue-in-cheek gesture was made in my weekly briefing paper from officers of the Conservation Commission. One of the opening paragraphs in this week's briefing was the usual report on sighting and capture of various nuisance crocodiles in the greater Darwin area. The commission took time out to enclose the crocodile identikit with a little notation saying it was to assist those who have difficulty in telling the difference between a salt-water and a fresh-water crocodile.

The incident on the Katherine River certainly surprised me. While checking out a major development in the Katherine River area, the member for Katherine and I came upon a very large fresh-water crocodile. At the time, we suspected it of being a salt-water crocodile. We had to decide whether to report the incident and we realised that, in saying we suspected that there was a large salt-water crocodile in the Katherine region, we would start a series of events that we could not stop. We had to decide whether it was responsible to do that or to let it go and do nothing. When we reported it to Conservation Commission officers in the Katherine region, about 12 people were aware of the incident. Of course, the officers headed out that night to check the area.

Katherine is a small town where everybody talks to everybody. I knew that 12 people already knew of the report and I did not want the people of Katherine suddenly to become aware by word of mouth or rumour that Conservation Commission officers were patrolling the Katherine River looking for a salt-water crocodile. I made the issue public in the knowledge that I could possibly have a large amount of egg on my face at some future date. As I remarked earlier, the cartoon in the NT News said it all! I have subsequently made it known to the member for Katherine that he owes me a few favours.

Statements of Mr Peter Paroulakis

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What action has the minister taken in relation to the statement made by the Country Liberal Party candidate for the House of Representatives, Mr Peter Paroulakis, to the effect that he supports the call of the National

Farmers' Federation boss, Mr Ian McLachlan, for the introduction of tertiary fees of \$5000 per annum?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question is again typical of the member for Stuart. He has demonstrated to this Assembly time and time again his propensity for picking up rumours ...

Mr Ede: I am concerned for students in the Territory!

Mr MANZIE: ... misquotes and incorrect statements and issuing them in this Assembly as facts. On many occasions, I have detailed in this House the problems caused in outlying communities by the actions of the member for Stuart. He likes spreading dishonest statements or sometimes straight-out lies.

Mr Ede: Paroulakis did not deny it.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Peter Paroulakis, the CLP candidate who will be the Territory member of the House of Representatives very soon, did not make any such statement.

The member for Stuart has shown, time and time again, in instances such as this ...

Mr Ede: He said he backed Ian McLachlan.

Mr MANZIE: ... in his statements last year about Yirara and Kormilda colleges, and in the telegrams which I often receive from him that he not only lacks knowledge but in fact takes actions which create problems. We had the instance of the cyanide spill near Tennant Creek and another occasion where \$1m was spent following his allegations that the gas pipeline was going to blow up in Alice Springs.

Mr Ede: You had to dig it up and replace a lot of it!

Mr MANZIE: We all know the story about Chicken Licken, and there he is, Mr Speaker. The sky is going to fall in! I think we should get it straight here and now. Mr Peter Paroulakis did not make the statement which the member for Stuart is attributing to him. I think we should all realise that ...

Mr Ede: Why didn't he deny it? That is what was quoted in the paper.

Mr MANZIE: ... every time the member for Stuart opens his mouth and says anything regarding any matter, it is not factual. It is made up. He dreams things up in the middle of the night. People should be aware of that and treat anything he says accordingly, as I do and as many other members on this side of the Assembly do.

Hepatitis B

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I realise that hepatitis B is a threat to people such as dentists working the field, but what threat is the disease to people such as prison officers and police, and are any programs in place to educate or inform officers of the public service, as well as the public generally, about how hepatitis B is transmitted?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question, which in some ways follows on from an adjournment debate speech given by the member for Sadadeen yesterday evening. I was keen to put before the Assembly a little more detail than was offered by the member for Sadadeen so that it becomes quite clear that the Northern Territory government is well aware of the problems with hepatitis B and, as I have said many times with regard to the handling of AIDS in the Northern Territory, is in fact leading the way in Australia in terms of the responsible approach we are adopting.

First, hepatitis B is transmitted by means similar to AIDS. It certainly is transmitted by sexual contact, be it heterosexual or homosexual. It can be contracted or transmitted by way of transfer of infected blood to a person who has an open wound or by some other method of transferring infected blood into another person's system. The disease is commonly transmitted from mother to baby around about the time of birth. That seems to be a very significant period of transmission.

The disease has been particularly widespread in the Aboriginal communities, as was pointed out by the member for Sadadeen yesterday. In fact, some 80% of Northern Territory Aboriginals have shown evidence of previous - I stress 'previous' - infection, as against 5% of non-Aboriginals. There is a point to take in that statistic, and I again stress the word 'previous'. It is obvious that some people are building up an immunity to this particular virus and that is giving us some comfort, although we have a long way to go.

Carriers can spread the disease and the carrier rate among Northern Territory Aboriginals is something like 10% in the Top End, but a rather startling 25% in some communities, particularly in central Australia. Obviously we have programs in place to try to combat the spread of this particular disease and, unlike the AIDS situation, we are very fortunate in having a vaccine available. As the Chief Minister pointed out in response to a question from the member for Sadadeen the other day, the vaccination costs \$126 per course. It is given to people who are in the highest risk groups and to Aboriginal infants in particular. As I pointed out, there is a perceived spread of the virus from mother to baby at or around the time of birth. We have been addressing that fact for some 12 months.

Public servants such as health staff, police and prison officers may have the vaccine administered if they so request, and the cost of those vaccinations is borne by the Northern Territory government. It should be also pointed out that all persons admitted to Territory prisons are tested for AIDS and hepatitis B. We are aware of prisoners who have those viruses when they enter our prison system and the Territory is leading Australia in that respect.

I wish that people did not see this as presenting a monumental threat to the population of the Northern Territory. It is a concern. It is not as big a concern as the AIDS virus but, nonetheless, we have responsible programs in place and we are addressing the problem as best we can. I would say to the member for Sadadeen and other honourable members of this Assembly that, if they wish for information on any matters that fall within my area of responsibility, particularly in the area of AIDS and other transmissible diseases, I will be only too pleased to arrange a full and comprehensive briefings on the subject. I have said all along that, as minister, I will not stand back from the responsibility which the government has of making sure

that every person who resides in the Northern Territory is fully aware of the problems associated with the AIDS virus and hepatitis B.

Forfeiture of Vehicle Under Liquor Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

My question is directed to the minister in his capacity as minister responsible for the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. I refer him to my comments during previous sittings about a bus from Santa Teresa which was forfeited and later ordered to be auctioned by the chairman of the commission. That order was overturned subsequently by the Treasurer himself, leading to a situation where people are unsure what the government's policy is. What is the government's policy in this regard and will it return to the courts the power to decide the forfeiture or otherwise of vehicles so seized?

ANSWER

We will not be returning the power to the courts. The matter of forfeiture of vehicles has occupied a great deal of time in this Assembly. The commission has sought views and ideas, particularly from Aboriginal people, about this issue. In respect of the Santa Teresa vehicle, I overturned the decision because of the extenuating circumstances, the impact on the community and the number of representations that were made to me. I can assure the member for MacDonnell that, as a result of that action, I intend to adhere strenuously in future to rules as laid down. We will not be returning such vehicles in future under any circumstances because of the concern that is being created as a result of this particular incident.

Forfeiture of Vehicle Under Liquor Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

Will he inform the House of exactly what extenuating circumstances caused him to overturn his chairman's decision in this case?

ANSWER

I do not have the exact details in my head. I am sure he is well aware of the hardship created in the community by the irresponsible attitude ...

Mr Bell: Wherever there is hardship, then?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member sought the information. The least he can do is listen to the answer in silence.

Mr COULTER: The honourable member will remember the incident of the cans being thrown out the window as the police car was approaching the bus. The driver was eventually apprehended by the police. I am sure the member does not need me to go into the details of how the vehicle was seized by the police in that particular incident. I have been to Santa Teresa Mission on many occasions and I have heard the concerns, particularly of the women, about the problem of grog-running and the number of vehicles being used to bring alcohol into the area. We took a decision in this particular case based on the track record of the vehicle's driver and his history in this area. That decision was taken and it will be adhered to.

Yulara and Alice Springs Sheratons

Mr FIRMIN to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, during past Assembly debates the Leader of the Opposition has proposed a simple formula for solving the Territory's financial difficulties brought on by the loss of \$104m in funds from the Commonwealth: to sell the Yulara and Alice Springs Sheratons. Can the Treasurer tell me whether that is actually a viable proposition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a simple formula to get us out of trouble. Unfortunately, it is also the brainchild of a simpleton. Without disclosing the full details of the commercial agreements, I can answer the honourable member's question very quickly. The answer is that it is not a viable proposition.

The Northern Territory government under the then Chief Minister, Paul Everingham, undertook a great commercial risk based on the sound information and forecasts that had been obtained, to develop tourism infrastructure in the Northern Territory. That decision has enabled the Northern Territory to capitalise on the tourist boom that has been generated over the last 5 years. The Northern Territory government has taken a considerable amount of criticism for developing our contingent assets such as the Sheratons at Yulara and Alice Springs. Having taken that risk and absorbed the criticism that has been made over the years, we are not in a position simply to sell and get out. If the Northern Territory government altered the agreements it has entered into with respect to those 2 developments; it would suffer a considerable loss. We are not prepared to do it. It is for us to decide, as it is for anybody who makes a commercial decision. There is a time frame governing when support for those facilities can be withdrawn and they can be sold.

Honourable members will be aware that we put \$10m into the Alice Springs Sheraton last year and that the financial models showed that there would be a time when the operation would be sufficiently well-developed to allow us to recoup that money. We will not be selling the hotels at this stage. We will only do so when their full potential is recognised. That is the short answer to the member for Ludmilla's question. There is a 30% growth in tourism predicted for this year, and the financial models indicate that it will only be a short period before the Northern Territory government's position in relation to those facilities is vindicated.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he confirm that, on top of the \$750 000 loaned to Hungerford Refrigeration by TIO, the Trade Development Zone Authority advanced Hungerford \$150 000 in March this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that the amount of \$750 000 made available to Hungerford by TIO was a loan. No doubt the Treasurer will clarify that for the Leader of the Opposition in due course. Indeed, I believe it was clarified at the previous sittings. As the minister responsible for arrangements between the Trade Development Zone Authority and Hungerford

Refrigeration in order to consummate the deal to bring Hungerford's total operations to the Northern Territory, I advise that my position is the same as my predecessor's: the government considers it quite inappropriate to detail the various incentives or components of incentives which are negotiated ...

Mr Smith: That is great.

Mr PERRON: ... by the Trade Development Zone Authority. Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants an answer perhaps he might ...

Mr Smith: I am not getting an answer. That is the problem.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Rural Electricity Reticulation Scheme

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to TREASURER

I am asking this question of the Treasurer in his role as minister responsible for NTEC. In view of several anomalies that have arisen in its implementation of the scheme, can the minister advise whether NTEC has plans to vary the provisions of what is called the \$5000 electricity reticulation scheme in the rural area? If so, have the interested people been consulted and when can we expect to have these changes presented to us?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question of alteration to the distribution system extension policy, or DSEP, has been before me now for some time. A number of matters are under consideration. The system was introduced in January 1985 to provide the mechanism for negotiating financial contributions for new systems and consumer extensions throughout the Northern Territory. The introduction of the DSEP followed the rural distribution funding scheme, or RDFS, introduced in July 1984. I think the member for Barkly was the minister responsible for NTEC at that particular time. The RDFS is due for completion in July 1987, at which time 580 lots will have been serviced at a cost of \$2.125m. At this point, 173 consumers have paid contributions or have entered repayment schemes. NTEC will ultimately recover the total cost of the RDFS. The distribution system extension policy encompasses 3 broad areas: major consumers, minor consumers and subdivisions.

Mr Speaker, I bring this information to your attention because the policy has worked to date and there has been tremendous development as a result of it. 53 major consumers have been serviced at a cost of \$1.193m. DSEP recoveries have amounted to \$725 000 which is 61% of the program. In addition, 13 private subdivisions have been connected to the system at a cost of \$192 500, with DSEP recoveries amounting to \$190 000 or 99% of the cost of the program. 171 minor consumer lots have been serviced at a cost of \$527 000 or 70%. At this point, 73 consumers have paid contributions or have entered repayment schemes. However, certain problems have emerged as the scheme has developed over the years.

One problem over which the honourable member no doubt receives considerable representation is the subdivision of lots that have been provided with electricity. That is probably one of the biggest bones of contention in the system at the moment. The system has been in force now for a number of years and there has been considerable development in the rural area as a result of the policy. However, there is now a need to review the DSEP policy.

Changes have been proposed to assist in a more equitable recovery of costs from consumers and to promote connections of new consumers. I will be making an announcement on that particular policy before the end of this financial year.

Darwin Bus Service Dispute

Mr SETTER To ATTORNEY-GENERAL

My question is directed to the Acting Minister for Transport and Works. It refers to the present dispute with drivers in the Darwin Bus Service. I note that it has been reported that the action is in response to disciplinary action taken against drivers who have been stealing bus fares. What action has the minister taken to rectify the situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the present industrial action by drivers in the Darwin Bus Service is certainly only one of a long list of similar activities in recent months. There have now been 7 stopwork meetings this year, one of which was extended to a 24-hour strike. Two of these meetings were sanctioned by the Department of Transport and Works to discuss the introduction of the split roster system. I think that all members will agree that that still leaves a record of industrial action which certainly cannot be condoned.

I find it very curious that this recent industrial action has taken place at a time when it will certainly cause the maximum possible disruption to the Bougainvillea Festival. It would not be difficult to describe such action as a blatant attempt at blackmail. Certainly, anyone who was in Darwin at the weekend could not have failed to notice the problems which were caused by the disruption to the bus service.

The union claims to be upset about disciplinary action taken against drivers who have allegedly been caught with their hands in the till. Those drivers fall into 2 categories: those whose monetary returns at the end of the shift fell short of the amount indicated by ticket sales, and those who allegedly have not been giving tickets to passengers and have pocketed the fare themselves. I believe the alleged number of drivers in both categories is very small. The drivers who are allegedly short in their returns have refused to pay back the difference. I also have been led to understand that one of the drivers who has been apprehended by inspectors for failing to issue tickets has actually been reported twice before for the same offence. We are now given to understand that the Transport Workers' Union has taken industrial action because its executive members object to disciplinary action being taken against its members. I can assure the Transport Workers' Union that I find the situation most objectionable to say the least. I certainly will not allow the Darwin public to be held to ransom in such a cynical fashion.

I advise honourable members that this matter has not been left to the Department of Transport and Works. I have instructed that the police be brought into the matter to investigate the alleged theft and alleged fraudulent practice. I believe that the police are the appropriate people to carry out such an investigation. Any allegations of theft are serious indeed and they must be investigated by the most competent people available. If it is found that offences have occurred, appropriate action has to be taken.

I would like to advise the Assembly that, as well as the allegations that have been made in relation to the alleged pocketing of money or failure to

issue tickets, I have also asked that the police be involved in an investigation of the use of forged bus passes by Darwin school students. I would also like to advise that arrangements have been made to provide off-peak services through private contractors. Honourable members would be aware that the union has banned the operation of overtime runs.

I want to point out also that this is not a case of victimisation of certain individuals. It is worth while pointing out that it has been estimated that some of the irregularities that are alleged to be taking place may be costing the taxpayers between \$80 000 and \$100 000 a year. It is also worth pointing out that since transport inspectors began a campaign of spot inspections and checks, the number of tickets sold has increased markedly.

Mr Speaker, I find it very hard to see how the TWU can justify the stance it is taking. The role the union has played in this dispute should be brought to the attention of this Assembly and to the notice of the public. It has been reported to me that, at last week's stop-work meeting, a TWU official actually addressed the drivers and told them: 'You belong to the most powerful union in Australia because you are responsible for the transportation of school children. That means you can get anything you want'. That is what he told them. Mr Speaker, let me put it on notice that the Northern Territory government will not tolerate any action that would place our services to school children in jeopardy. The government received a commitment from the union that services to school children would not be threatened if there was any dispute.

Mr Leo: This is depressing, Daryl. It is hearsay.

Mr MANZIE: I hear the member for Nhulunbuy making some comments over there. We know that he is an ex-member of the Transport Workers' Union and ...

Mr Leo: I am still an official of the Transport Workers' Union.

Mr MANZIE: I think that even he will have to look seriously at an instance where, when there is to be an investigation of reports of dishonesty, a union decides that its members are above reproach and therefore should not be investigated. I think even he would find that situation intolerable.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much chatter across the Chamber. The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, as I was saying, I would certainly like to hear whether the member for Nhulunbuy condones the union's behaviour. I do not think he would do so when he looked at the facts.

I do not think we should miss the most important point. A number of bus drivers working for the Darwin Bus Service do an excellent job and are people beyond reproach. These people are now being cast in the same mould as a number of allegedly dishonest persons and, until such time as this matter can be cleared up, all bus drivers are under a cloud. I think the union's actions are despicable and I would ask all Darwin bus drivers to think very carefully about what this irresponsible union is doing and to consider whether they should even be members of it. They could possibly transfer their allegiances to the ACOA or some other union or even form their own association. They certainly have been ill-served by the Transport Workers' Union which, during

the last couple of years, has carried out a number of actions against the Northern Territory community, deliberately antagonised and tried to ruin our tourist trade, and is now threatening the transportation of school children.

We know that the bus service costs the community money and we know that it runs at a loss, but we realise that it provides a service. That is why we provide top-up money to allow it to operate. We cannot tolerate the Transport Workers' Union using the bus service in an attempt to destroy services to the Territory community. During the last 12 months, the government has spent vast amounts in the development of terminals in the Darwin city centre at Casuarina. This has been done to enable our bus service to operate even more effectively and efficiently. However, people should remember that we now have an operational integration between private contractors and the government bus service. We have found that this works quite well. If we have to move the whole operation of the bus service into the private sector to get an operational bus service, that is what we will do.

If the Transport Workers' Union continues its disruptive practices, we will take action to ensure that the Darwin community has an operational bus service. That is the job we have to do, and we will not hesitate to do it. I therefore ask the drivers to consider leaving the Transport Workers' Union and either forming their own union or joining another union because, if they sat down for 30 seconds, they would realise that the Transport Workers' Union is looking to destroy their jobs and their future in the Territory. It is seeking to destroy the operation of the tourist industry in the Territory and to prevent school children from going to our schools. That is a despicable action and I would like to hear what the member for Nhulunbuy, an ex-Transport Workers' Union member, has to say about this matter.

Mr Leo: I am still a member!

Hungerford Refrigeration Warehouse

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

A recent newspaper advertisement placed by the Trade Development Zone Authority called for tenders for the construction at the zone of a 1000 m² warehouse for Hungerford Refrigeration. Who is paying for the construction of this warehouse, the Trade Development Zone Authority or Hungerford Refrigeration?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as a result of the efforts of the Trade Development Zone and others in encouraging Hungerford Refrigeration to bring its complete operation from Brisbane to the Northern Territory and, in time, employ some 40 or 50 Territorians rather than Queenslanders, the program of the Trade Development Zone Authority for the construction of warehouses and factories for occupants was thrown out of kilter. At present, the Hungerford Refrigeration operation is in a factory destined for another user. That action was taken in order to meet a timetable for bringing Hungerford to the Territory as early as possible. However, it meant that the construction of permanent factory space for the Hungerford operation would have to be considered. That led to the advertisement that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to.

The Trade Development Zone Authority and the government, through Treasury officers, have been holding talks of late to develop the most effective means of coping with the expansion of the trade zone by way of additional factory

space, taking into consideration that the zone authority's success indicates a need for several more factories each year for some years to come. The ultimate aim of the government and the authority is, where possible, to encourage occupiers in the zone to construct their own buildings or to have other third parties construct factories in the zone and rent them to businesses in the zone. I do not have before me at the moment exact details of arrangements that are being undertaken to finance the factory for which expressions of interest have been called. However, I will obtain this information and provide it to the Leader of the Opposition during these sittings.

Dairy Industry Levy

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Following meetings he attended in Canberra last week, is he able to provide any information on the Commonwealth government's dairy industry levy and how this levy affects the 2 Northern Territory dairy producers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was somewhat enlightening for me to go to the meeting of Ministers for Primary Production held in Canberra last Friday. Amongst other things, we discussed the matter of the DDT recently found in Australian meat shipments to the US and what should be done about that, and the subject of inequities which have arisen as a result of the levies by the federal government on the Australian dairy industry. I say 'enlightening' because it appears that what we have here is a simple case of taxation under another name inasmuch as every consumer of milk in Australia is required to pay a levy of 1.5¢ and 2¢ per litre in order to fund a scheme which provides assistance to farmers who are manufacturing dairy products. This is milk which is set aside in order to make cheese and butter and other dairy products for export as well as for the domestic market.

It seems that the whole dilemma has come about because Australia has a massive over-capacity in milk production, principally in Victoria. Because some governments have not been able to come to grips with the problems of reducing that massive over-production, all milk consumers in Australia have been required to pay more for their milk in order to fund it. It is an insane system because it is almost irrelevant whether we have local dairies or not. Any person who drinks milk in the Northern Territory pays a levy, primarily so that Victorian milk producers are able to stay in business. The total levy amounts to about \$91m per year.

The levy system is based on an uneasy truce, principally between New South Wales and Victorian dairy producers, under which each group agrees not to enter the other's markets. It has been demonstrated that Victorian farmers can produce milk for several cents a litre cheaper than New South Wales dairy farmers. Thus, New South Wales is vulnerable to milk from Victoria. The problem with this uneasy truce is that, under the Australian constitution, no government can prevent sales of goods from another state. The matter came to a head recently when a Victorian company reached an agreement with a chain of New South Wales supermarkets to provide milk at about 5¢ per litre less than that available from the New South Wales sources of supply. This is what caused the bunfight which led to the ministerial meeting to discuss the issue.

At the meeting, I argued that the whole scheme was preposterous as far as all milk consumers in Australia are concerned. I said that, in my opinion,

the politics of interstate milk trading seems to have totally overlooked the consumers. No one in the room appeared to be interested in consumers' views and that was very disappointing to me, particularly because I would have thought that at least 2 states would have had more concern in that direction. I argued that it was outrageous for the Northern Territory's 2 fledgling, struggling dairy producers to be expected to bear the burden of the 2¢ per litre levy. Northern Territorian consumers are now paying something like 95¢ per litre for a carton of milk. It is something like half that price in southern states. Why should we have to pay this 2¢ per litre so that it can flow into the pockets of dairy farmers in Victoria?

I also pointed out that the federal Department of Primary Industry had taken the trouble to send an officer from South Australia to the Northern Territory to collect production records from our 2 farmers. When he went on to the farms, that officer had the company of a Commonwealth policeman. The ministerial council thought that was all a bit of a joke. I think the federal minister was somewhat embarrassed at the actions of his department in spending quite a sum of taxpayers' dollars in order to collect \$1300 of outstanding levy payments from one farmer. Indeed, I understand the levies have not been paid to date. I argued that, under any rational consideration of this national scheme, Territory dairy producers should certainly be exempt from such a levy. The federal minister indicated that, whilst he was sympathetic to the plight of Territory dairy farmers, he really could not do much about it at present. He was only going to be a minister for a couple more days as the federal government moved into the election phase. His powers as a minister would be restricted to a mere caretaker capacity until the election, as is normal at such times.

Generally the Northern Territory's plight was set aside. Given that the Territory has only 2 dairy farmers, I guess we did not rate a great deal of consideration as far as the meeting's time was concerned. However, I did put the Territory's position and it was listened to. I do not think we gained very much ground at all but the subject has been rescheduled for a meeting next August of the Australian Agricultural Council. It will be further discussed because the peace which has been achieved between New South Wales and Victoria is certainly a very uneasy one. Both those Labor states have gone to enormous lengths to try to keep the peace with their industry, particularly during an election campaign. The last thing they want now is a bunfight. That is the situation. It is sad for Territory producers, but it is indicative of the sort of treatment we get from the federal government on so many fronts. As far as it is concerned, we are irrelevant and insignificant.

Swedish Geological Company

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is the minister aware that a wholly owned subsidiary of the Swedish government, the Swedish Geological Company, has become incensed by the unauthorised usage of its name and logo by the Northern Territory Open College and the assertion contained in college documents that a joint venture exists between the company and the college? Is he also aware that the company has now advised that it intends taking legal action against the Northern Territory government over the matter and has suspended all negotiations over its entry into the Trade Development Zone, following what it sees as a gross breach of faith on the part of the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I like the way the member for Stuart phrased that question. It is all fact. It is all true. It would probably be more appropriate if he asked what was the basis for all the allegations and carry-on.

Mr Bell: It is like your answer on the Darwin Bus Service, isn't it?

Mr MANZIE: The member for MacDonnell does not want to listen to anything. He just likes to throw in comments. People who hear him on the radio must get a great idea of the intelligent contribution he makes to this Assembly. I will endeavour to answer the question, regardless of attempts by the member for MacDonnell to create a disturbance and prevent me from doing so.

Mr Speaker, I am informed that representatives of this company made contact with Aboriginals from the Borroloola community in February this year and discussed an initiative regarding a training program. There was further contact between that group from Borroloola and a company called Abcon, an Aboriginal construction company in Katherine. That led to a proposal for a 15-week training program to be conducted in Sweden.

At this stage, there was no involvement with the Northern Territory Open College, the Department of Education or the government. Dr Flint, who was the head of TAFE in the Department of Education, was contacted by phone in April and offered 6 scholarships for Aboriginals to be trained in geological survey methods in Sweden. The inference given was that these were scholarships that the company was offering at its expense. Apparently, it is common practice for some companies to do this. The Open College's role at that stage was to assist in the selection of participants and in drawing up a joint venture proposal to go to the federal Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

Mr Ede: Who said it was to go to it?

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart now likes to throw his two bob in. If he would like to be quiet, I will explain it to him slowly.

This particular proposal was drawn up in conjunction with the Swedish company. At all times, the development of the submission was discussed as a joint concept. The submission was proof read and the original draft was returned with some suggestions for minor alterations. These were undertaken. Furthermore, a telex was received from Sweden supporting the open college's assistance on the submission seeking funds from the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. Not only that, the representative of this particular company appeared on ABC television holding the submission with the twin logos printed on it, saying what a great effort it was and how we were all going to do well.

Nevertheless, we have the member for Stuart accusing us of all sorts of disastrous things. I will give an example of how professionally this particular company operates in the Territory. The first I knew about the matter was a couple of days ago when I was walking down the street. A gentleman tapped me on the shoulder and said: 'Excuse me, I am Mr X and I represent company Y'. I had not heard of this company at that stage. He explained what he was doing and said that he was looking for support for a training program for Aboriginal people. It sounded to me like a reasonably good idea, and I asked him if he had written to us. He explained that he had had consultation with the Department of Education. I asked to be made aware

of these proposals and was then informed that the actual bottom line was that the Northern Territory government make a grant of \$84 000 to provide assistance for 5 Aboriginal people to go to Sweden to do a training course in geological survey. I thought that this was an expensive form of training and that the same amount of money or less in our local education system could provide training for more people. However, I kept my thoughts to myself and asked the company to send the information.

Not long afterwards, my secretary approached me and said that she had received a most abusive phone call from the gentleman involved. He had phoned and wanted to see me immediately and, because I was not in the office, roundly abused my secretary and accused her of trying to prevent him getting access to me. I contacted him by phone and explained in no uncertain terms that I would not tolerate my staff being spoken to in such a way. If he was so keen about his proposal, I wanted to see the written details of it in an envelope. The details were facsimiled through to my office. That was the first and last I heard of the matter before I started to receive telexes about legal action and so on.

All I can say is that the approach by the Swedish company's representative in the Territory has been most unprofessional. It has been incorrect. One minute he was assisting, providing, correcting and supporting an application to the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and the next minute he was threatening this government with legal action. I certainly believe the company's representative is the wrong man for the job. Some of the proposals that have been put forward are obviously good. However, I certainly would not be involved in any dealings with a person of the calibre of this gentleman. He clearly does not know how to operate in the sphere of relations with government.

Mr Ede: Would you say that outside the Assembly?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I really get sick of this. The member for Stuart asked me the other day whether I knew anything about this matter, and I said I would be very happy to ...

Mr Ede: You have destroyed his professional reputation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his chair. The member for Stuart will cease interjecting. To make 1 interjection is possibly permissible, to make 2 is skating on thin ice, but if he makes another one I will name him.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I said, the member asked me if I knew anything about this particular matter and I explained to him that I would be very pleased to give him a comprehensive briefing. Obviously, it then occurred to him that the facts might spoil a good story and we now have another Chicken Licken scenario: the sky is falling down and we all have to duck.

The Department of Education has acted with the utmost integrity and at all times has treated this as a serious matter which may have benefits for the Territory. I find it very hard to understand why this particular company representative has a problem with regard to what has happened. Perhaps he has been given an ultimatum by his company and has been told that he has to get results to keep his job. The circumstances are very strange but I am satisfied that all matters have been handled competently and properly. If the particular gentleman wishes to take legal action, that is obviously his right.

Because of those threats, I do not intend to make any further comments regarding the matter.

Alice Springs Structure Plan

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Could he explain the recent announcement on the Alice Springs Structure Plan?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, although the actual decision has been reported, a few points need clarification. When it endorsed the Undoolya option, Cabinet took various matters into consideration and I will briefly deal with 3 of them. They will need further comment and, possibly, support from all honourable members, including those opposite.

One of the matters considered was the removal of the seismic array which is currently located in the eastern area of Alice Springs and used for defence purposes by both the American and Australian governments. Cabinet has taken the view that residents of the Northern Territory should not be liable in any way for the \$3m cost of removing the seismic array. I intend to take up the issue today by writing to the Commonwealth minister, as well as to Her Worship the Mayor of Alice Springs to seek her support in this course of action. Undoolya would ultimately have been developed, regardless of whether it was now or 20 years hence. Our information indicates that the seismic array is already being interfered with by surrounding developments and passing traffic. The government was of the view, prior to making this decision, that we would assist with its removal. I am advising honourable members and the people of Alice Springs that that is not the case at the moment. In the view of this government, the \$3m cost of the removal of the seismic array should be and will be borne by the Commonwealth or American governments.

The second matter considered relates to future negotiations involving MacMahon Construction Pty Ltd which has made a very innovative submission to the government. It involves the building of a recreation lake, the provision of stage 1 of Undoolya consisting of 1250 lots, as well as a rural subdivision and certain commercial land elements adjacent to the recreation lake. The total up-front cost, in today's dollars, for the development of a recreation lake at the Emily Creek site as set out in the MacMahon proposal is approximately \$9.7m. It would be no secret that the Northern Territory is going through some rather serious reviews of its economic position. I would think that even the people of Alice Springs would recognise that, although the government is ultimately desirous of seeing a recreation lake built in Alice Springs, it would certainly be unwise at this time to commit that amount of money for that purpose. However, because of all of the elements in the proposition from MacMahon Construction, it is possible to look at various alternatives. Although that company does not have a monopoly over future development at Undoolya, there will be further negotiations. It took the initiative and presented an excellent proposal which the government will consider very seriously.

I am quite pleased that the decision on the future development of Alice Springs has been made. During the recent election campaign, the government gave an undertaking that the decision would be made within a certain time frame. That time frame has been met. In the interests of the future development of the town and taking all of the issues into consideration, the best decision has been made.

The third point that I wish to clarify relates to the development in the Emily Hills area. A proposition was put forward to the government some years ago and it has been under very serious consideration. There are a number of possibilities for the future use of the land, including tourist development and, certainly, rural subdivision. As a government, we are not prepared at this time to act as judge and jury concerning the use of that land. We have referred it to the newly-structured Joint Planning Group as a priority matter to be considered as a matter of urgency. I suspect that the developers involved with that particular land will probably make a further submission to the Planning Authority.

Those are the 3 points that I thought needed further clarification. I look forward to seeing the first blocks in Undoolya being turned off at approximately the end of 1989-90, depending on demand. I hope that we will not be faced with another shortage of land in Alice Springs if the town keeps on growing.

Spirit of the Northern Territory

Mr LEO to Minister for TOURISM

Is the Northern Territory government sponsoring a vessel named the 'Spirit of the Northern Territory' in an ocean race and, if so, what is the size of the sponsorship and will the Northern Territory government sponsor other boat owners for the same amount of money should they be interested in participating in ocean racing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is an issue which cuts across several departments, and I have been involved with it in at least 2 of them. To clarify the situation, the ocean-going yacht has been the subject of considerable publicity and several press reports over recent months. As to the involvement of the Northern Territory government, the total grant for the yacht to compete in the round-Australia race is \$80 000. That commitment is 2 years old and, as I said, has been subject to much publicity. The grant has come from 3 areas: the Departments of Education and Tourism, and the former Department of Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs have each contributed one third. In addition, the government has assisted with the purchase of a spinnaker that will be flown on the yacht. This, I think, will be tested for the first time in this year's Ambon race. Ultimately, the yacht will be housed at the Darwin Sailing Club where it will be used for training purposes.

I think that it is an excellent move by the government to provide this funding and to help the Darwin Sailing Club. The cost of the sailing vessel is very significant and has received the backing and sponsorship of many local businesses in the Darwin area. The total cost escapes me at the moment, but it is significant. Certainly it is over \$200 000. I would think that Territorians could be rightly proud that, when that around-Australia race takes place, there will be a yacht competing from the Northern Territory, named and sailed by Territorians.

Mr Speaker, I might advise the member for Nhulunbuy that I am sure the Nhulunbuy Sailing Club will participate in the race, because there are several stages around Australia and yachtsmen from the Territory will have the opportunity to compete. One of the important elements that I think is relevant is the fact that the yacht will be used in the Darwin area to train young sailors. I think it is a wise decision to assist the Darwin Sailing

Club to be able to participate. It is evidence that all sporting bodies in the Territory are encouraged by the government to develop. Such development has a cost attached. No member on this side of the Assembly would be prepared to see our young people suffer because of the high costs of participating in sport and the development of sporting facilities in the Northern Territory. Certainly, there seems to be a tendency for members opposite to laugh at the continual disadvantage faced by Territorians in such participation. This is another example of the cost involved for Territorians to be able to compete on the same basis as their fellow Australians. The Northern Territory government stands proud of the fact that it was able to assist in this small way.

Future Funding of the Northern Territory

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

At the recent Premiers Conference was any comment made regarding future funding arrangements for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I can advise the member for Jingili that there were some statements made by the Commonwealth in respect of the future funding of the Northern Territory. All Territorians are becoming increasingly and painfully aware of the continuous, carping criticism of the Northern Territory government and attacks on the Northern Territory people by members opposite. They have spent the last 7 years carping about and criticising the amount of funding that has come to the Northern Territory and saying that we were being overfunded to blazes. They have been pushing that line for years, but particularly over the last 3 years. As we all know, they gained the ear of at least one minister in Canberra, Senator Walsh, the Minister for Finance, who took their call up with glee and has been raiding the Territory purse now for 3 years.

Members opposite, including the current Leader of the Opposition, the former member for the Northern Territory, Mr John Reeves, and a Senator for the Northern Territory, Senator Ted Robertson, all spent years squawking about how much money had been paid to the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth and how over-generous the Commonwealth government had been. Their carry-on has finally come home to roost on Territory people because their mates in Canberra have viciously raided the Territory purse for 3 years in a row. This year, they have raided it more viciously than ever.

They have taken \$104m away from what we should have received, excluding the legislatively guaranteed 2% real growth in funding. Members opposite can thank themselves for that because they promoted this cause for some short-term political gain in 1983, 1984 and 1985. If they go back and read their comments, their press releases and their carping criticism of every attempt by the Territory to develop over that period, they can blame only themselves for what is happening now.

Our government is working very hard to manage this situation. In the election campaign this year, we put much before the people in terms of our plans to handle this environment. We will handle it and we will keep the Territory growing, despite these savage cuts and these raids by the socialists in Canberra at the behest of the opposition in the Northern Territory. Later this week, we will deal with the details of how we are going to handle it. I ask honourable members to remember that tourists are still coming to the Northern Territory, mines are still opening, the Trade Development Zone is still developing, manufacturing and horticultural industries are growing and

other sections of the economy generally are continuing to grow. It is equally true that, according to ABS statistics, the Northern Territory work force grew by 4100 in the first 4 months of this year. It is true that we are in a recovery phase and we will be able to develop with private enterprise money. This is a pro-enterprise government which is gearing the economy so that it can grow without ultimate reliance on government dollars. That is what we have put to the people and that is what we will deliver to the people. That is how we will keep the Territory going, despite the attacks from the Opposition.

Last year, when I was raising another important issue for Territorians - the issue of statehood - the Leader of the Opposition and others said: 'We do not know what the financial implications of statehood are. How much is it going to cost us? Can we afford statehood?' Nervousness about these questions has been bubbling through the economy.

Just before the Premiers Conference, between 7.30 and 8 am, the Commonwealth delivers what is called an 'offer document'. I have a copy of the offer document given to me at the last Premiers Conference and I will quote from the illuminating section which deals with what is cutely termed a 'negative special grant'. It says:

This partial recoupment is on the understanding that general revenue funding for the Northern Territory will be fully adjusted onto a state-like basis from 1 July 1988.

That is unequivocal. The prelude to that statement spells out the discriminatory and unprecedented raids which the Commonwealth has made on our budget. It says:

The Commonwealth also proposes to recover, by way of a negative special grant in 1987-88, \$14.4m of the total \$27.6m assessed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission as over-funding of the Northern Territory in 1983-84 and 1984-85. The Commonwealth has decided, however, to recoup, in 1987-88, the over-funding only in respect of 1983-84, partly because it would be unreasonable to recoup in one year over-funding in respect of 2 years, and partly because this will be in addition to the general reductions in payments to the Northern Territory.

I can advise honourable members that we at least obtained a commitment from the federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister that they would not take the other \$13.2m from future funding of the Northern Territory. The fact is that they should not have touched the \$14.4m. It is a clear and unequivocal breach of the Memorandum of Understanding and an unprecedented action in Australia to provide money to states and then to take it back in subsequent years. It is an unbelievable step.

There are 2 points I want to make. Firstly, honourable members opposite should wear the principal responsibility for the attitudes in Canberra that have led to the dramatic cuts in Territory funding and the clear breaches of the Memorandum of Understanding. Secondly, I ask members opposite to accept, from this day forward at least, that, from next financial year, we will be funded on a totally state-like basis and that there is therefore no financial argument against the move towards statehood.

Reference to Public Accounts Committee

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Would the Chief Minister explain to honourable members what the new reference is for the Public Accounts Committee?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I remind honourable members of debates that occurred last evening in respect of identifying areas for cutting the cost of government services. I am pleased to advise that, last week, I issued a reference to the Public Accounts Committee. I thank the members of the Public Accounts Committee, in particular its chairman, the member for Karama, for their positive approach and the assistance they have offered in relation to the very difficult task of trying to remove inefficiencies and identify administrative costs that can be alleviated. A principal role of the Public Accounts Committee is to identify areas where expenditure by government can be as effective as possible.

As a consequence, I have widened the ability of the Public Accounts Committee to investigate the efficiency of public expenditure by government departments. I signed a reference which directed the Public Accounts Committee to investigate and report on levels, patterns and efficiency of expenditure in all government departments, statutory corporations and instrumentalities. I particularly asked that the attention of the committee be directed to salaries, administrative expenses, capital items, repairs and maintenance and property management.

The intention of this is not in any way to be seen as a sort of witch-hunt in the public service nor is it working on the assumption that there are problems in all areas of government. A public service of 15 000 may be small by government standards but it is still a large organisation in the perception of the community. In any large organisation, practices inevitably develop, consciously or otherwise, which can be more effectively or inefficiently carried out. In view of the very savage cuts made to our funds by the Commonwealth government, it is essential that we use every available avenue to reduce our expenditure and maximise the effective use of the government dollar. In that respect, I am quite grateful for some of the suggestions that arose in the debate last night. I look forward to the active cooperation of the Public Accounts Committee in what inevitably will be an onerous task but one which, carried out effectively, will serve the interests of the Northern Territory by enabling us to use government dollars in the best interests of the community and to ensure they are applied as directly as possible towards the tasks and objectives that we set. I look forward to the support of the Public Accounts Committee in that endeavour.

Alice Springs Police Communications Centre

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the minister give the House an assurance that Alice Springs will have a reliable 24-hour police communications centre manned by at least 2 people?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very conscious of the difficulties faced by the police in Alice Springs. They have to deliver a range of services and these have peaks

and troughs. For example, time spent in court can severely affect other aspects of day-to-day work. We are addressing the problems of police workload in Alice Springs and in other towns like Katherine. The member for Katherine could readily provide information about the impact of a fast-growing community on the demand for police services. That was one of the major reasons for the government announcement during the election campaign that we will be increasing the size of the police force by 53 over the next 2 years. That decision represents a rational approach to increasing the size of the police force. It will be done in a way that will result in extra police being available to work on the streets in direct contact with the community rather than in administrative and backroom areas. The 53 extra positions will cover the number of police force members who are training as cadets or undergoing in-service training for promotion. They will make a very effective input into the direct provision of police services.

I am sure the honourable member will find that this recruitment will improve police capacity to provide services like the complete communications program in Alice Springs. The problem will not be solved quickly but we are addressing it through the recruitment program in accordance with the plans we put in place during the election campaign.

Lake Amadeus Land Claim

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can the minister advise what is happening with the Lake Amadeus land claim?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question because I think it is important that I advise the House of what I consider to be some rather disturbing news. Although it is only on the basis of verbal advice received from Central Land Council personnel on 9 June, we have been informed that the traditional owners have rejected the final draft of settlement that was being negotiated. We thought an agreement was imminent and we have no information as to why these lengthy discussions have been brought to a rather abrupt conclusion. It was the view of this government that, after prolonged discussions entered into by the Chief Minister in his former capacity as Minister for Conservation, the Aboriginal people were more than happy with the views expressed by the Northern Territory government and the settlement conditions offered. This latest decision therefore comes as a surprise.

It is interesting to note that certain elements of the claim involving the establishment of the Kings Canyon National Park and Messrs Conway and Lander at Kings Creek Station have now been going on for several years. One must wonder why the traditional owners turned their backs abruptly, without any forewarning, and advised the commissioner that the negotiated settlement that was about to be agreed upon - and all our advice up until 2 days ago was that it was almost agreed upon ...

Mr Bell: Don't you accuse the land councils and traditional owners of bad faith.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will maintain silence. The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I advise honourable members and the people of the Territory that the government is seeking to continue negotiations for the settlement of the Lake Amadeus claim to the benefit of all people involved. I say that for the member for MacDonnell's edification. I cannot understand why the Luritja people are now deciding to resort to the inquisitorial and adversary machinations of the Aboriginal Land Commission. The member for MacDonnell may not be aware of all the finer points involved in the negotiations or of the various parties affected, but I would be surprised if this was the case. I am also rather surprised that he seeks to comment in this Assembly. That would go against the efforts of the Northern Territory government in relation to the traditional owners, the Central Land Council, Mr Conway and Mr Lander in reaching an equitable conclusion to this outstanding claim.

I would take this opportunity to appeal to the traditional owners to at least give some reason as to why they have stepped away from these lengthy negotiations and gone back to the machinations of the land commission. I do not think it is to anybody's benefit and it would have been an instance where relationships between the Aboriginal people and the Northern Territory government could have been greatly improved. The sad thing about all of this is that Mr Conway and Mr Lander, who are involved in the Kings Creek Station, are once again at a loose end with no future, certainly no future of ...

Mr Bell: And your mates put them there!

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, the honourable member for MacDonnell simply does not know what he is talking about but it is interesting to hear his views, however biased they may be.

The point to be made, and I will make it quite clearly in this particular instance, is that the government's efforts to resolve the land claim satisfactorily through negotiations with the traditional owners have been hindered all along by one simple obstacle: the provision of the Land Rights Act that precludes the Northern Territory government from negotiating directly with traditional owners. We have always had to negotiate through the Central Land Council, and one would say that our past efforts have been frustrated to the greatest possible degree. I look forward to the day when the Northern Territory government can sit down and negotiate directly with traditional owners and the best way to achieve that is through the abolition of the land councils in the Northern Territory, established under the federal Land Rights Act.

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer some questions concerning Hungerford Refrigeration which were asked of me by the Leader of the Opposition during the course of these sittings. The text containing the answers was written yesterday. This particular episode is changing from day to day as the opposition increases its knowledge about the operation. I will read the answers exactly as they were written yesterday so that all honourable members will know just how things are changing.

First, the Leader of the Opposition recently asked whether the \$750 000 debt included the stated \$125 000 investment. The truth is, as I advised him in the Assembly last month, that the loan from the TIO secured by a floating charge over the company's assets is for \$627 500. In fact, the document which he produced from the National Companies and Securities Office

contained a mistake which has been admitted to by the people who tendered that particular document. He may say it is not a mistake and that I am covering up or offer some other scenario, but the simple fact is this is an example of the problem with creating or negotiating commercial agreements in this particular forum. Things change and people do make mistakes. Indeed, there was a mistake. As I told him last month, it was in fact \$627 500.

Mr Smith: A pretty significant mistake.

Mr COULTER: Maybe it was, but the problem with negotiating commercial deals in this Assembly is that sometimes things go wrong.

Mr Smith: It is a formal document that you have lodged to the National Securities Commission.

Mr COULTER: It is a mistake. The same as you are a mistake.

Mr Smith: It is a pretty important mistake.

Mr COULTER: The Leader of the Opposition's checks with the Queensland Companies Office showed that the 1984 return is still the last one lodged and there is still no record of the TIO now being major shareholders in the company. The Leader of the Opposition has already been advised that the company returns for 1985-86 have been lodged. In fact, they were lodged on 29 April 1987 and the other required documentation was lodged in May 1987. If whoever is supplying him with information in his role as debt collector for Soane Sheet Metal cannot find out whether returns were lodged, the Leader of the Opposition has a problem.

It is interesting that there is a private business in Darwin which has been trying since 26 February to get the Leader of the Opposition to pay a bill which he ran up during the election campaign. He is never available on the phone to discuss the matter with the gentleman involved, and I am sure the he knows whom I am talking about. It appalls me that he uses the 'I cannot come to the phone' tactic with a local businessman in connection with a sum of \$1080 whilst complaining about Hungerford. That is the sort of double standard we have become used to in this Assembly. No doubt the gentleman might get his \$1080 this afternoon. Let's hope so.

Mr Smith: Has Mr Soane got his money yet?

Mr COULTER: I would also like to point out that the Leader of the Opposition is a more powerful man than I could have imagined. He even has the editor of the NT News saying, in last night's editorial, that the TIO is using taxpayers' money, not policy-holders' money. If the TIO collapses, which is the worst-case scenario that the Opposition Leader paints for everybody, this doom and gloom will reign supreme. He has the editor believing it. If the TIO collapses, with its \$100m assets, the government will have to prop it up. That just goes to show that, if you peddle gloom and doom all the time, a little of it rubs off.

In question time on June 4 of this sittings, the Leader of the Opposition asked: 'Is the minister aware that notice has been served under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act on Hungerford Refrigeration by Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd for the discharge of a debt awarded against Hungerford by a District Court on 26 November 1986?' Events have progressed somewhat since the answer to that question was written, but I will be reading directly from its text as I proceed.

The Leader of the Opposition is obviously continuing his campaign against Hungerford. I told honourable members when he asked his first question about the company that he was intent on doing whatever he could to damage its business prospects in the Northern Territory itself. The question he raises relates to an award against the company. The amount of the award was being paid according to an agreed schedule. Due to the relocation of the company from Brisbane to Darwin, the May payment was late. That has now been rectified. This appears to be the sole reason for the notice being served.

The Leader of the Opposition's second question was: 'Secondly, is the minister further aware that, if this matter is not resolved promptly, Soane Sheet Metal Pty Ltd has instructed its solicitors to begin action to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration?' By the nature of the question, it would appear that the Leader of the Opposition has been in contact with Soane Sheet Metal or its legal representatives. I will say something about that in a moment; we know he is acting as a debt collector for them now.

It is also clear that he knows very little about the significance of section 364 notices. I suggest that one may be served on the Northern Territory branch of the Labor Party if he does not pay his \$1080 debt pretty soon. In the business world, they are cast around like confetti. They are used as little more than letters of demand. They are the sort of thing the Leader of the Opposition has no doubt received once or twice or will receive in the future. Through his lack of knowledge, he has been led into believing that this particular notice is far more significant than it really is. He seems to think that Hungerford is about to go into liquidation. He received a letter about that yesterday and he stood up in the adjournment debate and spoke about it. I am sorry to disappoint him, but Hungerford is alive and well and is not facing liquidation.

His third question was: 'What guarantees can the minister give, in the case of such an action, that the investment made by the Territory government in Hungerford Refrigeration is secure and will not be lost?' The answer is simple. In view of the fact that Hungerford is not facing liquidation, the question is irrelevant. In his fourth question, he asked: 'Will the minister give an assurance that the Northern Territory government will not provide more funds to bail out Hungerford Refrigeration?' The Leader of the Opposition has great difficulty in understanding that it is the TIO which has invested in Hungerford and it has done so as a commercial decision. The TIO was established in 1979 without any injection of funds at all from the Northern Territory government. The government holds no shares in the TIO. It started off with nothing and today it is a \$100m organisation. However, the level of TIO's investment in Hungerford is a matter for its commercial judgment and I am sure that the TIO board will not allow itself to be influenced by the prejudicial comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition asked also whether I could confirm that 'a firm called Hall Chadwick, a group of accountants in Queensland, has also lodged a notice under section 364 of the Queensland Companies Act to wind up Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd'. The answer relates to a dispute between Hungerford and this company for work performed. Hall Chadwick served a notice under section 364 and Hungerford obtained a Supreme Court injunction against Hall Chadwick proceeding under the notice. Hungerford won the case and costs were awarded against Hall Chadwick. The matter is still in the hands of the solicitors for both parties. Hungerford in fact won the case.

I believe that the Leader of the Opposition has launched a vendetta against Hungerford Refrigeration. I have information that he made interstate

calls in order to pump creditors and others for any adverse information he could find. Only 2 weeks ago, he rang the former managing director of Hungerford and asked numerous questions clearly designed to gather whatever adverse information he could find. The former managing director told the Opposition Leader that he had no adverse comment to make and that he considered the company had done remarkably well in the short period of its existence. The Leader of the Opposition did not tell us that. He might like to stand up now and tell us that the company's sales had grown from nil to over \$2m in the space of a little over 2 years. He also indicated that this rapid growth had placed strains on the company's finances, which presented serious problems for it. This did not mean, however, that the company was inherently weak and he advised Mr Smith that its commercial prospects were, in fact, very good.

The Leader of the Opposition is also known to have phoned a businessman in Darwin about the company, again clearly seeking adverse comment. The conversation was promptly reported back to Hungerford Refrigeration. I believe that it is demeaning for the Leader of the Opposition to be caught red-handed trying to dig for dirt. It lowers the status of his office when he and his staff are found to be acting like sleazy investigators, but perhaps he is enjoying his new role as an investigative politician.

Of more concern is information that has emerged in the last day or 2 concerning the opposition's phone calls. There are implications of possible misuse of parliamentary privilege. It has come to my attention that on Wednesday 3 June, when the Opposition Leader asked his question about the section 364 notice served on Hungerford, the company itself had not received the notice. In view of the contacts that the Leader of the Opposition has made with creditors of Hungerford, this raises the question of who informed him so promptly that the notice had been issued. In particular, it raises the question of whether the Leader of the Opposition or his staff were informed by a Brisbane solicitor, Mrs Justine Wlodarczyk, who is handling the collection of this debt on behalf of the creditor or by Mr Soane of Soane Sheet Metal. If that is so, and in view of the fact that he has mentioned the company by name in this Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition may be furthering the interests of this particular creditor by using the Legislative Assembly as a form of debt collection agency. There is even the possibility the whole thing has been a set-up. Alternatively, the Leader of the Opposition has fallen victim to the tactics of an aggressive interstate debt collection agent to assist her in exerting pressure on the debtor.

What a wonderful thing it must be for creditors to find that the Leader of the Opposition is willing to take up their case and provide a free debt collection service for them through this Assembly. Creditors of the Territory's thousands of companies will flock to him for his generous assistance. Or maybe he only acts for Queensland creditors.

I also advise this Assembly that senior partners of Hall Chadwick, the other company named by the Leader of the Opposition, are expressing concern that, through no wish of their own, he is embroiling them in what is essentially a political matter. They acknowledge that there is a dispute with Hungerford involving claim and counter-claim, but this will be resolved through the normal commercial channels available in such circumstances. They do not desire to have their business affairs made the subject of questions in this Assembly.

The fact is that, by innuendo and half truths, the Leader of the Opposition is threatening to undo much of the good work being done to

restructure Hungerford and re-establish its lines of credit. Because of this and because of his questionable contacts with creditors, I do not intend to answer further questions dealing with the commercial affairs of this company. I put the opposition on notice of that last month but it has kept at me. Mark my words, Mr Speaker, I do not intend to answer further questions dealing with the commercial affairs of the company.

Hungerford Refrigeration has shown the kind of enterprise and 'get up and go' which is so badly needed in Australia under the oppressive policies of the present federal Labor government. It can be readily understood, therefore, why such companies are a target of attack for the Leader of the Opposition. Certainly, their very success strains their finances sometimes. But it is such companies that help to produce growth and employment. It is a great pity that the Leader of the Opposition has chosen to criticise this company even before it has completely established its operations in the Northern Territory. It would have been far better to have judged it on performance over the next couple of years.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to answer a question asked of me on Tuesday by the Leader of the Opposition as part of his campaign of denigration of the Hungerford Refrigeration group. He asked me who is paying for the construction of a warehouse at the Trade Development Zone for which advertisements recently appeared in the press. I can advise him that, if he had read the advertisement, clearly he would have seen that it was headed: 'Design, Construct and Finance a 1000 m² factory for Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd'. I advise him that the developer is paying for the warehouse. It is being built for Hungerford Refrigeration.

Staffing of Hospitals

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

Will the minister undertake to investigate the imbalance in hospital staff numbers in social welfare and paediatric services between the Alice Springs and Royal Darwin Hospitals, with a view to redressing that imbalance?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would have to take the member for Sadadeen at his word that there is such an imbalance. Let me inform him and all other honourable members that, unfortunately, because of the actions of the federal government in slashing the budget of the Northern Territory to the degree that it has, I have to address a great number of things in health and various other services throughout the Northern Territory. Whilst he has not presented any petitions to this House relating to these matters, I am sure we could gather a great number of petitions to this Northern Territory government from people who are living in absolute fear of how their services might be cut.

I hope that people listened to what Mr Howard had to say to the people of the Northern Territory and Australia last night, because there is only one bright light on the horizon for the Northern Territory and that is to get the Australian Labor Party out of Canberra and the Northern Territory. However, getting them out of the Northern Territory would not really make all that much difference because their influence is nil. They are only interested in the guttersnipe tactics that we have been hearing about this morning.

Mr Bell: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I would imagine that 'guttersnipe' would register as being unparliamentary.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark relating to the opposition.

Mr DALE: I withdraw the remark unreservedly, Mr Speaker.

The task we have in front of us, particularly in my portfolio of Health and Community Services, gives me no joy whatsoever. On a personal basis, I have to make some decisions within those areas of responsibility. As I say, that gives me no joy whatsoever because every single one of them impacts on some person in the Northern Territory. However, I will certainly have a look at what the member for Sadadeen has put to me today in the total review of services offered by the Department of Health and Community Services.

Job Creation in Business and Industry

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

During the recent election campaign, the Chief Minister said that the Country Liberal Party would create 1000 jobs for business and industry in the next year in the Northern Territory. What progress has been made on those plans?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to advise the member for Casuarina that we set in train a series of plans designed to see the growth of the Northern Territory through to the year 2000. In those plans, we set ourselves an objective of 1000 new jobs each year for the Northern Territory. In preparing those plans, we were conscious of the inevitable need to be able to meet those objectives with less money available than we have had in the past. We did not quite realise the extent of the cut that we would incur this year as a consequence of the discriminatory attacks on our finances from Canberra. I say that quite deliberately because I do not and I never have objected to the fact that the federal government intended to cut finances to the Northern Territory. What I do object to violently is the fact that the Northern Territory community is being asked, yet again, to pay a proportionately much higher share of those cuts than other Australians. If the burden of recovery is to be borne by the community, it is essential that that burden be spread evenly around Australia. We would accept our share if the burden was fairly distributed.

However, given that there would be some restraint on our finances, we had to set our plans on the premise that we would not be able to build the community through pumping large amounts of government money directly into job-creation programs. We needed to set an environment that would encourage investment by the private sector and in the genuine wealth-creating sector of the community. Whilst I know that the member for MacDonnell believes that school teachers are part of the productive sector of the community, and they certainly play a productive role, I would not define them in this context as being part of the immediate wealth generation of the community. They are a secondary and essential infrastructural support system for wealth generation.

Mr Speaker, without being diverted on that particular point, there are already early signs that this program is working. Whilst the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for May are not yet available - actually they are

due out today - I can advise the Assembly that already there is a sound indication that my government will easily be able to meet its target of creating 1000 new jobs this year. In December last year, 67 400 people were in full or part-time employment in the Northern Territory. In April this year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that employment had risen to 71 400. That represents an increase of some 4000 people in employment in the Northern Territory. Significantly, this has come about at the same time as the bulk of 1986 school-leavers entered the job market.

I do not intend to raise any particular comments about the opposition in this debate because I think it is important that the community receives a very clear message. Members will agree that there are obvious dangers in relying on short-term statistics, and I accept that, but even members opposite would have to agree that an increase of 4000 in employment, in the first 4 months of this year, is an achievement of some merit. For their benefit, I shall look to the longer-term figures for employment growth.

Using ABS figures again, we have seen almost a 20% increase in the number of people with jobs between December 1982 and December 1986: the number has risen from 56 400 to 67 400. At the same time, the number of people unemployed in December has remained fairly steady at between 4000 and 5000. The NT continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Australia. If we look at the preliminary statistics for April 1987, they show the NT with an unemployment rate of 6.9% which compares very favourably with the Australian figure of 8.4%. It should also be noted by honourable members that the NT has the highest work force participation rate in the whole of Australia: 73.3%. That is 17.5% higher than the Australian figure of 62.3%.

If one combines the high participation rate - and, for the benefit of honourable members, the participation rate represents the proportion of people within the 15 to 65 age group that are actually participating and regard themselves as being in the work force - with the lower unemployment rate in the NT, and then proceed to calculate the actual number of jobs as a percentage of the civilian population, it can be said that for every 100 people aged 15 years and over, 68.2 are employed in the NT compared with 57 in the rest of Australia. This equals 19.6% higher employment rates in the Northern Territory.

That is quite a clear indication that we are back on track. May I say that plans that we have put in place are progressing and job creation is occurring. There was a hiccup in our population and employment growth in 1986. I must advise honourable members that the analysis of employment figures shows that, in the March and June quarters of 1986, net interstate migration was negative. In other words, more people were leaving the Northern Territory and going interstate than were coming into the Northern Territory. That was offset significantly by natural growth as more people were born in the Northern Territory and people came from overseas. In the last 2 quarters of last year and the first quarter of this year, net interstate migration has again become positive and the population growth is continuing. Early figures show, as at December 1986, a total population growth of 2.4%. The indications are that the population turnaround is increasing together with employment growth.

One of the most significant elements of the renewed activity is the work that has been put in to encourage building and construction in the non-residential building area. Honourable members can see the results of those efforts in Darwin with the new building that is being erected at the bottom of Bennett Street, the Harbour View Building. There is a new hotel

under construction now on the Esplanade and Peel Street and construction has commenced at the new private hospital adjacent to the Royal Darwin Hospital at Tiwi. Other developments are coming into the Trade Development Zone. All of these developments are bringing employment back into the building and construction industry and starting to turn around the decline experienced during the first half of last year as a consequence of the close-down of many major construction jobs at a time when there was nothing else coming through the system.

It has taken us time to get new projects up and going. The work force is now returning and, over the next 6 to 12 months, we will see a resurgence of activity. It may not reach the boom levels of previous years but we will certainly see a return to a healthy economic situation for much of the business community in the Winnellie and Berrimah areas and the CBD as workers come back into town for construction purposes. Business cash flows will increase and provide some relief over the next 6 months.

Maintaining our economy on a construction basis cannot be seen as a long-term aim. That is why there is so much emphasis now on the marketing and promotion of tourism development, along with the activities of the Minister for Industries and Development in building up our manufacturing, fishing and related industry base in Darwin. These developments will provide a further underpinning to our economy, to pick up and continue the growth created by the initial impetus the economy has received through our considerable efforts over the last 12 months to turn the situation around.

I am very confident that the restructuring of the economy on a sounder basis is progressing and that we will meet our targets. The Northern Territory will continue to grow in a positive direction. We will be able to do that by the freeing up of private enterprise resources, without the necessity of pumping in vast amounts of government money which, quite frankly, we do not have available to us now.

Finniss River Land Claim

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can he advise what is happening with respect to the Finniss River land claim?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unlike members opposite, I become rather nervous at times of federal elections because they are usually give-away times and another piece of Territory is gone. Recently, I received advice from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that he intends to grant the land in areas 1 and 2 of the Finniss River land claim to a single land trust. I have already enlightened honourable members on the fact that the Northern Territory government has gone to great lengths in recent times to negotiate various packages with Aboriginal traditional owners. In this particular instance, and bearing in mind that once again it is a federal election, I find the timing of this decision curiously coincidental.

For the benefit of honourable members, Mr Justice Toohey made his recommendations on 22 May 1981 - 6 years ago. For the last 6 years, the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has been grappling with the question of detriment. It is strangely coincidental that, on the eve of an election, the minister proposes to hand over only 57 km² out of a total area of 275 km²

recommended by Justice Toohey. The federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has not reached a decision on detriment relating to the other 3 areas of the claim, although we are advised that officers in his department are actively working on the matter at the moment.

It is election time. The Labor Party has an airy-fairy, left-wing, trendy, 'let's give the Territory away' candidate. His alias is Warren Snowdon, Central Land Council employee and ALP candidate for the House of Representatives. He has some very clear and concise views on Aboriginal land rights in the Territory. Let us hope that the people of the Territory are listening because here is the big chance for honourable members opposite.

I have sat in a room on 3 separate occasions with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Clyde Holding, and we have negotiated various packages involving certain amendments to the federal Northern Territory Land Rights Act, the only one in its existence in Australia. I want to know from the honourable members opposite if they support their House of Representatives candidate. Which of them over there has the guts to stand up and back him on this particular issue?

Four of the issues we have been trying to negotiate in the terms of the Northern Territory Land Rights Act - and members opposite raised this, not me - have involved claims to public purpose land ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister was asked a quite specific question about the progress of the Finnis River land claim. I thought he answered it admirably, but he has not touched on that specific question during the last 2 or 3 minutes of his current address.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I would ask the minister to restrict his reply to the question.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I will be as brief as possible in concluding my remarks.

It is important to note that the Northern Territory government has gone all the way down the line to agree to all the elements put forward by the federal government and the land councils, particularly in relation to excisions, yet the federal government still holds the gun at our head and refuses to pass amendments in the federal parliament. These are amendments it has guaranteed us, on 3 separate occasions, that it would pass.

Going back to the Finnis River claim, it is apparent that Mr Holding's grandstanding is likely to backfire. I will simply say that I am sure that, like me, honourable members of this Assembly have received various representations from the 3 Aboriginal groups involved in the claim, concerning their internal disputes over Wagait and their disputes with the Northern Land Council. It borders on being sickening that, after 6 years of waiting and grappling with the facts and problems associated with this particular land claim, on the eve of a federal election, the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs suddenly decides that he can only grant certain areas which he knows full well will bring about maximum political advantage for him and a minimum for everybody else involved. As I said, I fully expect the decision to backfire on him in a mammoth way.

Alleged Liquor Purchases on Departmental Order Numbers

Mr SMITH TO CHIEF MINISTER

What action is he taking to examine allegations made in a letter to the editor of the NT News that large amounts of alcohol have been ordered on public service department order numbers? The specific order numbers given were: CM0337 for a sum of \$2500, CM0524 for a sum of \$4000 and CM0192 for a sum of \$2000.

ANSWER

I am aware of the allegations to which the honourable member refers. Off the top of my head, I cannot confirm the details of the specific order numbers that he is quoting now. I will work on the presumption that they are the order numbers that were quoted in the newspaper. As CM order numbers relate to the Department of the Chief Minister, they were Department of the Chief Minister's order numbers and, as such, I did have the matter investigated.

Mr Speaker, those orders were for alcohol. Honourable members may like to know that those orders were filled for the Administrator's residence, and that is where the alcohol went. All items ordered against those order numbers went to the Administrator's residence, and that is not to suggest in any way that that was improper. I make that very clear because the fact is that the Administrator performs a very important role. As well as being the titular head of state in the Northern Territory, he also has a very significant protocol role. As recently as Monday of this week, a significant function was held at Government House which, of course, was the annual cocktail party celebrating the Queen's birthday. His Honour happens to be the Queen's representative in the Northern Territory. I know the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were there, and I am sure they enjoyed themselves, as did other people.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would again remind honourable members that the question session of the Assembly is broadcast live by 2 radio stations and, in courtesy to people who are listening, I ask all members to cease their interjections.

Mr HATTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point I am making is that the Administrator has a significant and important protocol role and I know the Leader of the Opposition would not deny the propriety of that function, the way in which it is carried out and the importance in the overall function of government of the Administrator's role as the titular head of state. Some part of those beverages were probably enjoyed by the Leader of the Opposition, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other people. I make that point, and I hope that answers the Leader of the Opposition's question.

Mr Speaker, there is a danger of all sorts of wild assumptions coming from these campaigns of half-baked allegations that often appear, without any basis in fact, in the newspapers.

Food Stalls

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

There has been considerable comment regarding the operation of food stalls in open areas in places such as Smith Street Mall. These comments have related particularly to policing of health regulations. Is he aware of the concerns of people regarding hygiene in these situations and what inspections are carried out to make sure health requirements are adhered to in these circumstances?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the circumstances of the various food outlets in the Mall and other places, such as the Parap market and Rapid Creek markets on a Sunday. Quite frankly, I believe that they are a colourful innovation to the Darwin way of life and are playing a major role as tourist attractions and that many local people enjoy the services that these people provide. They operate under permit from the Darwin City Council and, in fact, are inspected regularly by the health inspectors of the Department of Health and Community Services, usually on a 2-weekly basis.

The people who operate the stalls have been given advice by members of my department on ways in which they should, first of all, handle the food, cook the food and, of course, distribute the food to the customers. Given the advice that these people have been given, the conditions under which they operate and the continual inspections that they are subject to, it is very unlikely that anybody who eats the food provided by these people will suffer any ill effects.

Lake Amadeus Land Claim

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I preface my question by referring him to his previous answer to a question concerning what he referred to as the Lake Amadeus land claim. I will further preface my question by reminding him of a little of the history of this subject concerning events which took place in advance of the fairly short time frame within which he appears to be operating.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will ask his question.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, with due respect, I am prefacing a question. I believe I have done so shortly. I believe it is important information for the honourable minister ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will obey the instructions of the Chair and ask his question.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, with due respect, I prefaced my question. I used the appropriate form of words. I believed I was doing so as briefly as possible.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member has no right whatsoever to preface questions. He must simply ask the question.

Mr BELL: Why did the Country Liberal Party government alienate part of the Lake Amadeus land claim in 1981? Is he aware that, as a result of the

problems created by previous Country Liberal Party governments, that is exactly the problem that he is purporting to solve?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government takes various actions in the interests of all Territorians and reserves the right to do so.

Work Skill Australia Program

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, will he advise this Assembly of the Northern Territory's involvement in the Work Skill Australia Program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I am sure you would be aware, the Work Skill Australia Program is a good news story and it involves contestants from the Northern Territory. The program was launched in 1982 with the goal of establishing a national system of Work Skill competitions in an effort to provide an incentive for young people to attain high skill levels. That is something that is lacking in some education systems and the Work Skill Australia Program was set up to combat it. The competition is based on regional competitions held every 2 years. These are followed by national finals with finalists competing in the International Skill Olympics. In Adelaide later this month, 10 young Territorians, including 5 from Darwin and 5 from Alice Springs, from a wide cross-section of trades, including cabinet-making, hairdressing and cooking, will compete against winners from 30 Australian regions. Finalists from the competition will meet in Sydney in February 1988 to compete in the 29th International Skill Olympics.

I am sure that all members of the Assembly will join with me in wishing every success to the 10 young competitors from the Territory. I will be meeting with the 5 Darwin contestants shortly and I believe the Deputy Chief Minister will be meeting with the Alice Springs contestants before they leave for Adelaide. We wish them well.

Composition of Planning Appeals Committee

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In view of the fact that the composition of the Appeals Committee set up under the Planning Act is less than fair to local interests when it hears appeals from decisions of the different planning authorities, and considering that a proposed change is supported by the Local Government Association as an initiative of the Litchfield Shire, can the minister tell me if he would consider amending the Planning Act so that 1 of the 3 members of the Appeals Committee is a local person nominated by the relevant local government authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that ministers of the government are always more than willing to consider any matter. I have not as yet been briefed on nor received any proposition from the Department of Lands or the Chairman of the Planning Authority to change the composition of the Appeals Committee.

I am aware of moves by local government authorities to ensure that there is at least some form of local representation on appeals committees. However, I can equally see much advantage in having a non-local person on an appeals committee, provided the person is properly qualified to deal with the issues at hand, albeit that most of them are architectural or engineering ones. It could be argued that a local person would bring in an element of bias that would not otherwise exist. However, I am happy to advise the member for Koolpinyah that I will take up the issue and ensure that I am properly briefed. If there is a recommendation on its way to me, I will endeavour to deal with it in the shortest possible time so that I can advise the member for Koolpinyah of my decision.

Fringe Benefits Tax

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition inferred that John Howard would not be removing the fringe benefit tax. Is the Chief Minister aware of the comments to which I refer and, if so, is he able to confirm the accuracy of the Leader of the Opposition's remarks?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during last night's debate, the Leader of the Opposition took great pains to imply that the impending Howard-Sinclair government would retain the fringe benefits tax. I can advise that I have made the effort to double-check the facts because the implication was so contrary to everything that I know about of the policies of the Liberal and National Parties. I can advise the honourable member quite emphatically that the fringe benefits tax legislation will be abolished under a coalition government after 11 July. It will be abolished along with the capital gains tax, the assets test on pensioners and the cessation of other negative gearing, as part of overall policies to improve the investment climate to create some wealth and some real jobs instead of the short-term, make-work jobs that have flowed from this country's biggest-spending government ever.

I just want to clarify one point about fringe benefits tax. Fringe benefits tax means that, where a non-cash benefit such as housing rental, a vehicle or air fare is provided to an employee, the employer is required to pay tax over and above the expense of providing the benefit itself. Prior to this legislation being enacted, going right back to before 1920, the Taxation Act provided that those non-cash benefits were assessable income for employees and were taxable. The fact is that successive governments had never been prepared to take on the task of trying to collect that tax from employees. I have memories of the 1970s when the Fraser government sought to collect those taxes and was blocked by the coalminers over housing provisions. Obviously, Mr Howard has learned his lesson from that. Equally, he has recognised the total inequity of making the employer pay tax on what is often a legally enforceable condition of employment. It is absolutely inequitable to charge the employer a tax on that.

Yesterday, on the Ray Martin program, Mr Howard said that there were some justifiable cases such as housing in remote communities or cars which are essential for employment which will not be subject to tax paid by the employee. However, he said that abuse of the system would not be tolerated. He used the example of an employee with a Potts Point house, a holiday house or a luxury Rolls Royce as an employee benefit and said that that person would have to pay tax on those things. I do not object to the employee receiving

those benefits and paying income tax on them. I know the Leader of the Opposition would not object either because I remember a debate in this House last year when he made the point that these are benefits and should be taxed.

Mr Howard, unlike Mr Keating in his raid on the Northern Territory, does not intend to tax the provision of essential services to people working in remote communities. He is focusing on frills and rip-offs in the system and he has said that he will tax the employee for those. This option has always been available to governments and it is about time somebody took it up. The Labor government did not need to apply its nonsensical, inequitable and unjust fringe benefits tax which has done so much to destroy business confidence and investment, particularly in the remote areas of Australia. I look forward to a new government that will not be big-taxing and big-spending.

Mr Smith: Do you support the taxing of air fares?

Mr HATTON: The Leader of the Opposition is interjecting. I will tell him a few things.

Mr Keating continually takes the opportunity to talk about the Fraser government being a big spender. Let me say that the Fraser government's expenditure growth averaged 2.1% per year.

Mr Smith: Is John Howard going to tax air fares?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, that compares with 3.9% per year under this current Hawke-Keating government. If the Labor government's expenditure growth in the last 4 years had equated to the average of the Fraser years, total government expenditure over the period would have been \$20 000m less and the budget would have been in surplus for the last 2 financial years.

The Keating government is, without doubt, Australia's biggest taxing government of all time. Listen to this list of little taxes it has sneaked in: July 1983, lump sum superannuation tax; August 1983, automatic biannual indexation of traditional excises of beer, cigarettes and petroleum; February 1984, the introduction of a 1% medicare levy; July 1984, resource rent tax and a new excise on oil production; August 1984, 10% wine tax; July 1985, abolition of concessional expenditure rebates, abolition of negative gearing and removal of medicare levy limits; September 1985, disallowance of entertainment expenditure and capital gains tax introduced; July 1986, fringe benefits tax, bureaucratic substantiation provisions introduced; August 1986, new sales tax, 20% wine tax and large increase in excise on petrol; December 1986, increase in medicare levy to 1.25%; July 1987, increase in corporate tax rate from 46% to 49% and foreign tax credit system introduced. That is why this country is being strangled to death. This high-taxing, high-spending government totally refuses to recognise the necessity of cutting back on its own nonsensical expenditure programs and taking its foot off the throat of business and allowing it to get on with investment.

Darwin Rifle Club

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Can he confirm that the 1988 Queen's Shoot and the Australian Titles will be able to be conducted on the Winnellie Rifle Range or is it intended to complete the new range in time for these events?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am able to assure members of the Assembly and the shooting fraternity at large that the Darwin Rifle Club Range will not be expected to relocate until December 1988. Of course, that is well after the scheduled time for the Queen's Shoot.

Compulsory Transferees to NTPS

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is the position, in relation to the cuts to public service conditions announced yesterday, of compulsory transferees from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Public Service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have looked fairly closely at that question. I can inform the Leader of the Opposition and all honourable members that compulsory transferees who are not covered by awards will be picked up in the overall proposals. People who are covered by awards will have to be treated differently in so far as we would have to go to the Arbitration Commission to seek a variation to awards which cover them.

Frances Bay Mooring Facility

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In March, the Labor candidate for Casuarina stated that the Frances Bay Mooring Facility was a disgrace and a white elephant. Can the minister give this Assembly a report regarding its current status?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware of the statements made by members of the Labor Party in the past about how the sheltered berth in Darwin would be a financial disaster. I am pleased to advise that, at present, all 85 berths in the facility are booked. If any berths are vacant, it is not because they have not been booked; it is either because the vessels have not arrived or are still unloading prior to going to their berths.

The reason why the facility is full now, in mid-year, is because this is the first year in which the northern prawn fishery has been closed for the second time in a season. This is a result of low catches over recent years. Many experts believe that over-fishing has occurred and both industry and government have agreed that, for the time being, there will be 2 closures of the northern prawn fishery each year. This means that, in addition to the sheltered mooring facility being occupied during the closed season from December to April each year, which is the period when we all expect it to be very much occupied, it will also be occupied from about 22 June to 30 July.

This will obviously provide a boost to some Darwin businesses which may have been experiencing difficulties recently. I am pleased to say that a group of Darwin businesses has had the initiative, together with the Port Authority, to offer a range of services to vessel owners whilst they are in port. It is a testing period for the Darwin service industry which has the opportunity to show vessel owners that it is prepared to respond quickly to their needs while they are in port. We hope it all goes well.

The mid-year prawn season closure has been a boost to our original plans because the original projections stated that we would probably get just over 30 vessels in the facility during the first closed season. As honourable members were advised during the last sittings, the period from December to April was fully booked, as it will be next year, and the same now applies in this mid-year period. My good wishes go to the Darwin business fraternity which is offering services to vessel owners as a demonstration that the Northern Territory has the capacity to keep vessels from travelling south each year for refitting and servicing. I am sure that local businesses will welcome this opportunity with open arms.

Air Fare Proposals

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Will NTEC and DIT employees be subject to the government proposals concerning air fares and conditions of service? Will nurses lose their annual air fare entitlement under the proposed air fare deal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will be making a detailed statement later in the day answering all of those questions. People with specific existing provisions will retain those provisions. The only difference with air fares is that they will be paid in cash each fortnight.

Education Standards

Mr REED to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What impact will the recently-announced cost cutting measures, which are expected to generate savings of \$6.5m, have on the standard of education in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is very relevant at this time. It is important that people be aware of exactly what the impact will be. Most people in the Territory are aware that the Territory's finances suffered an appalling cut at the recent Premiers Conference, where \$101m was removed.

Mr Bell: That is not true.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is interesting that we have members of the opposition saying that it is not true. They have a mental fixation which deludes them into believing that, if they say something long enough, the problem will go away or people will believe it did not happen. All Territorians are aware of the fact that we now have to operate with \$101m less than we require. It is very unfortunate that this savage cut will affect all Territorians in all aspects of our daily lives and employment.

To overcome the economic problems caused by these cuts, we would have to raise our taxes and charges by 43% to 45%. By comparison, to cover the cost of its cuts, New South Wales would have to raise its charges by 7%. As a responsible government, we cannot raise taxes and charges by those amounts. There is only one other option, and that is to cut services. We are talking about a very large amount of money. If, for example, we closed down the Department of Law, we would make a saving of \$15m. We would still have to find savings of \$85m. That gives an idea of the scope of the impact of the cuts.

As was laid down in the Treasurer's economic statement, the Department of Education will be required to operate with \$6.5m less. A great deal of work has gone into determining how those cuts could be made with minimal effects. Nobody could say that there will be no effects; that would be stupid. Obviously, we have to look at ways and means of trying to ensure the cuts will not affect the quality of education to Territory children.

I would like to talk first about staff-student ratios. For many years, student-staff ratios in the Territory have been well in front of those in the rest of the country, especially at secondary level.

Mr Bell: Prove it.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I find that the interruptions from the member for MacDonnell ...

Mr Bell: Table a document. You have an army of people to do it for you. I don't believe you.

Mr MANZIE: Whether the member for MacDonnell believes me or not is not the point. He has been elected to represent people and he does not like to face facts. He likes to close his eyes to the problems ...

Mr Bell: You have not presented any facts.

Mr MANZIE: ... caused by his federal colleagues. The 2 areas in Australia which are closest to the Territory in staff-student ratios make an interesting comparison, but I will first point out what has happened here. Originally we had ...

Mr Bell: This should be a statement, Daryl.

Mr MANZIE: ... a ratio of 1 student to 16 staff ...

Mr Bell: Let us all have a bite of the cherry.

Mr MANZIE: ... at the junior high school level and 1 student to 13 staff at the senior secondary level. That does not include auxiliary staff. We have changed the basis of measuring the staff-student ratio so that it includes auxiliary staff and promotion positions. It is now 1 to 15.8 for junior high schools and 1 to 12.8 at the senior secondary level. Using the same baseline, the states with ratios closest to ours are ACT and Tasmania. Their ratios are 1 to 13 and 1 to 16 respectively. So we are still slightly in front.

I do not deny that the change in the ratio will cause a greater workload for teachers. It is obvious that class sizes will have to increase slightly, but I also have no hesitation in stating that I believe Territory teachers are

as capable as their interstate colleagues. I also believe Territory students are as capable as their interstate colleagues. Nobody would deny that the federal government cuts will make us all roll up our sleeves and work a little bit harder. We cannot make any exceptions. Our teachers are as capable as their interstate colleagues and, as such, can provide the same high standards that are supplied in the rest of the country.

That ratio will affect 50 positions in terms of staffing. I would like to assure people, as I have assured the Teachers' Federation - although it has refused to inform its members - that nobody will be sacked. It may take some time to reach the optimum level because, obviously, if a science or maths teacher leaves, a science or maths teacher has to be recruited. The information given to people has been absolutely ridiculous. Yesterday, the President of the Teachers Federation told people that 50 teachers would be sacked with another 100 to go afterwards. There is no basis for that statement except his desire to cause unrest.

Mr Bell: You have said it.

Mr MANZIE. I will say here and now that I have never said that. The member for MacDonnell is again displaying his ignorance. The sort of things that he has been saying around the Territory have obviously been ...

Mr Bell: Read a copy of the advertisement which you put in every newspaper around the place.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: Obviously, the member for MacDonnell has not taken the time to read the advertisement in detail. Maybe he cannot read. Possibly he has a mental block and has trouble understanding, but I think it is very important that the correct information is provided to people.

Mr Bell: I know of a school that is going to suffer a 20% cut.

Mr MANZIE: Another instance of the sort of misinformation being put out is the case where students at a school in Darwin were told that their school's staff would be cut by 19. That has no basis in fact, but it has caused a tremendous problem in people's homes. I think it is very important that everybody understands that the teacher-student ratio will still be marginally better than anywhere else in Australia. I do not deny that teachers will have to work a little harder, but I am sure that everybody will agree that they are at least as capable as their colleagues in some of the better-serviced states.

We will need to make a cutback in the area of over-entitlement staff. According to the staffing formula, some schools are over-staffed and we have to make sure ...

Mr Bell: This is outrageous. It has been going for 10 minutes, Daryl. This should have been a statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will cease interjecting and that is the last warning I will give.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I would like to be very brief with this answer, but I think the matter is very important. I really believe that people like the member for MacDonnell should listen to the facts so that they are in a position to ...

Mr Bell: You are being provocative ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I name the honourable member for MacDonnell.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the services of the member for MacDonnell be suspended from this Assembly.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 14	Noes 9
Mr Coulter	Mr Bell
Mr Dale	Mr Collins
Mr Dondas	Mr Ede
Mr Firmin	Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Hanrahan	Mr Leo
Mr Harris	Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Hatton	Mr Smith
Mr McCarthy	Mr Tipiloura
Mr Manzie	Mr Tuxworth
Mr Palmer	
Mr Perron	
Mr Poole	
Mr Reed	
Mr Setter	

Mr SPEAKER: As a result of the division, there being 14 ayes and 9 noes, the question is resolved in the affirmative. The member for MacDonnell is suspended from the services of the Assembly for 24 hours.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is rather disappointing that this has occurred ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister is being unnecessarily provocative. He has a specific question to answer. He has taken 15 minutes to answer already. He could at least ensure that the remainder of his answer is relevant.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but the honourable minister will confine his remarks to the question.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I am trying to provide some factual information for members and my reason for saying that I was disappointed was that I am aware that the member for MacDonnell has addressed some public meetings and his facts have not been correct. I hope he reads Hansard so that his public addresses will be closer to the facts.

Mr Speaker, disappointingly, we will have to bring over-entitlement staff back to the levels specified in the school staffing formula. As I said, some schools have been staffed in excess of their requirements but we now have to come back to the baseline. There will be cutbacks in some programs relating to the teaching of English as a second language. Most of us will recall that the federal Labor government reduced its funding in that area last year and all states were affected very badly. In the Territory, we managed to divert some of our very scarce financial resources to keep the program going. However, following the most recent cuts to our funding, we are no longer able to maintain our funding of the program which we believe is a very important one. Funding reductions will mean an increase in the size of some withdrawal

classes. We will not be cutting them out, but the teachers involved will have to carry a slightly heavier workload than before.

Special education is quite a large area and annual expenditure is normally around \$3m. That will be cut by 5% which will mean extra effort for the people involved. Again, I would like to ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I draw your attention to order of the day No 3, the economic statement presented by the Treasurer on the last sitting day. That economic statement is quite clearly a matter of debate before this Assembly. Its contents include specific mention of cuts of \$6.5m to education. Mr Speaker, I put it to you that the appropriate place for the minister's remarks is in the context of that economic statement, as provided for in standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, we will continue to give as much support as possible in the area of special education. There has been a tremendous amount of misinformation put about. I believe this is because of people's genuine fear that there will be a great decline in the quality of education. That will not occur.

There will have to be some cuts in services provided by literature production centres for bilingual schools. As all members know, we have the largest number of bilingual schools in the country, far more than any other state. Considerable resources are put into these schools which perform an important role. No one here would suggest that they should be phased out. I think the opposite is the order of the day. However, we must rationalise the way we are expending money there. For example, when we have several centres producing literature in the same language, we will reduce those to 1 centre. Some language groups have up to 3 separate production centres in 3 separate areas and we will have to move those back to 1 area.

Mr Ede: That is one of the few areas of Aboriginal employment that is really needed and he wants to cut it out.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart's comment has some truth in it. It is an area of Aboriginal employment and we are going to keep the majority of the literacy workers in local communities on our payroll. I must reiterate that it is not something this government is proud about having to do, but the bottom line is that the federal government has taken a tremendous amount of money away from the Northern Territory. As I said, that is going to affect everybody in the Territory.

I must stress again that the cuts to education do not mean that we are dropping below standards elsewhere in the country. We will still be slightly in front. I do not resile from the fact that it means that people are going to be working harder than before, but we must accept that we are all being affected by what the federal Labor government does. I think it is important that the community realises that money does not grow on trees. The way we have been treated means that we have to transfer those costs.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing order 112(1) quite clearly says that questions cannot be debated. The minister was asked a question which, in my view, he has comprehensively answered. It concerned the effects of the \$6.5m cuts in education. He has gone beyond that and he is now debating the matter in answer to a question, where we cannot respond to it.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would suggest that the honourable minister keeps his remarks as brief as possible.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am keeping my remarks quite brief because it is a very complex subject and it is very important. It relates to people throughout the Territory.

We have also looked at Aboriginal attendance at pre-schools. At present, children using pre-schools in outlying areas are able attend for the full day whereas, in the urban areas, attendance at pre-schools has been for half-day sessions. We are requiring pre-schools in Aboriginal communities to allow attendance for half-days only which is the same as for urban pre-schools.

I will mention pre-schools fees very briefly. At present, attendance at pre-schools is not compulsory. We build the pre-schools and staff them and we are asking parents to contribute \$3 per attending child. We do not like doing that but I think honourable members will remember that the federal government cut out funding to pre-schools 2 years ago and that we picked it up. However, we cannot continue to carry on funding services to an extent which is greater than that in the states. We have been cut very heavily.

In summary, while there are imposts, they will not affect the quality of education. Both students and teachers will probably have to put in slightly more effort but, and it is very important that people are aware of this, education is one of this government's highest priorities. It is the young people of the Territory who will take over and keep the Territory going in the years to come. It is a very important aspect of government and we are making sure that the quality of education will not decrease. However, we must remember that the Hawke-Keating mini-budget cuts have really affected the Northern Territory and that every area of the Territory has to shoulder some responsibility.

Bed Tax

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

I refer to the tourist industry's reaction to the proposed bed tax and the losses that will be incurred in trying to maintain good faith with those who have booked or prepaid their holidays. Is he aware of any industry plans to retaliate by charging travelling government officers the full commercial rate and would he confirm that, if that occurred, the government would lose most of the savings that it could realistically expect to gain through the imposition of the tax?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for the honourable member's benefit, I will answer the question on behalf of the Treasurer who has carriage of the legislation in this Assembly. It is normal practice in question time for questions concerning legislation to be answered by the minister responsible for that legislation.

The Stamp Duty Amendment Bill is on the Notice Paper under order of the day No 1. Subject to anything alarming happening in this Assembly, it will come forth at about 11.20 am or 11.30 am today. It will be debated following the second-reading speech. All of the issues addressed by the member for Stuart will be dealt with. I have had some discussion with the industry, but I will address all the pertinent facts ...

Interjection from the public gallery.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will tolerate no disturbances whatsoever in the public gallery. If there is a repeat of that performance, I will have no hesitation in clearing the entire gallery.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, it is my intention to further address all relevant facts relating to the industry's concerns in the second-reading debate of the bill today.

Territory Allowance

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is the justification for public servants receiving amounts of Territory allowance that exceeds those in the private sector?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is a question that many people in the private sector have been asking for a long time. I do not know if honourable members are aware of the different basis of calculating Territory allowance throughout the Territory. In fact, there is quite a significant difference.

In the private sector, people north of the 20th parallel receive \$866 and people south of the 20th parallel receive \$350 as a Territory or district allowance. In the public sector, people with dependants receive \$2237 per annum as an allowance and people without dependants receive \$1277. For many years, the private sector has had a problem in attracting people to the Territory when people in the public sector were receiving a much greater allowance. It meant that people would drift away from the private sector into the public sector.

Obviously, people will take an allowance if it is offered. In 1982, the Arbitration Commission decided that the Territory allowance was no longer justified in the public sector. It froze it at the then current figure and that is what has been paid ever since. It was stated quite clearly that the allowance was no longer justified. That is my belief and it is the belief of this government.

Land and Fire Services Tax

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to TREASURER

Can the Treasurer give me details of the proposed land tax and fire services tax? Despite making extensive inquiries, I cannot find out a single solitary detail.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is indeed heartening that the member for Koolpinyah cannot find any details of that particular proposal at this stage. As I said in my economic statement, it was a matter that was under consideration and we did not intend to move on it at this stage. They are additional revenue-raising measures for implementation in the event of other measures not being successful.

The member for Jingili returned from Brisbane recently. He brought back a copy of the Brisbane Sun with a front page headline indicating that there would be an increase of 50% in the fire service levy in Queensland, taking it from \$42 per year to \$72 per year. Fire service levies are implemented right throughout Australia. Indeed, the member for Koolpinyah recently attended a meeting I held with the combined rural volunteer fire brigades where there was discussion about the possibility of levying local landholders to cover the cost of running rural volunteer fire brigades. It is not a new tax in Australia. Indeed, it was the original means of funding fire stations. Honourable members may recall that some buildings used to have signs indicating the name of the company which insured them.

There is nothing new in a fire services levy. The government is giving consideration to its implementation. At this stage, our budget negotiations are continuing and we have no intention of implementing levies at the moment.

Kakadu National Park

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In the past, the minister has advocated multiple uses for Kakadu National Park and has been rebuffed by ANPWS. Have there been any developments that might cause him to believe that there might be a change of heart on the part of ANPWS in the future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. There have indeed been some rather startling happenings but, unfortunately, they are geographically based. They occur only in states where a Labor government is in power. I refer honourable members to that magnificent Labor state of South Australia where, in contrast to the Northern Territory, uranium can be mined.

Honourable members will be aware that I have advocated multiple land use for national parks in the Territory, such as Kakadu, for a long time. Indeed, I have made representations to various federal ministers and I recently had the opportunity to address the UNESCO World Heritage Committee where I suggested that it should consider multiple land use rather than just closing up parks in the Northern Territory.

Negotiations in South Australia on a station owned by the Kidman family show where we have gone wrong. The South Australians have recognised the shortcomings of Derek Ovington. They have gone to the Deputy Director of ANPWS, whose name is Mr Nicholas Newland. I will read from page 3 of the Adelaide Advertiser of 22 June in order to show what Labor states can get way with in contrast to the more conservative side of politics. The federal government is willing to bend the rules for South Australia but not for the Northern Territory. The Adelaide Advertiser article is headed: 'Unique Reserve Plan for the Cooper Basin Region'. Remember, the Labor Party in the Northern Territory does not even have a mining policy so I would expect opposition members to be just a little bit quiet during my answer. They have demonstrated in this Assembly, time and time again, that they have nothing to contribute in terms of providing meaningful full-time employment to Territorians.

Under the heading, 'Unique Reserve Plan for the Cooper Basin Region' the article says: 'In what was a first in Australia in conservation, the reserve will cater for multiple-use interests: tourism, conservation and the mining

of natural resources'. It goes on to say that the reserve will be protected under the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act. Here in the Northern Territory, with the same Sydney-based ANPWS and the same act, we are not allowed to get out there and realise the potential of Kakadu. There is no problem in the Cooper Basin area of South Australia. We read that the 'region's reserve concept is a uniquely South Australian solution to achieving a balance between interests of conservation, tourism and the use of natural resources'. Here in the Territory, we are told that that cannot happen and that we cannot have that balance of different interests.

Of course, the difference is that South Australia has control over its own land and has its own act. Here in the Territory, we have the Leader of the Opposition's federal colleagues looking after us. The party which he represents here in the Northern Territory is in control of our national parks. It does not control parks in South Australia where his other colleague, Hon John Bannon, is in charge. There, uranium can be mined and there can be multiple land use in national parks. The Prime Minister of Australia, the Leader of the Opposition's colleague, controls national parks and mining in the Territory. How long can Australians put up with that type of justice being meted out by the federal government? It is a complete nonsense. The mine at Jabiru has now produced \$1200m of wealth from an area of 4 km², and that is just scratching the surface.

Opportunities are available to us if the federal government would get its foot off our neck. We could go ahead and be the richest 150 000 people in Australia today. Instead, we see the nonsensical policies of the federal Labor government as it prepares for the election on 11 July. Mr Speaker, it is time we got rid of this disparity between what can be done in one part of Australia and what can be done in another.

Payment of Committee Members

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In these times of severe economic restraint, why is the Chief Minister promoting to the Remuneration Tribunal that members of this Assembly should receive extra payment for their duties on parliamentary committees?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have referred the position of Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to the Remuneration Tribunal for consideration. It is up to the tribunal itself to determine whether or not there is any justification for an allowance. It seems quite appropriate to me, given that people like the Opposition Whip and Deputy Leader of the Opposition receive special allowances, that the position of Chairman of one of the most time-consuming committees of this House should be considered by the Remuneration Tribunal.

Territory Abattoirs

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Could the minister provide advice on the current operating status of Northern Territory abattoirs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am sure honourable members will be pleased to know that 9 abattoirs are currently operating in the Northern Territory. The big abattoir at Mt Isa is not in operation this year and that is somewhat unusual. That abattoir traditionally has processed a very large number of Northern Territory cattle. At present, we have 5 abattoirs licensed for export meat: Mudginberri, Point Stuart, Meneling, Katherine and Achilles. The Achilles abattoir in Tennant Creek is a horse meat abattoir. The total throughput for the export abattoirs is a little over 800 head per day.

Honourable members will be aware that the Katherine abattoir opened up this year for the first time in 3 years. That has been very good news for Katherine because it has provided more economic activity in the vicinity of the town than was there a little while ago. There were some initial problems with the plant and equipment, as can be expected from a meatworks which has not operated for 2 years. Management seems to have overcome those problems and I am advised that the slaughter rate is approximately 200 head per day. It is aiming for a kill of 300 head per day during the course of the season. There are an additional 4 abattoirs in the Territory processing for the domestic market: Angliss abattoirs in Darwin which is running at very low capacity, Marshall's at Tennant Creek, Victoria Valley and Nelson Springs. Another 4 abattoirs are not expected to open this season: Urapunga, Curtin Springs, Alice Springs and Amoongana.

With these export and domestic abattoirs opening, there is an opportunity for the cattleman in the Northern Territory to obtain the best possible price as a result of the competition among buyers. It is a little sad that Mt Isa has had to close because that would have provided a little more competition. We trust that the pastoral industry will get maximum benefit out of this processing during the course of 1987.

Beaufort Hotel Debts

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

What agreement, if any, has been entered into with the liquidator of the Beaufort Hotel for the repayment of debts owing to the Territory for electricity, water and sewerage, and payroll tax? Is the electricity payment a first-order payment or is it to be made after a number of other creditors with higher priority have been paid?

ANSWER

As I have advised honourable members before, the Northern Territory government is in a very good position in terms of having its money returned in full. There is a section in the Northern Territory Electricity Commission Act which stipulates that we decide who will become a customer. I have made it quite clear to the bankers and the liquidator that it is the intention of the government that, unless we are paid in full, we will not be reconnecting ...

Mr Smith: You will not be able to do that.

Mr COULTER: Have you ever heard a more negative attitude than that of the member for Millner? We are well aware of what the Labor policy has been on this. The Leader of the Opposition said on many occasions that he would have put money into it to keep it open.

Mr Smith: I also would have taken more security.

Mr COULTER: That is the position of the Labor Party, unless it has changed and unless the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is making a takeover bid as spokesman on this particular issue. That is what it wanted to do.

In conjunction with the other creditors, the banks decided to sell it to another operator. There are many potential operators who are now vying for the Beaufort Hotel and the complete centre. I believe that it will be sold in a very short time and be back in operation. The negativism from the benches opposite never fails to amaze me. I will have to tolerate that. We have spoken about that on many occasions. I would have thought that, as a result of the censure motion, the Leader of the Opposition would have woken up by now. Apparently he has learnt nothing, and that is to be expected.

The point is that there is a section in the act which can be used in this situation. I have told the liquidator that he should make that known to any potential buyer of the Beaufort. Indeed, I mentioned that to many of the people who have approached me regarding the purchase of the facility. We will be paid.

Beaufort Hotel Debts

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, my supplementary question requires a simple yes or no answer. Has the government or officers of the government been able to enter into an arrangement with the liquidator for the repayment of those debts?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have had discussions. The liquidator and the major creditor are aware of the Northern Territory government's position.

Mr Ede: What is the ranking?

Mr COULTER: When you have the power not to reconnect until the bill is paid, what does it matter what the ranking is? We are in a very good position to recover the debt and we will recover the debt.

Government Negotiations with Trades and Labor Council

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Would he tell the Assembly why the negotiations with the Trades and Labor Council broke down?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to answer the question because I think it is important that the reasons for the breakdown in negotiations with the TLC are made clear. There is a whole range of things being said in terms of our not really caring about making any agreements with the TLC. That was not the case.

I called for a meeting with the TLC well over 2 weeks ago and put to it a range of options that the Territory government was considering as a means of picking up \$21.5m from public service conditions. That amount of money was

considered to be fair and reasonable considering that, in toto, we were trying to pick up \$92m out of costs to the Territory government in this financial year. That \$92m has been taken from a whole range of areas. The private sector is suffering because we have had to make cuts in the capital works program and housing. That will mean the loss of jobs in the private sector, Mr Speaker. I am not saying that to frighten people. People are aware of it. The fact is that we had to find the money. The money had been ripped off us and we had to get that money back.

\$21.5m out of conditions which are valued at more than \$100m above those received by the private sector is not a big deal. It is absolutely essential that we get that money. I called for a meeting with the TLC. I put to it the options of this government and it went away with them. I gave it the opportunity to consider a range of options. I gave it space in a building. I provided a telephone and desks and government employees to assist it. The TLC used that time to frustrate negotiations with the government. It would not come back and talk to me on a one-for-one basis. It would not come back and put to me the options that it proposed. It wanted to take a whole 2 weeks and come back to me, 24 hours before we had to make a decision, with a range of options that just did not stand up. Out of its range of options, we identified about \$1.8m worth of cuts because the figures do not stand up. No way in the world do the figures stand up, and that can be adequately demonstrated.

The night before last, I met with the TLC. The meeting lasted for 6½ hours and I put up with 6½ hours of personal abuse. I put up with that because I was determined to get an agreement out of the TLC. But I do not have to stand for that, and I knew that I was going back there last night to face the same thing again. The meeting opened with personal abuse, and I would not care to repeat the things that those people said. I would not be prepared to repeat them. They knew that we had to reach a decision on 24 June because, if decisions were delayed until September, October or November, we would have to pick up a damn sight more than \$21.5m.

Mr Speaker, there is no way that the TLC representatives were prepared to discuss any of the government options with me. They were determined to speak about every one of their options and we spent 6½ hours being diverted back to those options. They made no attempt to speak about ours and, if we tried to bring them in, there was just a continuing overriding discussion. The TLC representatives had no intention of reaching an agreement which included any of our options. It had to include only theirs. They had the government's options and they were not prepared to put them to their members. The options which the government announced last night were given to the TLC the night before last. They did not mention them at their meeting yesterday, which they say 5000 people attended. They did not put them to those people.

Mr Speaker, I have tried everything to get an agreement out of the TLC that picked up \$21.5m worth of conditions. They say that are going to give up conditions. But what do they give up? They want to give up some of their own work practices - work practices which are costing us dollars because they have become entrenched and cannot be aborted by means of this government's budget. The government has an absolute and total resolve to pick up \$21.5m in this area. I did not think this 2 weeks ago, as my Cabinet colleagues and party members could tell you. I believed then that we could resolve this issue by negotiation because I had some faith then in the ability of the TLC to come to such a settlement. However, its representatives' approach to the negotiations was to talk about their options but forget about ours. That was not satisfactory to me. It was not satisfactory to my government colleagues and

it was not satisfactory to the people of the Northern Territory. The choice is between cuts to conditions or cuts to jobs. I have settled for conditions that will keep people in jobs in this Territory.

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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.



25 June 1987

2. **University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-time students are enrolled at the University College of the Northern Territory?
2. How many part-time students are enrolled?
3. How many students who completed Year 12 at Northern Territory schools are:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents at the University College?
4. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Arts faculty?
5. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Science faculty?

University College of the Northern Territory *149

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STATEMENT
Call at Question Time

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, during the recess, some criticism was made of the giving of the call at question time. For the information of honourable members, I advise that I give the call on the following basis. The call is alternated between the government and the opposition sides of the Chamber. At the start of question time, if the Leader of the Opposition rises first, I will give the call to him. If, however, a government backbencher is the first to rise, I will give the call to him. The Leader of the Opposition will receive the call for the opposition side whenever he rises except that, after he has had 3 calls, I will then call either of the independent members or the National Party member if they seek the call. I should also point out that, if the Leader of the Opposition does not rise, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has precedence over other opposition members. I lay on the table statistics of questions asked since the commencement of the Fifth Assembly.

Mining (Validation of Tenements) Bill

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Has the Mining (Validation of Tenements) Bill, which was rushed through the Assembly at the last sittings of the Legislative Assembly under urgency, been assented to by the Administrator and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will provide that information to the honourable member in the course of these sittings.

Vietnam Veterans

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

What is being done to ensure that Territory Vietnam veterans are able to participate in the welcome-home parade and associated celebrations to be held in Sydney next month?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very happy to provide an answer for the honourable member. The subject of the Vietnam veterans' welcome-home parade was first brought to my attention by yourself some 6 months ago. As a result of your representations, Mr Speaker, I wrote immediately to the Minister for Defence, Mr Kim Beazley, seeking his assistance in providing RAAF transportation to allow Vietnam veterans in the Northern Territory to participate in the celebrations in Sydney. Subsequently, I met with representatives of the Vietnam Veterans' Association and pledged my full support to their endeavours to be able to participate with their comrades from around Australia in that parade.

I am sure honourable members will be aware of the round of fund-raising activities undertaken by the association with the assistance of many notable members of the Territory community including His Honour the Administrator, His Worship the Lord Mayor and that doyen of fundraising, Auntie Billie Pitcheneder. Unfortunately, offers of assistance from the federal Department of Defence were very slow in coming and I sent considerable correspondence to the domestic airlines, to Qantas and to Ministers Beazley, Morris and,

finally, Senator Evans when he assumed his new portfolio responsibilities for Transport and Communications.

At first, the Department of Defence offered only limited seating on a Hercules C130 aircraft for some 40 disabled and disadvantaged veterans. Further representations from myself and from the Vietnam Veterans' Association then ensued and I was delighted to receive advice recently that the Commonwealth has finally recognised its responsibility to make some gesture of appreciation to the Territory's veterans, and will provide 186 seats to Territory veterans on Hercules C130 and Boeing 707 aircraft operated by the defence forces. I understand this will allow all Vietnam veterans in the Northern Territory who wish to attend the march in Sydney to do so.

Mr Speaker, throughout this exercise, my office has maintained a close liaison with the Vietnam Veterans' Association, and this is continuing to ensure that no last-minute hitches arise. I am extremely pleased that those veterans who wish to attend this reunion will have the opportunity on the 25th anniversary of Australia's first involvement in Vietnam of meeting with their old mates from those traumatic days. I think it is a matter of vital importance for Australia, irrespective of the controversy surrounding the Vietnam war, and it is not a matter of debate in respect of that. Each of those veterans went to war on behalf of Australia and the Australian people. The treatment those veterans received on their return is nothing short of a national scandal. Whilst it may be small compensation for those people, it is about time Australia recognised the commitment, dedication and suffering of those people on behalf of this nation.

Shire of Litchfield (Transitional Rating) Act

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Is he aware of a serious flaw in the Shire of Litchfield (Transitional Rating) Act to the effect that there is to be a legal challenge to this act which, I have been told, will be successful, and what does he intend to do about it, considering how important this legislation is to people in the rural area, including some in his electorate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure if the member for Koolpinyah is asking me for an opinion or an answer. I understand that a situation has arisen in the rural area at Churchers Estate and that the people involved in that subdivision have taken some course of legal action. It is not proper for me to comment on the issue at this stage as it is a matter that will be before the courts in the very near future.

Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

What was the outcome of the Australian Police Ministers' Council meeting held recently in Melbourne to consider Aboriginal deaths in custody and how many Aborigines have died in police custody in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in respect of the second part of that question, I would like to confine my answers to a more recent period than the last 100 years of the

Northern Territory's history. Of course, the salient period, in terms of the national debate is since 1980.

The Australian Police Ministers' Council met in Melbourne on 10 September 1987 and the meeting was attended also by Correctional Services Ministers. I was represented at that meeting by the Minister for Health and Community Services who also attended in his own capacity as minister responsible for correctional services. The object of the meeting was to consider a draft code of practice and procedures for Aboriginal detainees. It quickly transpired that the various jurisdictions already had procedures in place and the following summary of practices and procedures was produced.

(1) Where diversionary procedures or facilities are available, Aboriginals should not be detained or remanded in custody for intoxication or other minor offences unless the offender is violent or the offence is likely to continue. In cases of detention, bail or surety, procedures should be instituted as soon as possible.

(2) A member of the Aboriginal legal service or an Aboriginal liaison officer should, where feasible, have access to an Aboriginal detained or arrested. Should it be necessary to detain an Aboriginal person, every effort should be made to advise relatives, friends or the Aboriginal legal service.

(3) An Aboriginal detained or arrested who exhibits signs of mental or physical distress should receive a medical examination within 1 hour of being taken into custody by either the prison medical officer, a qualified medical practitioner, a registered nurse or, if any of the foregoing are unavailable, another suitably qualified person.

(4) Where possible, Aboriginals should be placed in a multi-prisoner cell, preferably with another Aboriginal or Aboriginals, unless there is an identified threat from placing them together.

(5) Observation of a person demonstrating mental and or physical distress, including those suffering from the effects of alcohol or drugs, should be made with sufficient frequency to ensure the well-being of persons involved.

(6) Such detainees should be placed in observation cells, where possible and appropriate, and have neckties, belts, shoelaces and other similar articles removed.

The general orders promulgated under the Police Administration Act provide for the proper supervision and treatment of all persons in custody, irrespective of race. In addition, a set of guidelines relating to the welfare of Aboriginal people under interrogation, known as the Anunga Rules, are incorporated in the general orders. The Northern Territory police procedures more than comply with the APMC Summary of Practice and Procedures.

Aboriginal people comprise some 22% of the Territory's population. Of persons taken into protective custody, some 86% are Aboriginal and Aboriginal people are similarly over-represented in the prison system. Great social disruption exists in Aboriginal communities and excessive alcohol consumption is an obvious and major symptom. Cross-cultural training of police officers and enhanced roles of police aides are ways in which the Territory is attempting to deal with these problems. The Aboriginal Community Justice

Program and the Groote Eylandt Task Force are examples of projects which attempt to get to the bases of social problems. The Northern Territory has decriminalised public drunkenness and has mounted diversionary programs such as community service orders and the juvenile wilderness camps. No one pretends that no problems exist in the Northern Territory. There is much to be done to alleviate social disadvantages affecting Aboriginal communities and what is required is programs that address fundamental problems. We are well down the road with such programs.

Rather than extend this answer for a lengthy period, I advise that I am quite prepared to provide members with details of the number of detentions and the number of deaths in police custody or prisons since 1980. I can advise that the numbers are extremely small. It would be educational for all members of this Assembly to look at the statistics which show the exceptional rarity of incidents, and also to understand the procedures which are adopted following any such deaths through the processes of coronial inquiries which thoroughly examine all the circumstances. I might say that there has never been any suggestion in the Northern Territory of anything other than misadventure or suicide in respect of any of the deaths in custody which have occurred here and there is no reason for the Northern Territory to do anything other than participate fully in this inquiry. We have nothing to hide. In fact, we have a very good and proud record in this area.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Will he table the Valuer-General's valuation of Block H at Finnis River?

ANSWER:

No.

Offshore Oil Exploration

Mr REED to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he provide information on the number, size and the previous level of exploration activity of the offshore petroleum exploration areas that were announced recently?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can certainly advise the member for Katherine on the developments that have been occurring offshore in recent months. The answer is that a second major drilling rig, the Sedco 708, which is to operate in the Jabiru Challis fields about 650 km west of Darwin, has taken up a position beside the Jabiru Venture. In fact, the Jabiru 6 well, which it will drill, is within 1 km of the Jabiru Venture, the BHP Petroleum's tanker, which is producing 30 000 barrels of oil a day at the moment.

It is interesting to realise that the last shipment of Jabiru oil went to Texas, the great oil-producing state in the United States of America. The Jabiru field is supplying Australian crude to Texas and that is a significant development. The oil from the Jabiru and Challis fields is much in demand around the world.

The Jabiru Venture is currently producing 30 000 barrels a day and it is expected that the Challis well, which is expected to be brought into production this financial year, will produce an additional 24 000 barrels a day, bringing our total for this year to the vicinity of 60 000 barrels of oil a day. BHP Petroleum now employs 100 people in Darwin, and the support service industries employ 3 times that number. BHP Petroleum's operating costs are about \$440 000 a day and, this financial year, BHP will spend approximately 50% of its total exploration budget in the Timor Sea. The BHP company has now appointed a senior executive, Mr Bob Boyson, to head the Timor Sea project. His sole responsibility will be the development of that field which is now regarded as one of the most highly prospective hydrocarbon areas in Australia today.

The drilling of the Jabiru 5 and 6 wells is expected to add another 30 000 barrels per day. That will bring the value of the Northern Territory's production of oil and gas, which 2 years ago was \$25m, to about \$254m. The money spent on exploration and production in 1986 reached a record of \$102m which trebled the amount spent in the previous year.

In December, the federal government will release another 4 blocks from the Bonaparte Gulf through to the Arafura Sea, including the areas surrounding Melville Island. If we strike a considerable oilfield in that area or even if we can repeat the success that is now occurring with the Jabiru and Challis fields, that would make the Territory a major oil and gas producing area in Australia today. In a recent seminar, the head of the giant Santos Ltd, oil and gas producers from South Australia, said that the total life of the Northern Territory's gas supply production on current usage would be 460 years compared with 20 years for South Australian production. That gives some idea of what the Northern Territory is capable of achieving with its known gas supplies.

Seismic work is being carried out there. Honourable members may be aware of the Lombardo, the seismic ship that has been serviced out of Darwin. Some 11 000 km of seismic survey has been carried out by various ships in that area. The Magnificent Crete is the most up-to-date seismic vessel in Australia today. It has the latest Texas instruments on board. We believe that the activity will increase in the next 12 months and it is hoped that Darwin in particular will become a major servicing area for this fantastic industry.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I have a supplementary question. Has a valuation of Block H at Finnis River been carried out by the Valuer-General?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, might I remind the member for MacDonnell that this has been debated previously, and a full explanation was given to this House by the member for Casuarina during the last sittings. What the member for MacDonnell is failing to do is be more specific as to the information he requires. If he is taking the issue 1 step further, I would like to know whether he has the gumption to step outside this House and say what he said last time when he virtually accused - he did not virtually accuse, but he did suggest - that the member for Casuarina was complicit in graft with his dealings as the former Minister for Lands with this particular transaction.

I am not prepared to give the member for MacDonnell any more time over the issue simply because he has made an outrageous accusation in this House, without any substantiation. I am well aware of all the pertinent details concerning Finnis River Block H. They are certainly above board and I am quite prepared to tell honourable members that the block was sold subsequently, in February this year, and there has been no expenditure of government or taxpayer's money.

'Towards the 90s'

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The government is looking at changing its direction in respect of certain aspects of education. Following the release of the document 'Towards the 90s', which is now seen as a discussion document, will he be making a statement on that particular document to enable full debate to take place in this Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the member for Port Darwin pointed out, a discussion document was released in June this year setting out scenarios for future directions for education in the Northern Territory. In the foreword to that statement, it is indicated that it comprises a series of discussion papers, that the matters in it will be canvassed and that nothing will occur until 1989.

Members interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I think that the comments from members of the opposition are indicative of their general lack of interest in knowing anything. They tend to push a line which has no relevance to the facts and, when the facts are produced, they take no notice of them. Their ignorance is one of the reasons why only 6 of them are on the other side of the House.

As I was saying, this particular document has generated a great deal of interest in the community. I have visited many schools. One of the main problems I have encountered concerning this matter is to get people to read the document instead of relying on a precis of the document put out by the Teachers Federation which bears no resemblance to the document itself. However, I am getting advice from the Education Advisory Council and a second document will be produced as a result of all of the comments about and contributions on the initial discussion document. The second document will go into a great deal of detail. It will contain all the pros and cons and will take us much closer to where we are going than did this initial discussion document.

Mr Speaker, in order to clear up many of the misconceptions and the false information and to educate the members opposite as to what the philosophies behind the document are, I will make a statement on this matter in the Assembly next week.

Water for Soapy Bore Community

Mr EDE to TREASURER

Is he aware of the situation at the Soapy Bore Community on Utopia Station? In the 1985-86 financial year, sufficient funds to upgrade

the water supply were provided to the Department of Transport and Works. Due to a change in the then Department of Community Development's policy of removing responsibility from the Department of Transport and Works and engaging outside consultants, the funds were dissipated to the extent that the simple windmill, tank and water reticulation required still has not been completed and, even now, the new school in the area does not have any water.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the full details. I thought that we had discussed the issue of Soapy Bore in the Assembly. In 1986-87, there was an accelerated water-drilling program. We entered into an arrangement with the federal government to place many more facilities, more water and considerably more effort into drilling in that particular area in the member for Stuart's electorate as well as a number of other rural areas. The problem was, of course, that the federal government withdrew a large part of the money for that accelerated water-drilling program, as I remember it, being then the Minister for Community Development and responsible. I had many discussions with the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Holding, on this particular issue. We had it taken from us. It was the typical federal government gift; it was given to us with one hand and taken from us with the other.

However, I will obtain the details on that for the honourable member and I will provide him with a briefing on the history of what has happened at Soapy Bore and the efforts that have been made. I do not have a briefing on the community with me at present, but I will endeavour to obtain that information for the member for Stuart and provide it to him.

Private Telecommunications Network

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

As minister responsible for communications, what is the current situation with regard to Telecom's offer made earlier this year to provide a private telecommunications network to the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members may recall that, in September 1986, the government invited expressions of interest for the supply, installation, commissioning and maintenance of a private network to service all government facilities in the Territory with basic voice and data services. A steering committee was established in December 1986 to consider the most interesting proposals received, including a number of options from Telecom Australia. During the early months of 1987, the steering committee met with Telecom representatives and other parties to discuss their various proposals. In general, the Telecom offers lacked the clarity and detail presented by other parties. Nevertheless, on the face of it, Telecom appeared to have the lowest price, although it was recognised by the government that the detail of its proposal needed clarification to ascertain its full extent.

That was the situation when, in March of this year, the Chief Minister announced his decision to enter into detailed negotiations with Telecom. It was the government's intention to enter into a contract subject to its being satisfied that savings on its telecommunications expenditure could be maximised. The Territory government was assisted during those negotiations by an international telecommunications expert, Dr Alex Hill, who was the chief official responsible for setting up the Alaskan government's private network

10 years ago. Dr Hill provided expert technical advice and his probing questions revealed that Telecom's original proposal did not include a number of aspects required by the government as stated in its invitation documentation and, as a result, Telecom's price went up substantially. In addition, its offer no longer embraced the level of savings expected by the government. Consequently, the government suspended negotiations with Telecom pending resolution of a number of issues outstanding.

At about the same time, however, the previous federal Minister for Communications foreshadowed a number of regulatory changes which are now being mooted within the wider debate on privatisation and deregulation, including Telecom. In May this year, the federal Treasurer delivered his mini-budget which put increasing pressure on all governments to reduce expenditure. More particularly, it required Telecom to pay certain customs duties and sales taxes for the first time. Subsequently, Telecom announced price increases of up to 30% for some products and services.

All of these factors have significant implications for the Territory government's telecommunications plans. As a result, the government decided to review its plans and commissioned the Sydney telecommunications consultants, Amos, Aked, Swift Pty Ltd, to prepare a 5-year to 10-year strategy plan. As part of the consultants' brief, the Telecom offer was again analysed. The consultants have recommended to the government that the Telecom offer be rejected because it would cost the government considerably more to accept the offer than to take the services at standard prices. In financial terms, the Telecom offer is now unattractive, due in part to Telecom's increased tariffs and charges, but also because Telecom's offer was based on the level of telephone usage which the consultants estimate to be up to 10 times greater than the government's requirements.

I advise honourable members that the government will not be proceeding with the Telecom offer. Instead, the government is currently considering a number of key measures which will achieve recurrent savings in the order of \$1m per year on the current telephone expenditure, beginning in 1988-89. The strategy plan will go to Cabinet for endorsement in the near future and will improve government management and control over its current telecommunications resources as well as greatly improving the delivery of services to the public through more efficient administration. I propose to inform the Assembly of progress of this important project during the course of the next sittings.

Video on Alice Springs Recreation Lake

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Why did he veto my request to view the Snowy Mountains Authority video on the proposed Alice Springs Telegraph Station lake even though the video has been shown to the public on several occasions over the last few years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the full details of why I actually vetoed the honourable member's right to view the video. However, there must have been a very good reason why I did that. I will discuss it with the honourable member during the course of these sittings.

Bagot Road Pedestrian Traffic Study

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has the study into pedestrian traffic across Bagot Road near Nightcliff Hotel been completed and, if so, what action does the government intend to undertake to resolve the problems in that area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this matter has been raised by a number of people including the member for Nightcliff. The large number of motor vehicle accidents involving pedestrians occurring on that section of Bagot Road has been of concern to the government. Since 1984, there have been 3 fatalities and 26 people have been injured whilst crossing Bagot Road. 24 of those accidents occurred at night. Surveys have been undertaken since 1986 to try to identify the specific factors involved in those accidents. In 1986, it was decided that we should upgrade the lighting in that area in an endeavour to improve pedestrian safety. However, accidents have continued to occur. Recently, the Road Safety Council, in association with the Department of Transport and Works and others, has undertaken some studies to try to identify any trends in pedestrian activity. Unfortunately, people choose to cross that particular section of road in a multitude of manners and at a multitude of locations.

Mention has been made of sobriety. It is extremely concerning that 13 of the 29 victims of fatal accidents had blood-alcohol readings of between 0.156% and 0.291%, an extremely high level, while the remainder varied up to 0.0339%. One really has to stretch one's imagination to understand how people can walk at all in that state. Of the 29 drivers involved in those accidents, only one indicated a blood-alcohol level over the legal limit. The alcohol-related nature of these accidents and the element of unpredictability that entails does not allow for an easy technical solution to the problem. It is obviously more a social problem than one of traffic management.

A number of options have been looked at in terms of improved safety in that area. They include the possibility of an overpass, which would be of great benefit to the pensioners who live in flats in Coconut Grove and wish to cross to the shopping centre or to catch the bus on Bagot Road. Unfortunately, I believe that a pedestrian overpass would not be of any realistic benefit to the patrons of the Nightcliff Hotel who comprise the majority of people involved in accidents in that area. Other measures under consideration include controlled traffic lights, and pedestrian crossings with appropriate barrier fencing and signs warning motorists of the danger, particularly at night. Something that might be considered is hotel management ensuring that patrons are not allowed to become excessively drunk. Many of the patrons of the hotel cross the road to obtain take-away food and perhaps there could be a service which delivers food to the hotel.

The most dangerous period is immediately after the hotel's closing time. The great majority of people involved in accidents reside in the Bagot area, and maybe there is potential for a pick-up bus or something like that. That need could be even greater now that further housing is being provided in Kulaluk, which will result in people crossing Dick Ward Drive as well. The lighting in Dick Ward Drive is up to the appropriate standards but it may need to be upgraded. I would be interested to talk to members of the Aboriginal community and to local pensioners to see how we might be able to look after people crossing those roads.

The study has not been finalised but we are looking at some preliminary measures, possibly signage. I do not want to pre-empt the Treasurer's comments but I understand there is some provision in the budget for measures to alleviate this very serious problem.

Kings Canyon Development

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TOURISM

What is the current status of the proposed Kings Canyon development?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, whilst in Melbourne recently, I had the opportunity to speak to one of the main proponents of the proposed Kings Canyon Wilderness Resort and I am pleased to advise the Assembly that it is proceeding. We are looking for an opening date next year, and legal arrangements for the leasing and title of the land are all in hand. Government departments are cooperating. Certain roads and water supplies, which are an important element of the resort development, need to be in place at an early stage. I intend to go into more detail about these matters in later discussions concerning the budget.

For the member for MacDonnell's benefit, I might also mention that, last week, I travelled to remote locations in the south of the Territory to look at various developments including the Molly Clark project on the old Andado Station, New Crown, the Dalhousie Hot Springs in South Australia, Victory Downs, Curtin Springs, Kulgera and Eridunda. It is important to note that the increase in traffic through that remote part of the Northern Territory during the last 6 months has been nothing short of staggering, and it is encouraging to note that the pastoral operators are developing facilities to meet that demand. That augurs well for the future of the Kings Canyon resort, because we are all well aware of the increased traffic whereby, in 1 month, we had a 250% increase in the visitation at the Yulara Resort over the same month in the previous year. To say that facilities were stretched a little would be an understatement. It is very important not only that Kings Canyon comes on-stream as soon as possible but that the people who offer services in the remote parts of the Territory are encouraged to do so. I think that will go hand-in-hand with the Kings Canyon resort, and I assure the House that I am doing everything I possibly can to ensure that it comes on-stream at the earliest possible date.

Groote Eylandt Task Force Coordinator

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What progress has been made on Groote Eylandt following the appointment of the Task Force Coordinator?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was very pleased when the Task Force Coordinator gave me a report yesterday. While I cannot go into a great deal of detail, obviously he is doing a magnificent job with the various communities and the people on Groote Eylandt in trying to put in place various projects, particularly in respect of petrol sniffing, and developing submissions that he will be making to other ministers. For example, he hopes for a combination of resources in the educational area with recreational facilities on Groote Eylandt to try to provide some way for the young people there to address their energies towards activities other than wrongdoing and petrol sniffing.

Without going into too much detail, I am very pleased indeed to offer the honourable member a briefing on the discussions I had yesterday. However, suffice it to say that I am thrilled with the progress that the gentleman is making over there, and the attitude of the various communities over there is to be applauded. I think it will be an extremely successful task force.

Dairy Levy

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

After his recent discussions with Fitzgeralds and Rowlands, the 2 important dairy owners in the Top End, what does he intend to do to protect their interests with regard to recent contentious developments between the states of Victoria and New South Wales over the proposed dairy levy which, if implemented, will grossly disadvantage Rowlands and Fitzgeralds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not so sure that the statement the honourable member concluded with is correct.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It will disadvantage them!

Mr PERRON: It may disadvantage them but whether it will disadvantage them further than they are disadvantaged already is another question.

I have indicated to honourable members before the Northern Territory government's attitude towards the milk levy which has been imposed under what is called 'the Kerin Plan' around Australia which, in effect, requires all consumers of milk in Australia to pay a subsidy which goes towards assisting manufacturing-grade milk to compete on international markets. The bottom line is that milk consumers are being required to support a massive over-capacity in the Australian dairy industry, particularly in Victoria. As honourable members who have watched the situation of late will be aware, a temporary truce has been reached in the war that has developed between milk marketers in Victoria and a particular supermarket chain in New South Wales. That will only last a matter of weeks. The truce was arrived at by the supermarket chain in New South Wales agreeing not to pursue legal action against milk suppliers in Victoria for breach of contract.

The milk levy relies on a gentlemen's agreement between states that they will not delve into each others areas as far as marketing milk is concerned, otherwise the milk levy could collapse. Recently, the New South Wales government has served on the federal minister, under federal legislation, a notice which requires the federal government to take a vote among all states as to whether the milk levy system should remain or not. On 2 October, the Australian Agricultural Council - that is, the Ministers for Primary Production from throughout Australia - will meet in Canberra to vote on the suspension of the levy. To date, the Northern Territory government has made its views strongly known at 2 previous meetings which I attended. It was made clear that we do not support the levy at all and that we believe it is an unfair imposition on Australian milk consumers. By and large, the states certainly do not support that line and see themselves facing some very severe political problems, particularly in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, which states see a significant portion of their dairy industry being run out of business if the dairy levy system collapses. Most of the milk consumed in Australia will be produced in Victoria where, quite clearly, it can be produced more cheaply than elsewhere. I do not know the full reason for that.

The Territory government has obtained an agreement from the federal minister that the Australian Government Solicitor will not persist with his threats of prosecution of the 2 Northern Territory dairies for non-payment of the levy in the Northern Territory until such time as this whole matter has evolved a little further. However, I point out to honourable members, as I have done to both the dairies in the Northern Territory, that the milk levy that has been imposed upon them is a legal requirement which I can do nothing about. The fact that they have not paid it means that they have a legal debt outstanding to the Australian government. The dairies are aware of that situation in persisting in their individual decisions not to pay the levy.

On 2 October, when this matter is brought to a head in Canberra, we will see what the next stage of the saga will be. I have advised both Northern Territory dairies that, if the milk levy system collapses completely in Australia, there is a possibility of milk flowing to the Northern Territory from interstate in increasing quantities in an attempt to erode their markets. Both of those dairies are prepared to accept the challenge of interstate competition. I do not think there will be any concerted effort by interstate suppliers to market in the Northern Territory because the market here is very small. However, interstate people who are struggling to stay in business will be seeking to market milk outside their borders. It could be an interesting time.

Bradshaw Terrace Bus Stop

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, my question relates to the council's decision to remove the bus stops in Bradshaw Terrace. I have a petition but, unfortunately, it does not conform with the requirement of standing orders. It has been signed by 1258 people whose signatures were collected within 16 hours of an operating day at Casuarina. Is the Minister for Transport able to provide this House with information regarding the recent discussions he has had with the Darwin City Council regarding its decision to close the Bradshaw Terrace operation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Casuarina for his interest in road safety and for bringing this matter to my attention recently, particularly the council's proposal to do away with bus stops in Bradshaw Terrace. This has been a problem for some 2 years. It does not relate simply to the bus stops but also to the volume of traffic in Linton Street outside the Casuarina Shopping Centre where there is a wide median strip but no pedestrian crossing and where a large number of people travel between the banks, the post office and the Casuarina Shopping Centre itself.

That particular section of road is heavily used, not only by pedestrians but by motor vehicles, and it is also on a bus route. At the request of the shopping centre and bus passengers, the department approached the council about putting in bus stops to allow shoppers direct access into and out of the shopping centre.

There is significant danger on that section of road and, whilst one might be able to argue that bus stops create added dangers, I have yet to be convinced that any dramatic change will come about through the removal of the bus stops. My concern is that, without consultation and proper inquiry, the council sought to resolve the problem by off-handedly removing the bus stops, a measure which has caused great concern to shoppers, particularly the elderly

and those who are not capable of carrying their parcels long distances. That concern is reflected in the petition which attracted so many signatures in a very short time.

For some time, the Department of Transport and Works has been negotiating with the council concerning a proper and appropriate study. Early this year, departmental officers put to the Casuarina centre management and the council a proposal for a proper study to identify options for solutions to the problem. Many potential solutions have been put forward by officers of the department and the general public. These include malls, closing the exits from the shopping centre, additional lanes for buses and so on. The council decided recently that the tops would be removed on 1 October. The department has again advised the council of its desire to have a proper study carried out and that will now proceed, funded by the department and centre management, regardless of council's earlier indication that it would not participate. Meanwhile, all possible options will be the subject of a preliminary report to be completed this coming Friday. That will go to the council in an endeavour to have the council rescind its earlier decision to remove the stops.

It is just not good enough for the council to turn its back on the significant inherent problem that exists on that section of road. Originally, the council intended to put in a pedestrian crossing but has now reneged. I believe that, in the interim, a pedestrian crossing should be installed. Bus drivers will be reminded about the appropriate spots for stopping and I hope that a sensible solution will eventuate.

Effect of Increased Telecom Charges

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What impact on the Northern Territory will Telecom's increased charges have and will there be any change in the Rural and Remote Areas Program timetable for completion of the Digital Radio Concentrator Service which is so important for outback Territorians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, despite commentators indicating that the federal budget last night may have contained some reasonable news for Australians, the May economic statement this year, which it is all too easy to forget about, certainly did not contain good news for Australians, particularly Territorians. The economic statement delivered in May imposed on Telecom duties and sales taxes amounting to some \$380m which, formerly, Telecom did not have to pay. As a result, Telecom has announced a range of measures, including increased charges for telephone calls and rentals, which will certainly affect Territorians' calls and rentals. As of 1 September, charges for local calls increased by 2¢ to 20¢ and for trunk calls by 11.1% for distances of less than 165 km, and by 5.2% for distances greater than 165 km. Charges for telephone rentals increased on 1 July by \$27 per annum or 13% for business services, and by \$18 per annum or 15% for non-business services. These increases have been granted on an interim basis subject to examination by the Prices Surveillance Authority which will report its findings to the government by 30 September.

The Prices Surveillance Authority held public hearings in Sydney on 14 to 17 July this year. At present, Telecom plans to increase charges for installation of rural telephone services, and this relates directly to the honourable member's question and to outback Territorians. The cost of installation of rural telephones will rise from \$1390 to \$6240 and new telephone connections everywhere will have very long installation lead times.

In addition, Telecom has announced severe cuts to its expenditure and has targeted the Rural and Remote Areas Program for special attention. The extension of basic telephone services to rural and remote areas will be deferred indefinitely. Honourable members may recall that there was a target date - I think it was 1990 - when Telecom undertook to have telephones available to all Australians. That target date has now been removed and there is no replacement target date. These areas are not subject to decisions by the Prices Surveillance Authority. However, the Territory government emphasised the impact of these measures on remote area residents in its written submission to the authority's inquiry into Telecom's increased charges a month or so ago. In principle, the Territory government supports the general strategy to move towards a set of economically-efficient charges where prices follow costs but it is unrealistic to eliminate cross-subsidisation for rural and remote areas within the Australian telecommunications system. In fact, the Telecommunications Act of 1975 specifically directs Telecom to give particular attention to the special needs of people who reside or carry on business outside the cities. Since 1975, successive governments have endorsed cross-subsidisation to remote areas in Australia. It is contradictory to its legislative duty for Telecom to increase the economic burden on rural and remote area residents on the basis of requiring the revenue to cross-subsidise the very same users that they are penalising.

The Territory government has proposed 2 solutions to longstanding problems of remote area communications in the Northern Territory. First, where Telecom is required, for reasons of government policy, to depart from its user-pays pricing philosophy, these requirements should be made explicit and public by identifying perhaps 3 types of pricing zones: a contributing zone, a neutral zone and the subsidised zone. Secondly, the time is now long overdue for both Telecom and AUSSAT to cooperate to provide basic telephone services to remote areas as soon as possible. Telecom ought to set aside its absolute refusal to consider dealing with anyone in the telecommunications business other than itself.

I have written to the new Minister for Transport and Communications, Senator Gareth Evans, seeking his views on these issues and imploring him to take some interest in the policies and attitudes of Telecom because, despite its being a large and supposedly-independent statutory authority, it is still responsible to the Australian people through the Australian government. I hope that Gareth Evans will take rather more interest in the activities of this authority.

Increase in Water Charges

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is the NT News correct in saying that the 20% increase in water charges announced by him yesterday will be backdated to 1 July 1987?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory News has been consistently wrong of late. Its 'Shock Horror Budget' headline was wrong and so was its report that increased water charges would be backdated to 1 July 1987. The NT News was also wrong about housing rents going up by \$900 and about the removal of what it called the '3-dunny system' - the tax on extra pedestals. We are reviewing that matter but, at this stage, only the domestic pedestal tax has been removed. With its recent high degree of consistency, the NT News has it wrong again.

Review of Government Regulations

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

What steps is the government taking to meet its undertaking to reduce the amount of red tape affecting companies and individuals?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware that my government has devoted concentrated attention towards alleviating the problems, common throughout Australia, of excessive regulation and unnecessary administrative procedures which have the effect of slowing down and frustrating enterprise in the community. This is not an issue for the Northern Territory alone. In general, the Northern Territory's regulatory and administrative procedures are considerably more streamlined than those of the rest of Australia. Nonetheless, quite obviously there are significant areas where we can make substantial improvement in the way in which we go about the process of conducting government and the effect that government can have on the day-to-day lives of people.

For many years, there has been an outcry about red tape and regulations, and far too often people talk about the subject but do little or nothing about it. My government has set a clear policy of directing attention towards the concept of self-regulation rather than regulation. That means that we adopt the basic viewpoint that the average citizen is quite prepared to, and will, abide by the rules and regulations and the laws of the land. Only a very small minority seeks to break the law or circumvent the rules and regulations. However, traditionally, governments have adopted the attitude of devoting their entire structure to trying to stop those people who try to circumvent the laws. The effect is that the 90% or 95% of people who just want to get on with their lives are continually frustrated and angered and their lives are interfered with. That occurs because governments adopt an attitude of catch the crook, first, foremost and last, and end up putting so many rules, regulations and checks and balances into the system that it takes forever to work through even some very simple procedures.

My government believes that, if the rules are clear, people will generally abide by them. However, penalties need to apply where a minority breaks the rules and these penalties should constitute a real economic disincentive for rule-breaking. This will be a more effective strategy than devoting all our energies to setting up checks and balances to prevent the possibility of a person breaking the rules. That is the fundamental issue when one talks about self-regulation.

This government is taking action, not just talking. In February this year, we established a government committee comprising the Secretaries of the Departments of the Chief Minister, Industries and Development, Law and Treasury to initiate action to review comprehensively regulatory activities and administrative procedures in the Northern Territory, particularly those that affect business. Cabinet has recently approved a plan proposed by that Regulatory Review Committee, and this will identify priority targets for regulatory reform, implement a systematic review of all regulations and all administrative procedures throughout government and introduce a revised procedure for any new regulations.

The first phase is to identify priority targets for reform, and that is now under way. A series of advertisements has been running in all Northern Territory newspapers since mid-August, inviting the public and interested organisations to put forward submissions on those regulatory activities and administrative procedures which are perceived as unnecessary or in need of reform. The closing date for submissions is 31 October. Unfortunately, so far the public response has been disappointing to say the least with only 2 written submissions having been received. I might say, however, that my office is now receiving correspondence raising individual issues which people describe as 'bureaucracy gone mad' on undue administrative and regulative procedures, and I am referring these to the review committee. There is a follow-up mechanism back through myself and Cabinet to ensure there is continuous action on this issue.

I urge everybody in the community, including individuals, businesses and organisations, to take this process seriously and, rather than merely complaining through press releases or newspaper articles or over a beer in the hotel, to document their concerns about red tape and bureaucracy. Now is their opportunity to bring those matters forward so they can be dealt with in a consistent and responsible manner. At this stage, it is too early to draw any conclusions, but it may be that those interested are taking their time and there may be a number of well-thought-out and carefully-considered submissions in the pipeline. I certainly hope so, Mr Speaker.

Concurrent with this public consultation phase, the Department of Industries and Development is liaising with industry and commerce to obtain input. Government departments and authorities have been asked to identify areas considered in need of priority attention, and to report to the Regulatory Review Committee this week on progress already achieved in reviewing regulations and administrative procedures. While identification of priority targets will lead to the reform of major impediments, clearly it will make little impression on the larger, less controversial body of regulations and administrative procedures which may well benefit from some revision or streamlining. Therefore, departments and authorities have been instructed to review systematically all regulations and administrative procedures for which they are responsible, within a specific time frame. By 30 June 1988, all regulations introduced on or prior to 31 December 1982 are to have been reviewed. By 30 June 1989, all relevant administrative procedures and regulations introduced on or prior to 31 December 1987 are to have been reviewed. Thus, a review of each and every existing NT government regulation and all relevant administrative procedures will have been achieved in a little under 2 years.

In the course of its deliberations and in devising a program of action, Cabinet considered enforcing the review by means of an automatic regulation revocation program put into effect by some set legislation. It was felt that, at this time, such a course of action would be an overkill. However, should the review not proceed as efficiently and effectively as the government expects, a mandatory review by means of an automatic regulation revocation program may well be implemented. It is, of course, far easier to prevent unnecessary regulations than to change them subsequently. Therefore, steps have been taken to strengthen the process within government with the assessment of new or significantly amended regulations.

Since mid-August, all draft regulations have been required to be submitted to the Regulatory Review Committee and to be brought to the attention of those directly affected, with the opportunity for comment prior to the matter proceeding to Cabinet. In addition, from 31 December this year, the non-inclusion of a sunset clause in new regulatory proposals will have to be justified. The basic intention is that there will be a sunset clause in every regulation unless a clear and definitive case can be put forward as to why a sunset clause should not be included.

The procedures I have outlined give a very clear indication of the determination of this government to address the serious issues raised by community debate on the issue of red tape and unnecessary regulation and to put teeth into our policy of deregulation. As far as is reasonably possible, we want to get the government off peoples' backs so they can get on with their lives.

Increase in Water Charges

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

As he has denied categorically that the 20% increase in water charges will be backdated to 1 July, from which date will these increased charges apply?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition is getting at, and it is quite foreign to him, is that the Hatton government is against retrospective legislation, charges and costs, unlike the Labor Party which has demonstrated

on many occasions that it is quite within the realms of morality to backdate bills etc. I remind honourable members of the special negative grant which we received - the \$14m that was taken from us. That was money given to us in good faith and spent in good faith, but later the Commonwealth government came along - his Canberra-based colleagues - and said: 'Whoops, sorry, we are going to take that back'. That is not the policy of this government. I can inform honourable members that, as I understand it, a special meeting of the Executive Council has been set for this Thursday at which regulations will be changed to allow the increased charges in water and sewerage rates.

Increase in Water Charges

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Will he provide this Assembly with the date from which the increased water and sewerage charges will be applied?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would be aware that I cannot predict what the Administrator of the Northern Territory will do. That matter will be discussed by the Executive Council tomorrow afternoon. However, I would hope that all current bills will be based on the same rates as they have been in the past, and that all new water bills due and payable will reflect the new charges. However, I am not prepared to predict what His Honour will do tomorrow at the Executive Council meeting.

Mr Smith: That means backdated, doesn't it?

Mr COULTER: It does not mean backdated.

Mr Speaker, it is very difficult for me to discuss issues with the Leader of the Opposition because he simply does not understand or he will not listen. He knows the rules and he knows what has to happen. He knows the procedures. Perhaps he has not had the opportunity to discuss protocol and possibly Mr Clerk may be able to run some sort of course for him to give him some idea of how government operates in the Northern Territory. I do not think it would make much difference, and Mr Clerk probably has too much common sense to embark on a campaign which would be so futile.

Food Retailed at Outdoor Markets

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Reports in the press have suggested an inadequate standard of control over the preparation and sale of food at outdoor markets in the Darwin area. Has he received complaints at his office regarding this issue, and what standards do apply?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this has been a topical subject of recent times and I thank the honourable member for his question. The food stalls at flea markets have been perceived by some traders as a health hazard, and I stress the word 'traders'. Nearly all the letters about all the markets are from people who own, have an interest in, or are connected with, permanent food premises in the Darwin Mall. We have had no complaints from any other areas. It appears that these people are endeavouring to twist what is a commercial grievance into a perceived health hazard.

Health standards are set for the stalls. These are enforced through regular health inspections, and I stress that. Additionally, each stallholder is required to undertake instruction on food handling and to reach a satisfactory standard prior to the issue of any permits whatsoever. Food shops come under a far more stringent set of regulations because of their permanent nature and because they function continually and use the same facilities day in and day out. However, food stalls open for 4 hours only, and are assembled immediately prior to their period of operation on each occasion. Generally, the perceived health hazards complained about have little or no foundation.

The Health Surveyors have the resources to continue to carry out our present standards of health maintenance which include a regular health inspection of all markets on a bi-weekly or tri-weekly basis. There is supervision and enforcement of the minimum health standards laid down by my office. Each stallholder is now required to undergo a period of instruction in food handling, food hygiene and the standards required before being issued with a permit. There is no evidence that the temporary food stalls are causing or are likely to cause an outbreak of intestinal disease. We have had only 1 complaint of suspected food poisoning from any of the markets and that was at Rapid Creek. Bacteriological analysis of the food, which was soup, by the Northern Territory water laboratories showed a negative result.

To date, the Health Surveyors have maintained the required standard. As this supervision entails extensive after-hours duty, the overlooking of additional food stalls cannot be undertaken within present staffing levels. Health standards at the sunset markets at Mindil Beach are difficult to maintain because of the market's rapid growth. There are now 70 food stalls at this venue. Rapid Creek and Parap both average around 35 stalls and the Darwin Mall only 8 to 10. Because of the small number of stalls in the mall, we have now reduced our inspections to tri-weekly. Of course, the power to issue permits for food stalls lies with the Chief Medical Officer.

The main complaint about these food stalls comes from the restauranteurs in the inner city area. Their complaint is that we are taking business away from them by allowing these food stalls to operate. The permits to operate, in the first instance, are given by the Darwin City Council. The health target that these people are homing in on is, I suggest, a red herring used to cloak the underlying complaint that they have. However, taking their complaint on board, I do not believe there is any foundation for it whatsoever. At a licensed restaurant, people would wine and dine over a period of a few hours and the bill would be in the vicinity of \$30 to \$40 per head. With the markets, mum, dad and the kids go down to Mindil Beach and spend an extremely pleasant night out with some 3000 or even up to 5000 other people, including tourists, and the total cost for their food may not even approach \$20. I fully support these flea markets. I believe they are a great attraction in the City of Darwin. The mere fact that so many thousands of people attend them on a weekly basis underlines their popularity.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Water for Soapy Bore Community

Mr COULTER (Treasurer)(by leave): Mr Speaker, yesterday the member for Stuart asked a question in relation to Soapy Bore. Honourable members will be aware that the member for Stuart castigated the government and said that we had spent money on hiring consultants and that there was no activity in the area whatsoever ...

Mr Ede: Read Hansard.

Mr COULTER: You read Hansard. If I had my copy here, I would read it to confirm exactly what you did say.

Mr Speaker, I said that I would answer his question in the course of these sittings. I will take the opportunity now to answer the very serious accusations made by the member for Stuart yesterday in an attempt to identify to the people of the Northern Territory that, not only does he not know anything about running electoral campaigns, he does not know too much about his own electorate either.

Mr Smith: The bloke next door to you does not know too much about running electoral campaigns either!

Mr COULTER: There is an interjection, Mr Speaker, about the campaign. Poor old Maggie Hickey ran an operation out of her garage, funded it by a couple of cake stalls and came within 19 votes of beating the member for Barkly. When she got the full might of the ALP behind her ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing orders make it clear that answers should be relevant to the questions. The relevance of election campaigns to the predicament of the people at Soapy Bore escapes me. I suggest that you ask the minister to confine his reply to the question.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, if honourable members opposite wish to interject, surely they should give the courtesy of listening to the relevant answer. The words of the Treasurer were very interesting because he was outlining a situation in the Barkly electorate that is very embarrassing to the ALP members opposite. If they interject, they should expect an answer.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: As I was saying, poor old Maggie Hickey, with 2 bob to her name, mounted a campaign and came within 19 votes of her beating the member for Barkly. What happens? In comes the might of the ALP. No less a man than the Deputy Leader himself gets right behind this woman. The ALP throws in all its big guns, its staff and a huge electoral campaign is mounted.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Apart from the extraordinarily aggressive tones of the Treasurer, I believe that standing orders dictate that an answer must be relevant to the question. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked for specific information about 4 problems in his electorate that pertain directly to one of the fundamentals of life there. If the Treasurer wishes to debate anything beyond that, he is most welcome to at the appropriate time. Mr Speaker, I would ask you to rule that answers must be relevant to the questions and that the Barkly by-election is not relevant to the question of water supplies at Soapy Bore. I draw your attention to standing order 113: 'An answer shall be relevant to the question'. Question time is brief enough as it is without it being wasted on diatribes such as the one we are hearing from the Treasurer.

Mr TUXWORTH: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: Is the member for Barkly speaking to the point of order raised by the member for MacDonnell?

Mr TUXWORTH: Yes, Mr Speaker. Soapy Bore used to be in the Barkly electorate.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. In the first instance, the minister was responding to interjections. Whilst there is no point of order, I would suggest that the minister restrict his comments to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I appreciate the ALP's embarrassment over this issue and I will not continue the matter any further because the member for Stuart is in more trouble than the early settlers as a result of his efforts on that particular issue. The people at Soapy Bore are in considerable trouble as well, because they have the member for Stuart as their representative and he does not know what is going on. He castigated the government, suggesting that we had spent the money allocated on consultants and had done no work whatsoever in the area.

I interjected several times about Soapy Bore. I asked why it was called Soapy Bore? The member for Stuart did not elaborate on that; he did not talk about it much at all. The member for Barkly would know very well what Soapy Bore was, how it was developed and how the community came to live there. It goes back to 1962, when it was a very low-yield bore on a cattle station with a flow of 0.2 litres per second. People decided to settle there because it was a water source. It was a very poor water source but it was water just the same. This is a common problem in the member for Stuart's electorate. I have spoken on many occasions about the outstation movement and water. Traditionally, Aboriginal people lived where there were sources of water. They know where the water is and where you can live. Some of the areas that ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat. The cross-Chamber chatter between the Minister for Health and Community Services and the member for MacDonnell will cease instantly.

Mr COULTER: As I said, it was a very low-yield bore in 1962, but people decided to live around it. During the 1986-87 financial year, the pumping equipment to the bore was upgraded so that the flow increased from 0.2 to 0.5 litres per second. This was a temporary measure pending the provision of a new bore. Funds were provided to drill 2 additional bores in 1986-87, and these were completed in January 1987. Honourable members can read Hansard and reflect on what the member for Stuart said yesterday in this Assembly. Both new bores have a much higher yield than the old bore, having outputs of 3 litres per second and 2 litres per second respectively. In fact, a big effort has been put into finding water in a very difficult area. Perhaps that could not have been done in 1962 because the technology was not available to us then.

The member for Barkly also spoke about Utopia and a number of other places within his electorate where, he said, consultants had done very little work. He actually suggested that all the money had gone to consultants with no money being used for actual works. Hansard will record that he said exactly that.

Mr Speaker, I can tell you that, on Utopia Station, we placed a 120 kL ground-level storage tank with flat switches and upgraded reticulation. The contract was completed on 26 February 1987 at a cost of \$97 447. At Utopia outstation, Kurunga Bore, a 49 kL ground-level storage tank was placed. The member for Stuart may have to help me with some of these place names. It is nice to know that he can say the names but it would be even better if he visited the communities and had a look what we have done. There was a

49 kL ground-level storage tank, which included the new pipe work and, at Soakage Bore, a 49 kL ground-level storage tank, including new pipe work. At Soapy Bore, we have increased the pumping capacity of the windmill. The contract for these 3 outstations was awarded and the practical completion date was 2 April 1987, at a cost of \$58,400.

At Ngwanalanama, we upgraded the windmill. The work was completed on 5 November 1986. The contractors were Lewis and Partners. The final cost was \$8337.30. At Mosquito Bore, a new 22.5 kL tank on a 6-metre stand and some pipe work were completed on 9 March 1987. The contractor was paid \$15 000. There were 6 new bores, stand pipes and pipe work connected to rising mains for emergency standby use and future equipping. The work was completed on 9 March 1987, and the contractor was paid \$7681. At Mingintirrina, we equipped the bore and constructed a 22.5 kL tank on a 6-metre stand connected to the new clinic and with some other reticulation. The work was completed on 4 August 1987. A total of \$34 355 was spent. I would like to see the member for Stuart writing these figures down and recognising the cost ...

Mr Ede: I am waiting for you to tell me about water at Soapy Bore school.

Mr COULTER: ... that all this adds up to in an electorate where, he claims, this government has denied the basic facility of water and the maintenance of proper water levels. Let him add it up and let him remember that is in a very difficult area.

Funding of \$25 000 was allocated to Mulga Bore drilling. The work has not been carried out because of the extremely high level of nitrates present in the groundwater in this area. We have argued before with the member for Stuart about potable water and water that would be available for other uses. I had a very interesting discussion with him once about how we might be able to use water which is unfit for human consumption but which could be used for other purposes, including gardening and that type of thing. I have not seen that idea progressed any further. I would like to sit down and talk to the member for Stuart if he is really fair dinkum about supplying facilities in his electorate. I would like to discuss ways in which we may be able to do that because it is an extremely difficult area.

This government has not forgotten the people of his electorate. We spent thousands of dollars there in the 1986-87 period during which he claims that we have neglected it. It is consistent with the diatribe which this side of the House is becoming used to hearing from the member for Stuart. It is totally inaccurate, false and misleading and a discredit to the engineers who try so extremely hard to find that resource, which is so very rare in the middle of the desert, commonly known as water.

Drive-in Block Rezoning

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to the zoning of a block on Peko Road known as the Drive-in Block. Some time ago, he advised townspeople that he would not be acting to rezone the block yet, within 6 weeks, the block has been reviewed again by the Town Planning Board. Could he please advise me and my constituents what circumstances have changed that he saw as necessitating the review of the zoning on that block?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Barkly is quite correct. When the original submission came to me from the Planning Authority, I rejected the instrument. Subsequently, a further application has been made for rezoning that block. I believe that has been considered by the Planning Authority and, at this particular stage, I have received no further advice either recommending or rejecting the latest application for re-zoning. However, when I receive it, I will consider all the details to see if any new evidence or information has been presented, and I will be more than happy to speak with the member for Barkly when I am making a decision on the matter.

Defence Facilities

Mr REED to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the current situation regarding the build-up of defence facilities and personnel in the Top End?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am more than happy to inform members of recent developments in defence matters affecting the Northern Territory. It has been a matter of considerable debate in the Assembly and in the community for the past 12 months. It is of such significance to the Northern Territory that it is important that we seek to keep the community as informed as possible about this.

Honourable members may recall that, in June last year, I made a detailed statement in this Assembly on defence, following the release of the Review of Australian Defence Capabilities, more commonly known as the Dibb Report. In that statement, I welcomed the priority given by the Dibb Report to northern defence and pledged the Northern Territory government's cooperation with the Commonwealth in the implementation of the report's recommendations.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Everybody in this Assembly is interested in the matter of defence. My point of order is that the Chief Minister has not been asked a question. He has been asked to provide information on the state of defence preparedness and developments in the Northern Territory. On that point alone, I would think the matter should be ruled out of order. I would ask the Chief Minister to consider making a statement on this important issue rather than taking up our valuable question time.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Katherine was seeking information and asking a question. I would ask the Chief Minister to keep his reply as brief as possible.

Mr HATTON: I will keep it as brief as reasonably possible, Mr Speaker.

In March this year, the Commonwealth government released a White Paper on defence containing a comprehensive statement of the Commonwealth's defence policy. The centrepiece of that policy is the concept of self-reliance which, in essence, is that Australia must have the military capability to prevent an enemy from attacking us successfully through our sea and air approaches, gaining a foothold in our territory or extracting political concessions from us through the use of military force.

The defence of northern Australia and the northern approaches to Australia is an integral and, indeed, a vital part of that policy. Tangible expressions of the new emphasis on defence policy were given by the announcement of the Defence Minister, Mr Kim Beazley, in March this year that the Second Cavalry Regiment, presently based at Holsworthy in New South Wales, is to be relocated to Darwin by 1992. At the same time, Mr Beazley announced that the Australian Defence Force was to initiate studies of the possible relocation of further army units to the Top End to brigade level strength. I might indicate, Mr Speaker, that that is not a decision that has been taken despite some press comments to the contrary. It is a matter that will be considered after the location of the Second Cavalry Regiment in Darwin.

Relocation of the Second Cavalry Regiment will involve an increase of 367 army personnel in Darwin. Taking into account the relocation of spouses and children of the married personnel, the anticipated overall increase is around 1000 people. The army plans to integrate married quarters in small groups throughout the existing residential areas in Darwin to the maximum extent possible.

Following the release of the White Paper and the announcement concerning the Second Cavalry Regiment, I wrote to Mr Beazley earlier this year welcoming the recognition given in the White Paper to the fundamental importance of northern defence and reaffirming the Northern Territory government's continued cooperation with the Commonwealth in the progressive development of further defence facilities in the Northern Territory. I also proposed the formation of a joint consultative committee, comprised of senior Commonwealth and Northern Territory government officials, to ensure that the planned relocation of the Second Cavalry Regiment proceeds smoothly, and to support the studies to be undertaken on the possible relocation of additional army units.

A similar consultative mechanism has proven highly effective in the development of the RAAF base at Tindal. Indeed, this mechanism has served as a model for similar developments elsewhere in Australia, particularly in north Queensland. During a recent briefing of senior government officials in Darwin, Vice-Admiral Knox, the Vice-Chief of the Defence Forces, and other senior Department of Defence officials were most complimentary about the Tindal arrangements. It came as no surprise that Mr Beazley readily agreed with the proposal to set up the consultative group in Darwin.

I am pleased to report to the Assembly that the committee, chaired by a senior official of the Department of Defence, held its inaugural meeting in Darwin on 15 July. Although the relocation of the Second Cavalry Regiment is still some years away, the regiment is already preparing for its new role. Honourable members may be aware that the regiment recently conducted an exercise, code named 'Dusty Trooper', in the Top End. The exercise was aimed at familiarising the regiment with one of its new areas of operation and to test operating techniques with Norforce and the regiment. I was pleased to be able to visit the regiment last month at Timber Creek and to be briefed by the regiment's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Prickett, and by the Commander of the 7th Military District, Colonel Ian Bryant. This was but one of what I expect to be a long line of military exercises in the Top end. Not only will these serve to make this part of the country more secure, they will have a spin-off effect for local businesses as the army seeks to make major local purchases of consumable items, in particular food and fuels and repairs to military vehicles.

In response to an invitation by the Prime Minister to me earlier this year, senior members of the Department of Defence and the defence force gave a

briefing in Darwin on 4 September on the Commonwealth's defence policy. The briefing was attended by myself, Cabinet colleagues, Northern Territory representatives in the federal parliament, departmental heads and other Northern Territory government officials. The Leader of the Opposition was invited, but he was unable to attend because he was involved in some activities in the southern parts of the Northern Territory at that particular time.

Mr Bell: He does not have as fast an aeroplane as you.

Mr HATTON: He does, you know.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased with the way the present program for the build-up of defence facilities in the Territory is proceeding. There is a highly cooperative spirit between this government and the Department of Defence and the defence force personnel. My department will continue to monitor and coordinate development of defence matters as they affect the Northern Territory. The further development of defence facilities in the Territory will greatly enhance Australia's defence capabilities and will also make a valuable contribution to the Northern Territory economy through increases in population and opportunities for local businesses to provide defence-related commercial services.

The Northern Territory government will continue to support these developments which are to the benefit of all Territorians and Australians generally. As I said earlier, the move of the Second Cavalry Regiment to Darwin will mean a direct increase in population of about 1000 in the Darwin-Palmerston area. These people will require 175 married quarters as well as a base and all associated facilities. Construction will start in 1990 and, over a period of a few years, many millions of dollars will be injected into the Top End's economy. I understand that about \$70m will be spent on construction work alone. The development of Tindal airforce base is proceeding on target and a further \$60m will be spent there this year. The building and construction industry has benefited and will continue to benefit directly, and so too will the various service industries if they are able to adjust quickly enough to the force's requirements. I know from my discussions with the defence forces and the Department of Defence that the Department of Defence policy is now to encourage the development of a capability in the private sector to provide much of the logistic support once undertaken in-house. To ensure that full advantage is taken of existing opportunities, the Department of Industries and Development is working on identifying openings for Territory businesses. It will then promote those opportunities to the Territory business community.

These are exciting developments and my government is determined to maximise the potential benefits to the Territory. We have established excellent working relationships with Commonwealth defence authorities and look forward to welcoming the many hundreds of servicemen and their families who will shortly be moving to Katherine and Darwin. I look forward to working with the defence forces and the Department of Defence in relation to the increased levels of military exercises in the Northern Territory. At present, 2 exercises are proposed. The first is Kangaroo 89 which could bring as many as 10 000 service personnel to Darwin for several months. I might add that the new emphasis in respect of military reserve units and the allocation of areas of responsibility in the north, including the Northern Territory, will mean increasing exercises here by army reserve units. These also offer increasing opportunities for the community, particularly the business community, to gain significant economic spin-offs. This government will

continue to work cooperatively to maximise benefits for the Northern Territory people.

Block H at Finnis River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to my comments on Block H at Finnis River in yesterday's adjournment debate. Can I or any other Northern Territory resident obtain a loan of \$275 000 at 13.5% from the Northern Territory Land Corporation? We would love to be able to.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory Land Corporation is not a body under the influence, control or direction of any minister, nor is it an instrument of the Crown. Perhaps members opposite would care to refer to some of the judgments in the High Court which validate that position. I would simply suggest that the member for MacDonnell could have his question answered by writing to the directors of the Northern Territory Land Corporation.

Block H at Finnis River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Did the government receive an offer in November 1986 from any Darwin property entrepreneurs for the purchase of Block H at Finnis River for \$650 000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to lay the matter to rest, I will once again make several important points clear. The Northern Territory Land Corporation is not an authority or an instrumentality of the Crown. Further, the corporation is not subject to the control and direction of a minister of the Crown.

Mr Bell: Just answer the question, mate.

Mr HANRAHAN: With a little patience from the member for MacDonnell, I will deal with his question. The corporation has been kind enough to provide me with some of the details of real estate transactions with respect to the Finnis River block. The mortgage registered in favour of the Northern Territory Land Corporation over NT portion 3191 relates to the recent sale of this land to Input Pty Ltd.

Mr Bell: Recent? You said ...

Mr HANRAHAN: There are reasons, if you will just listen. The honourable member has asked why the Northern Territory Land Corporation has given a mortgage. I understand that this mortgage relates to vendor finance and not a loan for funds, as insinuated by the member. I assume that the member, as shadow spokesman for lands and housing, would be aware that vendor finance is a normal commercial practice. The fact of the matter is that the Northern Territory Land Corporation accepted an offer from Input Pty Ltd.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I refer once again to standing order 113 which says that an answer must be relevant to the question. I did not ask the Minister for Lands and Housing about mortgage arrangements on

Block H. I asked him whether the government had received an offer from Darwin entrepreneurs.

Mr Coulter: And he said no.

Mr BELL: The Treasurer tells me he said no. I would like the Minister for Lands to confirm that such an offer was not received. My point of order is that the Minister for Lands and Housing's answer must be relevant to the question I asked, not the question he hoped I would ask.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister is free to reply in any way he sees fit, provided that the information he is supplying is linked to the question. There is no point of order.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell must be as thick as 2 bricks. He asked me if I would recall ...

Mr SPEAKER: The minister will withdraw that remark.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the comment unreservedly. Unless there is something wrong with my ears, the member for MacDonnell asked, as a supplementary question, whether the government accepted an offer of \$650 000 from a land developer in Darwin. At the time when he made his point of order, I was saying that the Northern Territory Land Corporation accepted an offer. That was when he called a point of order. Obviously, he is not listening.

The Northern Territory Land Corporation accepted an offer from Input Pty Ltd to purchase the property for \$575 000 on 19 February 1987. A contract of sale was then prepared and exchanged, and settlement occurred in due course on 9 September 1987.

Mr Bell: 6 months later!

Mr HANRAHAN: This is interesting, Mr Speaker. Members opposite are laughing, presumably because they think an offer made in February was settled on 9 September because of some ridiculous secret deals. I will tell them the reasons why. Negotiations are still continuing over the possibility of accommodating the Vietnamese fishermen who live at the mouth of the Finniss River, and an Aboriginal excision. The reasons are quite extensive, and we are still dealing with them.

The contract of sale set the purchase price at \$575 000, with \$300 000 to be paid at settlement and the balance to be paid within 2 years following settlement at an interest rate of 13.5% per annum. To protect the Northern Territory Land Corporation's interest, a mortgage has been registered over the land. In answer to the member's second question, the corporation has advised me that it does not hold any other mortgages at present.

In answer to the third question asked by the honourable member, I stress again that the corporation is not an authority or instrumentality of the Crown. The function of the corporation is to acquire, hold and dispose of real property. Should the corporation choose to provide vendor finance in the sale of one of its properties, that is a matter for the corporation. I think I have answered effectively the questions raised by the member for MacDonnell this morning and during last night's adjournment debate.

Funding for Advanced Education in NT

Mr HARRIS to TREASURER

On reading last night's budget, it would appear that the federal government has allocated no money for advanced education in the Northern Territory. Is this true and are there any other areas where, to put it kindly, it would appear that an oversight has occurred?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have only had overnight to look at the figures that have been provided to us.

Mr Ede: I tried to ring your office about this last night, but you weren't there.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Stuart has equal opportunity to ask questions as other members.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, we have only had overnight to have a look at the figures. At first glance, there was some shock and horror in the Treasury offices last night where I was, for some time, going over the budget with Treasury officials. Indeed, myself and the Chief Minister were there till quite late last evening. We had the opportunity to look at the budget figures with officers of the department in the Treasury building. The first shock that came to us was that there was no funding at all for the colleges of advanced education and that we were down by some \$8m. We thought that it must have been a mistake. We checked the figures allocated to all the states and everything tallied, and it looked as though we were down \$8m. At first, we wondered if the federal government would be so vindictive as to recognise that that is the amount we require to run the University College and so took \$8m from us. When a federal government adopts the strategy of offering negative special grants, that sort of thought crosses the mind when you are the Treasurer of the Northern Territory and dealing with the Commonwealth government. However, we were advised earlier this morning that, in fact, it is a mistake. The Northern Territory government will receive the \$8m allocation for the funding of the CAE.

Mr Speaker, I will take a few moments to give honourable members an update. At first glance, the reaction that we have been able to put together regards the remaining sections and appropriations in the budget. I will be brief, but I think it is important to give a synopsis of what it implies for Territorians.

First, it is pleasing to note that the Commonwealth has come very close to balancing its own budget for the first time in many years. No doubt, this will see an increase in consumer and investor confidence. The early signs were apparent last night, with an increase in the value of the Australian dollar and an announcement that at least 1 bank will drop its housing interest rates to 14.5%. It was interesting to see that, when the dollar reached 73.1¢ against the American dollar, the first to sell was the Reserve Bank. Possibly that was done in an attempt to keep the dollar down to ensure that we can sell contracts and commodities overseas because, if the dollar rises further, the troubled sheep, wool, meat and coal industries will be in further trouble as a result of trying to obtain markets with a much higher dollar value. I mention that because one of the major areas from which we believe that the Commonwealth government has been able to fund its deficit is by taking some \$2600m in profit from the Reserve Bank.

If the value of the Australian dollar is held at its current level by monetary policy, the general perception of the balanced budget will lead to a general reduction in interest rates, and this will lead to enhanced development prospects. However, there has been general concern that the unexpected windfall has been received largely through increases in taxation revenues. I think the figure for PAYE is \$2680m in salary creep, which has put people into higher taxation brackets. Of course, the other windfall was in the unexpected areas of fringe benefits tax and capital gains tax which netted an extra \$1000m. It has destroyed the motor car industry and a few other industries, but the federal government did very well out of it.

Some other figures are interesting. Whilst we took a 10.1% drop through cuts contained in the economic statement that the Commonwealth Treasurer put out, and the states received 7.5% from a quick glance at last night's budget papers, the federal government took a dive of some 2.4%. Thus, there is a contradiction in terms there. The increased revenues from the capital gains tax and from the salary creep into various taxation brackets, plus the profits from the Reserve Bank, have helped the federal Treasurer to balance his budget. The revenue from asset sales has removed from the Commonwealth the requirement to apply discipline to its own expenditure. An examination of the Commonwealth's total outlays show an increase of 5.7%. If asset sales were treated as revenue, that would be normal practice rather than treating this sale of assets as negative expenditures as imaginatively portrayed by the Commonwealth budget.

It is clear, however, that the brunt of the expenditure cuts have been borne by the states and the Northern Territory. Assistance to other governments has risen by 3% only, while Commonwealth expenditure, excluding these payments, has risen by 6.3%, which is double the increase experienced by the states and the Territory. The Territory has been disproportionately affected relative to the states. As I said, we took 10% in cuts and the rest of the states took 7.5%.

It was said this morning on one of the radio stations that the Territory's cuts were only \$25m. That is very misleading indeed. It does not include the semi-government borrowing allocation which has fallen by over \$20m. The total cut to the Territory is about \$40m in money terms. We have had criticism from the member for Stuart who is economically colour blind; he would not know black from red. The fact is that, in real terms, in terms of what we could have done this year with last year's money, we have taken a dive of \$100m. No matter how often the honourable member stands up, nobody will believe him any longer because he does not know what he is talking about.

Had payments to the Northern Territory been maintained in real terms, we would have received an increase of \$80m whereas we suffered a loss of \$40m which produces an overall loss in real terms of \$100m, as I said in the budget speech yesterday. We all know what the honourable member has told us about Channel Island Power Station and he did not know what he was talking about there either.

Settlement with Air North

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Was it part of the settlement with Air North in the recent aero-medical contract dispute, which resulted in Air North withdrawing its legal challenge, that the Northern Territory government pick up the legal expenses of Air North in the various court actions over the issue? If so, what was the cost of those legal expenses and was a similar arrangement made with Skywest?

ANSWER

There was a settlement arrangement with Skywest as part of the overall settlement of the matter. That has been publicly reported but I do not have the details with me at the moment. In respect of Air North, propositions have been made to the government. The matter was being considered by the minister, but I am not aware of any decision having been made to make a settlement for legal expenses so far as Air North is concerned.

Consumer Affairs Report

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

During the election campaign, the minister referred to a report which he had received dealing with the range of consumer affairs' policy and legislation. What progress has been made to implement the recommendations of that report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a submission is presently before me, as minister responsible for consumer affairs, outlining a program for the implementation of the recommendations of the consumer affairs working group. I will be seeking Cabinet endorsement for implementation of the proposed program in due course.

A working group to review consumer affairs' policy and legislation was formed in early 1986. Members will recall that I was chairman of that review committee before I became a minister, after which time the member for Ludmilla took over. The working group has already given me a report. It is proposed that all existing consumer protection legislation be repealed and replaced by a new consolidated act to be known as the Northern Territory Commercial and Consumer Act. Consolidation of existing and proposed consumer measures, to a very large extent, should achieve consistency in definition, administration and enforcement. This would be in line with the spirit of the working group's recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations is dependent on Cabinet endorsement and the Cabinet's Legislative Priority Committee granting the proposals the necessary priority with Parliamentary Counsel.

The review has been very thorough and has been commented on by people in the consumer affairs area interstate. I believe that we can come up with legislation that will lead the field in the proper administration of consumer affairs throughout Australia. I look forward to the completion of this very difficult task and, in due course, to putting a proposition to Cabinet, which I hope my colleagues will endorse.

Moneys Owed by Burgundy Royale

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Has an arrangement yet been entered into with the liquidator for the Territory to recover outstanding payroll tax, electricity and water charges incurred by Burgundy Royale as operators of the Beaufort complex? Secondly, since the appointment of the liquidator, has the Northern Territory government been paid for the services it has supplied to the Beaufort Centre since that date? Thirdly, what is the full extent of the centre's current indebtedness to the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will give the Leader of the Opposition the exact details of the figures during the course of these sittings. I made some inquiries before the sittings, thinking that somebody might mention the issue. I have information coming from the liquidator including the performance of the hotel under the control of the liquidator in terms of accommodation nights etc. Also, we have received a legal opinion now from the Department of Law in respect of outstanding debts. I do not have the exact figures but I am quite happy to provide them to the Leader of the Opposition. As I have said in the past, the Northern Territory government's position is well protected in this case and the recent legal opinion from the Department of Law secures the government's position even more than I have stated in this House in the past.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government): Mr Speaker, I apologise to honourable members for this oversight but any questions for the Minister of Education and Attorney-General should be directed to the Minister for Industries and Development today.

Health Services at Ngukurr

Mr REED to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Concerns have been expressed by people of Ngukurr community regarding the future of health services there. Can he confirm that community health sisters will remain at Ngukurr, and that acceptable accommodation arrangements will be made for them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some people at Ngukurr were led wildly astray in the June to July period prior to my announcement of the \$5m cutbacks in the Health and Community Services budget. I received a deputation from the community health nurses at that centre whilst I was in Katherine trying to explain to the people with the honourable member for Katherine that there was a scaremongering campaign occurring in that region. We told them that they ought to wait until the cutbacks had been put in place when it would be clear that it was not the policy of the Northern Territory government to withdraw from Aboriginal communities. To the contrary, I have been saying since I became the minister responsible for local government, in particular the community government area, that it was the policy of this Northern Territory government, for the first time in the history of the management of Aboriginal affairs, to put it in its proper perspective and give the management of Aboriginal affairs back to the Aboriginal people with, if you like, a guiding hand from the Northern Territory government. I spoke about giving them back their self-esteem by way of self-management.

In this particular area of community health, the Northern Territory government has a policy that it will Aboriginalise the community health services in the Aboriginal communities when the communities ask for that Aboriginalisation. By 'Aboriginalisation' ...

Mr Ede: That is not what Fleming said.

Mr DALE: Pardon?

Mr Ede: That is not what Fleming said.

Mr DALE: By 'Aboriginalisation', I do not mean necessarily that we have to wait until such time as we have Aboriginal people who are trained to the level of triple certificate sisters. Aboriginalisation can mean that Aboriginal people might subcontract, from their own community, a person to run that community health centre. I mention that in response to some of the comments made by the member for Arafura in the adjournment debate last night. It is just one small example that demonstrates that this Northern Territory government has a policy of letting Aboriginal people run their own affairs.

Mr Speaker, I will not be withdrawing the nurses from Ngukurr. We have had some difficulties in relation to accommodation for nursing sisters there. In January 1985, the Ngukurr Council asked for a health service following the withdrawal of the service provided by the Anglican Church Missionary Society. Arrangements were made to rent a house from the church for staff accommodation. This arrangement was always considered to be temporary and we were fully aware of that. The church had advised that it would require the house back early in 1988. It may now require the house by November of this year. Construction of a house would cost in the vicinity of \$100 000.

I have had a number of options put to me. I have had some officers talk to the church in an attempt to retain the use of the existing accommodation for a further period. I have officers investigating any surplus houses that other departments might have in that area. Once again, given the policy of the Northern Territory government, I will be asking the council there for cooperation in the provision of whatever accommodation might be out there.

Action is proceeding as a matter of urgency. In contrast to the philosophy and policies of the federal government, it is not the intention of the Northern Territory government to withdraw health services from Aboriginal communities. I will indicate in my budget speech in the next few days that the exact opposite is the policy of the Northern Territory government.

Vietnam Veterans

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, now that the problem of transporting the Vietnam veterans to Sydney for the welcome home parade has been solved, will the government accede to the request of some of those veterans to be provided with Territory sporting ties and flags etc so that they can go with a Territory identity and promote the Territory in the process?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that any support and assistance, particularly with Northern Territory paraphernalia, regalia, identification etc, will be made available. Our government fully supports the

endeavours of the Vietnam Veterans' Association in this particular process. Should the veterans need ties, flags or other such facilities, they will certainly be made available through my government and I would welcome any approach concerning anything that they specifically require.

Police Numbers in Alice Springs

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Some months ago in this Assembly, I presented a petition on behalf of citizens of Alice Springs. What action has been taken to address the request by the Alice Springs community for increased numbers of police and the reintroduction of foot patrols?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member presented a petition to this Assembly on 3 June this year. Obviously, the ability to carry out foot patrols is related directly to the availability of staff in a community at any particular time. I should advise the Assembly that, although the gazetted police strength in Alice Springs is 101, the actual strength is in fact 113, due to the addition of 12 constables in June of this year. This lift in numbers is directly attributable to the graduation of recruits. One must accept that that excess will be absorbed or dissipated through the normal processes of transfers, training and attrition etc. Of the 113, I should advise that 100 are involved in operational duties providing a service to between 24 000 and 25 000 citizens: a very high police per head of population ratio.

In April this year, plainclothes foot patrols were introduced in the central business district of Alice Springs following complaints of vandalism and other unlawful behaviour. In addition, at police request, special lighting was installed at Anzac Oval, a late night meeting place for young people. These initiatives have resulted in a reduction in unlawful behaviour in the inner city and it has been possible to reduce plainclothes patrols and compensate with traditional uniformed foot patrols. Whilst it is not possible to eliminate completely behavioural offences such as thefts and assaults, and that is true in any community, the current strategies and staffing levels are considered both adequate and appropriate for the special requirements of the Alice Springs area.

In the longer term, the increase in the police establishment to cover training commitments will create greater staffing stability and, importantly, greater staffing availability on the ground in the provision of policing generally in the Northern Territory. Our police force stands ready to respond promptly to any specific situations that emerge, as my answer indicates we have done this year, and we will continue to do so in the future should such situations develop.

Units at Gardens Hill

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can he confirm that the Housing Commission has paid or is about to pay \$1m for a block of units at Gardens Hill, is it true that the units do not meet the criteria set down by the Housing Commission, and was the Housing Commission instructed by him to purchase those units?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, an offer to purchase the units at Gardens Hill was made. The settlement has taken place. The purchase price was \$1.1m. I am not sure of the exact date of settlement. The transaction fits in with the policy of the Housing Commission within the spot-purchase program announced by the Chief Minister. For the benefit of the member for MacDonnell, if he would like to listen, I might add that it is a well-known fact that the government has a sizeable investment in the Marrakai Apartments and, because of the value of those units at this particular time, it is appropriate for the government to seek to realise that asset over the coming months and further add to the revenue in the government coffers.

I have no problems with the purchase of the Gardens Hill units and, if the honourable member for MacDonnell, as the opposition spokesman for Lands, would like a full briefing on the issue, I would be more than happy to give it to him.

Overdue Commercial Electricity Accounts

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Are there any large commercial consumers, other than the Beaufort Centre, who have had electricity charges waived or who are substantially behind in their payments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, large commercial consumers? I wonder if the member could be more specific. To my knowledge, there is only one consumer who has entered into a scheme of arrangements with the Power and Water Authority whereby he could pay off his electricity account.

Darwin Bus Service

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Since the integration of the Darwin Bus Service with the school bus service earlier this year, has the anticipated saving of \$700 000 for the 1986-87 financial year been achieved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to advise on the exact amount of savings. I am certainly in a position to advise the House that the integration of bus services in Darwin has been a success story.

Since the school bus runs were amalgamated with the Darwin Bus Service routes, the utilisation of the bus system has increased by approximately 50%. That has occurred after a fairly extensive settling-in period. In the initial stages, we were determined that the needs of schoolchildren would be met entirely and that resulted in some over-servicing. As the system settled down, considerable finetuning was required and this process is ongoing. We found that some routes did not warrant the frequency of schedules provided initially and we carried out some rationalisation to optimise the service.

The department is continuing to work towards a more efficient service and we have recently rationalised further services with Matilda Tours. Contract

routes 1, 2 and 3 have been rationalised with Darwin Bus Service routes 6 and 12 and that exercise resulted in a \$47 000 per annum saving. From figures that I have been given this morning, I understand that about \$200 000 has been saved through rationalisation during the last 6 months.

The Darwin Bus Service has certainly come a long way since the first bus was run in 1950. I understand that the member for Fannie Bay was one of the first passengers. He may remember the 1939 Morris and the semitrailers on the route to Nightcliff, which was then a distant suburb. The service now carries about 2 million passengers per annum who take advantages of 70 000 services annually. The figures now include a great proportion of schoolchildren.

Some concerns have recently been raised in relation to the behaviour of high school students on some of the bus runs. Naturally, the complaints were attended to promptly by the department and I understand that appropriate action was taken both with the students and with their respective schools, and that things have settled back down again. I mention that quite deliberately because the Darwin Bus Service does have a hotline available for passengers or clients who have any matters of concern. People should use that service. It is interesting to note that, in recent times, the level of complaints has dropped dramatically. That is a credit not only to the officers who have arranged the rationalisation of the services but, more importantly, to the bus drivers themselves.

When the saga of the removal of the Bradshaw Terrace bus stop started, I had calls from a large number of pensioners. Aside from their expressions of concern in that matter, they went out of their way to acknowledge the excellent and very civil service provided by our bus drivers. We are very fortunate in having many long-time bus drivers and it is to be acknowledged that they provide an excellent level of service. During the last year, they have accepted some changes in their operating methods, particularly in relation to the split-shift system, and the way they have done this is a credit to them and the result is that the service is now running more effectively and efficiently. The member for Casuarina can be assured that that has also led to some significant savings.

Mr Speaker, I would like to mention a couple of things concerning the bus service and its efficiency. Recently, we have opened 2 interchanges, 1 at Casuarina and 1 in Harry Chan Avenue. Both are very modern, very attractive and, more importantly, very efficient buildings. They were constructed at a total cost of nearly \$2m.

Mr Bell: Of Commonwealth money.

Mr FINCH: I am more than happy to acknowledge that, and I thank the member for MacDonnell.

Mr Bell: You would not have acknowledged it if I had not interjected.

Mr FINCH: In fact, Mr Speaker, during the opening ceremony at Casuarina, I made specific reference to the ABRD funding of that project.

Mr Bell: And the participation of Peter Morris?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I acknowledged the participation of the Hon Peter Morris in that regard, although one could not say the same in relation to other areas of his previous portfolio.

Mr Speaker, that \$2m has provided a very efficient facility for interchange within the bus system. Private buses travel throughout the suburbs to those main terminals to exchange passengers to the main city runs and the express services. People should acknowledge the good service that the Darwin Bus Service is providing. It is all very well for us to knock the buses and the bus drivers, but the service that is being provided is of a very high standard and it is becoming more and more efficient. I am sure that provides pleasure to the Treasurer because he has been able to take advantage of the savings made by the Darwin Bus Service in his appropriations this year.

Mr Speaker, whilst I do not have a specific answer for the member for Casuarina, I will provide one for him later. Things are looking good but we have not stopped there. Electronic bus ticketing will be introduced soon and that will also help to improve efficiency. We have recently introduced a computer-based maintenance record system which is helping us to ensure that our buses are well maintained and that a valuable government asset is safeguarded.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it has come to my attention that a number of members have been holding private conversations during recent sittings and have not turned their microphones off by holding the cough button during these conversations. Members are reminded that the microphones are live and, apart from any need for the conversations possibly to remain confidential, the discussions can be disruptive to the public broadcast of question time and to the taping of debates for Hansard purposes.

Delegation to Greek Islands

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

Could the Chief Minister confirm whether he is leading a delegation to the Greek islands in the next month or so? I believe it is to occur in October. Could the Chief Minister advise who is to make up the delegation and confirm whether he will be travelling on to London and The Hague and what the cost of the tour will be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm for the honourable member that I will be travelling overseas next month. It is certainly not a matter of any secrecy and I would not like anyone to assume that it was. In fact, I will be visiting Singapore for discussions with the Trade Commission, Trade Development Zone and Tourist Commission representatives there on the South-east Asian business development programs. That will be taking place over a 1-day period. I will be visiting both Kalymnos and Cyprus for 2 days each as a consequence of invitations from the Mayor of Kalymnos when he was here. Honourable members will be aware that Kalymnos is our sister city and there have been a number of ongoing communications. A proportion of citizens of the Northern Territory, from both Kalymnos and Cyprus, represent a significant element of our local population. It is appropriate that I take the opportunity to visit both those places, particularly having received a number of invitations and a formal invitation from the Mayor of Kalymnos in March of this year.

The timing was delayed for such a visit to ensure that the necessary actions of government in its restructuring, the budget preparations and the major work that needed to occur this year, could be accommodated before any such visit took place. Obviously, to take such a trip in isolation could be

conceived, by those of a mean-minded nature, to be unnecessary. I do not accept that particular view. As I have said, the Greek communities of the Northern Territory, particularly those from Kalymnos and Cyprus, represent a significant proportion of our population and they themselves have made a number of representations to me to take an opportunity to visit there.

Nonetheless, I have combined that visit with necessary trips to Europe. For some time, I have wished to acquaint myself further with the nuclear reprocessing industry, a matter of particular importance to the Northern Territory. That matter has received some recent publicity through announcements by Minister Kerin. Therefore, it is appropriate that, as the leader of government, I familiarise myself with that most important industry, as did my predecessors, who took the opportunity to specifically brief themselves so as to ensure that, as a government, we are as well-briefed as possible on all the ramifications of such an industry.

In addition, in London, I will be taking the opportunity to meet with a number of British investors who have invested in the Northern Territory and who, in recent times, have expressed an interest in further investment here. There are 2 particular companies. I do not propose to name them, for no other reason than that I do not want to generate unnecessary debate. I can assure honourable members that investments are in the Territory now and more are coming. I wish to promote and accelerate that investment in the Northern Territory in important industry development programs, and I wish to hold further discussions on our tourism developments, which are quite exciting in the British area. I intend also to hold discussions with the Trade Commissioner's Office in London to update myself about opportunities that may exist for investment in the Northern Territory from that area, and general business development in that area. A full report will be provided on that trip, as is my practice, following any visits I make overseas. In fact, this question has been put only a few hours ahead of a press release announcing details of this trip.

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I was asked for specific details of how much the trip is proposed to cost and who is going. My apologies to the honourable member for not providing those answers. I do not have the specific details of the cost, but I am quite prepared to make them available to the honourable member. Obviously, I do not have the figures here and now and the details on the trip itself are still being finalised. I will be accompanied by my wife on that trip and I will be taking with me the Secretary of the Department of the Chief Minister, the Head of Protocol and my press secretary. I understand that Mr Paroulakis, who is the Honorary Greek Consul of the Northern Territory and his wife, are travelling to Greece also at that time and they will accompany us, but they are travelling at their own expense.

Vandalism in Black Jungle

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What steps have been taken to stop vandalism in Black Jungle?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I welcome this question because, only last week, the extent of vandalism in Black Jungle was brought to my attention. I can assure the member for Arafura that the Conservation Commission is totally disgusted at what has happened there and the government appeals to members of the community to cast a watchful eye over the general area. Failing regular patrols by the

police or a permanent presence by Conservation Commission staff, vandalism is very difficult to control. We cannot have someone on the spot every single hour of the day. I think it is a sign that part of our society has gone wrong when such assets are subjected to vandalism and destruction. We all know the benefits that such places bring, not only to the Darwin community but to visitors.

The Conservation Commission has certainly been in touch with the police, who have stepped up their patrols. Once again, I mention to honourable members and the people of Darwin that in recent incidents Conservation Commission officers have come to bodily harm whilst carrying out their duties. These duties are far-ranging and include constant vigilance to stop the poaching of fish and protected game and wildlife. It is appropriate that I place on record my thanks for the way Conservation Commission staff carry out their duties because I think they generally go unnoticed and unrecognised. They certainly do a good job and I think the facilities throughout the Territory stand as a permanent record of that.

With its limited resources, the Conservation Commission will acknowledge the value of Holmes Jungle by increasing its presence there somewhat, but I can only remind the public that such instances of vandalism do the Territory and its tourist industry no good at all. I repeat my appeal to the general public not to hesitate to contact officers of the law or the Conservation Commission if they come across instances of vandalism or see it occurring. We would welcome any information from the general public and it is interesting to note that most apprehensions of vandals come about through information received from the general public.

Activities of AIDS Task Force

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

There has been widespread concern in the community about the activities at the Darwin Show of certain persons associated with the AIDS Task Force. It is alleged that they handed out condoms to young children, particularly young girls. Is he taking any action to curtail the more abhorrent actions of some of the people associated with the AIDS Task Force?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think the member's terminology in relation to 'abhorrent actions' by members of the AIDS Task Force is going a little bit too far. It was reported to me that some people at the show were handing out condoms to people who were perhaps under the age where they would be sexually active. I have not really been able to assess exactly what damage may have been done to those particular children. I can remember back to my childhood, albeit I am very grateful that most young people in Australia do not have the childhood that I had. I certainly do not agree with the handing of condoms to young people under an age where they may be sexually active. However, I will make one point. If condoms were handed out to young people, even if this occurred in thousands of cases, and that action led to the protection from AIDS of a young boy or girl who would otherwise have been exposed to risk in sexual activity that day without the use of a condom, my view is that significant damage has certainly not occurred.

Mr Speaker, the number of AIDS cases and antibody-positive persons in the Northern Territory at present is 33. I am alarmed to say that this shows an increase on the 23 that I announced at the last sittings of this Assembly.

Thankfully, only 2 cases in category A have been recorded, with 1 death. In category B, 7 cases have been reported with 24 in category C. Only 1 category C case has involved an Aboriginal person and that person was subsequently moved interstate. AIDS authorities have made statistical estimates of the number of antibody-positive persons in each state and the Territory. These are based on projections from the total number of AIDS cases in Australia and estimate the number of antibody-positive persons in the Northern Territory at 500. However, most staff working in relation to AIDS in the Northern Territory, including the community-based groups, believe that that number would be closer to 100. My department, the Cabinet and my colleagues in this government have steadfastly taken the attitude that we will do everything within our power to combat this killer disease in the Northern Territory community.

I do not hesitate to boast that we have been a leader in the field once again, particularly in protecting Aboriginal communities from this virus. For quite some time, as I have reported to this House previously, we have had in place a community-based group that goes out to the communities and teaches the people in those communities how they can avoid this killer. In my department's budget this year, once again we have increased the funds that will be spent specifically in carrying the message to the Aboriginal communities. Once again, I refute some of the comments that the member for Arafura made last night.

Mr Speaker, I understand that there will be some unpleasant spin-offs from the attitude of the Northern Territory government in trying to combat this dreaded killer. I do not apologise for that because I do not intend to resile from our position. We will get the message of the seriousness of this particular virus across to every human being who lives in the Northern Territory. They will know the best possible way to avoid AIDS before we are finished. Some people say that our attitude may lead some young children astray or lead them into a sexually-active life that otherwise they may not have taken up. I am afraid that, in this particular case, the bigots of the world simply will have to sit back and bite their bottom lips. As I said, we intend to combat this virus in a very meaningful way. We are leaders in the field and, as far as target groups are concerned, my targets are young people from the age at which they become sexually active or may become sexually active right through to 25 years of age. Whether they are white, black, brindle or purple, I believe they form the risk groups in the community in the Northern Territory and we intend to get the message to them. In particular, we are upgrading our services and the education program to the Aboriginal communities.

Stocks of Waste Oil in Darwin Region

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What has the government done about the problem of accumulating stocks of waste oil in the Darwin region?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As most members would be aware, prior to the closure of the Stokes Hill Power Station, most of the waste oil in the Darwin region was burned there. When Stokes Hill Power Station closed its tanks to this waste in February this year, a serious problem began to develop with accumulating stocks of waste oil. Stokes Hill Power Station had burned it at the rate of about 10 t per week. I am pleased

to advise the Assembly that, as a result of government assistance in investigating potential new customers for waste oil, the proprietor of the new lime production plant at Mataranka has negotiated successfully the purchase of the company, Waste Oil Disposals. This company has resumed collection of oil from service stations, workshops and marine facilities around Darwin, and has been using this fuel in the lime production facility at Mataranka. I understand that about 30 t of that fuel has been processed in the last few weeks and is currently in use.

Once again, the Work Health Authority played a fairly active role in finding new customers for the waste oil. It is seen as a hazardous material, and we were in fairly dire straits over these accumulating stocks. Waste oil cannot be dumped easily and there are not many users of it in the Northern Territory. Thankfully, that user has been found, and the problem seems to have been overcome.

Private Wards at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Which group has been allocated the private wards in the Royal Darwin Hospital, when are they expected to start and for what period of time has the arrangement been made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the privatisation of the 2 wards at the Royal Darwin Hospital will be given to Health and Life Care, the company that is to construct the private hospital in the grounds of the Royal Darwin Hospital. The contract will continue until such time as the private hospital opens. This move is one that has been looked at by Ministers for Health throughout Australia because they have often wished to attack the problem of the enormous waiting lists that they have in public hospitals down south. In New South Wales, they have waiting lists of some 60 000 people. In Victoria, they have waiting lists of some 30 000 people whilst their private hospitals, in some cases, have an occupancy rate of something like 50% to 60%. They would love to be able to combine the private hospital facilities with the public hospital facilities as we are endeavouring to do at the Royal Darwin Hospital. We have not finalised the arrangements completely as yet, but I am very happy with the way those negotiations are progressing. We are receiving full cooperation from the nursing fraternity in the Northern Territory because it can see that, overall, the delivery of health services in the Northern Territory can only be enhanced by the privatisation, in the first instance, of 2 wards at the Royal Darwin Hospital and then with the construction of the wonderful private hospital in the same grounds.

The private hospital facility will upgrade not only the skills that we will have available to us in the Northern Territory but also the equipment. The inherent saving in those increases in standards will be in our PAT scheme as well. Where previously we had to ship people out of the Northern Territory to obtain treatment, particularly some surgery cases, we will have the facilities available in the Northern Territory. It is another example of how the quality of life in the Northern Territory is ever increasing under this government.

Darwin Airport

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has he contacted Senator Gareth Evans with regard to the future development of the Darwin Airport since he became Minister for Transport? If so, what details can he give us?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I had the opportunity of meeting informally with Senator Gareth Evans and Peter Duncan at ATAC recently in Coolangatta. I was most pleasantly encouraged by the attitude of both ministers with regard to the Darwin Airport project. I have no wish to dwell on the previous minister but, certainly, an obvious communication barrier built up over a period. For that, I make no apology nor do I ever intend to.

The question is where we go from here. The Territory government has maintained a consistent view that the north side development for the airport is the only realistic option, both from the point of view of facilities and from an economic point of view. That view is shared universally throughout all of the federal and Territory government departments and it seems that, with these 2 new ministers, particularly Gareth Evans who is the minister responsible for airports, we now have the opportunity perhaps to obtain a realistic and satisfactory solution.

I have corresponded further with Senator Evans regarding the Territory's position and indicated to him that, as I understand it, both sides of this House see that the project is very necessary and that we should be proceeding by the best possible means. I would assume that the best possible means is to find private funding towards the construction of the terminal building itself. I have sought a further formal meeting with the federal minister and I am hoping that that might be available soon after these sittings.

Whilst we are talking about communication with the federal government, I should indicate that the Minister for Land Transport and Infrastructure Support, Peter Duncan, has indicated his desire to accept an invitation to visit the Northern Territory and acquaint himself with our communications matters here. He will bring himself up to date on the railway proposal and examine airports at Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Hopefully, that will provide him with first-hand knowledge of these things in the Territory.

It is worth noting that the federal budget allocated \$300 000 for the Darwin Airport this year. I am not despondent about that. Whilst we do not have any details to date, if that will provide for the redesigning of the aprons and the taxiways for the terminal project, I will be delighted. I am yet to find out the exact details of that appropriation. The total budget figure for civil works was \$6m. I hope I will have the details in the next 2 weeks.

Roadside Inn Review

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

I refer to a statement he made some time ago that he was conducting an inquiry into roadside inns and the public demand for various types of facilities on the major arterial routes in the Territory. Has that inquiry been completed and, if so, can he provide details to the House?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Roadside Inn Review required some further work. When I received the portfolio of tourism, I restructured the advisory councils and the Tourist Commission to incorporate more industry people on committees which advise me directly. The Roadside Inn Review Report went back to the Tourist Advisory Council which subsequently deliberated and made many recommendations.

It is important to note that part of the review was very specific about some of the problems and some of the operators involved up and down the Stuart Highway. In the first instance, I thought it only fair that we should endeavour to inspect the facilities again and to impress upon the owners and operators of these facilities the importance of tourism to the Territory's economy. That has been done. The report has been added to and is due to go before Cabinet within the next 30 days. After it has gone before Cabinet, it will be made a public document and I will be more than happy to circulate it far and wide.

It is very interesting to note that, since the activities of the Roadside Inn Review Committee became known to the operators, there has been a remarkable improvement in some of the facilities up and down the Stuart Highway - though not all, I might add. I have certainly made no bones about the fact that a few operators in the tourist industry can make it bad for everybody and it is a situation that this government, as I have stated quite clearly before, is not prepared to tolerate. We are prepared to move to ensure that people generally are not ripped off or given very poor service because the industry is about service and it is about friendly people. Those are the issues, in part, that the Roadside Inn Review Report addresses and, as I have said, it will be made a public document the moment it has been before Cabinet. I think it will prove very beneficial to the industry as a whole.

Crocodile Meat for Restaurant Trade

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In recent times, there has been some criticism of the lack of availability of crocodile meat to the restaurant trade. When is crocodile meat likely to be freely available to this trade?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, plans are well advanced for the production and marketing of meat derived from crocodiles which are bred and reared in captivity in the Northern Territory at our 3 authorised farms. Under the management program for freshwater and saltwater crocodiles, the 3 licensed farmers are eligible to obtain permits to slaughter specific batches of animals within prescribed dates. The permits allow the reptiles to be slaughtered for their skins and their flesh. In fact, what we are witnessing at this time is the coming of age of a new industry. Whilst that industry has existed for a little while, it is only now that the farms have been in a position to exercise their rights to harvest the animals and slaughter them. There will be a function later this afternoon to launch crocodile meat in the Northern Territory. I understand it is called a croctail party and some honourable members may have been fortunate in making the invitation list. I am not sure who drew it up. It will be held this afternoon.

Hopefully, the crocodile farms will be able to ensure that there is no shortage of crocodile meat available through restaurants in the Northern

Territory. I am pleased to say that the owners of at least the principal farm in the Northern Territory have indicated to me that their preference is to see the local market supplied prior to even considering any export of crocodile meat. We all hope that access to crocodile meat will provide an additional attraction for people visiting the Northern Territory but, if we sell it all overseas first up, we will find that it is not available here.

To answer the honourable member's question specifically, the time has arrived when the shortage of supply will evaporate.

Administration of Mines Safety Control Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

My question has become something of a sessional question. Is the Mines Safety Control Act still administered by the Department of Mines and Energy and, if so, when is it proposed to transfer administrative control for that act to the Work Health Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is quite correct in saying that this is becoming a sessional question. I think he has asked it during every Legislative Assembly sittings this year.

Mr Leo: It is very important.

Mr HATTON: Yes, it is important.

Mr Speaker, one of the reasons why the staff have not been transferred is because there are quite serious technical difficulties in inter-relationship between the Work Health Authority and the Department of Mines and Energy which we are working hard to resolve. I say that in the sense that there are competing arguments being put of which the honourable member is undoubtedly fully aware. Probably that is the reason for his persistent questions on this.

Mr Speaker, allow me to say this. The mining industry has some particular and uniquely different circumstances to other sections of industry generally. I will outline a particular example that has been referred to me concerning underground mining. Mining inspectors are very difficult to obtain. The technical and engineering structure and design and work practice underground are integrally important in ensuring that there is a safe working environment. It would be quite impractical, particularly in underground mining, to have one group of inspectors going through the establishment discussing inspection functions and another group of inspectors carrying out safety inspection work.

We have been examining the proposal of mines inspectors carrying out the safety inspections as agents on behalf of the Work Health Authority, and reporting to it in respect of safety matters. That would involve an integration of functions instead of 2 separate inspectors going into the same mine at different times. It would relieve the potential for differing and competing demands being made on the miners which every member in this House would agree is totally undesirable.

If I can use a well-worn phrase, there have been some other unintended consequences with the Work Health Authority that need to be addressed. They are issues such as those associated with the Dangerous Goods Act. The Work

Health Authority, which is established principally to look at the issues of work health, is finding itself becoming involved in a number of other matters. We heard an answer from the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services concerning disposal of waste oil. Clearly, that is not an intended function of the Work Health Authority.

Those are not easy questions to answer and that is why there has been no final determination. It is essential for the proper development of the mining industry that we maintain the concept of a one-stop shop which has served that industry exceptionally well. The member for Nhulunbuy would be well aware of the exceptionally high safety standards that have been maintained in Nhulunbuy by Nabalco Pty Ltd which has been working on a self-regulatory approach since 1980. The honourable member was very actively involved in the development of those programs as a union delegate. We do not want to detract from that.

Equally, it is important that the functions of the Work Health Authority in the processes of accident prevention, proper compensation and rehabilitation are equally and properly addressed through the appropriate body. It is not the intention of this government to detract from the role of the Work Health Authority in its fundamental core function. Equally importantly, the government intends that the mining industry will maintain the efficiencies and effectiveness of a one-stop shop. The sorting out of those administrative arrangements and the interdepartmental battles will be resolved and I will inform the honourable member within the next week.

Access to Royal North Australian Show Society Stables

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Given the announced extension of Tiger Brennan Drive to Hook Road in my electorate, will he assure me that the road access to the stables at the rear of the Royal North Australian Show Society will be retained?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to advise that provision will be made for access to the stables and the Rifle Club. A track just south of the Rifle Club will become obsolete but access will be provided from Hook Road.

As was mentioned by the Treasurer, stage 4 of the Tiger Brennan Drive project will be undertaken this year. This will take Tiger Brennan Drive from Bowen Street through to Hook Road. Work has commenced on some of the preliminary earthworks on the section from Reichardt Road. It is anticipated that the works will be completed to enable traffic to travel down Hook Road and on to the connector road before the end of this financial year. That section of the Tiger Brennan Drive project involves a number of large cuts through some hills. The materials from the earthworks will be stockpiled for future use on access roads to the CBD area.

The project commenced some 15 years ago. The original sections involved roadworks through some fairly extensive mud plains and required embankments up to 5 m high. A particular method of construction was required there to allow proper consolidation of the fill material over a period of time. In completing the remaining sections over the last 5 years, other new techniques had to be used. Members will be interested to know that work at the swamp near Woolner Road used a base of felled mangroves covered with a geo-textile. The overall depth of fill was 3 m to 4 m above 2.5 m to 3 m of mangrove mud. The project has been a technical success and is part of the ongoing development which will eventually provide vehicular access to and from Palmerston. Planning on this project has enabled us to progress to the stage where there will be access from Hook Road to the city.

It is intended that, by 1990, Tiger Brennan Drive will extend through to Amy Johnson Drive and, by the mid-1990s, there will be a need to proceed with the project right through to Palmerston. That will be a boon for residents of Palmerston and the rural area, particularly those people who work in the city and have to commute daily. They will be able to use a high-quality road to gain easy access to workplaces in the city.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In relation to the Finnis River imbroglio, will he table, or show to me on a confidential basis, the contract that was exchanged with Mr Leo Venturin in February this year?

ANSWER:

Mr Speaker, such a request at short notice deserves some serious deliberations on the basis that I am not too sure whether I can respect the member's ability to maintain confidentiality. I am quite happy to enter into a discussion with him in relation to confidentiality with respect to the sale of Block H to Input Pty Ltd by the Northern Territory Land Corporation.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

When did he personally sight that contract for the first time?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell should know that I was not Minister for Lands during the negotiations on and sale of this particular block. I have seen no reason to see the details of the contract or even to view it.

Persons Lost in Remote Areas

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

What action is the Northern Territory government taking to upgrade procedures for the recovery of persons lost in remote areas in order to avoid tragedies such as the one which occurred in Western Australia earlier this year?

ANSWER

Honourable members will be aware of the tragic events that occurred last Christmas and led to the death of 2 young stockmen in Western Australia. That search extended beyond the Western Australian border into the Northern Territory. Following the discovery of the bodies of those 2 young men, the Northern Territory Police Force and Emergency Service held discussions with the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association with the objective of improving search and emergency service procedures in such events in the remote areas of the Northern Territory where, all too often, there is extreme risk to life because of climate and remoteness. Those discussions have resulted in the formulation of a plan to enhance our capability to recover persons lost in remote areas.

The plan has 4 main elements. First, police general orders already contain detailed instructions on search and rescue procedures. These instructions will be amended to include reference to assistance available from pastoralists. Secondly, for distribution through the Cattlemen's Association, the Northern Territory Emergency Service is producing a laminated card that provides initial guidance to pastoralists and their employees in search-and-rescue situations. Thirdly, the Northern Territory Emergency Service will compile a register listing all resources such as airstrips, fuel, etc available for search-and-rescue purposes on pastoral properties. Fourthly, a police search-and-rescue specialist will be made available to address trainee jackaroos at the Katherine Rural College. We have been assured of the continuing cooperation of the association's members and, wherever possible, will involve them in the planning and conduct of future search operations.

Mr Speaker, this event demonstrated quite clearly the need to develop more procedures and to encourage the pastoralists in many of these areas to search more comprehensively areas where people may be lost. I might say that even these procedures might not have been successful in the tragic events that occurred last Christmas because of the extent to which those 2 young men travelled. Nonetheless, by the use of the resources and local knowledge of pastoralists throughout search areas, these measures will enhance significantly the effectiveness of searchers and, I might say, will reduce the

risk of the tragic loss of life. I commend the Cattlemen's Association for its desire to participate in the search for lost people, and I am sure that it will enhance our abilities. However, I must say that that does not diminish the need for all people travelling in the remote parts of the Northern Territory to ensure they take steps to ensure that other people know where they are and where they are going. There should be reporting points so that searches can be initiated as soon as possible.

Tobacco Products Legislation

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What has happened to the review of legislation relating to supply and sale of tobacco and tobacco products to minors?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there has been a total review of the consumer affairs legislation. I last had knowledge of the matter to which the honourable member refers when I was chairing a statute committee. Quite frankly, I am not quite sure what stage that review has reached. I will make inquiries and respond to the honourable member during the course of these sittings.

Cullen Bay Marina

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The recent environmental impact statement prepared for the Cullen Bay marina proposal has come under some criticism from someone reportedly representing the Northern Territory Environment Centre. Does the environmental impact statement comply with the requirements of the act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, like the honourable member, I was somewhat surprised to hear the comments made the other morning by a person representing the Environment Centre regarding the Cullen Bay project. During the radio interview, she effectively made 3 points: the need for the project was never established, the ultimate cost to the public was not known, and the EIS failed to meet published Conservation Commission guidelines. I failed to see what a couple of those points had to do with the Environment Centre.

The comment that the need for the project was never established was a rather remarkable statement because the need for a marina in Darwin is very well established. In fact, the present proposal is the fifth put forward for a marina that I am aware of. I think the first proposal was made as far back as 1979. Currently, there are 200-plus privately-owned keel yachts in the Darwin sailing community which have to be either lifted on to dry land or relocated to one of the limited number of safe inner harbour moorings each wet season. I think 200-plus private keel yachts is more than enough to justify private enterprise looking at the development of a marina. Apart from that, from what I have seen of it, a substantial number of residential blocks will be incorporated into the overall development.

It is interesting to note that the advice from the developers is that options, and I stress that they are options, have already been placed over every residential block incorporated in the project. Therefore, I think I have fairly well substantiated the fact that there is a need for the project,

and I totally refute the statement by the Environment Centre that the need for the project was never established.

With regard to the second point, that the ultimate cost to the public was not known, all those issues have been addressed in the EIS, and the environmental assessment process identified a number of potential contingent liabilities against which the Northern Territory should be protected. It is the normal course of events that the government looks very closely at the matters of ongoing costs that will ultimately affect the public purse. Covenants on these matters, including such things as the unforeseen need to re-dredge the basin or to replenish sand, for example, on the new beach, have all been recommended for inclusion in any possible lease that may be developed.

The Minister for Transport and Works said quite clearly on radio this morning that the government had considered the option of ultimately building the ferry terminal. I think the original proposal was that it be located at the Parliament Park. It would be a logical step that any such development of a ferry terminal should be considered in association with the marina development if it were suitable and cost beneficial to the government. The costs of upgrading the services to the boundary have been identified by the government. They are minor. It is important to note, I think, that any of the subdivisional headworks that are required within the bounds of the development project will certainly not be undertaken at the expense of the government. They are at the expense of the developer.

As I have mentioned, a few other things, such as the upkeep of and responsibility for the new beach that would possibly be created with this development, are matters that are addressed in the development lease and the government is ensuring that its position is protected. I can assure representatives of the Environment Centre that we have been very responsible in identifying the ongoing costs to the government, and I think that it should not look past the fact that extra revenue will be raised through the establishment of a large development such as this which incorporates such a large number of residential buildings.

With regard to point 3, that the EIS failed to meet published Conservation Commission guidelines, the intention of the environmental assessment legislation is to ensure that matters with potentially significant environmental impact are fully examined to allow them to be taken into account during the decision-making process. This has been done in connection with this project to the government's satisfaction. In conclusion, I might add that the Commonwealth assessment authorities agree with the assessment of the Conservation Commission over this proposal. The Commonwealth is involved because of the proximity of the Larrakeyah Defence Reserve. The Commonwealth government has agreed with the Northern Territory Conservation Commission that there is no major constraint, on environmental grounds, to the project proceeding.

Any statement that suggests that the government has acted improperly or that the requirements of an EIS have not been carried out to the fullest possible extent is outlandish. It is based on no facts at all and personally I would like to commend all the persons from the Conservation Commission to the developers and to every other government authority involved in the preparation of that EIS because, from what I saw of it as it was processed through the public service, it was handled efficiently and professionally. I believe that, ultimately, the development will come to fruition and it will be an outstanding success. It will be a great addition and contribute to a better lifestyle for the residents of Darwin.

Reassessment of Road Design to Reduce Death Toll

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the increased death toll on our roads, and considering that an increase in alcohol consumption is not to blame for these accidents, will he undertake to examine all aspects of road construction, road sign placement, road alignment, materials used in road construction and in the erection of signs and any other relevant matter to reduce the road toll?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am astounded that the member for Koolpinyah should suggest that alcohol is not related to road deaths. It is a well-established fact

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Not the last 2 deaths in the rural area.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I did not catch the interjection from the member for Koolpinyah but, quite simply, she suggested that alcohol was not an influencing factor in road accidents. It is quite well established that it is. It is not the only factor, of course, and this government has addressed itself to all factors contributing towards our road accident statistics, including some of the aspects that the honourable member has raised. She would well know that expenditure on roads has been a very high priority with this government.

At self-government, we inherited a road system that was under-capacity and unsafe. Whilst we have come a long way since then, I am not suggesting for a minute that we should stop now. Despite tight monetary constraints, we are still allocating adequate funds for the extension of our road system and, more particularly, adequate road maintenance. We are currently reviewing signs and I am pleased to announce that I will shortly be taking to Cabinet a policy paper on the construction and erection of signs along the highway. We need not only to take into account the matter of commercial benefit to people who wish to put up signs - and it is important that businesses are identified - but also to ensure that such signs do not constitute a safety hazard. There are standards which relate to the construction of signs and the policy paper refers to these as well as to the location of signs in relation to bends, intersections, other signs and distance from the road itself.

The government is paying a great deal of attention to road safety. We are not only concerned about the safety of Territorians but also of tourists. The number of visitors using the Stuart Highway is increasing dramatically, particularly the number towing caravans. This increase is a result of the promotion of tourism in the Northern Territory generally. Mr Speaker, the south road from Adelaide to Alice Springs has been surfaced for its entire length, a project that you and a number of committees in the Alice Springs area strongly advocated in the early days. To your great credit, these efforts convinced federal and South Australian governments that it was worth while to construct a high-standard road which is now being used by a phenomenal number of tourists with caravans. Many of these people are not used to travelling long distances or towing vehicles which are not particularly stable.

Towing a caravan is something that needs to be taken very seriously and the Tourist Commission, together with the Department of Transport and Works, has been compiling pamphlets to assist tourists to become aware of hazards and safety factors. Information is being distributed through interstate tourist

bureaus and automobile associations. It concerns dangers on Territory roads, including the unique local problem of road trains. Some sections of the highway, particularly between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, still require widening to bring them up to national standard. We are also considering constructing information bays at each of the borders to advise caravaners about practical ways of avoiding accidents when they are travelling in the Northern Territory.

During the debate on amendments to the Traffic Act, I mentioned regulations which cover separation of caravans which is another extremely important matter. Caravaners like to make new friends in the course of their travels. That is important; it makes their travels all the more meaningful. However, it is very important that such people appreciate the importance of allowing a reasonable distance between their vehicles on the open highway. Caravans should be separated by a minimum of 200 m and that requirement has been incorporated into the act.

Mr Bell: You cannot put that in a third different way, can you, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the member for MacDonnell, it may very well be necessary to put it in a fourth way, but I will keep on trying to reinforce for honourable members of this House, and for the general public, the importance of road safety. I very much thank the member for Koolpinyah - misdirected though she is in her comments about alcohol - for her question.

To return to the original point made about alcohol in the question, it is very important that people are aware that, when the Traffic Act comes into place, there will be minimum penalties associated with alcohol-related offences. It is important for people to know that there will be no way that they will be able to go to the magistrate and offer a sob story that they did not really mean to drive with a blood-alcohol level in excess of the limit. They will be subjected to a predictable minimum penalty, and that is extremely important. We will be saying more in the media about that later. Justification for that is in the statistics. A clear correlation has been observed between alcohol consumption and the ability of drivers to drive carefully and avoid accidents. This government is justified in maintaining its 0.08% level, and intends to do so. The government intends to make sure that the travelling public is aware of those requirements.

Water and Sewerage Charges

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

When will the new water and sewerage charges announced in last week's Territory budget be implemented, and will consumers be faced with retrospective charges?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am in a position now to answer that question in more detail than I was able to give when it was asked by the Leader of the Opposition last week. The regulations have now been changed to accommodate the charges. The increases and charges are applicable from 1 October 1987. For water, there will be the introduction of a flat rate of 30¢ per kilolitre for all urban consumers in the Northern Territory. Prior to 1 October 1987, the charge was 25¢ per kilolitre, up to 1000 kL, and 30¢ per kilolitre for amounts in excess of that.

From 1 October 1987, sewerage charges will be \$215, irrespective of the number of toilets covered. The charge prior to that date was \$200 per annum, so the charge from 1 July 1987 to 30 September 1987 will be at the rate of \$200 per annum for up to 2 toilets which is \$50 for that quarter, and an additional \$75 per unit or \$18.75 per quarter.

Mr Speaker, people in Housing Commission accommodation already pay for up to 500 kL of water, and sewerage charges are paid as part of their rent. Consequently, the impact on Housing Commission tenants will not be as great as was first indicated. I can advise honourable members, for the benefit of their constituents, that the Customer Advisory Service Centre, now established in the old NTEC offices on the ground floor in the Jape Plaza, is available to assist anybody who has any further inquiries about the charges. If people contact that office, the staff there will be pleased to supply them with additional information on their individual utilisation of these services.

With regard to Housing Commissions rents, the increases will apply from 26 October. I think that answers the question for the member for Jingili and it is consistent with the answer that I gave to the Leader of the Opposition that we would not get involved in retrospective charging for services.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to the contract signed in February this year and to his previous answer in which he said he sighted this particular contract. Is he able to tell the Assembly whether that contract was signed by his now-disgraced predecessor, the honourable member for Casuarina ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for MacDonnell will withdraw that remark.

Mr BELL: I withdraw that remark, Mr Speaker.

Can the Minister for Lands and Housing please tell the Assembly whether that contract was signed by his predecessor, the member for Casuarina, or was it in fact signed by the Treasurer who had done the deal without the knowledge of his predecessor, the member for Casuarina?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have already stated to the member for MacDonnell that I have seen no reason to view the contract of sale or any of the relevant documentation relating to the sale of Block H, Finnis River.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The answer must be relevant to the question. I point out to the minister that I asked who had signed it, not whether the document itself was public information or not.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, in asking his question, the member for MacDonnell, specifically commented that the Minister for Lands and Housing had stated that he had sighted the document. Quite clearly, this morning, the minister has said that he has not sighted the document. That was a clear preface to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I think I said last week that the member for MacDonnell is as thick as 2 bricks.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will withdraw that remark.

Mr HANRAHAN: I withdraw it unreservedly, Mr Speaker, because we all know that there are thicker things around.

Mr Speaker, I do not know how often I have to say to the member for MacDonnell that I have seen no reason to have before me the relevant documents relating to the contract of sale or any of the mortgages. I have said the deal stands alone. I have said to the member for MacDonnell that I am aware of the sale price, the terms and the interest, and that is all that I am aware of. If the member for MacDonnell would like to enlighten me on specifics relating to the contract of sale, including who signed it, I will attempt to find the answer to his questions. If he wishes to accuse me of having stated previously that I have sighted this particular document - and I know that I have never said such a thing - I am quite happy to repeat the same answer if he keeps on asking the same question.

The honourable member for MacDonnell has proposed a matter of public importance for discussion immediately after question time and, no doubt, he will be raising a few more questions. Perhaps we should give him the opportunity to list everything that he wants to know so that, by 11 o'clock, I would be in a position to give him some answers.

Radioactive Waste Disposal Proposal

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

A few days ago, the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy mentioned that he is waiting on the Territory's advice about a facility for radioactive waste disposal? What is the Territory proposing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to answer this question because it is proving to be a fairly interesting subject at the moment. In the NT News of 14 September, there was a headline, 'Centre Warns on Waste Transport'. The article read:

The Northern Territory Environment Centre warned today about the potential hazards of transporting nuclear waste long distances to a disposal facility in the Territory. A centre spokesman, Ms Catherin Paul, was reacting to a report that the federal government would look sympathetically at a submission for a nuclear waste disposal facility in the Territory.

In the article, Mr Kerin was quoted as saying that 'such a facility was an important national service', and he indicated that the federal government was keen to see a safe and satisfactory method of waste disposal introduced into Australia. As a consequence of that article, the member for MacDonnell decided to go where he normally goes when he wants to beat something up - to the media once again. In the NT News of 15 September, there was a headline 'Bell Will Fight Nuclear Waste Facility'. The article read:

The MacDonnell member, Mr Neil Bell, has warned he will fight any moves to have a nuclear waste disposal facility established in his

electorate. 'My electorate has been targeted as a possible site and I cannot sit by', he said today. 'I am deeply concerned that, out of nowhere, the Territory and federal governments have decided a nuclear waste facility can be built in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, in the *Centralian Advocate* of 16 September, he was quoted as saying that the Territory should be made aware that it was federal Labor Party policy that an extension of the nuclear industry was unacceptable. I think we can read in there 'under any circumstances'. Mr Kerin was quoted as saying that the facility would store only low-level radioactive waste produced in Australia and that the facility would not include nuclear wastes from other countries.

We then had our representative in the House of Representatives, Mr Snowdon, make a farcical maiden speech in that forum. He followed that with a question to Mr Kerin using the term 'high-level nuclear waste disposal'. Perhaps he was trying to beat up the issue or trying to mislead the federal parliament. Given the public comments of Mr Kerin and the articles in the *NT News*, I have no idea where he got the idea that it would be a high-level nuclear waste disposal facility. He went on ABC radio the other day and talked about how we intended to import nuclear waste for disposal at this facility. He raved on about all types of nuclear reactors and completely and utterly misrepresented the situation. I accuse the member for MacDonnell of doing likewise in relation to his constituents.

Mr Speaker, let me enlighten the 2 representatives of the Labor Party who say that, under no circumstances, will they expand the nuclear industry in Australia. Let me tell these people what this is all about.

Mr Bell: What part of Wanguri do you want it in, Don? Come on, tell us.

Mr DALE: You have been educated once today. Sit down and let it happen again.

Mr Speaker, Australia has a long-standing problem in relation to the disposal of low-level radioactive wastes generated by medicine, research and industry which vitally affects his constituents. A Consultative Committee on Radionuclide Waste has discussed and examined this problem for 7 years. About 50 m³ of low-level, radioactive waste is generated annually in Australia. Storage is a constant problem and disposal is the only solution. No decision has yet been taken and Cabinet will soon consider whether a proposal should be developed.

There is a current inventory of about 1000 m³ of low-level wastes awaiting disposal. This is increasing by approximately 50 m³ per year - if you like, equivalent in size to 50 bags of party ice. The consultative committee has reported on detailed disposal methods and site suitability criteria and has given a list of areas in Australia warranting further investigation. A number of sites considered suitable by the committee are, in fact, in the Northern Territory. I make the point that it was that committee that identified the suitable sites in the Northern Territory. It was not, as indicated by the federal member, the Northern Territory government. The Commonwealth and all states agree that a national disposal facility is required. The need for a facility is not in dispute. Current storage arrangements pose a far greater threat to future generations of Australians than a properly-sited and established disposal facility would.

Let me put the scaremongering of the member for MacDonnell and the member for the Northern Territory in the House of Representatives at rest. We are talking about wastes that are generated through the use of things like X-ray equipment. We are not talking about nuclear reactors or Pine Gap or about any of those things over which the federal member seems to be hell-bent on misleading the federal government and the people of the Northern Territory. I hope that this has put the matter into perspective. I will be making a submission to Cabinet in due course so that Cabinet can consider whether or not we should make further inquiries into this subject. If the proposal is developed, a full range of consultation with interested individuals and organisations will occur.

Motor Accidents Compensation Scheme

Mr PALMER to TREASURER

In view of concerns expressed in the Journal of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria by the local tourist industry, can he assure the Territory public that all visitors to the Territory are covered by the Motor Accidents Compensation Act Scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a good question because a considerable amount of unrest was generated by the article, not only for those tourists who were entering into the Territory but also for Territorians who were leaving the Territory to travel interstate. The Territory Insurance Office has written to the General Manager of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria whose name, I think, is Mr Drinkwater. The letter from the Chairman of TIO refers to the August 1987 issue of Royal Auto, the Journal of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, and says:

Discussion with the author of the article indicates that it was prepared after only limited research and inadequate consultation with the Territory Insurance Office. The article claims that non-residents of the Northern Territory driving Territory-registered vehicles, either inside or outside the Northern Territory, have no third-party cover in respect of injuries for which they are found to be liable. This is incorrect. Section 6 of the Motor Accidents Compensation Act provides an indemnity in such circumstances. The abolition of common law rights, which is an inherent part of the Territory's no-fault accident compensation scheme, applies only to Territory residents. Non-residents have the same rights to sue at common law and have the same protection in respect of third parties as they would have under the traditional third-party compensation schemes existing elsewhere in Australia.

Having pointed out the errors in the article, the letter from the TIO Chairman asks for a correction in the next issue of the magazine. Letters have also been sent to all hire-car firms in the Territory enclosing a copy of the letter to the automobile club. I understand that there has been concern amongst proprietors of these firms in relation to the legal position of non-resident drivers visiting the Territory. We are waiting for the next issue of the Journal of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria in the hope that it will contain the necessary correction so that people's minds can be put at rest in relation to insurance matters and motor travel in the Northern Territory.

Ministerial Travel Costs within the Northern Territory

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he confirm that, during the last financial year and excluding Cabinet travel, over 90% of his air travel within the Northern Territory was by charter plane and that the cost of that charter travel was \$95 000? Secondly, can he confirm that the cost of charter travel in the Northern Territory undertaken by ministers and their staff during the last financial year was in excess of \$225 000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm those figures off the top of my head but I will check them and respond to the Leader of the Opposition. I want to say quite clearly that my ministers and I take our responsibilities seriously. We recognise that we are a government for the whole of the Northern Territory and that it is therefore important for us to travel and speak with as many people as possible in as many parts of the Northern Territory as possible. That cannot be done by travelling by any means other than charter aircraft.

I have certainly spent a considerable amount of time in charter aircraft moving around the Northern Territory to carry out my responsibilities, as have my ministers. I do not apologise for that and, more importantly, I will encourage my ministers to move around the Northern Territory to carry out their ministerial responsibilities and to consult widely with Territorians. This is the only way we can reflect properly attitudes in all parts of the Territory and not, as some people would prefer, those of Darwin alone.

During the last 12 months, I have been amazed to see the Leader of the Opposition rushing to the media to criticise me whenever I go to places like Alice Springs, Tennant Creek or Borroloola. The moment I leave Darwin, he jumps up and criticises me for being out of my office and not getting on with the job of governing the Northern Territory. For goodness sake! Alice Springs, Yulara, Hermannsburg, Borroloola and a multitude of other places are in the Northern Territory. I can visit such places and I should do so, particularly in these days of modern communications when facsimile facilities and telephones link distant places. Government in the Northern Territory inevitably means travelling. You cannot understand the Territory without it. If the Leader of the Opposition travelled rather more and whinged rather less, the Territory would be a far better place.

Chief Ministerial Travel Costs

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister confirm that his total travel bill last financial year was \$180 000? Secondly, can he confirm that the interstate travel bill for his personal staff was approximately \$80 000 last financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition has a string of questions about my travel costs, I am quite happy to get the details. I am not ashamed of them. Yes, I did a great deal of travelling last year and it all was for the benefit of the Northern Territory.

Commercial Television Outside Darwin

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

When will Territorians living outside Darwin receive commercial television services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will recall that, earlier this year, following the withdrawal of court action challenging the decision of the Licensing Tribunal, the central Australian group, Imparja, became the undisputed holder of the RCTS licence. That entails an obligation to use its best endeavours to commence broadcasts by January 1988 to Territorians outside the Darwin area who are not covered by commercial television. At about the time when the court action ceased, talks commenced between Imparja and at least 2 other parties with a view to the possibility of establishing a joint venture to run the licence. At that time, the Territory government supported the view that a joint venture between the 2 original applicants for the licence would be most appropriate, and that view was made known. We felt that such an arrangement would have led to the earliest possible commencement of commercial television services to Territorians. In particular, areas such as Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek could possibly have had commercial television perhaps even by now through the microwave link that is available.

A fair amount of correspondence has passed between myself and Imparja over the past several months but, despite that, it is difficult to obtain accurate up-to-date information on the progress Imparja is making towards putting its service to air. Earlier this year, following advice from the federal government in June that the Northern Territory government would be receiving substantially less funding from the Commonwealth in 1987-88 than it received in 1986-87, and our recognition of the serious plight in which that placed the Northern Territory government from the point of view of its own 1987-88 budget, Imparja was advised in writing that the Northern Territory government would have to reconsider its offer to purchase a package of television services for remote areas of the Territory. It was clear that the government could not commit its scarce resources as generously as it had previously intended, indeed as it had previously undertaken to do at the licensing hearings. Honourable members will be aware of those facts because they are on the public record. However, it was obvious that Imparja should be advised immediately that the federal government had made its decision, and the Treasurer, as acting minister, wrote on 15 June, advising Imparja of that.

In saying that, I am not saying that the government will not utilise the services of commercial television when it is available to areas of the Territory outside Darwin. Indeed, the Territory government looks forward to the commencement of that service so that it can use that medium to communicate as a government with Territorians on appropriate occasions. I am informed that Imparja has now decided not to enter any joint venture arrangements with any party, and that is certainly its prerogative, although I confess to being a little surprised that it did not take the opportunity to spread some of the costs of running a television service which, I am advised, are very substantial. That has caused Imparja some difficulty in calculating the costs to provide services to Territorians, particularly services which will be broadcast to those areas outside the range of the microwave link. That refers to Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

As I have said, it is difficult for me to keep up with the intentions and actions of Imparja. Certainly, it is not responsible to me. We do our best to keep up to date with Imparja. However, I am advised that Imparja intends to commence broadcasting in about mid-January 1988 which is certainly in accordance with its licence. Recently, I noticed advertisements in the local press seeking applicants to man the television station, and I hope that it receives many very good applications. Also, I hope that that date of mid-January does see the commencement of commercial television services to that half of the population in the Northern Territory which, until now, has had access only to ABC television. Perhaps, with the special dishes available these days, some people may pick up some other services from interstate. However, primarily, Territorians outside the Darwin area have been limited to ABC television and it is certainly time that they were able to receive a proper commercial television service as does most of the rest of Australia.

Finniss River Excision for White Eagle Aboriginal Corporation

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer to his answer to a question put by the member for MacDonnell on Wednesday 16 September. In that answer, he stated that negotiations were continuing for an excision in favour of Aboriginal people in the Finniss River area. What steps have been taken by his department since February of this year to provide for that excision for the White Eagle Aboriginal Corporation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the member for Stuart, the member for MacDonnell has already asked that question. After my request relating to Block H Finniss River, the member for MacDonnell delivered to me 3 pages of questions. Answers to those questions are being formulated. One of those questions relates to the action taken for the provision of an excision on the Finniss River property for the White Eagle Aboriginal Corporation. I hope to have written answers provided to the member for MacDonnell prior to the debate on the matter of public importance this afternoon.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Chief Ministerial Travel Costs

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I have had an opportunity to extract some of the details of my travel expenditure during the course of last year and I would like to outline them briefly. Information that I have available to me indicates that the total cost of my travel in the 1986-87 financial year was \$148 487, of which \$95 533 was for charter flights. That is combined intra-Territory, interstate and overseas travel.

Those figures include some 66 nights interstate or overseas on government business. I spent considerably more nights than that outside of Darwin but within the Northern Territory during the last 12 months. In no way do I apologise for that. I have nothing to be ashamed of in relation to any trip I have made and I am prepared to justify any trip. If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to continue this nonsensical line of questioning, I would appreciate his explaining to Northern Territory people the benefits the Northern Territory gained from his 20 nights' interstate travel and how much intra-Territory travel he has done. If there has been benefit to the Northern Territory, why has he undertaken no interstate travel since April, and what is he doing to brief himself on the realities of the Northern Territory?

Small Claims Court

Mr FIRMIN to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Are any moves under way to ease the burden on magistrates in relation to small claims hearings and has any consideration been given to lifting the monetary limits on the jurisdiction of the Small Claims Court?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the first part of the question, a number of mechanisms are being considered. There is a proposal to redraft small claims application forms to make them more understandable both to applicants and defendants. It is suggested that this would result in clearer applications to the Small Claims Court which would enable disputes to be settled more effectively by parties involved, including the magistrates.

Another proposal that is being considered is the introduction of a process to enable a defendant to admit a claim when he receives an application. That would allow the matter to be settled more quickly. It has been suggested that a position of registrar be created in the local courts where small claims are heard and that that registrar be given the power to hold pre-trial conferences on small claim matters. Obviously, that mechanism would allow parties to settle matters out of court and reduce the number of disputes which would have to be heard by magistrates.

In answer to the second part of the question, it has been suggested that the Small Claims Act be amended to lift the limit to \$5000 or even above. Obviously, there must be some reservations about adopting that suggestion. First of all, our statistics show that the majority of claims settled under the act tend to be for fairly small amounts and I do not think it has been established whether there is a demand for an increase or not. Consideration must be given to the point that such a move would make it worth while for litigants with greater financial resources to employ counsel to appear for them, while opposing parties in those matters might not have those resources. Therefore, we would be bringing matters into the lower courts that had been set aside to enable the average person to be able to settle them without going to a great deal of expense.

It may be appropriate to increase the limit to some degree. The economic fluctuations and exchange rates obviously have some relevance to the sort of limits that we should be looking at in our courts. Most other areas of jurisdiction have limits set around the \$3000 to \$5000 mark. Clearly, we are required to take cognisance of what is occurring in the rest of the country. However, no firm decision has been made on either of those matters, and I will be considering those issues most carefully before I move to implement any changes in those areas.

Chief Minister's Overseas Trip

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Last week he undertook to provide to this House details of the cost of his planned overseas trip. Is he in a position to give us that information today and, secondly, will any parts of that trip be undertaken by charter aircraft?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I apologise to the Leader of the Opposition. I will try to have that information made available during the course of today's question time. With respect to the overseas trip, I believe there may be a requirement to use a charter aircraft for travel from Athens to Kalymnos. I will confirm that when I see the details of the program. I will try to obtain that information before the end of question time today. People in the Department of the Chief Minister are in the process of making arrangements for the trip and, whilst the itinerary has been established, the making of telephone calls and the confirmation of bookings is a matter I normally leave to my staff. I will, however, advise the honourable member.

Future Operation of Lameroo Lodge

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Has an agreement been signed for the future operation of Lameroo Lodge and, if so, what is the name of the successful applicant?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the arrangement has been finalised. It took some time to sort out the details. As a result of our call for expressions of interest, 3 serious proposals were lodged and I am able to announce that Tchia Anthony Travel Accommodation Catering, known as TATAC, is the successful tenderer. It is important to note that the government has taken steps to ensure that covenants and guarantees for specific performance are placed on the successful tenderer so that work is done to upgrade the facility as soon as possible. There is a development covenant of about \$910 000 and a performance guarantee of \$150 000. The actual lease was signed by the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Housing on 11 September 1987.

Installation Costs of Rural Telephones

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In an answer in the Assembly last week, he stated that the cost of installation of a rural telephone will rise from \$1390 to \$6240. I am advised by Telecom that there will be an increase in cost for the installation of a rural telephone, but that it will be from \$1390 to \$1410 - in other words, a \$20 increase. Where did he obtain the information concerning the cost increase that he outlined, and will he now concede that that information is wrong?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, just at this moment, I cannot lay my hands on the document I was quoting from. If the Leader of the Opposition refers to Hansard ...

Mr Smith: I did.

Mr PERRON: I said that it was intended by Telecom to make that particular increase, not that Telecom had made the increase. In fact, I think the matter may be going before the Prices Surveillance Authority. The Leader of the Opposition shakes his head.

Mr Smith: I think you had better check.

Mr PERRON: Does Telecom not have to go before the Prices Surveillance Authority?

Mr Smith: It is not going to increase the charge. It is pretty outrageous stuff, when you think about it, chucking around accusations like that.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, if my publicity on this matter has altered Telecom's course, I would be very pleased to claim the credit for it. However, I will re-examine Hansard, and the document that I quoted from when I was answering the question last week, to establish clearly that the words I used were that Telecom was intending the increase, rather than that it had made the increase.

Petty Cash Expenditure by Chief Minister's Department

Mr REED to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware of the news item yesterday which stated that the Department of the Chief Minister had spent \$200 000 on petty cash items in 1 month in the 1986-87 financial year, and was that news item accurate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of a news item alleging that the Department of the Chief Minister had spent \$200 000 on petty cash items in 1 month in the 1986-87 financial year. I understand that was yet another of these allegations so flagrantly thrown around by the Leader of the Opposition in his vain attempts to demonstrate somehow that the Northern Territory government is not managing its money efficiently and effectively.

Mr Speaker, we did not spend \$200 000 on petty cash items in 1 month. What I believe the Leader of the Opposition is referring to is the increase arranged in the departmental cheque account in June 1987. That payment was arranged in the department to facilitate prompt payment of end-of-year accounts for local traders and ministers. The Leader of the Opposition laughs. I would urge him not to joke about this because he is about to get egg right across his face.

Payments through the Accounting Service Centre ceased for 10 working days to enable normal end-of-year financial processing. Our government has a determination to ensure prompt payment of accounts and the department took steps to ensure that the facility was available to continue the prompt payment of accounts from the Department of the Chief Minister despite the end-of-year processing. Nevertheless, there was an even more fundamental reason at that time. I remind honourable members that, at that time, we were in the middle of a significant industrial dispute with the public service. There was a real threat that the public service unions would seek to use their membership in the cheque processing areas to cut off the payment of cheques and, equally, to cut off the payment of salaries to public servants. Officers of my department took precautionary measures to ensure that they could counteract any such industrial action by the trade unions and to ensure that departmental staff could be paid at the appropriate time. The reasons were: first, to make sure accounts could continue to be processed and, secondly, to counteract potential industrial action, which was a real threat at that time. I commend the department on having the foresight to take those precautionary steps.

Training of Apprentices

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

How does the number of apprentices receiving training at the Darwin Institute of Technology this year compare with the numbers during the past 2 years and what are the Territory-wide figures for apprentices during the same period?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the data that I have received from the Darwin Institute of Technology shows that 821 apprentices are receiving training at the Darwin Institute of Technology. As it happens, there were also 821 apprentices at the Darwin Institute of Technology last year, although this was an increase of nearly 30 over 1985 when there were 793. Throughout the Territory, 1116 apprentices are receiving training from either the Darwin Institute of Technology or the Alice Springs College of TAFE or are doing some of their training interstate. This compares with 1120 last year and 1061 the year before.

It is interesting to note that the number of apprentices going interstate for training has steadily declined from 108 in 1985 to 103 in 1986, down to 83 this year. At the same time, there has been a marked increase in the number of apprentices studying at the Alice Springs College of Technical and Further Education, formerly the Community College of Central Australia. Numbers there have risen from 160 in 1985 to 196 in 1986 and 212 this year. The decline in students going interstate for training is largely the result of increasing numbers of apprenticeship courses being offered in the Territory. Another reason, which also explains why enrolments at the DIT have remained static, is the downturn in the building industry. I am advised that the slight decrease in the overall number of apprentices is due to lower numbers of apprentices being taken on this year in the building industry and associated trades. This was not unexpected in the present economic climate, and it will certainly pick up again as the industry recovers from its slump. There has also been a drop in the number of apprentices commencing in the food and hospitality industry and this can be attributed, at least in part, to the effect of the fringe benefits tax on this previously-growing industry.

I believe that, overall, the Territory has done well to maintain its apprenticeship numbers in the face of an adverse economic climate. It is also due to the initiative of organisations such as the Master Builders Association which, in combination with the government, have developed unique schemes to allow apprentices to train in areas where there is fluctuation and where economic factors can affect intake numbers. Such innovative steps have enabled us to keep constant the number of young people who have opportunities to learn trades in the Territory.

Block H at Finnis River

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he assure the House and the Territory public that neither he nor any of his ministers or former ministers have, or have had, any direct or indirect financial interest in the purchase or sale of Block H at Finnis River Station?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members of the Assembly are required to register publicly statements of their interests. For the benefit of the member opposite, who has been digging away at this matter for some time without a skerrick of evidence, I want to state very clearly that I have no financial interest in that particular block of land or any other block of land in the Northern Territory, Australia or the world other than my own home block. Everything that I have an interest in, either directly or indirectly, is stated in the records of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

I have heard allegations, obviously spread by the opposition, particularly during the lead-up to the Northern Territory election, about certain ministers having an interest in that particular block. I have spoken with the ministers mentioned in the rumours and have been assured categorically that they have no interest whatsoever in the block. It is one of the most scurrilous pieces of muckraking and gutter raking that I have ever heard. It was used as part of an ongoing campaign by members of the opposition to dig around in the dirt, to find anything they could, to spread any rumours they liked in order to try and discredit this government. They have nothing to run with. There is nothing improper in the dealings with the Finnis River block. To my knowledge, none of my ministers - and I have been assured of this in response to inquiries I have made - has any interest in that block.

Document Relating to Member for Barkly

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

On the front page of the NT News of 9 December 1986, there was an article headed: "Here is the proof" - CM'. It stated in part: 'Queried strongly about his claim to irrefutable proof, Mr Hatton reached into his office desk drawer and produced an official document detailing Mr Tuxworth's disloyalty'. Was the official document mentioned in the article a statutory declaration sworn by one Jeffrey Kenneth Brenton of Lake Evella via Nhulunbuy and, if so, to how many members of the CLP parliamentary wing did he show the document before that date?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that has absolutely nothing to do with my ministerial responsibilities or the government. It is an internal party matter. I do not intend to debate the matter in this House.

Vehicle Encumbrance Legislation

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Vehicle encumbrance legislation has been under review since the middle of last year. An announcement was made during the election campaign in March that it would be completed before the end of the year. When is this matter of vital importance to vehicle purchasers likely to be completed?

ANSWER

The matter of motor vehicle encumbrances was raised during last year's Consumer Affairs Review undertaken by the then Minister for Community Development. The responsibility for implementing such a scheme has been handed to the Department of Transport and Works as being the appropriate body

in that the Motor Vehicle Registry already has computer facilities and keeps records on all motor vehicles registered in the Territory.

In assessing the best way to handle the approximately 25 000 motor vehicles involved in registration encumbrances in the Territory, we had a couple of options. One was to look at schemes in place interstate. Some schemes have been in place for 2 or 3 years. The most suitable for our needs are those in Queensland and New South Wales. Negotiations are in progress with Queensland, in particular, to try to determine the cost of linking into its scheme. The final objective is to link into a national information network on motor vehicle encumbrances, but that is seen to be still some few years away.

The other option was to develop a stand-alone scheme for the Territory itself. The initial costs involved would be about \$300 000 for the computer hardware and software programs, and about \$100 000 per annum on recurring expenditure. Obviously, that was quite excessive if those costs were to be passed on to those wishing to utilise the system; that is, consumers, motor vehicle purchasers or potential purchasers, and the financiers who would want to have their interests safeguarded. On revision of that stand-alone system, it was found that it might be possible to cut those costs back to about \$150 000 by utilising some second-hand computer ware etc. That is now seen to be a reasonably viable option. However, as I mentioned, we are also pursuing the potential of linking in with the Queensland system.

As for timing, I would hope that, some time during the early part of 1988, we will be able to implement a system within the Northern Territory that will be accessible to motor vehicle purchasers, who would wish to know, of course, whether the vehicle they had their eye on was under any encumbrance from a finance company, and to lenders of finance. Whilst it has been some 4 or 5 months since the announcement was made initially that we were entering into a scheme, things have progressed and I am very hopeful that we will have a most satisfactory system in place early next year.

Installation Costs of Rural Telephones

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer to his answer of Wednesday 16 September 1987 where he said, in part, 'The cost of installation of rural telephones will rise from \$1390 to \$6240, and new telephone connections everywhere will have very long installation lead times'. In the light of that specific guarantee, which has now proved to be wrong, will he apologise here for misleading the Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will not apologise to the Assembly although, in answering a question earlier this morning, I undertook to seek some more information. May I say that, in all fairness to the House, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should read the sentence preceding that which he has just quoted. I will read it for the enlightenment of honourable members: 'At present, Telecom plans to increase charges for installation of rural telephone services, and this relates directly to the honourable member's question and to outback Territorians'. Obviously, if Telecom plans had gone ahead, on the advice that I had, then the charges would have risen from \$1390 to \$6240.

Mr Smith: You need a new adviser.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will withdraw that remark.

Mr Smith: Mr Speaker, I withdraw it.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I have undertaken to seek further information and advise the House in due course. The Leader of the Opposition was being quite facetious in reading out that sentence and not the preceding one, which indicated what Telecom's plans were. I would hope that, in his dealings with Telecom, the Leader of the Opposition will put in an appeal on behalf of Territorians, particularly Territorians in remote areas, for Telecom to ease off its attacks on plans it had for the installation of telephones in remote areas for Australians. Telecom has to address certain cutbacks because of the Commonwealth government's imposition on it of some \$380m-worth of charges from which it was formerly exempt. I hope that, in due course, the Leader of the Opposition can advise the Assembly not only that he has confirmed the accuracy of my statement with Telecom, but that he is using such influence as he may have with the federal government to influence this giant monopoly in Australia to play fairly with the lives of Territorians so that the services to Territorians are equivalent to the services provided to all other Australians.

Water Conservation Program

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What has been the effect of the public water conservation program which started a few weeks ago?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can advise the House that the water conservation program which the Power and Water Authority and the Water Directorate entered into some weeks ago has been successful in terms of a decrease in the utilisation of water. The consumption for the week ending 16 September was less than that in the equivalent period last year: 105 ML as compared with 120 ML last year. For those who prefer imperial measurements that is a drop from about 2.8 million gallons to 2.4 million gallons. There was a similar fall in consumption for the previous week as well.

The program has been very successful, and I thank the people who have become more conscious of the high cost of using water. For every litre we deliver, the government recoups about half the cost. It is a big cost to government and honourable members would be aware that, at the moment, the rural area is being investigated for potential sites for the development of larger dams to enable Darwin and the rural area to have a more constant supply of water as we approach the 1990s. Any savings that can be made by water conservation will help towards the high capital costs involved in constructing larger dams.

The Consumer Advisory Centre, which has been established in the old NTEC building in Cavenagh Street, has been inundated with suggestions and questions. Suppliers have brought to our attention a range of devices which assist in water conservation. I have also spoken to the Chief Minister and my ministerial colleagues because the most frequent complaint received by the Customer Advisory Centre is that government departments are using more water than necessary. We will be talking with various ministers about how they can become involved in conserving water. Once again, I thank all those people who have been involved in the program and ask them to keep up the good work.

Groote Eylandt Airport

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Are there any plans by the Northern Territory government or the federal government to extend or upgrade the Groote Eylandt airport?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly I am not aware of any plans currently before the Northern Territory government or the federal Department of Transport in relation to the Groote Eylandt strip. Judging from my last visit, the strip is in a reasonable state and is long enough to handle most of our commuter aircraft up to F28 standard. I am not certain what the honourable member is referring to. Maybe he is referring to the terminal facilities which I found to be somewhat inadequate during my last visit. These facilities are possibly a responsibility of the mining company, and I will undertake to investigate the matter and, hopefully, have an answer for him tomorrow.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Tobacco Products Legislation

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services)(by leave): Mr Speaker, earlier in these sittings, the member for Sadadeen asked me a question pertaining to proposed legislation concerning the sale and supply of tobacco to children. The member for Sadadeen was Chairman of the Statute Review Committee last year and, in August or September of last year, he submitted a proposal, as chairman, that the government should review its legislation on this matter. The only relevant legislation which applies is the Children's Protection Act 1904 of South Australia which provides for a penalty of \$10 in today's terms. Obviously, if we wish to address this particular problem, we would need much stronger legislation.

The committee went to a great deal of trouble to obtain public input on this issue which stirs the emotions of many people. As a result of those public considerations, the committee submitted proposals which would create a basic offence of selling or supplying tobacco products to a child with a maximum penalty of some \$500. It would be an offence for a child to purchase from a vending machine, with a penalty of \$50. Owners of machines would be subject to regulatory orders by the court if extensive use of vending machines by children was proved. Warning notices would be required at points of sale and on vending machines, and schools would be authorised to confiscate and destroy cigarettes in the possession of pupils.

Whilst the thrust of the proposals is obviously to be commended, they should be seen in the light of the government's desire to cut red tape and deregulate. It was unfortunate that the timing of the Statute Law Review Committee's recommendations coincided with the preselection process leading up to the last Northern Territory election because this meant that there was a period during which not a great deal of work was done on them. Since the elections, the Chief Minister has put in place various administrative arrangements to review all regulations attached to legislation and, of course, a Statute Law Review Committee will continue to review legislation. The sale of tobacco to children will take its place among the issues before those 2 bodies and I look forward to informing the Assembly about further developments on this matter.

Uniform Firearms Legislation

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the government's position on uniform firearms legislation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a topical matter of considerable interest in Australia, particularly after the tragic shootings which occurred when a person I can only describe as a crazed gunman went on the rampage in the VRD and Kimberley regions and, of course, the recent massacre in Melbourne. The Northern Territory Firearms Act was substantially revised in 1978, taking into account legislation in other states. Additionally, the legislation is compatible with the various points raised in an earlier resolution to the Australian Police Ministers' Council. In particular, machine-guns are prohibited in the Northern Territory and the legislation provides safeguards to prohibit the possession of semi-automatic weapons of military calibre with large-capacity magazines.

However, the government does not adopt a complacent attitude to these matters. Amending legislation will be brought before this House in relation to: the suspension of licences, permits and registration certificates and the immediate surrender or seizure of any firearms to which such suspended or revoked documents relate, as well as the documents themselves; the service of notices under the act; the making of appropriate offences provided for under the act; regulatory offences; and the provision of penalties for certain offences. In addition, the rights of appeal against decisions by the Police Commissioner to revoke licences are also being examined.

At its November meeting, the Australian Police Ministers' Council will consider the report of a working party which will examine national criteria for licensing shooters, creating a national firearms register, a uniform permit system, a uniform list of prohibited weapons and a practical test as a prerequisite for obtaining firearms.

The proposed legislation I have outlined is aimed at tightening up further the issue of firearms in the Northern Territory, particularly combined with the work that is occurring through the Australian Police Ministers' Council to address this very vexed problem. For example, one of our great difficulties in the Northern Territory at the moment is that, whilst our laws are quite stringent with respect to firearms, states such as Queensland have laws in this regard which can only be described as lax, and this provides an opportunity for people to transport legal and illegal weapons across the border into the Northern Territory. We understand that that occurred in the Kimberley murder case. That makes it essential that there be uniform gun laws throughout this country and that they be policed strictly.

Whilst the pro-gun lobby fights very hard for the right to hold and own weapons, there is an equal and compelling responsibility on governments and the community generally to ensure that guns are not in the hands of inappropriate people and that, where guns are allowed, they are properly controlled and their use restricted to minimise the risk of their being used to cause harm to persons or property.

Rationalisation of Planning Authorities

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Has he taken any action to rationalise the boundaries of jurisdiction of the Rural Planning Authority and, in so doing, change the boundaries of the Darwin Planning Authority and take into consideration a separate planning authority for the Cox Peninsula area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot answer the honourable member specifically. Could the member indicate whether she is talking about the Darwin Rural Region Strategy Plan that is currently under review?

Mrs Padgham-Purich: No, I am talking about the boundaries.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, a proposition has been circulated to government departments which addresses all the issues relating to the shire boundaries, the Darwin City Council boundaries, the future of Cox Peninsula and, of course, the Palmerston boundaries. In the near future, I expect to receive comments from government departments. I am more than happy for the member for Koolpinyah to peruse that document because, in the very near future, it will be made available for public comment. I certainly have no problems with the honourable member viewing it now.

Review of Adoption of Children Act

Mr FIRMIN TO MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

For quite some time now, I have been vitally interested, on behalf of my constituents, in the review of the Adoption of Children Act. When will this review to be completed and legislation placed before the Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the field of adoption of children has been subject to considerable scrutiny and assessment in recent years. The review of the Adoption of Children Act is proceeding in order to examine the need for amendments in the areas of inter-country adoption, step-parent adoptions and issues of contact between adoptees and their natural parents. Of course, that last issue is one that is proving to be of great interest to many people. It is a very emotional issue.

Research into the adoption legislation of other states has already begun. The report of the States and Territories Commonwealth Joint Committee on Inter-country Adoption has been received, and its recommendations are being examined. Public submissions have been sought from individuals and organisations to determine the area of community concern regarding adoption. In late 1986, I approved the following timetable for the review of the act: submissions from the public and from adoption agencies to be received by March 1987; discussion paper to be prepared and circulated to interested parties by April 1987; a Cabinet submission, seeking approval to prepare draft legislation by June 1987; draft legislation to go to Cabinet in October 1987; a draft bill to be in the Legislative Assembly between November 1987 and February 1988, to allow for public comment; and a revised bill to be introduced into the Assembly in April 1988.

While a delay in receiving some public submissions has caused some disruption to this timetable, a discussion paper has been developed and it will be available to the public in approximately 2 weeks. Copies will be sent to persons who have specifically expressed an interest. This paper sets out the issues involved, discusses alternatives, and puts forward proposed alternatives. It is envisaged that the revised bill I mentioned will now be introduced into the Assembly in June 1988.

Northern Territory Land Corporation

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

The Northern Territory Land Corporation has a trust account which appears in the quarterly financial statements along with all other trust accounts. For the 3 months ended 30 June 1987, the closing balance of that trust account is shown as \$48 018. For the 3 months beginning 1 April, the opening balance is shown as zero. I do not expect the Treasurer to have the answer to my question, but I would appreciate him obtaining and supplying it. What happened to the \$48 000 that was in the trust account at the end of one financial quarter, but was not there at the beginning of the next?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the information provided to me by the Leader of the Opposition is correct, I could suggest to him that that money was spent. I will endeavour to obtain further information for him during the course of these sittings, but the independence of the Northern Territory Land Corporation has been explained in the Assembly.

Northern Territory Land Corporation

I have a supplementary questions. Can I point out to the Treasurer who again has demonstrated an appalling ignorance about his own financial ...

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Leader of the Opposition is debating the matter and not asking a supplementary question. I think he is entirely out of order. He is supposed to be asking a question in an endeavour to elicit further information in relation to the answer to his question. Instead, he is giving a statement of his views on the matter.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, it is necessary in this context to go into a somewhat lengthy explanation so that the Treasurer will get the point of the question, which he obviously missed.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but the Leader of the Opposition should ask his question rather than debate the matter.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, my understanding is that the quarterly financial accounts are there so that, at the end of each quarter, there is an accurate record of transactions and the final balance. At the beginning of each quarter, there is an accurate record of the balance. Is the Treasurer suggesting that those financial accounts are inaccurate and that transactions may well take place which are not recorded in the quarterly statements?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will provide the Leader of the Opposition with that information during the course of these sittings.

Frances Bay Mooring Basin

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, some 6 months ago the Australian Labor Party described the Frances Bay mooring basin as a white elephant. What benefits have accrued to the Darwin business community since the completion of the safe ship harbour?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will be as brief as the subject matter warrants. The subject matter is another good story of the Northern Territory, a good story that was bagged during the election campaign by one John Reeves, who was simply trying to put down the honourable member for Casuarina. The honourable member had no reason to be anything but proud of his efforts relating to the mooring basin. The mooring basin has been operating for almost 1 year.

Mr Collins: It's not big enough.

Mr FINCH: The member for Sadadeen is correct, and that only reflects the absolute success of that project.

The basin was constructed with a total of 85 berths. There are different ways that people can lease those berths. I understand that some 40 berths are permanently booked by fishing vessels. Companies are able to rotate boats in and out of their permanent facilities and have work done through the surrounding businesses. During the off-season, or off-seasons as they now are, the basin is absolutely chock-a-block with vessels of one kind or another, particularly fishing vessels for which the facility was originally designed.

The adjoining businesses include engineering, maintenance, ships' chandlers and other support services for the fishing industry. I am pleased to say that those businesses have experienced a tremendous increase in custom and the feedback is that they are providing an extremely efficient service to fishing boats during their brief stays in the basin. The fishermen have praised the performance of local businesses, and that is to the great credit of their operators. We have been able to attract fishing companies to establish their operations here in the Northern Territory, as opposed to returning to Broome, Fremantle or Cairns. Not only will business benefit from this, but families will reside here also, as opposed to drifting back interstate. That will provide valuable spin-offs to the whole community.

The basin was constructed for approximately \$7m. Construction was carried out extremely efficiently, enabling boats to be berthed there prior to the last cyclone season, that being the principal purpose of the facility. When Cyclone Kay was approaching, the basin was fully occupied by fishing vessels and a number of small yachts that sought refuge. The Port Authority is operating the basin so as to recover operating costs only. The government is not seeking to pay for the capital investment through income from people utilising the facility. We see it as a community benefit and the operating costs, which I understand to be about \$250 000 per annum, are offset by berth rentals to both permanent and casual users. Income to June is about \$107 000 and we expect that the full-year income will be very close to the \$250 000 expended. There have been minor hiccups. One reflected rather sadly on a contractor who, at one stage, attempted to hold us to ransom over some claims for additional funds, but that matter has now been settled and the basin is operating very efficiently.

That is not the end of the story. Some additional facilities will be required, and approximately 5 ha of land have been filled to the west of the basin entrance. That land is undergoing natural consolidation and we are looking at possible uses for it. Naturally, such uses will be related to the fishing industry. I foresee some additional support facilities being located there and, at present, we are considering short-term uses while the fill is consolidating. Definite long-term development will have to wait for a few years yet. The potential remains for us to provide a magnificent facility which will provide a great financial return to business and to the Territory generally.

Speed Limits on Territory Roads

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer to the horrendous death rates on our roads and the fact that we alone, throughout Australia, have no speed limits on our major highways or other roads outside built-up areas. Has he looked at any correlation between high speeds and unsealed roads in the Northern Territory, is there such a correlation between the 2, and has the government any intention of introducing a global speed limit on unsealed roads in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, road safety is an extremely serious matter. I am delighted that some honourable members have gone to the trouble of bringing forward matters of concern and I thank the member for his question. I condemn those who might treat road safety as trivial and the Leader of the Opposition seems to be putting himself into that category. We have a statutory limit of 110 km, which means simply that people who exceed that limit need to be able to illustrate that they are still driving with due care.

Whilst I do not have a finite breakdown of speed-related statistics, it is my perception that the majority of speed-related fatalities or serious accidents relate to people breaking the speed limits established in urban areas rather than those who are doing excessively high speeds out on the open road. The main contributing factor on the open road is fatigue, resulting in single vehicle accidents, and it appears that the actual speed component is not of great significance. In relation to travel on gravel roads, there may be some validity in the point the honourable member has made. I will undertake to have that aspect reviewed by the department and the Road Safety Council. The honourable member is quite correct. When travelling on gravel roads that are subject to seasonal deterioration, there is quite a dangerous situation, particularly with 4-wheel-drive vehicles which are inherently very unstable. I thank the honourable member for his question. I take it on board. Hopefully, I will be able to supply a comprehensive response at the next sittings.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Chief Minister's Overseas Trip

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I refer to a question directed to me earlier by the Leader of the Opposition concerning my proposed overseas trip. The Leader of the Opposition sought information about the total cost of the trip, which I undertook to provide earlier in these sittings. He also asked whether charter flights would be used at any stage.

Mr Speaker, again I must apologise. The head of the Protocol Unit of the Department of the Chief Minister is the officer who has that information. I was advised this morning that he is absent from work today through illness, and I am unable to obtain that information. I trust I will have it available for tomorrow's sitting.

However, I can correct what I said about charter flights. I am advised that it is proposed that travel from Kalymnos to Cyprus be by charter, not from Athens to Kalymnos. Mr Speaker, I would expect to have more detail on that, if people consider that necessary, when I have had an opportunity to speak with Mr Farrell tomorrow morning.

Japan Australia Railway Study Group

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

When is the next meeting of the Japan Australia Railway Study Group to take place and could he give us a report on general progress made by the study group?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I have outlined in the Assembly, because of the manner in which the railway was dealt with publicly earlier this year, I took the firm decision not to report progress to the Assembly until such time as there was a concrete position. I can report ...

Mr Ede: Will you tell us when the train arrives?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart takes great delight in making these inane statements on the unreasonable assumption that somehow he is being clever. All he is doing is demonstrating his absolute ignorance and incompetence. If the member for Stuart will quieten down for a moment or two, he might actually hear something. The member for Stuart should understand quite clearly that you cannot keep your ears and your mouth open at the same time and, unfortunately, his mouth is open all the time.

Mr Speaker, the Japan Australia Transport Study Group, which was formed as a consequence of my visit to Japan earlier this year, has met, I think, on 3 occasions in Japan, with representatives from the Northern Territory attending. Last month, the chairman of that study group, Dr Sugawara from Japan Railway Technical Services, visited the Northern Territory and, in company with the Minister for Transport and Works, surveyed the route of the proposed railway. He was briefed on a number of the technical aspects of the railway from this end and some of the development possibilities that could arise from that railway.

Since that time, I understand the Japanese participants in the study group have been meeting in Japan, and I have been advised of their continuing keen interest in the project. They have formed 3 subcommittees to consider the technical, financial and operational aspects of a rail service. It is proposed to hold a further meeting of the full study group in the Northern Territory towards the end of October. We will then be paring the group down to those participants who have a real rather than an academic interest as inevitably occurs during the early days of forming a consortium. I might add that there is increasing interest in this project from Australian businesses and we have been maintaining contact with a number of Australian organisations which are seeking to participate in different aspects of the railway project. Yesterday's Financial Review contained an article which clearly indicated the keenness of EIE and Kumagai Gumi in being involved with the development of this railway, and Dr Isuzaki featured strongly in that article.

No one has ever assumed that this project will be put together easily or that it can be done on the front pages of the newspapers. We are approaching the formation of a consortium in a solid and businesslike manner and I can advise honourable members that it is still my objective to commence construction of the railway in 1988.

Payment of Subcontractors

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

There have been reports in the media recently on difficulties experienced by subcontractors in gaining payment for work completed for some Department of Transport and Works contractors in Katherine. What action is his department taking in relation to this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, quite correctly, a number of honourable members have asked me about the department's position in this matter and what action it has been able to take. I should acknowledge that the member for Koolpinyah raised the matter with me yesterday. I am in a position to inform honourable members concerning the construction company which is carrying out work for the department both in Katherine and on the Arnhem Highway. The company is Queensland-based and, at the time of acceptance of its tenders for those projects, it was able to demonstrate that it had the technical capacity to meet its commitments. As is common nowadays, the company utilised a number of subcontractors to carry out the greater proportion of the work.

Unfortunately, as is all too common these days, most of the subcontractors did not have formal contractual arrangements with the principal contractor. I would like to dwell on that matter briefly, because it has been a matter of concern to me for many years. Under most principal contracts, nominated subcontracts, relating to mechanical engineering services or plumbing services of a major or complex nature, are written specifically into the head contract. That provides protection for subcontractors under the nationally-accepted NPWC standard conditions of contract. Similar clauses exist in standard master-builder contracts and the national SAA standard contracts which are supported by the Institute of Engineers. In addition, wage-earners working for nominated subcontractors have protection also. If the subcontractor fails to pay them, they are able to take their concern to the principal contractor and have action taken to ensure that payment is made.

Mr Speaker, I have been concerned about this for some time. Not long after I was appointed Minister for Transport and Works, we introduced a clause which is unique in Australia, to give some additional protection to those other smaller, non-official subcontractors that the principal contractor wishes to use. We inserted a clause that ensured that the principal contractor had an acceptable written agreement with the subcontractor. In most cases, that is enough to ensure protection of both parties - the subcontractor and the principal contractor himself. There must be a written agreement relating to the service and the payment therefrom. To ensure that there was a formal subcontract in place, the new clause obliged the principal contractor to pay a proportional component of his progress payment to the subcontractor within 14 days of receipt of that amount. That seemed to be a fair and reasonable approach for all parties. These days, most contractors pay on a weekly basis so that they can attract a better rate.

That clause has been implemented since I have been in office. I was surprised to find that it attracted some adverse criticism from the Master Builders Association. I think that criticism resulted from a misconception of what it was all about. I understand it is now more acquiescent about that clause being there. As I said, it gives protection not only to the subcontractor, but to the principal contractor also.

The question related specifically to contract work in Katherine. The department has invited suppliers who have not been paid to list their grievance with the department. The department's position is that its officers have spoken with the principal contractor and assured him that, if he does not meet his financial commitments, that will be the last job he will receive from the department in the Northern Territory. At the moment, we have some progress payments and retention moneys which have been held by the department, and we are awaiting the outcome of some action being taken in the courts at the moment by some of the suppliers. I believe that the funds that are held will go substantially towards meeting those debts that have been incurred by the small subcontractors, but we will need to wait until all of these matters are determined. I understand that the contractor has disappeared from Katherine, but has established himself out on the Arnhem Highway to continue works out there.

Mr Speaker, I mention also that some wage earners have been disadvantaged in this matter and a great number of civil subcontractors. I believe also that the Gagadju people are involved in that job on the Arnhem Highway. The department is doing everything within its power to ensure that their interests are protected.

Strehlow Collection

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer him to the Strehlow Collection which contains tjuringa and miil-miil pa kutjupa kutjupa. What will the minister and the government do to make arrangements for the Strehlow Collection that recognise the religious associations that much of this collection has for many of my constituents?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we will take sound advice. The difficulty is in determining where to obtain that sound advice. Who do we ask? Which traditional Aboriginal people have the right to speak for, advise on or even look at various aspects of the Strehlow Collection? Some 5 or 6 months ago, I approached the member for MacDonnell myself and asked if he would be prepared to work with me to develop the government's strategy on the Strehlow Collection. That offer still stands.

I am pleased to advise the member for MacDonnell that, now that all the negotiations concerning the Strehlow Collection, its ownership and title, including copyright, have been firmly established and legally bound by way of contract, we are seeking advice from relevant people who have been associated with the Aboriginal traditional owners for some time to develop a strategy for the proper handling of the collection, in particular those parts of it considered sacred or not available or requiring special treatment. We have had considerable difficulty in finding the right person in the Alice Springs area to deal with this. I can assure the member for MacDonnell that any advice that he has to offer to me on the direction that I should or should not take will be gladly received. I am sure that the member for MacDonnell is probably more aware than I am of the intricacies involved in the correct procedures actually finally establishing the Strehlow Collection.

We have purchased the collection. It was done amicably with Dr Kath Strehlow ...

Mr Bell: You know that is not true, Ray.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, that is a ridiculous and outrageous statement by the member for MacDonnell because he simply has no idea of the final negotiations involving legal counsel for the Northern Territory, the Director of the Conservation Commission, Mrs Strehlow's final legal representative and Mrs Strehlow herself over a 4-day period. It would be interesting for the member for MacDonnell to take particular note of the fact that the negotiations which were finalised did not involve any extra monetary demands from Dr Kath Strehlow, and did not involve any additional demands that could not be met, within reason, by the Northern Territory government within the terms of the original agreement. The point really at issue was the original diaries which were listed originally as being part of the collection.

I have made no secret of the fact that the Northern Territory government is in possession of microfiche of the original diaries. The agreement simply states that, for the term of Kath Strehlow's life, the original diaries relating to the Strehlow Collection will remain in her possession. Upon her death, they will transfer, with some other particular personal items, to the Strehlow Collection. Mr Speaker, to say that that agreement was not arrived at amicably is a statement made without any fact; something that the member for MacDonnell seems to do with a great deal of delight. Unfortunately, to his great and ever-increasing embarrassment, he never learns that he is suffering from foot-in-mouth disease. I appreciate the efforts made by Anthony Thomas and officers of the Department of Law. I have stated publicly my appreciation for the efforts of Dr Kath Strehlow in ensuring that this complete collection ultimately becomes an asset for the people of the Northern Territory.

To return to the matter I was addressing when the member for MacDonnell decided to put his size-10 boot fair down his throat, we have a 3-year program to establish a building in the Alice Springs region to house the Strehlow Collection permanently. Tied to that is the possibility of incorporating a museum for Alice Springs. How that comes about, and how it is ultimately developed is a matter for ongoing consultation and development of the normal procedures through the government process. We have stated our assurance publicly. We stated our intent publicly. I take great exception to the member for MacDonnell suggesting that we have acted improperly or in any way impinged on normal negotiations between Kath Strehlow and the Northern Territory government.

Despite his foot-in-mouth disease, I am still more than happy to say to the member for MacDonnell that, if he chooses to give me advice and would like to sit down with me and give me his ideas and thoughts on how the collection should be assembled, arranged, displayed and housed, I will be more than happy to do so.

Legal Advice on 1983 Election

Mr HARRIS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of the 1983 election and referred specifically to the election of the member for Ludmilla, Col Firmin, and the member for Wanguri, Don Dale. Has the government received any legal advice regarding the outcome of the 1983 election?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the question because it allows me the opportunity to speak about something that has been cleared up for quite some time except, obviously, in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Smith: You should have made a public statement about it when you promised you would. That is the problem.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I think that that sort of comment from the Leader of the Opposition is very unfortunate because, if he had his ear to the ground or took the time to make any inquiries, to listen or to read newspapers, he would realise that the matter was addressed before the last election. Opinions were sought from Mr Bob Ellicott QC and Sir Maurice Byers QC, and it was found that the member for Ludmilla and the Minister for Health were legitimate members of the Legislative Assembly between 1983 and 1987.

Section 120 of the Electoral Act sets out the procedures to challenge an election on any grounds. The grounds in the suggested case were that the members were not eligible for nomination as members to contest an election. That challenge could have been made by any person and would have had to have been directed to the Election Tribunal within 21 days of the polls being declared. In the circumstances that we have talked about, no such challenge was mounted within 21 days so that particular avenue ceased to be available.

Section 135 of the Electoral Act provides that any matter can be referred to the tribunal by an Assembly member at any time during that particular Assembly. Again, that was not done and no challenge was mounted. Therefore, there was no question of the members not being legally elected.

There is another section in the act which provides that, if any person who has been elected to the Assembly is later found by the tribunal not to have been so elected, any actions in the Assembly or any procedures involving that person are valid. There are no problems about procedures in the Assembly in any case. As well, the role of the member for Wanguri as a minister was entirely valid because he was a legally-elected member.

In the case of the member for Barkly, challenges were mounted in terms of the eligibility of 1 of the candidates. That was referred to the tribunal within the proper process and the tribunal made a decision. That was a separate set of circumstances. Any inference made by the Leader of the Opposition or any members, either in this Assembly or outside of it, that neither the member for Ludmilla nor the member for Wanguri was a legally-elected member of the Assembly should not be uttered because it is not true. It would be worth while for all members to make themselves aware of the procedures laid down in the Electoral Act. As members duly elected to this Assembly, I think we have a duty to ensure that we are fully aware of all the provisions of that act.

Video on Alice Springs Recreation Lake

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I direct my question to him in his capacity representing the Minister for Mines and Energy. Will he undertake to provide me with a copy of the Snowy Mountains Authority video on the Alice Springs recreation lake for further study?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, not being thoroughly briefed on this particular item, I cannot give the honourable member an unequivocal undertaking to do so. However, I will have the matter examined and advise him later today.

Northern Territory Public Service

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I have given the minister prior notification of these questions. How many public servants left the Northern Territory Public Service in the 12 months to 1 September 1987? What has been the total cost of redundancy or any other payouts made to these persons? How many of these public servants have held the position of E4 and above, including that of Chief Executive Officer? What was the total cost of the payouts to these senior public servants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the member for Nhulunbuy stated, he gave notice of those questions and I am able to provide answers to them. In the 12 months to 1 September, 2852 people left the NTPS. Obviously, not everybody received a pay-out. Severance payments totalling \$1.765m were made to 76 public servants, 18 of whom were at levels of E4 and above.

I believe I have answered all of the questions put to me and that there is no reason for further questions on this matter.

Planning Regulations

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Now that the government has established a Regulatory Review Committee, what action, if any, is being taken in relation to activities of planning authorities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am certainly aware of some moves that would be of interest to the general public and developers involved in planning. Incidentally, since becoming Minister for Lands and Housing, I have become aware of how much emotion is generated by planning issues. On the one hand, there are the developers who do not want to be delayed by the bureaucratic process. Whilst the government does not wish to impose any unnecessary restrictions on developers, we have a responsibility and a duty to protect the quality of life of Territorians and a need to consider the views of the public, especially the views of local residents affected by any planning issues. I think that our planning system goes a long way towards respecting and addressing the aspirations of the various groups: the general public, the local residents, and the developers.

Ample evidence indicates that the various planning acts and controls have been under constant review. I have formed that view after researching the subject thoroughly. Since self-government, these reviews - particularly in relation to the Darwin Town Plan - have been quite substantial. I advise honourable members that the Darwin plan is presently undergoing a very comprehensive review. A draft document has been finalised and is presently being discussed with various private developers and people in the private sector who interact with developers, such as architects and structural engineers. It quite often occurs that, when a development does not fully comply with planning requirements, the developer highlights some minute detail and thoroughly castigates the bureaucratic process. However, anyone who looks at the planning process in the Northern Territory and compares it to those

which apply elsewhere in Australia will quickly realise that we have a very efficient system.

The government is happy with the review of the Darwin Town Plan, the sole purpose of which is to further simplify the planning process. As I have already said, a draft document is available and is being forwarded. Discussions are being held with various people who are directly involved, particularly on the technical side of the planning process, to ensure that they have a relevant input. I believe that the document will become available to the general public early in 1988. If it is finalised early in 1988, I certainly intend to release it for quite extensive discussion by the general public. I am referring, in particular, to the Darwin plan and I make no secret about it. I will be seeking a very extensive input by the general public towards the draft document because, with all of the issues that are raised in the document, I intend that, ultimately, it will become a draft relevant to a total review of the various other town plans in existence throughout the Northern Territory. In closing, I urge all members of the public and any interested party to avail themselves of the draft document when it goes on public display early in 1988. Their comments and input will be gladly received.

Northern Territory Public Service

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I thank him for the clarity and candour of his answer to the first 3 questions that I asked, but I would like to repeat question 4 because I may have missed the reply. What has been the total cost of payouts to these senior public servants - that is, public servants who have held the position of E4 and above, including Chief Executive Officers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, 4 senior executives within that area received total payouts of \$316 357.46. I do not intend to enter into individual situations because of the confidentiality of that matter.

Bus Stops in Bradshaw Terrace

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORK

On 15 September, I asked a question about the bus interchange in Bradshaw Terrace and he indicated to the House at that time that a preliminary report would go to the council on 18 September and that he would advise the House of the discussions that would take place with regard to his submitting that preliminary report to the Darwin City Council. Is he able to give the House an update on what the council is to do regarding the bus stop situation in Bradshaw Terrace?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand that the preliminary report was completed and forwarded to the Darwin City Council on Tuesday of this week. The report included consideration of some 6 or 7 options for different ways in which the council might consider tackling the problem of the bus stops on Bradshaw Terrace. Obviously, some of those options have greater merit than others. Now it is for the council - with the assistance of our departmental people and a consultant that we used during the preparation of the preliminary document,

if the council so wishes - to come to a resolution about finite studies which would take another 10 weeks or so to work up into a full proposal. I hope that the council will now defer its decision to remove the bus stops on 1 October. I understand the council will meet to discuss that matter early next week. Once again, I have arranged for departmental officers or the consultants to attend and talk to council about the options that are available.

The interim suggestion that the department has put to the council is similar to those put previously, and that is for the installation of a pedestrian crossing and other minor associated works between the shopping centre and the post office. We have suggested that the council allow some 10 or 12 weeks for consideration of the traffic study and to complete the works as they should have been done in the first place, and that the Department of Transport and Works take some additional steps to ensure compliance by the bus drivers in observing the marked bus stop areas and so overcome concerns people have had in respect of that.

Program for Darwin Prison

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

As minister responsible for correctional services, has anything further been done regarding the introduction of a program into the Darwin Prison for the construction of simple Aboriginal-type housing similar to that produced in the Alice Springs Prison?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we are always looking at improving employment situations for people who find themselves incarcerated in the various prisons throughout the Northern Territory. That particular project has not been introduced to Darwin Prison at this stage. It is enjoying some success in the southern region but, in the short term, it is not my intention to introduce it in the Top End, mainly because of lack of space. I will be considering that matter along with many other matters that we are addressing throughout the correctional services area. Legislation, which I will be introducing to the Assembly relating to home detention for prisoners, will help to alleviate the overcrowding at Darwin Prison. At that stage, we can take further interest in moving that particular industry to the Top End.

Australia Card

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

What effect does the startling revelation during yesterday's proceedings in the federal parliament regarding the ID legislation have on the Australia Card resolution passed in this House yesterday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am entranced by the exquisite irony of the situation that faces the federal government.

Mr Bell: It was all the result of yesterday's statement!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I would that it were so!

The Australia Card issue was used, in a highly-technical sense, as the trigger for the double dissolution of the federal parliament earlier this year. The Prime Minister used it deliberately to call an election at an advantageous time. He used it as a trigger purely because he thought the time was then right to call an election. As it turned out, he was quite correct. There was no emphasis in the election on the Australia Card issue; it was simply a technical, legal mechanism to go to the polls.

Mr Speaker, it is sweet irony indeed that the Prime Minister now finds that a legal technicality, albeit based on good, constitutional and conventional practice, is being used to render the introduction of the Australia Card highly unlikely. Those who conduct their politics by devious means should expect the same treatment to be given to them. Mr Hawke is hoist by his own petard. As I understand it, the embarrassment that Mr Hawke is facing stems from a failure of his bureaucratic advisers to appreciate the difference between proclamation and regulatory procedures. This is the constitutional loophole raised by the opposition in Canberra. It appears that, through oversight, many of the crucial aspects of the Australia Card legislation need regulations to put them into effect and either House of the federal parliament has the unilateral capacity to disallow such regulations. It is certain that the Senate, with its non-Labor majority, would move for such disallowance thereby rendering the act inoperable.

I do not know what the federal government will do but, if I were the Prime Minister, I would be grateful for the opportunity to ditch a highly-unpopular, highly-offensive and highly-intrusive piece of legislation. Expediency and pragmatism have been the Prime Minister's hallmark and it would come as no surprise to me if, on this issue, he conformed to type. The effect that this development will have on the ID resolution passed in this House yesterday is that it will thankfully be put to rest. However, as the resolution indicates, we will send it to the Prime Minister as expressing the legitimate concerns of Territorians and certainly the vast majority of members of this House.

Installation Costs of Rural Telephones

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer to his answer yesterday in relation to Telecom charges for rural telephones. Does he accept today that Telecom is planning to increase its charges by only \$20, and will he tell this House where he obtained the incorrect information that the increase would be in the order of \$3000 to \$4000?

Mr Ede: And apologise.

Mr SPEAKER: If the honourable member for Stuart continues to maintain a running commentary, I will have no alternative but to name him.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the Leader of the Opposition's questions, I have some information which I have gathered over the past 24 hours. It is important that honourable members are aware of the system which Telecom is required to use in order to change some of its charges. The tariffs for the basic services, including telephone rentals, local call charges and STD rates, are notifiable to the Prices Surveillance Authority and are subject to veto by the federal Minister for Communications. The installation fee for remote area telephones is not notifiable and is not subject to approval by anyone except

Telecom. It is a fee that is set by Telecom internally and at its own discretion. This arbitrary decision-making process leaves remote area users entirely at the mercy of what I might describe as Telecom's benevolent dictatorship.

Last Wednesday, I told honourable members that Telecom had plans to increase the installation fee from \$1390 to \$6240. This information was taken from a report of a speech presented by Telecom's Chairman on or about 18 May this year, shortly after the mini-budget, when Telecom was hit with imposts of some \$380m for sales tax and customs duty. At that time, the chairman announced also that Telecom would be reviewing its high-cost services, including the remote area services, to move away from a pricing policy of cross-subsidy to a user-pays policy more in line with costs to Telecom. As all honourable members know, Telecom's tireless justification for its monopoly is its obligation to serve the needs of disadvantaged users, such as remote area Territorians, through a policy of cross-subsidisation. Under the threat of privatisation, Telecom continually holds a sword over its remote area programs. In fact, at the same press conference, Telecom's chairman announced that the Rural and Remote Area Program would no longer meet its 1990 target, and new telephone connections everywhere would have long installation lead times. A report from that press conference, issued by the Chairman of Telecom, which appeared in the communications section of The Australian of 18 May, said that the measures could have the effect of increasing the installation fee to \$6240.

Mr Speaker, I apologise to the House for not qualifying the figure I used in answer to the question on 16 September inasmuch as that it was drawn from an article in the national press. To give some perspective to this, the installation fee for a new service in an urban area is \$210. The Leader of the Opposition is correct when he says that the current fee for new remote area installations is \$1410, but this could change subject to Telecom's economic and political whims. Who can say? The fee is determined by Telecom management and I gave up long ago trying to predict its decisions from one month to the next.

I will be writing to the Chairman of Telecom to seek his commitment that Telecom will not increase the installation fee in remote areas at a greater rate than in urban areas. At all times, the Territory government will continue its efforts to make Telecom accountable so that the gap between charges affecting our urban and remote area residents does not widen even further.

Potential Damage to Film Industry

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware of the potential damage to the infant film industry and the tourism industry in the Northern Territory that could result from recent demands by traditional owners of Kakadu and Uluru for excessive location fees from producers of the movies 'Crocodile Dundee II' and 'Evil Angels' and, if so, what is being done and what can be done to counteract this adverse influence?

Mr Bell: They will put you on the front bench one day. Kick them hard enough and you'll be right.

Mr SPEAKER: I offer the same warning to the member for MacDonnell, and any other honourable members who interject, as I gave to the member for Stuart a few minutes ago.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, before answering this question I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the sort of interjections that come regularly from people like the member for MacDonnell. It seems that any time anybody criticises any action of any group which is in any way associated with the Aboriginal community, he immediately faces the direct or obscure accusation of being anti-Aboriginal or racist.

Mr Bell: It is a smear campaign, Steve, an unsubstantiated smear campaign.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, let me say that my answer to the question will be directed specifically at what I regard as a gross misuse of a legislated monopoly situation to extort moneys from people. That is my view and I stick by it.

Mr Bell: If people wanted to make movies in your backyard, would you let them do it for nothing?

Mr HATTON: No, I would not. I would be prepared to charge a reasonable fee. If the member opposite would stop talking - and I refer him to the comments I made earlier to the member for Stuart - he could open his ears instead of his mouth. He might then learn something for a change.

Of course, I am well aware of the problem which has been recently highlighted in the media. With the success of the first 'Crocodile Dundee' movie, the Northern Territory has had the opportunity to build a new industry that will bring economic benefits to a wide variety of sectors of the Northern Territory economy. The Northern Territory has 2 major things going for it as far as film companies are concerned. First, it is a relatively cheap place in which to film - certainly much cheaper than the United States - and, secondly, its weather and extremely good light make it a very easy place in which to make films. One of the most expensive aspects of filming on location is the transportation of cameras, generators and lighting to sites. Obviously, the less of this equipment that has to be transported, the cheaper it is for film companies. The long hours of bright light in the Northern Territory, particularly in the dry season, mean that companies need much less lighting equipment than they would elsewhere. Originally, the film industry in the United States was established in New York. However, largely because of the light situation, it subsequently moved to Hollywood.

The Northern Territory is becoming a very sought-after location for the making of feature films and television series. We all know about 'Crocodile Dundee II' and 'Evil Angels' and most people will have heard of the series 'The Top Enders' that was filmed here recently for television. Members may not be aware, however, that there are a number of other films and television series in the planning stages. For example, a Japanese film crew is due in the Top End very soon. The big danger, of course, is that the charging of excessive location fees will cause the film companies to go elsewhere. Both Queensland and Western Australia are actively soliciting their business and are offering financial incentives for companies to film in their states. We have had not to offer such incentives, but we certainly do not need to add major disincentives to the cost of filming in the Territory.

I am advised that it costs only \$1000 per day for companies to hire the entire Sydney Opera House, which has to pay for air-conditioning, electricity, cleaning and security staff to name but a few of its costs. Had a similar fee

been required from the 'Crocodile Dundee II' producers, an amount of \$30 000 would have been payable to the Kakadu traditional owners. That is not an unreasonable amount but, to demand \$200 000 can only serve to drive potential users away from that location in the future and away from the Northern Territory.

It might interest honourable members to know that the 'Crocodile Dundee II' shoot, which I understand finished only yesterday, meant an injection of some \$2m into the Territory. It provided employment for some 20 Territorians, including parts in the movie for 2 of the Aboriginal traditional owners of Kakadu and, ultimately, it will give another important boost to the Territory's tourist industry, a result which has been very evident with the success of the first 'Crocodile Dundee' movie.

I am advised producers of 'The Top Enders' spent something like \$500 000 in the Territory. I am very concerned at the figures being reported regarding the demands of the Uluru traditional owners of the producers of 'Evil Angels'. If the rumoured figure of in excess of \$1m is correct, in all likelihood the producers will take their business elsewhere, since it would be cheaper for them to build sets or use photographs of Ayers Rock than it would be to take a large film crew to Uluru. Demands for excessive fees are very shortsighted. The advantages of having such films made in the Northern Territory should be obvious to all. Not only do these film companies inject money into the economy in the short term but, if we can develop a regular turnover of producers, a fledgling Northern Territory film industry will develop providing year-round employment for such people as cameramen, sound recordists, lighting experts etc.

The increased tourist activity that has resulted from 'Crocodile Dundee' has benefited the Territory greatly. It has also benefited the Gagudju Association in that occupancy rates at Cooina have increased markedly this year and a contract has just been signed to construct a major new hotel in the shape of a crocodile, at Jabiru.

In an attempt to bring some sanity to the situation, the government is considering a proposal to produce an information package for distribution to film production companies. This package will outline potential film locations in the Northern Territory and will include details of such important requirements as: accommodation; logistical backup; availability of equipment; transport, including aircraft and helicopters; catering and details of likely costs, including any location costs that might be imposed by owners. We know that there are plenty of other areas in the Northern Territory, such as Litchfield Park, that would provide more than suitable locations and would not be subject to the outrageous charges being sought at Kakadu and Uluru.

Mr Bell: You do not know what those charges are.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell is on his last warning.

Mr HATTON: I appeal to traditional owners at both Uluru and Kakadu to consider very carefully the implications of their recent demands. Ultimately, they will be the big losers if a more realistic approach is not arrived at.

Mr Smith: You are an absolute disgrace.

Mr HATTON: Go away, Terry. You are the only disgrace in this House.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will withdraw that remark to the Chief Minister.

Mr SMITH: Which remark, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: The word 'disgrace'.

Mr SMITH: I withdraw it, Mr Speaker.

Film Location Fees to Traditional Owners

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Has he one skerrick of evidence that the traditional owners of Uluru have asked a location fee of \$1m or any other amount, or whether they are simply attempting to recover costs or a fee for service, and is he aware that the director of 'Evil Angels' has repudiated the announcement and stated that no location fee has been asked for, and that the whole statement is simply a fabrication by the member for Araluen?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in my answer, I specifically said 'if' those suggestions were correct. I repeat that. I do not have any evidence. The matter has been debated in this House.

Mr Smith: Why are you spreading it around? You are being irresponsible.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is trying very hard to beat up a nonsensical argument.

Mr Smith: You are the one who is beating it up.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I regard the \$200 000 payment at Kakadu as outrageous. I referred specifically to that and drew comparisons with other areas to demonstrate what I regard as the excessive level of that fee. I said in my answer 'if the suggestions are correct' and I went no further than that. I recognise, as I did in the answer that I gave, that I do not have any evidence and I was referring only to suggestions that had been mentioned. If that has been repudiated, I welcome that news without hesitation. I was making a very clear point about the benefits of this film industry and what can be occur if excessive fees are to be charged. I do not resile from my statement that I regard a fee of \$200 000 to be excessive. Wherever parks are being used for the purposes of filming, any fees charged for the use of those parks should be returned to the appropriate park authority for use in the management of the park.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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

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25 June 1987

**2. University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-time students are enrolled at the University College of the Northern Territory?
2. How many part-time students are enrolled?
3. How many students who completed Year 12 at Northern Territory schools are:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents at the University College?
4. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Arts faculty?
5. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Science faculty?

20 October 1987

3. Aboriginal Employment

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In view of the Northern Territory Government's stated commitment to improving Aboriginal employment and in the light of recent reports indicating a decline in Aboriginal employment levels, what are the numbers of unfilled positions in each of the following categories:

- (a) Police aides;
- (b) Trackers;
- (c) Health workers;

- (d) Assistant teachers in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities; and
- (e) Teacher aides in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities?

4. Motor Vehicle Accidents

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

How many persons have been:

- (a) killed; and
- (b) injured

in motor vehicle accidents in the Northern Territory so far this calendar year and who were travelling as passengers in the rear of utilities or motor trucks?

Impact of TAB Link with Victoria

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

What impact has resulted from the TAB of the Northern Territory associating with its Victorian link for TAB as far as the float is concerned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am in a position to advise honourable members of the impact of the Northern Territory TAB entering into the VICTAB system. In fact, I happened to be at the Alice Springs racecourse on Saturday and it was very interesting indeed to see the betting pool for the Caulfield Cup reach almost \$2m. It was also interesting to note that the Northern Territory TAB trifecta on that particular race paid \$1055 compared to the Victorian trifecta which paid \$490. The Northern Territory TAB is linked to VICTAB for win and place pools but we do not have trifecta or quadrella betting links with VICTAB at present.

I know that the TAB has been the subject of considerable debate in this Assembly and was talked about at length before its introduction. We now have the Victorian TAB link. The pool started officially in the week ending 10 October. Originally, it was proposed that the link operate from the beginning of August this year but that target proved to be impracticable for technical reasons that were largely beyond our control. The link was established in late September and testing took place in the first week in October. The bugs were eliminated and communications were thoroughly tested. At last, TAB clients in the Territory were able to avail themselves of the stability offered by the giant Victorian win and place pools. I understand that the Victorian TAB now has race holdings in excess of \$1200m. That signifies the enormous level of interest in punting in Australia, particularly in Victoria.

Mr Speaker, let me give you some figures to illustrate the impact of the link on the Northern Territory. In the week ending 26 September, when the link was not operating, TAB turnover increased by 10.2% on the corresponding week of the previous year. In the following week, while testing was happening, turnover increased by 36.9% on the previous year. In the week ending 10 October, the first week that the link operated officially, turnover increased by 54.5%. In the second week, the Victorian link operating turnover was up by 39.3%. To put it in dollar terms, since the link was introduced, win and place betting has increased by an average of \$143 000 per week over the previous 13 weeks of this financial year. Punters in the Territory are obviously showing a greater willingness to use TAB since the win and place pools have been linked with Victoria, and that is good news for everybody. It means that the Territory generates extra revenue and greater benefits to the racing industry which should not be underestimated as an employer of Territorians and as a catalyst for the tourist industry.

Mining and Energy Seminar

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What level of Territory business support has been forthcoming for the government seminar, to be held in Darwin tomorrow, to keep suppliers informed about business opportunities arising from new mining and energy developments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some weeks ago, I gave a press interview on the huge potential available for local suppliers to become involved in the mining industry. At the same time, we announced the tremendous developments that were occurring in the Timor Sea, the most prospective hydrocarbon area of Australia today. We said that we would have an industry seminar and advise various local suppliers how they could get a slice of the action. I was told by industry representatives at the time that there should be a great deal of interest and that I could expect perhaps as many as 6 to 30 people to attend the seminar. I am pleased to say that when the department closed off registrations yesterday, a total of 230 people had registered to attend the mining seminar. Last evening, I had the pleasure of dining with Mr Knapp, from the Australian Mining Industry Council, who is here to represent Australia's major lobby group and representative body, and he is tremendously excited about the potential and the opportunities that exist in the Territory.

On another note, it is our intention to mount an industrial display next May. This will take place in the showgrounds and so far we have received 800 expressions of interest from people wishing to attend that particular seminar. Of course, most of those come from interstate and the only difficulty involved with such an exhibition seems to be the lack of accommodation that will be available to house 800 additional people within the Territory next year. I think that that illustrates the amount of interest being shown in the Northern Territory at present. During the debate on the Appropriation Bill, we spoke of the fact that things really look prosperous for us, particularly in the mining industry.

The Supply Seminar will take place at the Beaufort Hotel and I believe it will be an outstanding success. When I first issued the directions for it, I was sceptical about the number of people who might attend, but that has been totally vindicated by the 230 registrations lodged before we closed off registrations yesterday. The response is nothing short of magnificent and I believe that the major developers, and the projects to be discussed tomorrow, show that the Territory's future in the mining and energy fields is very bright indeed. Those developers include companies such as Ranger, Nabalco, Gemco, Sedco, Fourex, BHP Petroleum, Gulf Aquitaine and Magellan whose representatives will all be present at tomorrow's seminar. Other major contributors to the seminar include the Australian Mining Industry Council, the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association and the Commonwealth Heavy Engineering Board.

The seminar is all about telling Territory suppliers what is occurring now and what will occur in the next couple of years, and what will be needed by way of supplies for those developments. Superb opportunities are emerging for Territory business across the whole supply range. The interest shown has been enormous and I fail to see how it can be anything else than an outstanding success. In the same vein, I can report that next year's Mining Expo will outshine any other industrial display ever held in the Northern Territory. It will occupy an area the size of the Darwin Showgrounds and I believe that it will give us the opportunity that we have been looking for to obtain a greater share of the mining business available to us.

I congratulate all those people who have registered their intention to attend tomorrow's seminar and I wish them well, as I do the 800 people who have registered their intention to attend the Mining Expo to be held next May. I also congratulate the officers of the Department of Mines and Energy who have worked so hard to arrange the 2 events.

Commercial Television Outside Darwin

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I am quite sure that the member for Braitling, with his keen interest in television broadcasts of sporting events, will be interested in the answer to this question. Will the Northern Territory government act in the same manner as its counterpart in Western Australia to ensure that commercial television is available to all communities in the Northern Territory outside Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure of the full extent of the Western Australian government's involvement in the provision of television services to remote parts of Western Australia but I am sure that the Western Australian government is not facing the same financial difficulties as the Territory government at present. I am equally sure that, whatever the commitment of the Western Australian government to remote area television, expenditure on that service would be a minute percentage of its budget. This year, the Northern Territory faced a financial cut from the federal government of unprecedented proportions. This has caused this government to undertake some very agonising cost-cutting measures which have severely affected the government's priorities virtually across the board. Some honourable members will have further opportunity to contribute to that debate during the passage of the Appropriation Bill at these sittings of the Assembly

The honourable member is seeking some further indication from me as to whether or not the government will provide financial assistance to the licence holder of the Remote Area Commercial Television licence in the Northern Territory. I can advise him that I have met with representatives of Imparja in Darwin and, recently, I inspected its premises in Alice Springs and sought from the organisation a submission on what it proposes to do and when, and what services it is proposing to offer. To date, as minister responsible for communications in the Northern Territory, I have had no communication from it telling me when it proposes to go to air, what it proposes to put to air, how many hours it proposes to broadcast for etc. Those subjects have not been addressed at all. I have asked it to provide that information so that I may consider what government requirements could be met through such a service.

Land Acquisition in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

No doubt the minister will be aware of concern amongst landowners, land agents and potential land buyers and developers in the Undoolya Road area of Alice Springs and the roundabout to Sturt Terrace regarding a proposed land acquisition for a 4-lane highway. When will the government make a clear decision on acquisition so that uncertainty is removed and business can proceed in a normal fashion?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly share the concern of the member for Sadadeen and the residents in Alice Springs who live along Undoolya Road. Recently, I was fully briefed on proposals to Cabinet from the Minister for Transport and Works. I can advise the member for Sadadeen that I have requested that the utmost urgency be placed on the submissions to be put before Cabinet and the presentation of the various options available so that the residents for whom

the member for Sadadeen expresses concern can be given a direction that will enable them to examine the future viability of their properties. They will also be advised of the government's intention in respect of any acquisitions necessary as a result of the widening of the Undoolya Road to cater for the future development of the Undoolya option.

Road to the Olgas

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In light of the comment that has been made by the tourist industry and by the federal government over the past few days, what steps have been taken to ensure the safety of travellers on the road to the Olgas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to advise that appropriate action has been pursued by both the Minister for Tourism and myself recently. At a time of the year when they would normally be pursuing every possible chance for business, it is sad to hear that tour operators are withdrawing their services from that Mt Olga section. That is quite understandable because the condition of the road is an absolute disgrace. The road has been graded and re-graded for decades to the point where, in places, it is approximately 1 m below the level of the natural environment.

Mr Bell: It has been for 15 years.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the Olgas road lies in the electorate of the member for MacDonnell. I would like him to relax for a moment and listen to some information that may very well be of importance to him and to his constituents as well as to the large number of tourists who are using the Yulara facilities. I mention his constituents because that road takes traffic out to the Docker River area. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are inherently unstable and the potential for a serious accident along that 30 km section of road from the Yulara turn-off to the Olgas is extremely high. The road becomes corrugated almost overnight. The re-grading occurring there seems to be almost useless.

Mr Bell: You know that is not true, Fred.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell ought to know better than to raise such ridiculous interjections. He is on the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management and ought to know that the Department of Transport and Works has been trying for at least 7 years to obtain approval for a bitumen road, which would ensure the safety of his constituents and of travellers. We have had a full survey design and total appraisal of the project forwarded to the federal government for 3½ years.

The delay appears to be on the part of the ANPWS, Professor Ovington and the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management, which ought to have a bit more motivation towards resolving this matter. It is not a laughing matter. The damage that occurs daily to vehicles amounts to thousands of dollars. However, my principal concern is the high risk to persons who use that road. These are constituents of the member for MacDonnell and, if he does not share my concern, I am most alarmed, to say the least. What we need is at least an acknowledgement that the project will proceed in the alignment suggested by the Department of Transport and Works. It is the most cost-efficient measure. In the long term, it will involve approximately \$4m, and there are ways of staging the works. We have suggested to the Australian National Parks and

Wildlife Service that the expenditure of \$0.25m in the first year would provide some relief on the worst sections of road. To re-grade the road is only a very temporary bandaid measure at best.

Suggestions have been made that the road ought to be located from Ayers Rock and divert round to the south, adding some 10 km or 15 km which would involve expenditure of a further \$2m or \$3m above the estimate. There have been suggestions also that the road should divert to the north, right away from the park itself. The Department of Transport and Works took a very positive approach and completed the designs and the surveys at its cost and forwarded them to the federal Department of Housing and Construction, as it was then, for approval. It is rather disappointing that the ANPWS and the likes of the member for MacDonnell still sit on their hands exposing our tourists and our Territorians to severe risk.

Road to Cahills Crossing

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

There is at least one other road in the Northern Territory that exposes tourists to risk. In fact, recently an elderly couple lost a caravan on this particular road. I refer to the road between the Arnhem Highway and Cahills Crossing which I understand is the responsibility of the Northern Territory government. When will the Northern Territory government take appropriate steps to upgrade that road?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, once again, I am delighted by the question from the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to inform him and members of the House that that particular section of road is in Kakadu National Park. The Northern Territory government, through its Department of Transport and Works, has continually re-graded and provided some nominal upgrading works to that section of road over the last decade. For the information of the Leader of the Opposition, at the moment we have before the ANPWS a submission that, possibly on a cost-sharing basis, we upgrade that road and the road into Cooida, both of which are in Kakadu National Park.

The Northern Territory government, through the Department of Transport and Works, is more than happy to take more than its share of the responsibility for looking after our tourists and our constituents.

Mr Smith: Really, it is your responsibility.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, as far as responsibility is concerned, I will inform the Leader of the Opposition again that the responsibility for roads in Kakadu National Park rests with the ANPWS. It has absolutely nothing to do with the Northern Territory government although ...

Mr Smith: Why do you maintain the Kakadu Highway then?

Mr FINCH: If we did not maintain the Kakadu Highway, at great cost to the Northern Territory government, and upgrade the other roads into the park, quite clearly it would not happen. I am delighted to inform the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues that this government has taken more than its fair share of responsibility. I find it alarming that again he does not recognise and acknowledge just what the federal government's responsibility through the ANPWS is. However, I seek his cooperation in pursuing this

cost-sharing arrangement so that it may be possible to obtain the approval of Professor Ovington. The Northern Territory government has absolutely nothing to be ashamed of concerning the roads in Kakadu National Park. We have done more than our fair share at the cost of the taxpayer and, if it were not for us, it would be absolutely chaotic out there.

Political Input to Statehood Education

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I noted the comments of the opposition spokesman on education on ABC radio this morning, when he suggested that various political groups should have input into the preparation of proposed curriculum material on statehood. What is the minister's position in relation to this proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was very concerned this morning to hear the comments from the opposition spokesman on education because again he showed his total lack of understanding of how the Department of Education works and the principles of curriculum development. Later in these sittings, I will be detailing the member for Stuart's total lack of understanding in regard to his shadow responsibilities. That is detrimental to the Northern Territory and I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to take note of the performance of his colleague and to view it with the same concern with which it is regarded by myself and probably a large number of other people in the Territory.

The member for Stuart has suggested that the development of curriculum material regarding statehood is something that should not be done by curriculum professionals but referred to various political groups for their comment and input. Any suggestion that politicians should be involved in curriculum development certainly will not be coming from this side of the House. Whilst the member for Stuart thinks that should happen, I do not think it is the position of his party. The Leader of the Opposition might tell us whether he supports his shadow spokesman on education in this matter.

Statehood for the Territory is a very exciting issue and is unique in Australia today. We are going through processes that the rest of the country went through 80 to 100 years ago. It is important that the constitutional development of the Territory be part of the education process of young Territorians. Hopefully, it will become part of the education process of all Australians. It is therefore important that curriculum materials be developed and continually reassessed by appropriate professionals. In this case, the materials will be developed by the SACE Curriculum Development Unit, which is the body which looks after social and cultural education. That group will be assisted through the secondment of a senior education officer, a high school teacher and 2 primary school teachers. The materials developed by this group will be presented to the SACE committee whose membership includes school principals, an ICPA representative, someone from the Darwin Institute of Technology and representatives from FEPII.

If there are any concerns about the booklet, the SACE committee can submit it to the full Board of Studies for further consideration. Most honourable members would be aware of the composition of that board although, obviously, the opposition spokesman on education, whose performance has been so abysmal, is not. For his benefit, I will outline the membership of the board. It consists of members of the Confederation of Industry, the Trades and Labor Council, the Council of Government Schools Organisation, the ICPA, the

Teachers Federation, independent schools, the Catholic Education Office, the University College, DIT, educationalists from the department and school principals.

It is abundantly clear that the Northern Territory has an education system which excludes political interference in the preparation of curriculum materials. It should be clear, even to the member for Stuart, that the preparation of such material is in the hands of people who are best qualified to handle it. We should all show some trepidation at suggestions by the member for Stuart that these matters should be handled by politicians. I certainly hope that the Leader of the Opposition will censure the member for Stuart severely for his suggestion that that is what should occur.

I will make one more point before I sit down. On the radio this morning, the member for Stuart claimed that the cost of this project would be prohibitive, particularly since there had already been some severe cuts in the curriculum development area. He was incorrect on both counts. He was referring to an expenditure decrease of \$233 000 this year as against last year. The reason for that decrease is that there were a number of people on paid leave last year and additional staff were employed to cover those paid positions. That is no longer the situation and there have been no staff cuts whatsoever in the curriculum area. The member for Stuart has been shooting from the hip again without making any inquiries or finding out the real reasons for the variation in expenditure. He makes these accusations willy-nilly and this is not good for education processes in the Territory, which are important to all Territorians.

The opposition should have an education spokesman who is conscientious and carries out proper research into expenditure and other matters. The member for Stuart would rather open his mouth and rave on. He will not listen to the facts. The Leader of the Opposition also thinks it is a joke. It is not. I am sure that the rest of the community does not think it is a joke.

Later in these sittings, in concluding the debate on my ministerial statement on education, I will detail the absolute ignorance of the member for Stuart in regard to education matters. That will take 20 to 30 pages. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition is genuinely concerned about education and I hope he will take note of my remarks and either find a new education spokesman or severely censure his deputy and urge him to do some homework so that his actions are commensurate with his responsibilities in respect of education. His performance has been absolutely abysmal and disgraceful.

Ambulance Services at Yulara

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

When will the Northern Territory government honour its election promise to the people of Yulara by providing adequate ambulance services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been saying publicly for some time that there has been considerable discussion at Yulara about the nature of health services to be provided there. There have been great differences of opinion about precisely what services should operate. During the past 2 weeks, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Community Services and the Regional Director of the department in Alice Springs have visited Yulara and held in-depth discussions

with providers and users of health services at Yulara. We will be taking appropriate action in due course.

Operation of Mines Safety Control Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Which government body currently controls the operation of the Mines Safety Control Act, the Department of Mines and Energy or the Work Health Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be very disappointed if the member for Nhulunbuy did not ask this question in these sittings. In answer to an almost identical question during the last sittings, I outlined the proposed amendments. There have been no changes to administrative orders at this stage. However, these will occur in due course. As members will be aware, I returned to my office only yesterday. The matter has been further promoted during the last 24 hours and documentation is being prepared so that it can be processed by Executive Council.

Proposed Amendments to Police Administration Bill

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

My question follows on from recent media comment regarding the proposed amendments to the Police Administration Bill. Could the Chief Minister advise the Assembly why he has decided to delay the passage of those amendments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware that, yesterday, I indicated the intention not to proceed with the legislation during the course of these sittings. This is because there has been considerable public debate about the legislation and I am grateful for the interest that has been generated. There were discussions last week between the police department and the members of the legal fraternity concerning the legislation. I understand those discussions were very positive and fruitful. Both the police and the legal fraternity have suggested that it would be appropriate that we not process this legislation through all stages at these sittings in order to give them time to consider specific aspects of it. Such consideration could lead to amendments being proposed during the committee stage of the legislation.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I repeat that the bill merely seeks to confirm, by specific legislation, procedures that have been practised by the police for some 20 to 25 years. In fact, this has resulted from recommendations and suggestions from judges. The case that initiated it was what is known as the Williams case.

Mr Smith: Rubbish!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to show his ignorance. He seems to think he knows more than the Department of Law, the police and Northern Territory and interstate judges. I would prefer to take their advice than the Leader of the Opposition's.

Mr Smith: You do not understand their advice; that is the problem.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, as I have said, it is intended to clarify this very difficult area of law and to make it specific. The judges have indicated that they believe it cannot be dealt with appropriately through the normal common law judicial decision process. It needs some definition to protect the interests of citizens, to clarify the rights of citizens and to provide an effective opportunity for the police to carry out necessary investigations.

Administrative Arrangements

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

This is a supplementary question to the member for Nhulunbuy's question. Is it a fact that none of the administrative arrangements entered into by his government on 19 March have been approved by the Executive Council and or the Administrator as is required and that, as a result, the Power and Water Authority, the Department of Industries and Development and other departments that were created or changed at that time have been operating illegally since 19 March?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will obtain specific details of the administrative arrangements that have been put in place. The administrative arrangements that have not been promulgated at this stage are those dealing with the actual establishment numbers of departments. The numbers and classifications within departments has been a most complex exercise. Every department has been working at addressing the new structures. The administrative arrangements establishing departments and the appointment of departmental heads were processed by administrative orders issued in March when the original ministries were established. However, I am very conscious and very concerned that the actual establishments themselves have not been finalised through the Executive Council. That exercise could have been done quickly but it had been done simply by taking all the people in the establishments that existed previously and putting them in place and then going back later. The process is part of an overall restructuring of government and necessary reduction in the size of the public service that flowed from budgetary considerations. They have all been addressed. I understand that the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services has now completed the work necessary for him to be able to present the detailed documentation to have the complete establishment structured.

Dam in Batchelor Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he assure me that the full necessity of dam building in the Batchelor area will be assessed before any compulsory acquisition of currently worked farm land from those people engaged in primary industry is considered, in view of the importance of horticultural production to the development of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question on the vexed subject of building dams in the Northern Territory. The subject is one that takes up a considerable amount of time and engenders considerable debate. One has only to look at Alice Springs. The Mary Anne Dam in Tennant Creek was probably the dam in the Northern Territory that was built the fastest and

involved the least debate. To my knowledge, the member for Fannie Bay has been talking now for some 4 or 5 years about the development of a lake rather than a dam within his own electorate. That has caused a considerable amount of debate, particularly within Cabinet. It has been suggested to him that he should buy a long-handled shovel or run a colour-in competition to raise money for such a facility.

All members would be aware that the building of water reservoirs in the Northern Territory is a very vexed question indeed. The member for Katherine has approached me recently about water in the Katherine region, and we will meet at lunchtime today about that. The member for Arafura may perhaps ask me a question this morning about Milikapiti which has run out of water due to sand intrusion in No 6 bore. That has necessitated the school being closed this morning. Officers from the Power and Water Authority have left for that region this morning.

The member for Stuart never seems to miss an opportunity to talk about water and water supply in the Northern Territory. I have spoken in this Assembly before about this and the member for Flynn has mentioned the impact of 6-year droughts on the Territory. Recently, some information has come to me from a person who has spent a considerable number of years in the Northern Territory studying weather patterns. He suggests that the Northern Territory is 37-year cyclic and that we are in the middle of a 6-year period during which we will experience very dry wet seasons and that this will bring about increased demand for water as people try to develop additional water resources. As a result, the water tables will decrease. Let us hope that he is wrong, but this is a man who has done considerable research on this subject and the evidence he presented to me was persuasive. I hope that, in 4 or 5 years time, the Leader of the Opposition is not laughing about this particular issue, particularly in the middle of the next election, because it is one of considerable concern to all Territorians.

The evidence that has been presented to me suggests that we could be in the middle of a 6-year dry period in the 37-year cycle. There will be cries from members on both sides of the Assembly for more and more water as it becomes very scarce and our catchment areas start drying up. On the evidence given to me, I believe that the Northern Territory is in for some particularly dry spells during this coming wet season. I do not want to start panic and have people moving in from the central desert areas as they did years ago. Places such as Yuendumu and Hermannsburg were established largely because of their year-round supply of water.

Mr Bell: That is not true.

Mr COULTER: It is true. I will provide that information to the honourable member who may not be aware of it. I will give him the details.

On the evidence that has been presented to me, we could be in for a dry spell. Batchelor is probably the most favoured site of the 6 dam sites that have been mentioned because of its close proximity to the Darwin River dam. The other area that probably presents itself as a second option is the Warrai proposal at Adelaide River. That site has the advantage that there are not too many people living there. In fact, most of the catchment area is part of Cann Creek Station which is owned by Billy Doyle and there is some mining interest in the valley.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: That is not what they say. They have written letters to me.

Mr COULTER: I could not understand why they would do that.

Mining interests in Warrai also have to be looked after. We are looking at ways in which we can promote that as a site, but it has a penalty. The penalty is that a pipeline would be required to bring the water to the Darwin River dam area and that would cost some \$10m. I am also well aware of the development that has occurred in the Batchelor area. There has been grass seed production, buffalo domestication programs, large rambutan orchards and, as the member for Victoria River has brought to my attention on a number of occasions, \$2.5m has been spent on Meneling Abattoir, which would be inundated by the Batchelor dam if the proposal went ahead. In fact, the member for Victoria River came out against that site in my absence recently.

Mr Speaker, I can assure the member for Koolpinyah that I am aware of the problems associated with the construction of all these dams, in particular the dam at Batchelor. I gave an undertaking at a meeting in Batchelor, which she attended, that I would have some answers by October. Unfortunately, that deadline could not be met and it now looks like being November before I will be able to provide preliminary estimates of developing such a facility in that region. I share the member for Koolpinyah's concern but the simple fact is that we are running out of water. Our population expansion and water requirements by horticulturists place additional demands on this scarce commodity. I also remind the member for Koolpinyah of the effects that a dry period may have on the bore fields in her electorate. It is a serious problem and I congratulate the officers in the Power and Water Authority who have dedicated a considerable amount of time to this particular issue and I hope that I will have satisfactory answers in the near future.

Airport Facilities

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

During the last sittings, he indicated that he would be meeting with the federal minister responsible for aviation matters. What was the outcome of those discussions, particularly as they relate to airport services in major Territory centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I met with both Senator Evans and Mr Peter Duncan, the federal ministers responsible for transport in its various forms. Both of those meetings went extremely well and I am pleased to report that, with support from all federal members and the opposition in this House, at last we see some sanity coming into the debates on Darwin and Alice Springs Airports.

In regard to Darwin Airport, we now have public acknowledgement that the north side option is the real option. I am delighted that Mr Peter Duncan, the federal Minister for Transport and Infrastructural Support, made that announcement while he was here. It has been clear to all Territorians for quite some time that that was the logical step to take. The intervention by a previous minister does not warrant any comment other than to say that it is sad that we have missed out on 2 or 3 years of tourism development as a result of inactivity.

These are different times and I am delighted to acknowledge that the response from both of those ministers has been extremely encouraging. I hope that they will be able to take to their Cabinet some immediate measures to resolve the Darwin Airport problem in the shortest possible time. It would be

my hope that, given some cooperation either through direct federal funding or by permitting private enterprise participation at Darwin Airport, we would be able to move immediately and set in place a satisfactory facility within approximately 2 years. Such a facility would provide not only for Territorians and domestic travellers but, more importantly, it would allow international airlines access to Darwin and thence to the rest of the Territory to provide a broadening of our economic base and jobs for our kids.

In Alice Springs in recent months, we have seen an astronomical growth rate of about 30%, based on last year, which was some 20% or so above the year before. The growth rates have been placing the Alice Springs terminal under extreme pressure. The federal minister announced that the federal government was proceeding with a \$1.1m extension to the existing terminal building. That will provide some short-term relief only. More importantly, the federal government is putting some \$5m-odd into the taxiways and aprons. That is to be applauded. However, what we need to be conscious of and what we have basic agreement on is that the long-term plans may very well require some entrepreneurial or private investment to cater for the rapidly increasing tourist market through Alice Springs to Yulara etc.

As we travelled north over the 2½ day period, work had commenced the week before on extensions to and upgrading of the Tennant Creek airstrip to allow for F28s to land at Tennant Creek by Christmas. Off the cuff, I think 17 December is the recommencement date. Works are progressing very satisfactorily there. It was pleasing to have the federal minister see at first hand the state of that strip which had been allowed to deteriorate over quite a long period of time. It is important that Territorians, particularly residents of Tennant Creek, recognise that that was a jointly-funded project involving \$1.1m from the federal government. It had intended to upgrade the strip to take commuter-size aircraft. Quite correctly, the Northern Territory government recognised that an F28 standard was far more appropriate both from a tourism point of view and for local usage. As a result, the Territory government provided \$1m to ensure that the strip could be lengthened and strengthened to F28 standard.

In Katherine, of course, a great deal of work is occurring at Tindal RAAF Base. The Katherine terminal building is under severe attack not only from the local residents but from white ants. The building there will need to be replaced. That is on the design list and the federal government has undertaken to provide the Territory with copies of the preliminary drawings so that we can advise as to the appropriateness of the planned facilities from a Territory viewpoint. I understand that work may be programmed for the 1988 calendar year and that would be good to see.

In summary, in regard to aviation matters, I am extremely delighted and, on this occasion, more than happy to acknowledge the cooperation of the 2 federal ministers who showed quite a dramatic difference in attitude to the needs of remote areas and towards privatisation or getting on with the job using whatever entrepreneurial means are to hand. I acknowledge their participation.

Cullen Bay Marina

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The developers of the proposed Cullen Bay marina have been looking to the Northern Territory government for an agreement regarding certain aspects of that proposed development. Has an agreement been reached between the Northern

Territory government and Darwin Marina Estate and, if so, when will details of that agreement be available and, if not, when will the government be in a position to sign that agreement?

ANSWER

In a nutshell, Mr Speaker, an agreement has not been reached, but I will canvass some of the issues involved with the future development project. This government is certainly prepared to support this project. It has been the subject of previous publicity and I think that it goes without saying that, when the project is finally completed, and during its construction, not only will it provide many jobs in the Darwin area but it will greatly improve the lifestyle of people in the Top End.

Some of the issues that have been of concern and have been addressed in the appropriate manner by the government involve those areas relating to the environment, the release of some land at Emery Point by the Department of Defence, consideration of the Foreshore Protection Plan and the relevant zoning of the land. The Port Authority has been involved. Consideration has been given to the engineering viability of the project, objections by local residents, access and the compatibility with development proposals for the old Darwin Hospital site.

I can confirm that a draft development lease and conditions has been finalised and will come before Cabinet very shortly. I can advise the member for Port Darwin that, after consideration by Cabinet of the relevant terms and conditions of that development lease and further discussions with the developers, I would hope to be able to announce that the project will proceed in a manner that will enable the construction of the facility to occur at the earliest opportunity. The government makes no bones about the fact that it supports the project, provided that all the sensitive issues relating to the environment, foreshore planning, zoning etc are dealt with in the appropriate manner. The terms and conditions of the development lease should be finalised by Cabinet in the very near future.

Fees for TAFE Courses

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it true that he intends to impose fees on students of TAFE courses in the Northern Territory and, if so, can he advise those students and the parents what the level of fees will be and to which courses they will be applied?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, once again the member for Stuart has demonstrated his knowledge of education matters. It would have been appropriate if he had prefaced his question with some comment regarding the cut of \$23m to TAFE by the federal government. Because his Labor colleagues were involved, he did not really want to mention that and why there are such problems with TAFE. Even someone with no knowledge of education matters would realise that a cut of \$23m will have an impact. Setting that aside, however, I will provide some information for the member opposite.

TAFE fees at the DIT and the Alice Springs College of TAFE are matters set by their councils. The council of the Alice Springs College of TAFE is considering the matter at the moment. The shadow spokesman for education

should know - although he does not - that the DIT is totally independent. The legislation regarding its independent status was passed by this House. The college councils will consider whether charges will be levied and they will advise people appropriately regarding those charges.

The matter of charges must be seen in the context of the prevailing situation in Australia. Last year the federal government introduced an administrative charge for universities, an amount of \$250 per student. That charge was applied in an effort to ensure that the public education dollar could be spread a little further. In the light of the \$23m cut in the TAFE area, our Territory institutions are to be congratulated on continuing to provide an excellent service under adverse economic conditions. It certainly is a credit to the people involved, including members of the staff and the council. If college councils decide that there is a need for charges to be levied, I am sure that they will be made so that ...

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: I find it pretty frustrating to hear the member opposite displaying his ignorance. I would like him to inform this House later during these sittings on what steps he has taken to ask his federal colleague to return the money that has been taken out of the TAFE area and what steps he has taken to ensure that his federal Labor colleagues provide the same level of assistance to tertiary education in the Territory as they provide to the rest of the country. It is a shameful situation. The member for Stuart makes snide comments while members of his party, who profess to be supporters of education and of underprivileged people, blatantly cut funds for the education of Territory students. The member opposite would be far more productive if he went to his federal colleagues and asked them to treat us equally with the rest of Australia instead of making snide remarks regarding education in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate TAFE administrators for the work that they have undertaken to continue to provide quality education. If there are to be charges in that area, they will be decided by the institutions involved. I will back them all the way because they are operating under very adverse conditions brought about by the policies of the party of the member opposite.

Writ by Burgundy Royale

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Can he confirm that, on or about 7 October, Burgundy Royale Investments lodged a writ before the Federal Court of Australia seeking release from liens held over it by the Northern Territory government, Westpac and perhaps the Northern Territory Development Corporation on grounds which include promises made by the then Chief Minister and the then Deputy Chief Minister, now the member for Fannie Bay, when they were on a 1979 investment mission to Asia, that: (1) the Beaufort Hotel would be given a casino licence; (2) developers of the Beaufort were guaranteed that a further 5-star hotel would not be built in Darwin until the Beaufort was fully operational; (3) the new airport terminal would be constructed by the time the Beaufort opened; and (4) the railway line would be built by the time the Beaufort opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously the Leader of the Opposition in his role as debt collector for those people aggrieved and various other causes he takes up from time to time has been very well briefed on this particular question judging by the contents thereof. It is true that there has been some legal action taken by Burgundy Royale Investments against the Northern Territory government and also against Westpac. That is a matter before the courts and I will not be entering into any prolonged discussion or debate on that particular issue other than to say that our legal advice is that the action against the Northern Territory government is not particularly sound. We believe that we will be able to defend the writ that has been taken out against us.

Review of Restricted Areas Legislation

Mr FIRMIN to TREASURER

When might the review of restricted areas legislation be available for consideration by government and is he in a position to comment today on any aspects or recommendations of this report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the author of the report, Mr d'Abbs, has been involved in a number of reports in the Northern Territory. Honourable members will recall that he compiled the report on domestic violence. He has played an active role in looking at the social implications of various trends in the Northern Territory. I have before me a draft report from Mr d'Abbs in respect of the review he was commissioned to conduct into the effects of dry areas on Aboriginal communities. I have been assured that the final report will be presented to me by the end of October. I hope to be able to table it at the next Legislative Assembly sittings. I know honourable members have been anxious to get hold of the report but I am told that the delay has come about, in part, because of a need to re-analyse some of the data and to allow the incorporation of new data which has been obtained from the Aboriginal drug consumption survey being carried out by the Drug and Alcohol Bureau.

The first draft adjudges that the restricted area provisions are a qualified success. It finds that some areas of the legislation need addressing and it goes into detail on those. It is a matter of fact that the government was aware of this when it first commissioned the report last year. I do not intend to go into the detail of the recommendations in this House

until my colleagues and I, particularly the Minister for Health and Community Services, have had a chance to examine them. Suffice it to say that, in addition to other matters, the report addresses the permit system and the enforcement of restricted area provisions of the act. These are matters of grave importance to Aboriginal communities and this government does not intend to take them lightly. Before any recommended amendments are approved, I intend to ensure that they are properly canvassed and that they reflect the expressed wishes of the community.

However, we will be looking into tidying up parts of the act relating to vehicle seizure and forfeiture and the responsibility of the courts in these matters. Honourable members will be aware that this matter has been canvassed in this Assembly on many occasions and I understand that it will be debated again tomorrow. Penalties for offences will also be considered and I will advise the House on further details after considering the final report.

In relation to amendments to legislation which will be discussed in the Assembly tomorrow, I can advise that the Liquor Commission is reviewing its procedures for issuing of licences and the social issues which relate to the consumption of alcohol. As part of an overall review to ensure that it meets the demands which are placed upon it, the commission will also be considering what expectations the community has in relation to its functions. I hope to table the report in the Assembly in November after it has been considered by Cabinet and the issues have been canvassed by government. I look forward to debate on the issues during the next Legislative Assembly sittings.

Writ By Burgundy Royale

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, this is a supplementary question on the matter of the Burgundy Royale writ. Can the Treasurer directly confirm that the writ issued by Burgundy Royale was based at least partly on the grounds that, in the 1979 trade mission to Asia, the following promises were made: that the Beaufort Hotel would be given a casino licence; that the developers of the Beaufort were guaranteed that a further 5-star hotel would not be built in Darwin until the Beaufort was fully operational; that a new airport terminal would be constructed by the time it opened; and that the railway line would be built by the time it opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is reading from a public document. I will sit down with him and read it out to him if he has some difficulty in understanding it. An interesting aspect of this may be that, if the Burgundy Royale can be successful, Mr Hawke might well find himself in court because he was the one who promised us the airport in the first place. We could be in good company.

We are only one of a number of defendants who have been named in this writ and we will be defending it most vigorously. I understand that they are in possession of some documents, but the only document which pertains to the Northern Territory government is the Tourist Marketing Survey which was carried out by the then minister, Mr Roger Steele, in 1979. I would suggest to honourable members that that was a conservative document in terms of the number of tourists who are now entering the Northern Territory. As I have said, the Northern Territory government will be defending this most vigorously.

Public Holidays

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

What is his decision on the celebration of any additional public holidays, both in 1987 and 1988?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I am advised that the Northern Territory has celebrated a public holiday known, in latter years, as the 'additional day' for a very considerable period. My department's research indicates that the public holiday was gazetted when it was under the administration of South Australia and that, on transfer to the Northern Territory, that public holiday continued to be gazetted. In more recent times, the holiday has been gazetted to fall between the appropriate days of Christmas Day and New Year's Day during the Christmas holiday period. I do not think there is any need to remind the Assembly that the celebrations planned for Australia's bicentennial in 1988 are very significant. As a part of those celebrations, the whole of Australia will celebrate the Australia Day public holiday on 26 January. In the spirit of the bicentennial, all states, with the exception of Queensland and New South Wales, have extended the period of celebrations by gazetting a public holiday on Monday 25 January. That is the Monday falling between the Australia Day public holiday and the preceding weekend. In those states, I am advised that the action taken involves a transfer of Boxing Day to 25 January.

Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, because of its portable nature, I have been able to move the additional public holiday from the traditional week following Christmas forward to Monday 25 January, thus enabling Territorians to enjoy the 4-day weekend within which to celebrate Australia's bicentenary. I hear objection from the member for Koolpinyah. In fact, the extra public holiday has been held in the Northern Territory for a long period. It was gazetted in 1984 for the 3 years up to 1987. In fact, this year, it is to be celebrated at the end of December. However, next year, I have brought it forward to 25 January. It will cost business in the Territory no more because it is a public holiday that has always been there. I am quite happy to look at the proposal to get rid of the additional public holiday but it is quite reasonable to hold that public holiday in January in 1988 in order to create a long weekend for the bicentenary. I do not believe that any employer in the Northern Territory will have an argument with that. It is a very significant occasion. There is a school holiday. Teachers may be a little fortunate in that they were due to go back on 25 January next year. I believe the occasion is significant enough to warrant the action that I have taken and I am quite happy to defend it.

Mineral Exploration Licences

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is the Department of Mines and Energy able to process applications for mineral exploration with reasonable expedition and could he indicate to the House the approximate length of time required to process an application?

Mr Ede: It is a disgrace.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is indicative of the amount of mining activity that is occurring at the moment. If that is a disgrace for the honourable member for Stuart, then I suggest he is the one with the problem, not the Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr Speaker, I thank the shadow spokesman on mines and energy for his question. Indeed, we have had a problem in the Department of Mines and Energy where we had a backlog of some 190 applications for mining activity of various types throughout the year. In the Department of Mines and Energy, we find it very difficult to maintain staff in boom periods. Geologists are being offered \$100 000. A particularly good officer, Gary Higgins, has left the Department for Top End Resources recently. He will be sadly missed in the Department of Mines and Energy. Recently, we advertised some 20 positions that are vacant at the moment.

After budget discussions with the Chief Minister, an additional 5 staff were employed in the exploration titles area to overcome that particular backlog. I can advise the member for Nhulunbuy that we have started to overcome the backlog of the 190 applications. However, since June, we have had an increase of some 50% over last year in the number of titles being sought in the Northern Territory and the backlog has jammed up again. I may have enough courage to approach the Chief Minister, in the next couple of weeks, for another 5 people but I can assure the Assembly that we are trying to process those particular applications as fast as we possibly can at the moment, with the additional 5 staff that have been employed there.

The size of the backlog is dependent on the types of title and the complications involved. I ask all prospectors and exploration people to bear with us. I can give some outstanding examples of the expediency that has been displayed by the Department of Mines and Energy. The member for Barkly would be aware of White Devils which received approvals to go ahead with its open cut within 8 weeks. I believe the open cut has commenced with Roche Bros as the operators. They were particularly impressed with the expediency with which the Department of Mines and Energy handled that. I have many other stories of that nature.

However, there are some examples where there are competing interests, where expiration dates have been reached and, along with the mineral boom which is occurring in the Northern Territory, a rush of exploration licences can come in for a particular title and it is a matter of sorting out the best miners and the best program available for a particular area of land. There are many competing interests for these titles. Mr Speaker, can I remind honourable members that we are experiencing a boom period in mining and that involves some problems. I am thankful that, as Minister for Mines and Energy, those are the sorts of problems that I have. I do not like them, but it does show that exploration activity is required in the Northern Territory, and I believe that this is largely attributable to the 150% return about which I have spoken to the member for Nhulunbuy. Some concern was expressed about giving away money, especially by the ex-Treasurer, the Minister for Industries and Development, who has never been known to give away too much except homing pigeons and boomerangs. We were really concerned that we might lose by offering the 150% return on exploration activity against 35% of the mineral royalty rate, but it looks as if that is proving successful and that people are queuing up.

We apologise for the delays wherever they occur. We have increased the staff there by 5 to handle that and we are trying to proceed with the processing of applications as fast as we possibly can.

'Towards the 90s'

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Yesterday the member for Stuart implied that the discussion document 'Towards the 90s' had been thrown out the door. I believe the honourable member has a misunderstanding in relation to the status of that document.. I ask whether the discussion document 'Towards the 90s' has been thrown out the door.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very glad that that matter has been raised by the member for Port Darwin because, yesterday, we had another example of the despicable attitude adopted by the member for Stuart towards his shadow responsibilities for education. We are talking about 'Towards the 90s' which was issued as a discussion document in June this year. The whole concept of the document was to engender discussion and to look at ways and means of increasing accountability, of rewarding good teachers who wish to stay in the classroom, of maximising value for every taxpayers' dollar that is spent on education, and to look at directions for the next decade. Some of those themes have actually been picked up by the federal Minister for Education in statements he has made so far regarding tertiary education, accountability and results. Actually, he has indicated that the rules have changed for tertiary education and that tertiary institutions will not be funded unless they produce the results.

'Towards the 90s' is in that vein and is a document that requires people in the Territory who have an interest in education to develop points of view on it, to become involved in discussion and to put forward ideas and suggestions which will be productive for all Territorians. As members in this House who listen would realise, I made a statement on education at the last sittings which gave a fair amount of detail as to where 'Towards the 90s' is and where it is heading. Obviously, the member for Stuart, who has shadow responsibility for education, has not taken any notice or even listened to what is occurring in respect of that document. He had the audacity yesterday to say that the document had been disposed of and was finished. I find that incredible. The shadow spokesman for education takes his responsibilities so seriously that he puts his head in the sand and says it has gone away. It has not gone away, Mr Speaker. I would recommend that the member for Stuart start taking a real interest in his responsibilities and do justice to them on behalf of a large number of people who support the Labor Party.

The Leader of the Opposition has a responsibility also to ensure that his shadow education spokesman does his job. I would like to offer a little bit of advice to the Leader of the Opposition and, whether he takes it or not is up to him. I think that he should consider making the member for MacDonnell shadow spokesman for education because at least the member for MacDonnell has an interest in the subject and produces some useful and workable alternatives. He shows a genuine interest and his contribution to debate is sometimes quite productive. The Leader of the Opposition has a responsibility to the community in regard to education. I ask him to examine some of the statements that have been made by the member for Stuart and see how flippantly he has treated the subject.

Mr Speaker, coming back to the document, we have had over 120 submissions amounting to 1000 pages. I am sure the member for Stuart has not contributed a page, but be that as it may. The matter is being examined by the Education Advisory Council. It has collated the material and it has been discussed. As I have said many times, the next step is a refined second discussion document which, hopefully, we can produce by the end of this year. At this stage, it looks as though it will be ready early next year.

Mr Speaker, I certainly hope we will receive a rather more mature response from the shadow spokesman on education on the second document. It is a matter that should be treated sensibly and properly and which will not disappear. The member for Stuart cannot put his head in the sand. He has a responsibility to this Assembly and to the community to ensure that his contribution to education debates is based on fact and not hearsay and scare tactics. I am dismayed at statements by the member for Stuart that this matter has been thrown out of the window. I can assure him that it has not. I can assure him that many people in the community have shown a great deal of interest in the document and have contributed accordingly. I would certainly encourage him to do likewise. It is still on the notice paper and it can be finalised during these sittings.

Cattle on Oolloo Station

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Was a contract let to clear cattle from Oolloo Station with the contractor tendering \$60 000, and has the contractor now cleared over 45 000 head from the property at a value well over \$0.5m?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm at present the matter that the member for MacDonnell has raised. However, I will seek information and provide it to him during the course of these sittings.

Uluru Board of Management

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Earlier this year, much public comment ensued about the Northern Territory government's reluctance to nominate an appointee to the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management. Finally, however, the government announced that it would make a nomination. What has been the outcome of that nomination?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the question because it does give me an opportunity to make a minor correction to a statement I made on this matter in the course of the debate yesterday with respect to the Jawoyn land claim. Firstly, we made 2 separate nominations in fact. In late 1986, the government nominated both the Minister for Conservation and the Minister for Tourism to be representatives on the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management. They were nominated on that basis because they were the Northern Territory equivalents of the 2 federal government political nominations on that board. Subsequently, on 31 March this year, I wrote to the then federal Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment, Hon Barry Cohen, nominating the Minister for Conservation and Tourism, Mr Hanrahan, as the Northern Territory government's representative to the board. The minister replied on 7 May this year advising

me that he had written to the Chairman of the Central Land Council seeking his agreement to the appointment before proceeding with the process of appointment. That is the last we have heard on the matter, Mr Speaker.

The federal government and the Territory opposition were loud, particularly last year, in their criticism of our reluctance to make a nomination initially. Therefore, members will understand my cynicism when, some 6 months later, no further correspondence has been received from the federal government. The member for MacDonnell, a board member himself, was particularly strong in his comments urging the government to join the board of management. What has been done to allow our nominee to join the board? As far as I can ascertain, nothing at all. So much for the Labor Party rhetoric extolling the absolute necessity for a government appointment to the board.

Mr Speaker, I wrote to the Prime Minister yesterday, protesting at the lack of action on this matter by his ministerial colleagues and seeking his intervention to secure the appointment of Mr Hanrahan to that board of management. It is very easy to criticise this government and to play party politics with issues like participation on the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management. As recently as the beginning of this year, the member for MacDonnell made a lot of noise about the matter. If he is making a stand on principle, he has a responsibility to follow it up and support the course of action he has advocated. I find it quite disturbing that he has made absolutely no comment in relation to this exercise. He is aware, because it was raised in the House this year and made public ...

Mr Bell: How long did you take to make the nomination?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell asks how long we took to make the nomination. Quite frankly, that is totally irrelevant. We took a specific and very public stand on the matter. Despite that, at the beginning of this year, the member for MacDonnell ...

Mr Bell: The trouble is you stood in about a dozen places.

Mr HATTON: The member for MacDonnell advocated that we should change our position and nominate a single representative to that board. The federal minister made exactly the same request of us. Now that we have complied, it is natural and logical that the member for MacDonnell should welcome our step and seek to encourage the placement of our representative on the board or else he could be accused of playing cheap political games and using rhetoric to play party politics rather than achieving the high moral ground he sought to take on this issue.

I can accept that there is a degree of inefficiency in the federal government and I can accept that there is a degree of inefficiency in the way members opposite carry out their various responsibilities, including their role as members on the Uluru board. This matter, however, goes well beyond simple administrative inefficiency. On a number of occasions, the member for MacDonnell pleaded with us to do as he asked. It is completely irrelevant for him to make excuses for his federal colleagues and other members of the board on the grounds that we took 6 or 12 months to make a nomination. I urge the member for MacDonnell, who is a member of that board which sits in his electorate, to be as good as his word early this year and to actively promote the involvement of the Northern Territory government nomination on that board.

Mr Speaker, we have nominated a representative to the board because of the vital importance of the Uluru Katatjuta National Park to the Northern

Territory. It does not change our view that it is inappropriate for politicians to sit on the board. Since that is the only choice we have, we have decided to act in the interest of the Northern Territory but it is, without doubt, inappropriate that politicians should sit on the board. It is equally inappropriate that the federal government should create a situation where the Northern Territory government does not select the 2 nominees but, rather, there is 1 representative from each side of this House. The federal government did not offer the same opportunity to the federal opposition. Instead, it placed 2 ministers or their representatives on the board. Finally, I reiterate that the position of the Northern Territory government in relation to the management of the park has not changed in any way. We will never resile from our position that Uluru must eventually be a Northern Territory park managed by the Northern Territory Conservation Commission.

Sightings of Cane Toads on Tipperary Station

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I address this question to the Chief Minister in his capacity as acting Minister for Conservation. Can he confirm that there have been recent sightings of cane toads on Tipperary Station? If that is true, can the acting minister tell this House what action has been taken on this particular matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not been advised of that but I will seek the information as a matter of urgency. I would be quite disturbed if that were the case.

Mr Ede: We want his name.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am not going to rise to that bait. I am very very tempted to suggest it is sitting on the frontbench opposite, but I will not do that.

Pesticide Residues in the Northern Territory

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What is the current situation in regard to pesticide residues in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House on the current state of play in this most important matter. Nationally, the Northern Territory maintains an excellent record in the current crisis of pesticide residues in meat for export. There have been no violations although in excess of 800 fat samples have been tested in the Territory, this sampling representing some 60 000 head of cattle and buffalo. However, the problem is a national one and it is imperative that we control the chemicals used in agriculture both to ensure that we retain our export markets for primary products and to safeguard the health of the population. In some ways, we are perhaps fortunate that we have not had longstanding agricultural or horticultural industries in the Northern Territory. The organochlorine chemicals, such as DDT, which are very persistent in the soil, have never been used extensively nor in any quantity. The same chemicals have not been used in livestock in the Territory for about 20 years.

The major legislation to control pesticides and agricultural chemicals in the Territory is administered by the Minister for Health and Community Services - the Poisons and Dangerous Goods Act 1983 as amended in 1985. This act controls the availability and use of pesticides and the licensing of pest control operators. Under this act, the senior chemist of my department has been appointed registrar and will be responsible for establishing and maintaining a register of pesticides. Discussions are being held with the relevant parties in relation to proposed Commonwealth legislation for clearance and registration and any other points that require further clarification. Amendments may then be needed to the Poisons and Dangerous Goods Act in the Territory to clarify some of the current functions of pesticides registration, for example, deregistration. Northern Territory retailers are being informed of registration and offences as it affects them - that is, the sale or use of unregistered pesticides will be illegal.

The other area where agricultural chemicals will be controlled is under the Stock Diseases Act. DDT has already been banned for use in livestock under the Stock Diseases Act. I have approved the preparation of regulations and action is now under way to ban the organochlorines and persistent organophosphates for use in livestock under that act. It will also be necessary to declare pesticide levels of significance a disease under the Stock Diseases Act in order that quarantine, restriction of movement of livestock and clearing of properties can occur. Dieldrin and other organochlorine chemicals used for termite control could be used to protect wooden stockyards and holding paddocks. This has been a major cause of pesticide residues in the states. It is not thought to be a major area of concern in the Territory since most stockyards are of a permanent steel construction or are steel portable yards. It is of more concern in the small farm areas surrounding Darwin and Katherine where more wooden yards and possibly more dieldrin have been used. Amendments to the act are being prepared to cover this area.

The Commonwealth government, among other things, is concerned in the clearance and registration of chemicals and drugs used for agricultural and veterinary purposes. On 14 August 1987, the Australian Agricultural Council agreed to establish a working party of senior state, territory and Commonwealth officials to report on how a single national clearance and registration scheme for these chemicals could be achieved. The uniform clearance, registration and labelling of chemicals is considered to be a first line of defence against market reaction to consequential residues in food products. The Northern Territory relies heavily on bodies such as the Technical Committee on Agricultural Chemicals to clear chemicals which may then be registered in the Territory under our legislation.

The Northern Territory is represented on a state and Commonwealth committee to implement the Australian Agricultural Council's integrated action plan on pesticide residues. With respect to the integrated action plan, the Commonwealth is planning a mechanism which will allow for clearance of properties, and my department is presently preparing proposals for clearance of the whole of the Northern Territory under that plan, with the possible exception of the small farm areas I mentioned earlier around Darwin and Katherine.

Policewoman for Groote Eylandt

Mr LANHUPUY to CHIEF MINISTER

Does this government intend placing a policewoman on Groote Eylandt and, if so, when will that happen?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter of locating a policewoman on Groote Eylandt has been raised on a number of occasions. One of the difficulties is actually getting applications for the location of a policewoman at that particular station. The matter has also been raised by the Women's Advisory Council which took the issue up with me as the minister to whom it reports, seeking to obtain some definite action.

There is a wide range of social problems on Groote Eylandt, including domestic violence and prostitution amongst young girls. Considerable concern has been expressed by the Groote Eylandt community. People believe that the presence of a policewoman would greatly assist in alleviating some of these problems. The matter has been taken up with the Commissioner of Police and he is seeking to take some action to locate a policewoman on Groote Eylandt as soon as possible. I reiterate that one of the difficulties lies with actually getting volunteers. Whilst it is possible to instruct a policewoman to relocate there, it would be preferable to obtain a volunteer for transfer to the island because, obviously, the person would far more readily fit into the community and become actively involved. From the point of view of morale, if we can arrange a voluntary transfer, then so much the better. The Commissioner of Police is seeking to place a policewoman there as soon as possible.

National Companies and Securities Scheme

Mr SETTER to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer to an article published in the NT News of 22 September in which the Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Northern Territory's decision to oppose the federal Labor government's takeover of the National Companies and Securities Scheme showed a lack of will to tackle interstate corporate offenders. Is the Northern Territory's stand against the federal government's intention to unilaterally establish a centralised companies and securities scheme likely to encourage white-collar crime in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I hope that the Leader of the Opposition has advanced his knowledge on the matter further since he made that statement. The Territory, through having control of its own Corporate Affairs Office, is far better able to fight corporate crime than it would be through the centralised system that the federal government is intent on forcing on Australia. As Attorney-General of the Northern Territory, I can ensure that our Corporate Affairs Office has the resources it needs to fight corporate crime, and I assure honourable members that our office has a full complement of investigative staff. Those investigators work very closely with the Northern Territory Police Force. In fact, a member of the Fraud Squad is actually stationed at the Corporate Affairs Office. That certainly creates a very close and effective situation.

The system which operates at present enables very close monitoring of our local scene and encourages liaison both with local business people and interstate corporate offices. We have a situation where the federal government, through the federal Attorney-General, is proposing a change from our present scheme of Corporate Affairs Offices and the National Securities and Companies Scheme. The federal government is advocating that it take total control of the situation. As members know, we only moved into the scheme last year when we passed uniform legislation relating to companies. There was cross-vesting of companies so that companies could move from the register in one state and be fully covered in other states. All the legislation relating to companies and the operation of companies was uniform around the country.

Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition advocates following the suggestion made by the federal Attorney-General to have one national scheme. I can assure the honourable member that business in the Territory is totally opposed to that idea, right through from the Confederation of Industry and Commerce and the Small Business Association to all aspects of the industry in the Territory. Those of us who can remember the days of control from Canberra realise why. There is nothing more hopeless for advancement of any organisation than having control vested 3000 km to 4000 km away without any input or any ability to influence the people who hold the reins. It means that the views and opinions of that large concentration of population in the south-east corner of Australia overwhelms any views, suggestions or needs of other Australians elsewhere in the country.

Mr Speaker, I inform the Leader of the Opposition that Labor governments in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are totally opposed to a national scheme as well as conservative governments in Tasmania, Queensland and the Territory. In fact, the only state which supports the federal government is New South Wales. I do not know what is behind that. Probably there are some benefits for New South Wales. The fact that, apart from New South Wales, all states oppose the federal scheme, stock exchanges right throughout the country oppose it and major business organisations around the country oppose it does not seem to faze the federal Attorney-General nor, obviously, the Leader of the Opposition in the Territory.

I think that all Territorian businessmen and others are aware of the problems with having central control and of the inhibitions it creates. Much groundwork has been done to create potential for business over the next 10 to 20 years in the Northern Territory and any concept of controlling that from a central point for the benefit of Australians in the south-east corner of Australia will stifle business in the Northern Territory, as it will stifle business in Western Australia, South Australia and any other area that does not fit in with the New South Wales and Canberra syndrome. Certainly, that will not help Territorians in the growth of business and in the creation of jobs for our school leavers.

We have a law that is uniform throughout Australia and a system which allows input by all states. I refer to the ministerial council of which I am a member and which controls the scheme. Each state is treated equally so that the smaller populations are not overruled by the larger populations. It also means that changes cannot be made overnight. It has to be discussed with a quorum of all state ministers and it allows business to know that there will not be any overnight changes to legislative provisions. It allows for planning for the long term and stability in the organisation of companies and national securities.

Any suggestion that the present system encourages crime, which is what the Leader of the Opposition said in his comments in the NT News on 22 September, is rubbish. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to talk to local business people and find out why they oppose the concept of a national scheme, and to support the growth of business in the Territory and some local control and input in relation to the rules that control business and corporate affairs in the Territory.

Seat Belts for Taxi Drivers

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will he undertake to consider a request from taxi drivers that the wearing of seat belts be made optional for them? Their concern is that personal safety is at considerable risk on occasion from certain passengers and that seat belts make them particularly vulnerable as they cannot defend themselves whilst strapped in?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter raised by the member for Sadadeen is very serious and it has been of concern to me for some time. We have not yet reached the absolutely shocking state that Sydney and Melbourne have reached with taxi drivers being physically assaulted and, in some cases, murdered while doing their job, particularly in the middle of the night. Taxi drivers interstate quite often are extremely reluctant to work night shifts or are very selective in the customers that they pick up. Here in the Territory, we are trying to promote the tourist industry and it is very important that the taxi and hire car industry plays its part.

The specific suggestion raised has certainly not come before me directly as yet but I take it on board for serious consideration and will also look at ways of assisting taxi drivers to find other appropriate means of ensuring their safety. In other places, they have emergency call systems using automatic buttons and so on. Some taxi drivers protect themselves with self-defence equipment such as monkey wrenches and so on. It is a serious matter, however, and I do not take it lightly. I undertake to investigate it.

Road safety statistics of serious accidents and fatalities indicate that one of the biggest killers on our roads is the failure to wear seat belts where they are installed. We certainly do not want the wearing of seat belts to place taxi drivers in some other form of danger. Driving in the close confines of urban areas could allow the matter to be seen in a different light and I will have the department and the Road Safety Council look at the suggestion seriously to see whether we can take it up to assist taxi drivers or find some other means of supporting them.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Sighting of Cane Toads on Tipperary Station

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I can confirm that 1 mature male cane toad has been sighted on Tipperary Station. It was identified yesterday and has subsequently been confirmed. A team of Conservation Commission rangers is on its way to the homestead area of Tipperary Station to determine whether other cane toads are present and, if so, to clear them from the area. Quite probably, it is an individual cane toad. It is suspected of having arrived in a shipment of palms from Queensland. I have addressed this Assembly on the subject of cane toads on a number of occasions.

Mr Bell: The member for Barkly could be responsible, with his associations with the Premier of Queensland.

Mr Tuxworth: You will notice that there are none in Barkly.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am sorry the member for Barkly made that comment. He should learn more about his electorate because the south-west area of the Barkly electorate is where we have the major threat of the entry of cane toads, particularly around Wologorang Station. In fact, they are moving around the Gulf of Carpentaria at the rate of some 27 km per annum and there is a major infestation in the western part of his electorate.

The cane toad represents one of the greatest biological and environmental threats facing the Northern Territory. A pair of mature cane toads can infest an entire waterhole and neighbouring streams in 1 breeding season. A female lays about 15 000 eggs at a time and lays several times during the course of a year. The cane toad has no natural predators in Australia. The glands behind its head secrete a poison which is venomous to any predator which attacks it. It is omnivorous, consuming plant life as well as small fauna such as lizards and small snakes. It breeds rapidly and can cause significant problems for the cattle industry by getting into water troughs and secreting its poison there. Cane toads present a major problem and we are on constant alert.

There have been a number of sightings of cane toads in Katherine and other locations in the Territory, including a couple in Darwin. I have vivid memories of 1985 when the Kulaluk area was searched for several days after a cane toad was discovered there. The Northern Territory Conservation Commission employs probably the leading expert on cane toads in this country and we are actively involved in national research, in combination with Queensland and the federal government, to discover a biological control for the cane toad. Frankly, that offers the only hope of counteracting the threat. A viral disease which has been identified around the Townsville area, known as the Townsville Disease, has dramatically reduced the cane toad population in that area. Our people are working actively on research into that disease. I have addressed this Assembly concerning that work on a number of occasions in my previous capacity as Minister for Conservation.

I cannot emphasise how important it is to maintain a continuous monitoring in respect of this particular pest. The Northern Territory is a natural habitat for the toad. If it becomes established in the wetland areas in the north, it will spread rapidly right across the Top End of the Territory with untold environmental damage to wildlife. Unfortunately, it is quite possible that it will arrive in vehicles or products from interstate. It tends to bury itself and it is believed some cane toads have arrived inside pot-plants from nurseries in Queensland. It is not possible to detect them without inspecting every pot-plant arriving in the Northern Territory, which would involve a massive cost. The hitchhiking habit of cane toads has been the subject of much mirth. They have a tendency to climb up underneath vehicles and secrete themselves so that they can be carried over considerable distances.

The cane toad is a major threat to the Territory and I can assure honourable members that the Conservation Commission is constantly monitoring and policing the matter as well as engaging in research on biological controls. I am sure that, as information becomes available, the minister will keep this Assembly informed.

Burgundy Royale Debts

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

As I understand it, the government has paid rent for office space at the Beaufort 5 years in advance. Does the liquidator consider this to be a debt held by the government against Burgundy Royale and, if so, where does it rank in the order of debts and, secondly and conversely, if no arrangement has been entered into with the liquidator for the recovery of the rent advanced, how does the government propose to avoid paying rent again when the property is sold?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will not be discussing the matter of Burgundy Royale in terms of its financial position or anything of that nature in this Assembly because the writ has now been listed. No financial considerations or part of the Burgundy Royale situation will be discussed by me during the course of these sittings.

Work Health Authority

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Recently, I heard a radio interview with a representative of the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union who saw fit to denigrate and insult the operation of the Work Health Authority. This individual, Mr Peter Tullgren, has apparently described the Work Health Authority as a paper tiger and has gone so far on public radio as to cast aspersions on an insurance company because he says it owns a rehabilitation service. In view of the recent statement made by the minister on the Work Health Authority, will he advise on further action on this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for that question. It is most unfortunate that we have experienced recently these outrageous outpourings from Mr Peter Tullgren about the Work Health Authority. I say 'unfortunate' because Mr Tullgren holds a privileged position in that he has been appointed to the Work Health Authority Ministerial Advisory Council. Mr Tullgren was nominated for a post on that council by the trade union movement, and he does the membership of the union movement a great disservice because, whilst he has not seen fit to attend either of the 2 meetings of that advisory council that have been held, he has chosen to enter into some sort of public anti-Work Health Authority campaign, using the media as a vehicle. If Mr Tullgren has a brief for the people he reports to, he should bring forward some constructive criticism for improvements to the Work Health Authority instead of denigrating through the media one of the best work health organisations in this country. He is in a better position to do that than most people because he is a member of the advisory council.

I was appalled at Mr Tullgren's outburst on Territory Extra on 30 September. Whilst I do not intend to take up the valuable time of this Assembly by discussing his criticisms in detail, I would like to make 2 brief points. Firstly, Mr Tullgren referred to the Work Health Authority as a paper tiger. The authority is held up nationally as a model for the administration of occupational health and safety; it promotes the obligation of our society to rehabilitate injured workers instead of simply paying them off and

assigning them to the unemployment scrap heap. It is instrumental in bringing about significant reductions in the cost of workers' compensation, which all citizens of the Territory ultimately bear. Any paper tiger which can do those things has considerable value to the Northern Territory and is worthy of my support.

My second point concerns Mr Tullgren's claim on radio that an insurance company owned one of the Territory's rehabilitation services. In my view, that verges on slander. His statements were tantamount to an accusation that this insurance company covertly instructs its rehabilitation service to reduce its liability for compensation payments by pushing injured workers back to work before they have completely recovered. That is an outrageous statement and I hope Mr Tullgren has some evidence to back it up if he intends to stay out of the court. If I were involved with an insurance company accused of that, I would be taking the matter to court to have the record set straight. I will be very surprised if Mr Tullgren does not find himself in trouble over that matter.

Northern Territory Public Service

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I understand that the government has stated that, in the course of this financial year, it will save 600 Northern Territory Public Service positions to take the figure from around 15 600 down to about 15 000. If that is correct, can the minister explain why the total salaries bill this financial year, as contained in the budget papers, is up by \$15m and further can he state whether a significant component of this increased cost is due to the upward reclassification of positions related to the new staffing structures? Further, could he confirm that there are 8 new E4 positions in the Department of the Chief Minister as a result of the reclassification structure?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be happy to provide some detail on that question. We will be decreasing public service numbers down to a figure of 15 030. Over the last couple of years, the figure has been 15 500 to 15 600. However, not all of those positions have been filled. In fact, we will be losing about 240 people who have become excess to requirements. We are working very carefully to ensure that nobody is made redundant compulsorily.

The Leader of the Opposition would be well aware of the nurses' anomaly pay claim which has resulted in a significant increase in costs to the public service. He would also be aware of the \$10 increase that came into effect in March of this year. That \$10 increase is being paid. He would be aware that a 1.5% increase is likely to come into place. Hopefully, it may be delayed, but a 1.5% increase will probably come into place this year and had to be allowed for in the budget. I have no problems at all with the fact that costs have increased because of the increased costs of the nurses' anomaly pay claim, the 1.5% increase and the \$10 increase earlier this year. We cannot hold back the growth of the public service in the very essential areas of police, teachers and nurses. Their numbers are increasing all the time with the growth of the Northern Territory. We have to allow for those people and that answers the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition. He mentioned 8 new positions in the Department of the Chief Minister. I do not have details of that before me at this time, but I will look into that matter and get back to him on it.

Mr Smith: Eight new E4 positions.

Mr McCARTHY: I am sorry, say that again.

Mr Smith: Eight new E4 positions.

Mr McCARTHY: I do not believe that is the case, but I will get back to the Assembly with details of that during the course of these sittings.

Bradshaw Terrace Bus Bay

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is the present situation concerning the Bradshaw Terrace bus bay and what was the outcome of any discussions he has had recently with the Darwin City Council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that at least the city council came some way towards seeing the light, so to speak, in regard to the particularly dangerous situation at Bradshaw Terrace. The council has agreed to defer its final decision on that area until we complete a comprehensive report on all the possible options. The current situation is that 3 of the 6 stops in the area have been eliminated. Whilst that has not created a significant problem for travellers, it has meant some rescheduling and the cost associated with that.

The real problem is that the council, contrary to the advice that we would have given it, has installed a second pedestrian crossing less than 10 m from the Linton Street intersection. It does not take much imagination to visualise the dangerous situations that will arise there and some have already been observed by bus service employees. Pedestrians are moving across the road right next to the intersection, which is dangerous in itself. In addition, while people are on the crossing, buses are stopped across Linton Street thus blocking off traffic and creating a further hazard. We have drawn the attention of the council to the situation and, hopefully, it will address it quickly.

The situation illustrates the problems which can arise when people make gung-ho decisions without proper deliberation about the full implications of their actions. Whilst I commend the council for postponing its final decision on the matter until we can properly report, I find it quite difficult to sit by without commenting on another dangerous situation the council has inadvertently created with this crazy pedestrian crossing next to the Linton Street intersection.

The survey will be completed in November or December and hopefully will put forward some practical, safe options for council to adopt, with or without the support and assistance of the Department of Transport and Works. We certainly have not been other than totally responsible in proceeding with the comprehensive study, with the assistance of Lend Lease, which ought to be commended for its serious input into the matter.

Grant of Crown Land at Berry Springs

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is it a fact that the government has given or is thinking of giving a grant of Crown Land to Aboriginal interests in the Berry Springs area for commercial purposes? In tandem with this proposition, what discussions have taken place with the local progress association, the local people and the Litchfield Shire officers and where do the proposed plans fit in with the deliberations of the Rural Planning Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to lay to rest some of the speculation and innuendo that appears to be coming from residents of the rural area. It appears that on talkback radio I mentioned the possibility of an Aboriginal cultural centre being established on commercial land adjacent to the Berry Springs Nature Park and Zoo. May I explain, for the benefit of the member for Koolpinyah, what is proposed. There is a 40 ha site adjacent to the Berry Springs Zoo on which it is intended to establish commercial concessions because we believe that it will be the most visited tourist destination in the Top End. The proposal is for the establishment of a caravan park, a restaurant and a souvenir and craft shop.

I was approached some 6 months ago by Aboriginal interests about the possibility of establishing an Aboriginal cultural centre in Darwin. I put it to them that the perfect location was adjacent to the commercial ventures being established at Berry Springs Zoo. The reason for this is obvious. It is on the road leading into Litchfield Park, which will attract visitors and locals alike. The Aboriginal cultural centre will not proceed unless the Aboriginal people, in conjunction with the government, are able to organise their finance. The accusation that we are establishing another reserve such as Bagot or Kulaluk is quite wrong. What is proposed is a building within which Aboriginal people and their organisations will have the opportunity to sell and possibly manufacture their arts and crafts. This fits perfectly with the policies of the Northern Territory government to do whatever it possibly can to involve Aboriginal people in tourism.

Mr Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah has been invited by myself to join the management committee of the Berry Springs Zoo. Very shortly, the membership of that committee will be finalised and draft terms of reference that I have prepared will go to that committee. It will investigate how the concessions will come to fruition and how an Aboriginal cultural centre may be implemented. I would like to put at rest the minds of those rural residents who feel that they have not been advised properly. My ministerial officer spoke at length with a member of the progress association who gave an assurance that he would take a more positive role. In effect, by allowing such land to be used for commercial purposes, we are bringing enterprise to the rural area. This will create employment.

It will be one of the greatest assets available for tourists travelling to the Top End. We make no secret of the pressures being placed on our visitors in Kakadu. We need another location close to Darwin and the publicity that was given recently to the establishment of Berry Springs Zoo says it all. It will be one of the world's best and most outstanding features because it will deal generally with everything Territorian. Once again, I put on the record my congratulations to the members of the Conservation Commission who have helped in developing that facility. I have no doubt that it will be one of

the outstanding successes of tourism in the Top End. An Aboriginal cultural centre, a restaurant and a caravan park operated independently of government will do nothing but add to the asset and attract tourists to visit Berry Springs, the nature reserve and the zoo on the way through to the Litchfield area.

Cutback in Darwin Operations of Commonwealth Department
of Administrative Services

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In Tuesday night's adjournment debate, the minister reported the concerns of the Australian Professional Engineers Association, which also expressed its concerns on the ABC radio news this morning, regarding the cutback in the Darwin operations of the Commonwealth Department of Administrative Services. What impact might this move by the department have on the Northern Territory economy?

ANSWER

In a word, Mr Speaker, significant.

Mr Bell: That will do, Fred.

Mr FINCH: My answer does warrant some elaboration because a particular problem has been identified for a number of years and I, naturally enough, have a solution.

The Department of Administrative Services construction group, along with federal government departments, is facing some cutbacks. The Deputy Secretary of the department has opted to eliminate quite a large number of level 1 positions. The position of the Darwin senior officer is one of them but that in itself is not the end of the story. Changes to the departmental structure will reduce the design capacity in the local office to an absolute minimum. Similar problems have been raised in the House on a number of occasions. Well before I entered this House, Paul Everingham spoke about problems which went right back to the immediate post-cyclone period when all management functions for the department in the South Australian and Northern Territory region were transferred back to Adelaide, despite the vast predominance of work being carried out in the Northern Territory.

Since Cyclone Tracy, I believe there has only been one annual period where the workload for South Australia has exceeded that of the Northern Territory. In one particular year, \$90m was spent in the Territory while \$1m was spent in South Australia, for a fence at the Adelaide Airport. The department's rationale for not increasing local design capacity was the difficulty of recruiting staff in the immediate post-cyclone period. Despite many moves to change this over a period of time, there has been only a token increase in the establishment of the design cell here, and that came about in 1983-84. That capacity is now to be reduced again. Whilst there was some increase in the number of design jobs carried out here for Territory projects, that is to be wiped out.

The impact will extend much further than the department's local staff of 20 to 30 people. There will be no capacity to give work to local consultants where it will be done by local people in local offices. That will not only affect jobs. It has been clearly illustrated over the years that products coming out of design offices in Adelaide are usually most inappropriate for

the Northern Territory environment. We need designs which take account of environmental considerations like the heat, cyclones, horizontal rain and so forth, which designers in Adelaide are not at all familiar with. We have previously had projects designed in Adelaide where the materials were not available in Darwin and local manufacturers, agents, and suppliers did not have an opportunity to bid. The cost involved in bringing in these specialist materials is onerous in itself. Construction techniques which are appropriate in other places are inappropriate locally. The cost of that is in itself quite tremendous. I estimate that 100 or so jobs are involved for Territorians. Apart from that, the cost to the public purse of having jobs designed inappropriately elsewhere is of great concern.

The other night, the member for MacDonnell seemed to have great difficulty accepting that I was seeking a bipartisan approach in this matter. I wonder whether the Labor opposition in the Northern Territory does have any access to Canberra because my suggestion that we ought to take this matter on as a cooperative issue was scoffed at. This is a serious matter for the Australian taxpayer and also for local employment. If members opposite do not believe that, they should talk to the people in housing and construction, in architects' offices, in quantity surveyors' offices, in engineering offices and in surveyors' offices and those people will tell them what it means in job terms.

One solution is to get the federal department to reverse its decision and listen to what its Darwin people and its Adelaide office people are saying and reinstate the status quo. Probably a better solution would be for the Department of Transport and Works, which has the capacity and the local expertise and is able to coordinate local consultants, to take on an agency basis all of the design work that is to be completed within the Northern Territory. With a military base to be established and an air terminal to be constructed, hopefully in the near future, there will be a high demand. It would not only be good for the federal government but also it would ensure maximum benefits to the local community. Those benefits are not simply short term during the design phase. They will be realised during construction when there is a need for the designer and the guy in the field to be able to talk directly. There is also a need for people to be available on a long-term basis to provide ongoing consultancy.

The situation that has arisen now could have been avoided by the relocation of the principal regional headquarters to Darwin where it rightfully belongs. If that is not to happen - and I suggest that perhaps there should be some lobbying in respect of that - the federal government should be realistic and accept the offer of the Department of Transport and Works to complete these works effectively and efficiently on an agency basis.

Block H Finnis River

Mr BELL to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, can the Treasurer confirm that, as acting Minister for Lands in January this year, he instructed the Northern Territory Land Corporation to sell Block H at Finnis River for \$650 000?

ANSWER

The answer is no. I did not instruct the Northern Territory Land Corporation.

Odours at Northlakes

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he offer the residents of Northlakes and nearby residential areas some relief in the matter of unsavoury odours which drift from the Marrara golf course treated-effluent irrigation system?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am in a position to give honourable members a rundown on the developments that have occurred in that particular area. The member for Sanderson has been in my office on a number of occasions about this particular issue and, of course, the member for Jingili, who lives some distance away but represents an area within the immediate vicinity, has also mentioned it. As the local member myself previously, I worked very hard on this particular issue. Unfortunately, as the member for Berrimah, I happened to go to the office of the Minister for Transport and Works. The member for Sanderson was that minister in those days. I used to discuss this particular issue at some length with him. It was not until I became minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority that we saw the action really speed up on this particular issue.

I am happy to be in a position to offer fresh cause for optimism to the long-suffering residents in the area and to the Minister for Education who has long suffered complaints from his constituents about the quality of the air at various times.

Mr Hanrahan: It was pretty bad last night.

Mr COULTER: The member for Flynn would share his concern about this matter.

Perhaps I should outline the nature of the problem briefly for the benefit of honourable members who are not fortunate enough to have such a well-grassed and well-watered 18-hole golf course in the middle of their electorates. In 1981, agreement was reached to utilise treated effluent to irrigate the golf course and other nearby recreational areas. However, since commissioning it in 1983, growing numbers of complaints have reached the government about unpleasant odours emanating apparently from the golf course which had had the effect of putting entire families off their nightly dinners. Those complaints came to a peak late last year and, following representation from the member for Sanderson, it was resolved that something had to be done about it.

From the number of complaints and from on-site investigation, it was obvious that the main source of the odour problem was the effluent storage lake. The first stage of the remedial exercise involved aeration of the lake to reduce the growth of blue and green algae. I am pleased to say that the aeration process, which began mid-year, has distinctly improved the effluent quality and reduced the rate of the build-up of sludge. The second stage has involved stopping chlorination of the effluent at Leanyer, with the approval of the Department of Health and Community Services, and a third stage involves introduction of a freshwater flushing cycle into the golf course system at the end of each irrigation cycle. This reduces the effect of stagnation in the mains. To this end, the 1987-88 budget allocated \$70 000 as a grant-in-aid to the Darwin Golf Club to provide a freshwater flushing facility. Further remedial plans involve the possibility of introducing fish - and the Minister for Industries and Development would be interested in this I am sure - into

the lake to improve the biological cycle and further reduce the growth of offensive blue-green algae.

In summary, I can report that, since aeration of the lake started in earnest, no complaints from residents have been recorded so far. I believe we have put an end to this problem which has frustrated people in the area for some time. I would like to congratulate the people from the Water Directorate for the energy and effort that they have put into resolving this particular issue. It has presented some problems at times, and we have been unsuccessful at times in the remedial action that we have tried to implement out there. However, at long last, it appears that the solution has been found.

Conservation Commission Headquarters and Herbarium

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Can he confirm or otherwise that the headquarters of the Conservation Commission and the commission herbarium are to be transferred from Alice Springs to Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the herbarium will remain where it is for the moment, until we finalise the arrangements for the move to Palmerston.

Mr Ede: So it is moving.

Mr HANRAHAN: It is intended ultimately to establish the Conservation Commission in toto at the Palmerston site, including the herbarium.

After working with the Director of the Conservation Commission for some considerable time now, I have made the decision to move the Director, and only the Director, back to Darwin. That move will be effective on 1 February 1988. There will be no significant change within the structure of the Conservation Commission as it stands at the moment, but there will be an additional position in the Alice Springs region which will virtually become Deputy Director South, if my memory serves me correctly.

I have been attempting to create a commission that operates as efficiently as possible and, to all intents and purposes, the only way ultimately to achieve this aim, because of the workload and the balance of staff in the regions in the Territory, is to have the Director live in Darwin. For that purpose, he will take up residence in Darwin effective 1 February 1988.

Park Area for Larapinta Valley

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

A number of blocks of land in the Larapinta Valley area have been set aside for future land use. These uses include parks, sporting oval sites and a future school site. In view of the fact that some 700 people are now in residence in this area, when will a block of land be handed over to the Alice Springs Town Council to enable at least one park to be made available to the children of the residents of this new area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the constituents of the member for Araluen in the Larapinta Valley area of his effective representations. Only yesterday, I was able to write to the Alice Springs Town Council and offer a piece of land for the development of a park, at nil cost and with freehold title to ensue. The land is Lot 7178 Lindervale Drive.

I share the concerns of the member for Araluen. The Larapinta Valley is a fast developing area. Many people are moving into the town. It lacks some of the basic infrastructure of a suburb somewhat removed from the main business area and I think it is essential that a high priority be placed on it to ensure that the establishment of parks and other community facilities takes place. Of course, I say that in the context of the budgetary constraints on us this year. I certainly give an undertaking to the residents of the Larapinta Valley area that I will work closely with the member for Araluen, listen to his advice and do whatever I can to ensure that the development of parks and other community assets in that particular area is a matter of priority.

Howard Springs Community Health Centre

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recently, on television, the minister indicated that the government was prepared to subsidise the operation of the Howard Springs Health Centre if private medical practitioners were willing to establish a practice there. In light of the fact that the centre was closed recently due to financial cuts, what form and level of subsidy is the minister prepared to provide?

ANSWER

I made those comments in a television interview when the reporter asked me for details about the Howard Springs Community Health Centre. It turned out afterwards that the story had come from the Nurses Federation and was all about how I was supposed to be privatising every community health centre in the Northern Territory. Obviously, that is not the case.

The Howard Springs Community Health Centre was closed because I believed that government funds could be saved whilst the same service could continue to be provided through the Berrimah and Palmerston centres. Infant care, for example, would be handled from Palmerston while domiciliary care would continue to be handled by the same people, based in the Palmerston or Berrimah centres. All outreach services in the area would continue. The other main reason for closing the centre was that we had received some expressions of interest from private practitioners who wished to open up a service in that area. This would mean that not only would the previous services continue to be provided for the residents there but they would be enhanced by the availability of a general practitioner, as well as attracting a pharmacy into the area.

I have been negotiating with a number of doctors who have indicated interest. The point I made in the TV interview about the possibility of government subsidy - which is not really the appropriate word - was that we may have to help the business over a short period of time in order for it to become viable. This could perhaps be done by not charging rent for the premises or something of that nature. If that is the case, so be it. It will be one way of increasing health services in the area. I have been very

pleased indeed with the number of expressions of interest from GPs to operate in that area. I can advise the people in the Howard Springs area that health services will actually be increased because of the cuts in the government's budget in respect of health and community services. I am confident that that will be evident in a very short period.

Leanyer Sewage Ponds

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, my question follows from a question put by the member for Jingili. Is the minister aware of dangerously high sludge levels in the Leanyer sewage ponds and can he assure the House that the Power and Water Authority will take whatever action is necessary to prevent the emanation of noxious odours and their dissemination over the northern suburbs as a result of those high sludge levels?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. It is interesting that the member for Ludmilla has not asked the same question. I understand that he is quite happy and that the effluent pumping system in his electorate is operating quite well and without any noxious odours emanating from it. The design of the Leanyer sewage ponds is such that sludge builds up. I am not sure that the member for Karama is right about it having reached dangerously high levels. Engineers from the Water Directorate tell me that the sludge build-up will be treated in the normal manner, as it was designed to be treated, and that the design limits have not been exceeded. When the sludge is removed for treatment, I suppose there may be some odour.

Honourable members will be aware that people living in the Leanyer area are no strangers to odours. The Leanyer dump was a source of odours for some time and, over a period of time, design changes were made to stop noxious odours emanating from it. Eventually, of course, a new dump site was found. I advise the member for Karama that we are aware of the sludge build-up which is designed to be part of the operation. The sludge will be treated and I suspect that, when that happens, there may be an odour for a short period of time. That is an inevitable result of the operation.

Discovery of Alanite at White Range

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I know the minister is well aware of the discovery of alanite at White Range in the Arltunga area near Alice Springs. Alanite is the compound from which yttrium, a rare earth element, is derived. Yttrium has real potential for use in superconductors, an exciting scientific development. Will he undertake to encourage Australian investment in this particular compound and also to encourage secondary and even tertiary production relating to it here in Australia so that Australians will reap the full advantage of it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member's question may arise from an article in the Centralian Advocate. I do not have the date of the issue it appeared in but I took a copy of it. The headline was: 'The Japanese Move in on Mining Scoop'. I also noted that the member for Stuart, speaking in the debate on the Appropriation Bill, seemed to agree with the member for Sadadeen about the need for Australian involvement in processing industries.

The article gave the impression that Arltunga is one of only 2 places in the world where this particular commodity is found. My advice from my department indicates that that is not correct and that the material is found in beach sands right around Australia. Apart from Queensland, there are not too many places where beach sands can be mined although I believe Western Australia recently received \$100m from a Japanese consortium to develop a similar process with semiconductor material. The major occurrences of rare earth materials in Australia, which appears to be relatively rich in them, are in heavy mineral beach sands which contain monazite, which is a by-product of heavy mineral beach sands mining for ilmenite and zirconium.

Active exploration is under way for rare earth elements in a number of places in Australia, including the Hall's Creek district in Western Australia. Rare earth elements are produced by Renison in Tasmania and exported to France. The French company Rhone-Poulenc announced its intention in January this year to build a \$100m monazite processing plant in Pinjarra, Western Australia, to treat monazite produced from Western Australian beach sand products.

The point that I am making is that, at the moment, the end users of this product seem to be the ones with the risk capital. There are not too many Australian companies who have demonstrated that they wish to become involved with the value-added product. I guess that is nothing new in Australia. It is what I spoke about in relation to the Appropriation Bill. I said that the Northern Territory should investigate every possibility to become a resource producer of value-added products, not simply provide the raw material. One of the areas where we could become heavily involved in secondary and tertiary product development is the uranium industry. It would be good if we could become involved with rare earth minerals because that is the state of the art technology, as the member for Sadadeen pointed out to us recently. These metals are much sought after by mining companies. If we could develop anything like that in the Northern Territory, it would be advantageous to us.

The recent interest in rare earth elements stems from the discovery that alloys containing rare earth elements become superconductors at temperatures above that of liquid nitrogen. If further research can produce an alloy that conducts at room temperature, the effect on the electronic industry would rival the effect of the invention of the automobile on the transport industry.

In the vicinity of White Range near Arltunga, an interesting deposit containing the material alandite has been discovered by Alice Springs prospector, Bluey Bruce. The mineralisation occurs in association with pegmatitic veins on the exploration licence that has been granted to Mr Bruce and his associates. The tenement at this stage remains in the names of individual holders and has not been included in the property that forms part of the White Range Gold NL float. The discovery of alandite in this area is interesting but requires much further exploration before its significance can be assessed.

In the article in the Centralian Advocate, the comment concerning the presence of infrastructure and activity on site is related only to the exploration for gold in the White Range area. To date, no significant exploration in the area that contains alandite has taken place. We wish Bluey Bruce all the best of luck. I hope he can find a substantial amount of this quality product and that he can attract venture capital from Australian companies or even overseas companies. Wherever possible, we should look to Australian investment but we should remember that the British developed that magnificent state of Texas in the United States of America. The British set

up the big cattle ranches and the ribbons of steel across the state. We will take investment from wherever we can get it. However, it would be nice to see some Australian entrepreneurs helping Bluey Bruce to develop this exciting product.

Australian Traineeship System

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Has any progress been made on the introduction of the Australian traineeship system in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a very timely question. The subject of the Australian traineeship system was a significant agenda item at the Labour Ministers' Conference that I attended in Sydney last week. Honourable members will be aware that the Australian traineeship system was announced in 1985 in the federal budget. This announcement signifies the federal government's adoption of a recommendation from the Kirby Inquiry into training.

The Australian traineeship system is aimed at providing an additional window to employment for school leavers in the 16 to 18 year age group. Traineeships have a duration of 12 months, involving integrated on- and off-the-job training and are conducted in a non-trade area. The Australian traineeship system in the Northern Territory is administered by a joint secretariat consisting of officers of my department and officers of the federal Department of Education, Employment and Training.

To date, there have been 2 traineeships completed in the Northern Territory. The first was within the Australian Public Service and some 8 persons graduated on 27 March this year. All of those 8 persons were offered full-time employment within the Australian Public Service within the Territory. On 24 April 1987, the first private sector traineeship in Australia was completed when 8 trainees were awarded their competency certificates after having completed a tourism and hospitality industry traineeship conducted at the Beaufort Hotel. All of those trainees were employed by the Beaufort Hotel in a full-time capacity following graduation.

Currently, there are 3 traineeships in progress within the Territory. Firstly, there is a traineeship for 10 people in the tourism and hospitality industry - again at the Beaufort and I commend the Beaufort for its effort in this regard. The Australian Public Service has commenced another traineeship for 15 persons. Finally, in the building and construction industry, some 14 trainees commenced the Territory's first group traineeship under the sponsorship of the Master Builder's Association in May - 10 of these trainees are from Darwin, 3 from Katherine and 1 from Jabiru. These trainees are undertaking a package of training which includes a range of skills in construction occupations, including concreting, steel fixing, scaffolding and building labourer requirements.

A further development in this area is agreement between the Territory and Commonwealth governments on the funding of a position of traineeship liaison officer. This position is located within the Darwin office of the Confederation of Industry and Commerce. That officer commenced employment during August this year and is responsible to the Confederation of Industry and Commerce for the development of Australian traineeship systems in various industries under the umbrella of the confederation's membership. I should

perhaps mention here that a similar offer was made to the Territory Trades and Labor Council, but it has not yet taken up that offer.

Many of the delays in getting traineeship schemes off the ground have resulted from the need to negotiate individual agreements with the particular union covering the area concerned. Whilst much progress has been made in these negotiations, there is significant scope for them to be streamlined, and further negotiations are under way with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union for an umbrella agreement. If these negotiations are successful, such an umbrella agreement will obviate the need for individual agreements on individual traineeship schemes.

In the area of forward planning for further traineeships, I can advise the Assembly that discussions are well under way for developing a training package, together with the Transport Workers Union, for a traineeship in the furniture removals and storage industry. Within the area of local government, a training package has been finalised for local government municipal works and parks and gardens traineeships. Recent indications are that traineeship schemes in this area of employment may be able to be implemented in early 1988.

Initial discussions have been held with the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association aimed at examining the feasibility of a station hand traineeship. If these discussions prove fruitful, it is proposed that that scheme will be based in Katherine. That is logical because Katherine is recognised as a service centre for the majority of the cattle stations within the Top End. Discussions with Katherine Rural College management are planned for this month. These discussions are aimed at an assessment of the college's ability to provide the off-the-job training component.

Work has commenced on the drafting of a formal agreement to facilitate an office-clerical traineeship in the private sector in the Northern Territory. To this end, Territory offices will be in contact with federal officials in the Federated Clerks Union to finalise this agreement. It is expected that the training package for an automotive replacement parts traineeship will be completed. The industrial agreement to facilitate this traineeship has been agreed to and it is to go before the Arbitration Commission later in October.

Preliminary work is under way to assess the potential for an insurance industry traineeship being conducted within the Territory. With regard to the traineeship proposed for the Northern Territory Public Service, I must advise the Assembly that significant difficulties have been experienced in reaching any sort of agreement with the Australian Public Service Association for this traineeship. What is promising is that a way has been found around the Australian Public Service Association's intransigent attitude and, at this stage, it is anticipated that a traineeship in the office-clerical area, within the Northern Territory Public Service, will commence early in 1988 in order to coincide with the school leavers seeking employment and the semester requirements of the Darwin Institute of Technology which is to provide the off-the-job training component.

As a general response to the question, traineeship schemes in the Northern Territory have been somewhat sluggish in getting off the ground. Of course, there is the exception of the high level of success in the tourism and hospitality area, and I am sure that all members will agree with me that this is a very important area for training, given the Northern Territory's growing tourist industry. However, the future outlook of the Australian traineeship system in the Northern Territory is promising. The groundwork carried out

over the last 12 months is now starting to bear fruit and I would anticipate an acceleration of traineeships over and above those that I have outlined in the Assembly today.

Mr Speaker, the federal government has strengthened the scheme recently and I see a great deal of hope for it. I think it is one of our best potential means of training people in the Northern Territory, and they are very happy with the way the Territory government has been supportive of the scheme. I hope that unions will take the same responsible attitude and do away with their intransigence. The pressures that they place on the ability of people to employ trainees, in demanding levels of payment beyond what is required, has been the major factor in slowing up the development of some of those schemes.

Air North Settlement

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In the last sittings, I asked the Chief Minister a question concerning Air North and the settlement of the aerial medical contract. He said that a proposition had been put to the government by Air North as settlement of any legal action outstanding over the contract. Has that proposition been accepted by the Northern Territory government and does it involve payment of moneys by the Northern Territory government in settlement of any claim or any legal expenses incurred by Air North?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have details of any funds changing hands between the Northern Territory government and Air North as a result of the finalisation of the contract. My participation in this matter has involved getting the contract started by Skywest. That took place on 4 September. I have no information about any moneys changing hands between government and Air North in any settlement.

Darwin to Alice Springs Railway

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to the front page story in the leading Japanese financial daily yesterday which, amongst other things, stated that preference will be given for concessions relating to our rich natural resources in return for investment by Japanese companies in the railway. What concessions have been discussed and what agreement has been reached?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot say this question comes as any surprise given that the Leader of the Opposition gave a clear indication through the media this morning that such a question would be asked. I will preface the answer by saying that I received a copy of this press report late yesterday. Honourable members will be aware that I made some public comment that I would be seeking to find out where the report came from and to verify the accuracy of the statements made in the report. We have been unable to identify the source of this particular statement and apparently the media has been unable to track down the source of the statement also.

I would like to refer to some of the comments the Leader of the Opposition made in the media today because it would be worthwhile having the matter clarified. In Territory Extra this morning, and also in news reports, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that the suggestion to include proposals, such as potential rights to develop mineral resources or other projects, is somehow a new issue that has been thrown into the ring as far as this railway is concerned.

I will not suggest that the Leader of the Opposition is either deliberately lying or deliberately misleading the people. I must work on the assumption that either he does not do his homework or, quite frankly, is simply incompetent in terms of following the debate on the railway. I would like to refer honourable members to a number of reports. I refer to a media release that I issued on 20 April 1987. It said: 'Mr Coulter discussed mineral developments and markets with his Japanese counterpart while Dr Conn is to represent the Northern Territory government in the Japan Australia Transport Study Group'.

There was an article in the NT News of 20 April. The front page story referred to myself: 'He said all parties involved in the \$610m railway project had shown strong interest in possible allied mineral developments'. On 20 April, at a press conference in Darwin, I stated: 'With the other industries that can be developed off that transport mode - mining, agriculture and other industries that become more viable with the rail line - you start to get an understanding of why it should be called a transport study group rather than really a railway study group'.

On 29 April, I said in answer to a question put in this Legislative Assembly: 'I might say here that the project may involve more than a railway line. The line is really the linchpin in the development of a transportation system which involves shipping, ports and rail as related transport modes. It is possible that other projects can be mixed and matched with the railway in a consortium-backed multi-project venture that could well improve the viability of the total scheme, and provide more investment opportunities for the Northern Territory'.

Mr Speaker, I can say to the Leader of the Opposition that that is still the position. The concept of concessions is similar to the process that was used in the United States in the construction of rail services there. As I have said consistently on the railway, we may well blend in other development opportunities, as concessional rights to the consortium that would construct the railway line, to improve the overall viability of the total project. There is no suggestion of subsidies, underwriting or other special arrangements in respect of the railway line. The objective is to get a railway line built and if, in doing that, we can blend together other development opportunities that become viable with the railway or which - to use a colloquialism - can 'sweeten the pie' to improve the overall viability of such a business consortium, then I support that approach fully, because to use a railway line and to accelerate economic development in other areas in combination can only work to the benefit of the Northern Territory and Australia generally. There is no suggestion there of any hidden subsidies.

This railway line is a significant and fundamentally important social infrastructure and transport infrastructure facility and, as such, deserves careful consideration of any options that are available. There have been no fixed agreements on any form of concessions or otherwise. Certainly, different options have been outlined in a similar vein to the way they are being outlined in the House.

Those discussions are open for consideration by the government and consortium members and consideration is being given to how they can be brought together. There will be meetings during November which we hope will further advance the proposal. I reiterate the comment I made yesterday, that I am heartened by the interest being shown in the railway. I advise honourable members that interest is increasing on almost a weekly basis among Australian businesses. They are showing keen interest in examining the railway project with a view to possible participation in the consortium.

In case any members run the risk of being misled, I can advise that we are still working towards the creation of a consortium. The study group is the vehicle for examining opportunities and identifying potential participants in such a consortium. The consortium is not yet formed. We are working towards that and the details will be worked out as the project develops. I still feel reasonably confident that we can commence construction of the railway some time during 1988. I make no firm commitment to that date because the task is very complex and difficult. The establishment of this railway has confounded governments in the Northern Territory community since 1911, but I genuinely believe that we are far closer to the realisation of our plans than ever before.

I would like to remind honourable members that the Leader of the Opposition has been an active proponent of the view that the Northern Territory should reconsider the federal government's 60:40 proposal, which would involve a direct capital works injection by the Northern Territory government of around \$300m.

Mr Smith: No, that is wrong.

Mr HATTON: The injection would be 40% of \$610m in 1986 dollars. The Leader of the Opposition can do his own sums, but it is certain that any such amount would be a very high direct cost to the Northern Territory community. I will not rule out the possibility of the Northern Territory government becoming involved in the railway, although my preferred position is that it be a 100% private enterprise project. Equally, whilst there may be some

opportunity costs in encouraging private investment, the net benefit to the Northern Territory would be more than offset by those. Although I am not suggesting that it will be the case, benefits offered could include the waiving of rights to mineral royalties. The entire project could be put together in such a way that it would generate additional business development along the rail corridor.

Mr Smith: It will be subsidised by the back door rather than the front door.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition refers to that as subsidisation through the back door. I am talking about the possibility of giving a concession in terms of forgoing revenue from projects that would not start if there were no railway line. If there were no railway line, there would be no revenue from such projects because the projects would not commence. These matters will be considered in more detail as issues develop. We know the opposition likes to criticise and knock developments in the Northern Territory but I was really sad to see the Leader of the Opposition jump on the bandwagon and try to find some way of criticising yet again what could be one of the most exciting development projects or consortiums that the Northern Territory has seen. Our government will work with all expedition to try to have this project under way in the interests of the Northern Territory and to generate some wealth both for the Territory and Australia.

Annual Leave Loading

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Can he advise of any progress on the government's decision to apply to the Arbitration Commission to abolish the 17½% annual leave loading?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members will be aware that the air fares, district allowance and 17½% leave loading conditions enjoyed by government employees are covered, in some cases, by awards of the commission. This is especially the case in respect of the 17½% leave loading. It is therefore necessary for the government to apply to the commission to vary those awards. In the case of air fares, those applications seek to abolish air fares for all employees recruited after 1 August 1987 and covered by awards. In the case of the district allowance, the applications seek to reduce the amounts of allowance to the levels agreed in discussion with the TLC - that is, down to zero for employees without dependants and \$960 per annum for those with dependants.

In the case of the 17½% loading, the applications seek to remove the provision from all awards covering government employment. The government's intentions in that respect are no surprise to honourable members and certainly no surprise to the unions. It was the subject of considerable discussion in the talks with the unions in June. It is pretty fair to say that the TLC is not happy about that but it recognises the government's right to seek to remove the 17½% loading from the award. The applications have been before the commission for some time now. The commission has a very heavy schedule and we do not have a definite date as yet for those applications to be heard. We have to fit in not only with the commission but within the fairly heavy schedule of the person who is taking our case to the commission. I would expect that those hearings will come up in the fairly near future.

Darwin to Alice Springs Railway

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

The story in the Japan National Economic Day purported to represent the Northern Territory government and its position in places. Can he provide this House with a categorical assurance that the story was not planted by either the Northern Territory government directly or by any agent of the Northern Territory government who has been involved in these talks, particularly Dr Ishizaki or Dr Sugawara?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have advised the House already that we do not know the source of this story. We have been trying to check it. We have spoken with Dr Ishizaki who was equally surprised at the story and denies any knowledge of having fired the story. Equally, I can assure the honourable member that I certainly did not plant the story and I know the Treasurer did not. It came as a surprise to us. We have not yet been able to make direct contact with Dr Sugawara but I must say that we would be very surprised to hear that he had any involvement. It has been confirmed today that one of the companies named in that report, EIE Pty Ltd, with which Dr Ishizaki is associated, has subsequently denied the report and is confirming what I have said in this House today: that there is no fixed agreement. I am genuinely confounded as to where that story came from, as is our government. We have been trying to source it down ourselves.

Imprisonment of Juvenile

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer to the case of a 15-year-old girl who was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment, which has received a great deal of publicity recently. Is he satisfied that his department has performed adequately in this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this young lady certainly attracted widespread media attention when she was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment by the Darwin Juvenile Court on 12 August 1987. While in Darwin Prison, the young lady was seen by a psychiatrist and a psychiatric nurse who provided relevant reports on her psychological and emotional condition. As a result of their visit and a subsequent assessment completed on the young lady, the staff at the Darwin Prison were instructed as to the most appropriate means of ensuring that her emotional and psychological needs were met while she was in the prison.

Reports from the prison indicate that she responded extremely well to the program established for her in prison which included an educational component, supervised by the education officer within the prison. Further, the reports indicated that her behaviour and attitude within the prison improved markedly. The assessments indicated that she required consistent handling while she was in prison and highlighted the benefits to be derived from family counselling upon discharge.

On Tuesday 13 October, through her solicitor, the young lady appealed in the Darwin Supreme Court against the severity of her sentence. Upon hearing the appeal, the judge confirmed the sentence of the lower court. However, he released her forthwith on a 12-month supervised bond of \$500 in her own

recognisance. She was ordered to enter into the bond and to accept the reasonable directions of a delegate of the minister with regard to residence, associates and employment, and to abstain from alcohol and drug consumption except that prescribed by a medical practitioner. She has now returned to live with her mother.

As a result of the Supreme Court's action, arrangements are being made for the family to receive family counselling from staff of the Tamarind Centre in conjunction with community welfare officers. In addition, the fact that she has been placed on a supervised bond will require juvenile justice officers to maintain regular contact with her. Now that the court has made the decision to release the young lady into the community, every effort is being made to ensure that her return to the community is successful.

Mr Speaker, I want to place that on record as being what I hope is the final chapter in this episode relating to this young lady. I said publicly that I was surprised that the matter attracted media attention. I was also surprised at the criticism that was launched against members of my department in the welfare area in particular and, I dare say, criticism of the magistrate for his decision in sentencing this young lady. It did nothing to help in her rehabilitation. Whilst I do not advocate it for future cases, I believe the sentence had an impact on the young lady. I certainly hope the young lady takes the decision that she has a future in front of her and that she will stick on the straight and narrow. The appeal court confirmed the sentence. If she does misbehave, she will go straight back to Darwin Prison.

Society becomes very frustrated over the number of houses that are being broken into and the number of similar offences that are being committed by juveniles, particularly in the Darwin area but no doubt right throughout the Northern Territory. I think the sentence of the magistrate was indicative of that frustration. It is too late for parents to start criticising welfare workers, prison officers, magistrates, police and the like once their children reach that stage.

Mr Speaker, I would like to leave you with some food for thought. Following the introduction and publicising of mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, the number of notifications increased greatly. During the last 12 months, an increase in notification has been quite evident.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The opposition has been fairly tolerant during question time over the last few sitting days but, quite clearly, the minister has gone right over the top on this particular occasion. He was asked a particular question about a particular person and he now intends to deliver a general speech on a general subject. If he wants to do that, he should do it by way of statement.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I would like to speak to that point of order. In fact, the question was whether I was satisfied with the work that my officers had been doing in the department relative to these matters. I believe that the answer that I am giving is quite relevant.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I ask the minister to keep his answer relevant to the question.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, in September 1987 alone, 39 reports were received and, if this trend were maintained, 400 reports could be anticipated in the 12 months from July 1987. In the past 12 months, the overall number of child protection reports has approximately tripled. The number of substantiated

reports has approximately doubled. I put the challenge out to the parents of children in the Northern Territory to take a look at themselves before their children find themselves before a Court of Summary Jurisdiction where they are likely to be sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

The number of child abuse cases that are emerging is horrific. I have no doubt in the world that they are nothing more than the tip of the iceberg in terms of what is occurring in some homes in the Northern Territory. I can assure honourable members that welfare officers are working extremely hard on a number of cases which have been reported to them. I make a plea to parents of young children to look to their responsibilities as parents and not cry out when matters reach the stage where their offspring are sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

Prison Labour from Gunn Point Prison

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What has been done by the Division of Custodial Services to use prison labour from Gunn Point Prison to work on maintaining facilities for campers and picnickers in the Gunn Point area and to act as agents for the Department of Lands and Housing in the administration of this area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Conservation has put that proposition to me recently and I am investigating the matter through the department to see if we can come up with some agreement on how we can work together in that area.

Deregulation of Aviation Industry

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Since the federal Minister for Aviation has made an announcement regarding deregulation of the aviation industry, is the minister able to advise the House of the benefits the Northern Territory is likely to receive in relation to international aircraft visits?

ANSWER

A number of developments have occurred since the time of the federal government's announcement on deregulation and termination of the 2-airline policy in 1990. A couple of those developments are of concern to us, although the Northern Territory government certainly endorses and supports the removal of government interference in the marketplace in the aviation industry.

I have written recently to the federal Minister for Transport in regard to the possibility that, should one of the existing 2 airlines gain pre-eminence in the industry, predatory activities might commence and there would be a need for some oversight. My concern is based on the fact that Australian Airlines will require some considerable financial injection over the 3-year period to 1990. This could come from the government or, more appropriately, through some form of privatisation of Australian Airlines which would ensure that it could be an equal competitor with Ansett. My concern was that the federal minister had announced that he would leave any oversight of the industry to the Trade Practices Commission and the Prices Surveillance Authority. I suggest that their powers and limited expertise might be inadequate and that such machinery would be both cumbersome and ineffectual. I have written to

the federal minister reinforcing the view which this government expressed in the review of May 1985. We proposed then that, at least during the initial period, there should be a specialist and independent statutory authority which could encompass restricted trade practices functions in relation to the aviation industry. The problem is that the Northern Territory, particularly with its long routes and relatively low numbers of passengers, may receive some harsh treatment from the major airline companies. Whilst we welcome the deregulation announcement as such, I have expressed those fundamental concerns to the federal government.

The second area of concern relates to Qantas. Whilst deregulation will allow Qantas to take advantage of interlining, which is the picking up of international tourists from domestic ports, the decision did not go far enough in relation to the Northern Territory, Western Australia and northern Queensland. I believe there would be great advantage in allowing the international carriers to pick up domestic passengers to fill empty seats on routes to and from those areas. This would make additional routes available to Territory passengers. One would assume, for example, that there would be some excellent holiday packages to and from Townsville, where Qantas currently lands.

A couple of days ago, the federal Minister for Tourism expressed some concern about the 50% rule which requires Qantas to gain 50% of passengers travelling into and out of the country. I would support the relinquishment of that 50:50 arrangement, which would certainly enable more passengers to be flown in and out of the Territory so that we can exploit our promotion of tourism and, we hope, a new terminal building to be built in the very near future.

In summary, deregulation will not lead immediately to cheaper air fares unless some no-frills airlines develop over the next 3 years. I hope that there will be no adverse effect on air fares. There is potential, should the federal government act appropriately, to allow domestic pick-up by Qantas and to adjust the 50:50 arrangement so that we can achieve additional international tourist numbers in the Northern Territory.

Roadside Inn Review Report

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

I refer him to a question I asked him on 17 September 1987 regarding the Roadside Inn Review. He advised in response that, within 30 days, he would submit the report to Cabinet and immediately thereafter the report would be made a public document which he would be more than happy to circulate far and wide. I ask him to advise this House on the truth or otherwise of stories that this report has been given selective distribution and, regardless of his answer to that question, will he allow us mere mortals to see this report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that I would give the member for Stuart status as a mere mortal but, for his advice, the Roadside Inn Review Report is still not before Cabinet and will come there in due course. Particular details relevant to individual operators have been forwarded to the operators for comment. Most of the recommendations in the report have already been acted upon and are in train. I would hope that, before the end of the year, I will be in a position to make the document public. I really do not have any objections at all to giving the member for Stuart an advance copy. The only

thing I would ask is that he respect the confidentiality of certain parts of it that deal with facts relevant to particular operators. I am sure those operators would not be prepared to have some of the comments publicised far and wide and I think they should be given the opportunity to answer the relevant recommendations contained within the report.

Budget Directions and Information

Mr HARRIS to TREASURER

Yesterday's editorial in the NT News was rather critical of the Northern Territory government's direction with the budget. Comment was made about taxpayers not being allowed to know what is happening with their money and also that the budget has been hijacked by the public service. What is the true position regarding the direction of the budget, and what avenues are available to inform the public of what is happening with their money?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Port Darwin for his question. Indeed, it was interesting to read yesterday's editorial and the comments. The rounding out of the figures used was very interesting. The cost of running the public service is a favourite hobbyhorse of many journalists. \$500m was the figure used for the salaries of public servants. Of course, the figure is around \$450m, but that was not rounded down to \$400m; it had to be rounded up to \$500m.

I would like to cover that issue in rather more detail. There really have been meaningful cuts in the past 3 years to staff numbers in the public service. The maximum staffing allocation in 1986-87 was 15 700 and we are now funding just over 15 000 public servants. Significant inroads have been made into the reduction of the number of public servants employed in the Northern Territory. The quarterly expenditure figures are now available and give considerable detail. I have heard members on both sides of this House doubt the authenticity of some of the matters mentioned in the column on the back page of the Sunday newspaper: the Bushranger column. From time to time, some members have expressed their concern about the authenticity of those particular items. I for one am a convert to some of the items now, in particular where Bushranger suggested that he had a copy of the quarterly statements when he was preparing his article. I do not have the actual item here, but that is interesting. As it became a public document and was gazetted on the Friday, I guess he did have a copy and therefore we should not doubt the authentic nature of some of the comments in the future.

The quarterly statements provide considerable information about the budget and the member for Port Darwin can gain considerable insight into the budget from those figures. It is true that capital works have been reduced this year. I mentioned that in my budget speech. Indeed, we will be dealing with the Appropriation Bill today and I will be speaking in reply to the second-reading debate immediately after question time. I will be drawing attention to the contributions made in this Assembly about the capital works program. There is nothing new in that. We have said that we have had a scaling down of capital works programs in the Northern Territory. The largest single component was the completion of the Channel Island Power Station which has resulted in the capital works' allocation being \$70m lower in 1987-88 than in 1986-87. Other major cuts to capital works have been possible because of progress that we have made in previous years, in particular in relation to roads and housing, the 2 areas which suffered the most severe cutbacks in the last budget.

There was a cut of \$17m in roads funding and some of that was due to cuts in federal funding. The housing allocation was down some \$6m. Members would be aware that we have reduced our housing program from 600 houses down to fewer than 200 houses in this budget. The allocation for the safe anchorage is down \$5m. There were reductions in allocations for many capital works. Special regard had been paid to the effect of cuts on small contractors, especially in the Darwin region. There was a \$3m provision in the budget for small, labour-intensive projects. We also intend to upgrade some 1474 houses in order to inject work back into the community. There were also significant cuts in relation to repairs and maintenance.

Mr Speaker, much more information will become available today during the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill. The quarterly statements became available to the general public last Friday in the gazette. As I will indicate in my reply to the debate, the budget is working. In the first 3 months of this financial year, the government's direction has been maintained and we are developing a truly meaningful economy in the Northern Territory that is being led by private investors rather than the government, which has led the economy in previous years.

Land Application in Pine Creek

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to comments by the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services and resolutions from the Pine Creek Branch of the Country Liberal Party saying that he should step down from the consideration of decisions with respect to his uncle Jeff's application for the block in Pine Creek, on the corner of Kakadu Highway and Stuart Highway. Will the minister in fact step down?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the opportunity to clarify the situation so it can be put into perspective. There appears to have been much ranting and raving by various people as to the status of the application. Quite simply, the application came before Cabinet in a summary document that indicates briefly all the applications made for land, be it by the Darwin City Council, the Alice Springs Council, this department or that department. That is the status of the application. The concern that has been expressed as to my involvement is possibly a little premature. I doubt whether anything will sit on my desk as Minister for Lands and Housing relevant to this development application for some 6 or 7 months. It will take that long for all the issues to be resolved.

What I will say is that I am prepared to look at the matter in a positive way. It is not very often that we are presented with developmental proposals in the Territory from people who are prepared to spend money. I would rather see how we can address the genuine concerns of the people of Pine Creek and also ensure that the development is not lost to the Territory. Certainly, I think that is very possible. I would welcome any further discussions with members of the CLP in Pine Creek, the local government authority and anybody else who would like to put a proposition before me.

As for the question from the member for MacDonnell, I certainly have no intention of standing aside in this matter. This morning, I advised the Chief Minister that I would ensure that any decisions relating to the matter would be taken to Cabinet so that Cabinet as a whole could be properly informed and make the decision. I trust that keeps the member for MacDonnell happy.

Jawoyn Land Claim

Mr REED to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he advise the Assembly of the results of his visit to Katherine last Friday to discuss the Jawoyn land claim, particularly in light of weekend press reports on the matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to be able to advise that I went to Katherine last Friday and took the opportunity to speak to a wide cross-section of the community there. The object of my visit was, firstly, to initiate dialogue with the Jawoyn Association and the Jawoyn community on a number of very significant issues that are vitally important to the Northern Territory and to have those matters resolved in the interests of the Territory. Secondly, I wished to gauge the opinion of the people of the Katherine region, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. In that respect, I must say that the meeting was particularly successful. During the course of the day, I met with Mr Werner Sarny, the major tour operator within the Katherine Gorge National Park. I met with regional heads of Northern Territory government departments. I met with the Jawoyn Association and with representatives of the Katherine Town Council, the Master Builder's Association, the Confederation of Industry and Commerce and the Tourist Promotion Association. I met also with the Katherine Gorge Action Committee and, at a public meeting late in the afternoon, I met with interested members of the public in the Katherine area.

Mr Speaker, there was some comment in the media over the weekend about my being kept waiting and that somehow that was a gross humiliation of the Northern Territory government. I must advise honourable members that the Jawoyn Association itself advised us last Thursday that, prior to the meeting commencing, there would probably be a delay as the people came together as they wished to sort out the procedures for that day for what was a general meeting of the Jawoyn Association. We understood that and, in fact, we advised the media of that fact prior to proceeding to Katherine. Whilst there was a delay, it was not an unexpected or an unforeseen delay, and it was not an undue delay. In fact, I allocated a period from 10 am until 12.30 pm of that morning for the discussions and they were successfully concluded prior to that time.

I am sure honourable members will be pleased and interested to know that the Jawoyn Association has nominated a negotiating group of 9 representatives of the association who will be advised by 3 members of the Northern Land Council. The objective of that group is to meet with the Northern Territory government to seek to resolve the issues arising from the Aboriginal Land Commissioner's recommendations which deal with such matters as the future of the Katherine Gorge National Park. On the agenda, equally, is the issue of land tenure over that particular park. It will deal also with issues of detriment, particularly as that relates to access to a suitable water supply to meet the needs of the Katherine region.

I place on record again the fact that the Jawoyn Association has consistently maintained the viewpoint and given undertakings that it will ensure that there will be access to water and has said that the Katherine Gorge National Park will be maintained as a national park. Public statements were made by representatives that it would be operated in the same manner that it is now. Quite obviously, however, the hows and whens and wherefores of that need to be resolved. That can be done and it is our intention to ensure

that they are resolved properly and satisfactorily in the interests of the entire community during the course of those discussions with the Jawoyn Association.

I will be meeting the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at the earliest opportunity and, again, I will be putting to him that there should be an opportunity for us to resolve these matters prior to the grant of any land. The statement I made in the Assembly last week is still the position of the Northern Territory government and I can advise honourable members that our position with respect to that was specifically referred to the Jawoyn Association during our discussions.

I might add also, in case there is any misunderstanding, that at all meetings with the various sectors of the community there was an acceptance of and support for the course of action that I have recommended and am adopting. That came in the course of those debates from all sections of the community, and I include in that the Katherine Gorge Action Group, the business community and the representatives of the public. There has been widespread support for the approach being adopted by our government in trying to resolve this, and I welcome the positive approach adopted by the Katherine community and particularly I thank the member for Katherine for his positive contribution in this exercise. I know he will continue to play an active role to see this matter satisfactorily resolved in the interests of all Territorians.

Administrator of the Northern Territory

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to the determination that the Prime Minister made some 18 months ago in that the renewal of the Administrator's commission would terminate in June next year and would not be reviewed. Has the Chief Minister commenced discussions with the Commonwealth government on whom the Administrator's replacement might be, and would he be prepared to give Territorians an undertaking that a true Territorian will be put forward as the Territory's nomination for the next Administrator?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for that question and I would like to make a couple of points in responding. Firstly, we have been making representations to the federal government and we intend to make further representations in the near future, specifically to the Prime Minister. It is our view that there should be no replacement of the Administrator, particularly during the bicentennial year. My first submission to the Prime Minister will be to seek that the federal government review its decision, made late in 1985 or early in 1986, a decision which the Northern Territory government and the member for Barkly opposed strongly. It was a pre-emptive decision, taken without consultation with the Northern Territory government. Mr Speaker, I will be seeking an extension of the current Administrator's term. Unfortunately, because this is not a state, we do not have the right to make recommendations directly to the Crown. If this government's reasonable request is refused, I can assure the honourable member that we will be recommending that a Territorian should be nominated as the next Administrator of the Northern Territory.

NT News Editorial on Northern Territory Public Service

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

I refer him to yesterday's editorial in the NT News, headed 'NTPS Feeds Itself', which stated: 'This financial year, the Northern Territory Public Service wage bill for the first time will exceed \$500m. Add to that the cost of office space, stationery, electricity, the vast car fleet and the rest. Add then the interest on borrowings, the Territory's fastest rising budget item, and it is no exaggeration to say the administration of the Territory government is consuming about 60% of total outlays'. Can the minister comment on the accuracy of that part of the editorial?

Mr Ede: The question has already been asked.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question has not been asked. The question asked by the member for Casuarina is quite different from the question that was asked of the Treasurer. It relates to whether the public service is unproductive and whether it consumes an enormous proportion of our budget. As the Treasurer indicated, the figures in the NT News were wrong. This year, the Northern Territory Public Service will cost about \$50m less than the \$500m quoted.

I would like to refer directly to some comments in the editorial concerning the budget of the Department of Labour and Administrative Services. The \$7m expenditure in the first 3 months of the financial year has not been unproductive. Most of it - \$4.425m in fact - has been spent on the rental of office accommodation. This expenditure goes back into the community because the majority of our space is leased from private developers who themselves employ people, including cleaners and so forth. Money is also expended on electricity, security, grounds maintenance and legal costs, none of which are unproductive. Private developers employ cleaners, ground maintenance staff and, dare I say, lawyers.

The editorial infers that our public service is unproductive and is growing more quickly than it should. In fact, public service numbers have been maintained at a very reasonable figure over a number of years. In 1979, 13 100 persons were employed in the public service. That was the figure in the year following self-government and it has since grown by 16% to 15 200. In that same period, the total labour force in the Northern Territory has grown by 47%, from a base of 51 300 to 75 400 and the Northern Territory residential population has grown by 34% from a base of 114 000 to 153 800. The increase in public service numbers is quite modest in comparison. The approved figure for this year is 15 038, which represents a reduction of 500 in the last 12 months. Taking into account all the activities of the Northern Territory government during the last few years, there has been a very insignificant growth in public service numbers.

The number of public servants was 13 100 in 1979, 14 100 in 1980, 14 300 in 1981, 14 100 in 1982, 14 600 in 1983, 15 000 in 1984, 15 400 in 1985 and 15 500 in 1986. That growth has not occurred primarily in administration. Because the Territory is growing, we have to employ more teachers, more health professionals, including nurses, and more police. Those numbers have to increase with the population. The growth in the public service has been insignificant compared with the 47% increase in population.

As far as I am aware, the editorial's figures are reasonably correct. Certainly, the figure for the Department of Labour and Administrative Services is correct.

Mr Hatton: The figure for the Chief Minister's Department is not. It is more than our entire budget.

Mr McCARTHY: I did not check the figures for the Department of the Chief Minister but those for my Department of Labour and Administrative Services are correct. We have spent \$4.425m on rentals for office space, with the remaining \$2.575m being spent on other labour and administrative costs. I do not think that is outrageous. The public service of 15 000 people is working extremely hard. We have kept the numbers down and we are getting very good value for money from our public service. It is hardly a problem here compared with other states and the federal government whose public services are growing at an enormous rate. I think that that particular editorial ought to end up in the wastepaper basket because it is totally unresearched.

Stormwater Drains in Larapinta Valley Subdivision

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

At present, due to the lack of community facilities in the Larapinta area in Alice Springs, young children are using stormwater drains to play in and there are reports of young children walking some 200 m up these pipes. At this time of year, Alice Springs can be subject to sudden heavy rainfall and flash flooding. What action is the government taking to provide stormwater drain covers in the Larapinta Valley subdivision?

Mr Bell: The question is why they were not put there in the subdivision, Eric. The government ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for MacDonnell can wait for the reply.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think that is a most reasonable question from the member for Araluen and it is very similar to one raised by the member for Jingili recently in respect of action at Casuarina. In fact, the difficulty in finding a workable solution at Casuarina was that there were a number of entry points along the drain itself which could have led to an even more dangerous situation if gratings had been provided across the ends of the main drain.

The whole question of responsibility for drains in the Northern Territory is still to be resolved. In this particular instance, we are talking about a drain that may expose local children to some danger. As there are no additional entry points along the length of that particular drain, I have written to the department seeking its cooperation. At this stage, although the department had already offered to hand the drains over to the local government in Alice Springs, in this case the department will install gratings. This should ensure a safer environment for the children in the honourable member's electorate. I am sure that he will be delighted to hear that news and that the children in the electorate will be able to play more safely.

Alice Springs Water Supply

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I understand that contracts have not been let in time for new water bores to be drilled and commissioned in the Mereenie field to maintain an adequate water supply for an expanding Alice Springs this summer. Will he take the action necessary to ensure that Alice Springs has a water supply secured for the high demand summer period?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure which bore field the honourable member is referring to.

Mr Collins: It is the Mereenie Basin outside Alice Springs.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will take that question on notice and provide the honourable member with more detail. Can I tell the honourable ...

Mr Collins: The bores were in the budget.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will take that question on notice and supply the honourable member with a more detailed answer during the course of these sittings.

Land Application in Pine Creek

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

I refer him to the Minister for Lands and Housing's previous answer that he would not step down from decisions about the block in Pine Creek. I also refer him to the Westminster tradition of collective Cabinet responsibility as summed up by Pettifer in his comment that 'it is required by convention that all ministers must be prepared to accept collective responsibility for, and defend publicly, the policies and actions of the government or else resign'. Will he accept the decision of the Minister for Lands and Housing not to step down or will he resign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think that is a very unusual question. In actual fact, of course, I will accept the decision of the Minister for Lands and Housing. That is his decision. It is his right to make that decision. I said that I would bring to the Minister for Lands and Housing the proposal from a meeting held at Pine Creek last Sunday. It was a much wider meeting than a meeting of the local CLP. Other people from the town attended that meeting. It was more a public meeting. Resolutions were passed at that meeting and I said that I would bring them to the minister, and I pointed out to those people on that day that this was the prerogative of the Minister for Lands and Housing. I think that his agreement to take this application to Cabinet for decision is the right one.

Hansard Staff

Mr SMITH to SPEAKER

Can you confirm, Mr Speaker, that Hansard staff worked through the night until 4 o'clock this morning?

ANSWER

I am advised by the Clerk that that is correct. They worked until 4 o'clock this morning.

Bradshaw Terrace Bus Bays

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I heard this morning that, because of the Transport Workers' Union, a decision has now been taken by the Darwin City Council to remove all the bus bays along Bradshaw Terrace. Is that information true?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been advised this morning that a council meeting last night decided to remove the final 3 bays from Bradshaw Terrace. It is no wonder that one becomes frustrated in these matters. It is bad enough that the council itself is prepared to act without appropriate technical advice but we also have the Transport Workers Union, which cannot even take the advice of its own members, acting as traffic engineers. That is apparent from the northern suburbs rag that the member for MacDonnell is holding up. The position taken by the Transport Workers' Union is certainly one of the options that is being discussed by the consultants in a constructive and positive way, but it has a number of negative features. I find it absolutely astounding that the committee of the council should take the advice of Mr Hearn of the Transport Workers' Union who is putting himself up as some sort of traffic expert.

Mr Dondas: I wonder what role Jamie Robertson has in this?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I do not really know what role Alderman Robertson has played in this matter but one cannot help but be a little suspicious. I mentioned that the union was working without the advice and support of its own members because, at a recent visit to Casuarina interchange, I was told by supervisors and the bus drivers themselves that the situation as it had recently stood resulted in less traffic congestion and a safer environment, with the exception of one point which I will come to in a minute. It was the opinion of the drivers themselves that our approach was the correct one: to undertake a deliberative study on the effects and impact of the possible options for overcoming the Bradshaw Terrace problem. In addition to the moves made by the council, what was required was simply to install a single, proper crossing.

What did the council do? It has gone off half-cocked again, without any appropriate technical advice, I would suggest, and installed a crossing that is creating a dangerous situation because buses are being backed across Linton Street. And what has the council done now? On this so-called magical advice from the Transport Workers Union, it has removed those 3 stops. Passengers - school children, like those sitting in the gallery this morning, pensioners, ladies with babies, ladies heavily laden with shopping - have to cross

Linton Street, without the facility of a pedestrian crossing now, in order to catch a bus at the interchange. Who will take responsibility for that, Mr Speaker? I would suggest that residents of the northern suburbs, and those who use Casuarina Shopping Centre, ought to be taking their concerns direct to the council aldermen, and I would be pleased to provide them with some telephone numbers so they can do so effectively.

Mr Speaker, this is another clear example of people acting irresponsibly and without proper advice. I can see that the Transport Workers Union has set itself up as some sort of expert and it ought to be condemned for its interference in a matter that is none of its business and condemned for not even listening to the advice of its own members.

Bradshaw Terrace Bus Bays

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In relation to the previous question and the answer given by him, and the savage calumnies heaped on the Transport Workers Union, is he able to confirm that, in January this year, his department received this constructive proposal about the safety problems and the problem of protection from the elements for patrons of the Darwin Bus Service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am able to confirm that the department received that proposal along with 4 or 5 others. For nearly 12 months, the Department of Transport and Works has been trying to obtain the cooperation of the city council in completing a proper study and assessment. The preliminary assessment which the member opposite waves around has been put forward as a panacea to all the problems. It contains some pitfalls. It does not take much to see the difficulties of making major changes in Trower Road and Linton Street and in providing safety measures for people travelling to and from Monterey House. Those are factors that need to be taken into consideration before one runs off half-cocked.

Despite the fact that the council is responsible for that whole area, the Department of Transport and Works was prepared to share the cost of a proper study and provide technical input. That was not good enough for the city council. What did the Department of Transport and Works do? It took it upon itself to accept total responsibility, in a financial and technical sense, for examining this matter which is extremely important to pedestrians and shoppers in the northern suburbs. Its position can only be seen as one of total responsibility. I should add that Lend Lease also made a financial contribution. The Department of Transport and Works has nothing to be ashamed of in relation to its efforts.

Kulgera Roadhouse

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question comes as a response to persistent rumours I have heard during the last couple of months and I think it is time they were put to rest. Does he have a financial interest in the Kulgera Roadhouse?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very happy to answer the question from the member for Sadadeen. The rumour campaign has been rather interesting and it appears that Uncle Jeff is growing in stature each day. As I understand it, his was one of 3 or 4 competing interests and that, together with his partner Barry Browse, he purchased the Kulgera Roadhouse, which was on the market in the normal way. At various times, I have been touted as a director, a silent partner and a financial backer. Indeed, all sorts of interesting roles have been attributed to me. I can certainly advise honourable members that I have no financial interest nor any intended financial interest in that roadhouse. I am not a financial backer, nor are any of my family companies or my family itself financially involved in any way, shape or form with the Kulgera Roadhouse.

The new owners of the roadhouse have embarked upon a \$500 000 stage 1 development plan. It is anticipated that total works to take place at Kulgera over the next 2 years will be worth \$1.5m. Kulgera was our biggest problem in terms of tourists entering the Territory and I would like to commend those 2 entrepreneurial gentlemen for doing such a good job because the comments of tourists and people who are in a position to compare the present facility with the previous one indicate that highly commendable progress has been made. I wish those 2 gentlemen every success in their future ventures.

Marine Industrial Chemical Complex

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Rumours continue to circulate about the construction of a marine industrial chemical complex on the foreshore of Frances Bay. Is he aware of these rumours and will he confirm that there is no proposal for the construction of a marine industrial chemical complex on the foreshore of Frances Bay?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Fannie Bay has made representation in this regard also. The suggestion of a chemical plant at Frances Bay is absolute rumour which, certainly to my knowledge, is not based on any proposal which has been put forward. What is required there are some additional facilities to provide support to the safe mooring basin. I am delighted that support from local industries and businesses has complemented that facility. There are some additional requirements that will evolve as a result of fishing companies relocating their bases to Darwin. A 5 ha area adjacent to the fishing mooring basin is settling and, once it has settled sufficiently to allow the provision of services and roads, we will be able to consider the provision of further support infrastructure for the fishing industry. It is needed, not only for the fishing industry but for pleasure craft as well. The developments that we will see in that port area will be quite commendable. As I mentioned, there is no foundation at all in any rumour relating to any chemical plant or any other sort of facility.

Drug Abuse Education Program

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

I understand that he has recently given approval for the first police officer in the school-based community policing program to travel to the United States to take part in a drug education training program. What are the

details of this visit and the benefits which are expected to flow to the Territory from it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Jingili for this question which shows, once again, that he has a finger on the pulse of his own electorate because the officer concerned, First Class Constable Scott Mitchell, is one of his constituents as well as being a constable based at Casuarina Secondary College. For some time now, the police have been looking at the United States Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program which attempts to give school children the confidence to resist the temptation to experiment with illicit hard drugs and soft drugs like alcohol and tobacco. The DARE program gives students accurate information about drugs, teaches them decision-making skills and shows them how to resist peer pressure to take drugs. It is purely a preventive program aimed at kids who have not experienced drugs.

I understand that the preliminary evaluation of the DARE program by the NT police is encouraging and there is a possibility that it will be incorporated in the very successful school-based constable program which was pioneered in the Northern Territory. I am sure honourable members opposite will take note of this advantage of the school-based constable program, and some of the roles officers are performing, following the debate yesterday. The Los Angeles Police Department has invited the NT Police Force to send a representative to undergo training in the DARE program. The federal government, the NT Department of Health and Community Services and the Police Department are covering the cost of sending a police officer to Los Angeles to be trained in the program next month as part of Australia's national drug offensive.

First Class Constable Mitchell was selected because, as the member for Jingili correctly stated, he was the first Northern Territory police officer to take part in the police-in-schools program. Additionally, it is considered that he has the experience to appraise the DARE program thoroughly and to assess its suitability for introduction into the Northern Territory.

My government is strongly committed to the fight against drug abuse. There is no greater tragedy for a family than to have one of its members become addicted to alcohol or hard drugs. Drug abuse adds seriously to crime, the cost of policing and the cost of providing health care. Also, it has an immense and immeasurable cost in terms of human suffering. The tragedy is magnified when, so often, it destroys the lives of young people. Anything that we as a government can do to reduce this burden should be welcomed by all the community. I believe our comparatively minor commitment to sending First Class Constable Mitchell to Los Angeles will prove to be a valuable investment in the fight against drugs in the Territory, and I look forward to reading his report when he returns to Darwin.

Air North Settlement

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In the September sittings, he said a proposition had been put to the government by Air North in relation to settlement of any outstanding legal action over the aerial medical contract. I asked the question last week. Has the government reached an agreement with Air North over the settlement of outstanding legal action in respect of the aerial medical contract and does any settlement involve the government in payment of legal expenses or other monies to Air North?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware whether any settlement has been reached at this stage but I will have that confirmed.

Mr Smith: That is what you said at the last sittings.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, during the last sittings I said that, at that stage, no settlement had been reached. I have been asked a question today. It is not a matter which directly involves me in my ministerial role. It is a matter that has been referred to the Attorney-General for advice, and I am not even sure that the matter has been resolved at this stage.

Mr Smith: Do you want me to ask the Attorney-General?

Mr HATTON: I will check with the Attorney-General and advise the Leader of the Opposition during the course of these sittings.

Transport Link to Olgas

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he able to provide any comparisons of cost and effectiveness between a monorail system, as proposed this morning on the radio by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, and a road service to the Olgas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, quite obviously the member for Katherine, with his background in conservation matters, is very sensitive to the proposal that has been put forward, unlike the member for MacDonnell who, last night, had a bit of a lash at my response when he suggested that the federal government was not being the least bit serious. If the federal government was not being serious, I will refer him to Hansard of yesterday. Secondly, I will refer him to this morning's radio broadcast by one Professor Ovington. As a man in charge of a public service establishment, one can only take it that he means what he says. He was seriously advocating the monorail as the environmental solution.

Mr Bell: What is wrong with it environmentally?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, let me tell the honourable member what is wrong with it environmentally. Professor Ovington was advocating a 1-metre high monorail that would run along between the sand dunes.

Mr Bell: Yes.

Mr FINCH: 'Yes' says the member for MacDonnell. It must be some time since he visited that area. What has to be appreciated is that, in general terms, the sand dunes between Yulara and the Olgas run in the opposite direction. One would have to snake backwards and forwards between lines of sand dunes for some hundreds of kilometres before reaching the Olgas. The member for MacDonnell is treating this lightly. It is a serious matter when the head of the ANPWS and the honourable member, who is on the Uluru Board of Management, can treat the environmental aspects with such light-heartedness.

Let me tell him about the environmental aspects. As a consulting engineer, I had the pleasure to visit that area before there were any roadworks in the Yulara area. To construct a monorail would impose on the

environment the construction of the same width for the total length of the monorail, not just a little blob where you put down the column. The impracticality of Professor Ovington and his Minister for Tourism leave me absolutely astounded.

The second aspect of a monorail is that it can only work on a circuit or loop system. We are not talking about 1 run out to the Olgas; we are talking about 2.

Mr Bell: Why?

Mr FINCH: The honourable member asks why. To go backwards and forwards takes an hour each way. Given the number of tourists required to make this proposition viable, we would need a monorail of 2 km or 3 km. The visual impact on the environment of this long snake carrying 3000 or 4000 passengers at a time is almost beyond belief.

Aside from the environmental problems that Professor Ovington has overlooked, we have an extremely dangerous situation when people like the Minister for Tourism and Professor Ovington seriously advocate such things inside the Northern Territory and we have no say. The irresponsibility of such a project, if it stood any chance of success without input from the Northern Territory population, is very clear.

Let us come back to the financial and technical feasibility. If you were moving towards this futuristic and supposedly environmentally satisfactory solution, you would run the monorail out to Ayers Rock as well as the Olgas. Thus, you would be talking about at least 100 km at a current cost of at least \$4m a kilometre, not including the cost of the trains themselves. Even if you could repeat capital city prices in this remote area, you would be talking about \$400m-plus for a start.

All we are asking for is a safe and environmentally acceptable road. All the roads there have been constructed to take particular cognisance of the environment. There is already a prohibition on 4-wheel-drives leaving the main roads. We are talking about \$4 or \$6m. The interest component on \$500m is \$60m or \$70m per annum and \$60m or \$70m would not only provide that road but also a free helicopter service so that every tourist could land on the Rock as well. That does not include the running costs.

What we are talking about with the monorail is electricity. Maybe the member for MacDonnell is proposing that we should have a solar monorail.

Mr Bell: I hadn't thought of that. How much will that cost, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, all we want is a simple, bitumen road that will reduce the extremely high risk to travellers, tourists and the honourable member's constituents alike, and that will minimise the damage to vehicles that is occurring daily at a cost of thousands of dollars. All we are asking for is a bit of cooperation in approving an alignment. There is no great deal about this. The honourable member knows that, for the last 3 or 4 years at least, he has sat on his hands and has not provided constructive support for having that alignment accepted. Apparently, we do not need to worry about the funding if a \$500m project is being contemplated. This whole proposal is straight out of Disneyland or a Flash Gordon comic. The honourable member's federal colleagues ought to throw away their comic books and we can get back to some realistic jobs.

Deregulation of Aviation Industry

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

When will the Northern Territory government follow the lead of the federal government and deregulate the Northern Territory civil aviation industry to the extent of removing the requirements for a licence to fly over a designated RPT route?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is quite a positive question. I am pleased to say that aviation in the Northern Territory has advanced and is continuing to advance. However, we need to be a little practical and realistic about it. We put out to public tender a proposed contract for renewal of the regional airline services. We have not quite reached the stage of being able to guarantee an open, deregulated marketplace. The honourable member has to think about his own constituents and the people of Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Mr Leo: We have been carrying Katherine and Tennant Creek for 5 years.

Mr FINCH: I will answer the honourable member's interjection in a moment. Unfortunately, at this stage, to ensure that these people have a minimum level of service we still need to provide some guarantees. The only way to do that is through free competition on a single contract system which gives exclusivity to the Alice Springs to Yulara run.

Mr Ede: It is all very well to criticise the federal government, but you do exactly what you accuse it of doing.

Mr FINCH: The honourable member has to be a bit realistic about these things.

To reinforce a point, there is a need to tie the whole Territory regional package up as one because the services to Gove and Groote Eylandt do not prop up the rest of the Northern Territory air services. In fact, what does prop it up is the very lucrative Alice Springs to Yulara run which is extremely heavily loaded. Quite clearly, this government has accepted a responsible approach by acknowledging that, to maintain a minimum service to his constituents and those down the Stuart Highway, the lighter-loaded runs, we have to tie the whole thing up in one package at this stage. There is no inconsistency. We are developing and there will come a time - and it will not be a hell of a long way away - when we will be able to deregulate the regional service. However, at the moment, it would be irresponsible of me and of this government to do other than ensure an adequate service to the honourable member's constituents and others in the rest of the remote areas of the Territory.

Crocodile Meat for Restaurants

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

My question refers to the croctail party held last month at the Sheraton Hotel which I had the pleasure of attending. Has he had any advice on the results of the launch of crocodile meat as a gourmet dish at that party, and is he aware of concerns regarding the cost of that product to restaurants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the launch of crocodile meat as a gourmet dish went down very well. During the period since the launch, restaurants have seemingly sorted out their attitudes and strategies towards this new product on the market. I am aware that there is some criticism of the price being asked by the producers of crocodile meat and one large hotel, for example, has decided not to enter into the crocodile 'stakes', as it were, solely on the basis that it believes the price is far too high and, of course, that is that hotel's choice in a free market. Other consumers and retailers of the crocodile meat have certainly passed the comment that the price seems pretty high but, just the same, they are purchasing the product. As far as I am aware, most local restaurants and, indeed, interstate buyers have found that there is a market niche for top-priced crocodile dishes. An example of this is another local hotel which has placed repeated orders for crocodile meat, its main form of sale being as a small side dish of smoked crocodile.

Overall, the distributors of crocodile meat have reported reasonable levels of sales and high levels of interstate inquiries due to extensive southern media coverage. In fact, currently, they are distributing all the product as fast as they receive it. I am advised that 100 kg was consigned to Adelaide recently and it seems that the reported high price is not so high as to deter people from purchasing the product.

I was hoping that demand for crocodile meat would be so high in the Territory that we would not be exporting any outside our borders and it would be one of those specialities that people virtually had to come to the Territory to experience, with the exception, of course, of a farm in Queensland which is also producing some meat. However, that is not to be the case. Crocodile meat is going interstate, obviously to people who are prepared to pay the price.

Personally, I think that the launch of crocodile as a gourmet dish was a huge success. It really did launch the crocodile industry in the Northern Territory on a fully commercial scale. Honourable members are aware that the crocodile farms have spent a long time reaching this stage, at considerable expense to themselves as they tried to make ends meet whilst this government and others were attempting to have crocodiles appropriately placed on the international CITES lists so that captivity-bred animals could be exploited. Most members think of the tourist crocodile farm near Darwin when they think of the crocodile industry. Certainly, that farm has been able to obtain an income over the past few years from tourism, and a very good show is put on there as well. However, I remind honourable members that there are 2 other large crocodile farms in the Top End which are not tourist ventures as well. They have had to bear the costs of their industry to date and are now being able to reap some rewards through the sale of skins and crocodile flesh.

Amendments to Planning Act

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Will he give consideration to introducing amendments to the Planning Act so that third party appeals can be made to the Appeals Committee and so that the composition of the Appeals Committee will be investigated to do away with the majority numbers of developers and give majority decision to local area representatives?

ANSWER

No.

Abolition of First Class Air Fares for Government Travel

Mr EDE to TREASURER

I remind him of an economic statement delivered to this House on 11 June 1987 when he said that first-class air fares for all intra-Territory travel funded directly or indirectly by the government would be abolished. The member for MacDonnell and myself immediately entered into the spirit and the practice of using economy class air fares to Alice Springs and back. We have noticed increasing numbers of members opposite travelling first class. As a result, we realised that this decision must have been reversed at some stage and that we had not been advised. When was that decision reversed and, if it has not been, why is the decision relating to economy class travel not being honoured?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask that that question be redirected to the Chief Minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Does the honourable Chief Minister wish the question to be put again?

Mr HATTON: No, Mr Speaker. What the honourable member says is correct. In the economic statement, that was the position proposed. During the course of the budget deliberations and discussions during the public service dispute, that policy was slightly modified to the extent that all travel within Australia for government purposes is economy class, except in respect to departmental heads and ministers and 1 person travelling with a minister.

METAL Program

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has money been allocated to extend the METAL program to Alice Springs and, if so, when will it be made available?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no appropriation has been made for extending the program to Alice Springs, although the matter is being assessed by government.

As the honourable member is aware, the METAL program has been extremely successful in Darwin where it has been operating for a few years. The reason for its success is the broad, community participation that is occurring. Intending motorcyclists undergo an intensive program to obtain the different types of licence in a fairly protected environment. Not only does the program result in better trained motorcyclists but, in some cases, it convinces young or not-so-young people that they may not be suited to riding a motorcycle. In some cases, people abandon their objective of obtaining a motorcycle licence, which is good in itself.

It has been recognised in Australia that such programs can result in a reduction of up to 50% in serious motorcycle accidents. As we are all aware, motorcyclists are extremely exposed on our roads. Recently, there have been

2 very sad fatalities in Alice Springs and I imagine they have partly motivated the member to ask this question. There has been increased interest in Alice Springs in having a METAL program started there but we need to assess the costs. There is no doubt about the value to participants and I will be raising the matter with my colleagues to see whether it is possible to fund the extension of the project to Alice Springs.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Abolition of First Class Air Fares for Government Travel

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to clarify my earlier answer and provide additional details. Departmental heads are certainly entitled to first-class travel as are the Administrator, all members of the Legislative Assembly, judges and those persons who had a pre-existing contract which specifically entitled them to first-class travel. Apart from those instances, travel within Australia is economy class.

Funding for Home Loan Video Scheme

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has he received any response to his request of the federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training that funding be continued for the home loan video scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am still waiting for his response but, for the benefit of members opposite, I will point out that members of the federal government have already commented in both the press and the Senate. The loan scheme is one which provides video recorders and television monitors to all School of the Air families living in remote areas of Australia, including the Northern Territory. Through the use of this equipment, students in remote areas are able to view specially-prepared educational video programs as part of their lesson material. Both of our Schools of the Air prepare these materials and they have now become an integral part of the School of the Air teaching program. I am very surprised that the member for MacDonnell, being a member for a remote area, has no knowledge of this particular program. It has been running for a number of years and is strongly supported by the ICPA. I am sure that other members for rural electorates are aware of it.

It is important for honourable members to realise that this program provides children in remote areas with an important teaching aid which is taken for granted by children in urban schools.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart really does make some nonsensical statements. I am sure that he would want the public purse to pay for private satellite dishes but I am afraid that many people cannot afford to provide private facilities to pick up satellite pictures. I am also sure that he is aware that there are as yet no commercial television broadcasts anywhere in the Territory because the licence was given out in circumstances about which we had serious reservations. We are now waiting for that service to be provided in the knowledge that it could have been provided instantly by the Territory's existing commercial television organisation. It was another example of the federal government believing that it knows more about these

matters than Territorians. I am sure there are some people in the member for Stuart's electorate who greatly appreciate the education video service. The majority of students who benefit from it come from families which can ill-afford the high cost of providing their own educational video equipment.

I wrote to the federal minister on 16 October and I am still waiting for a reply. I note that, on 21 October, a spokesman for the federal minister was quoted in the *Centralian Advocate* as stating that 'funding for the scheme past the end of this year will not be forthcoming'. Obviously, honourable members opposite do not bother reading about what is occurring in the education area in central Australia or anywhere in the Territory. Last Friday, Senator Tambling attempted to obtain more details about the federal government's commitment to the scheme from Senator Susan Ryan, who represents the Minister for Employment, Education and Training in the Senate. The senator acknowledged the success of the scheme. If honourable members opposite did a little research, they would also recognise the success of the scheme.

Mr Ede: I was on radio about it this morning.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart suddenly has a flashback. He has selective amnesia. I am sick and tired of the cheap efforts he makes to scare people and to promote misinformation in the Territory. People in the Territory are waking up to him and members of the media are starting to become aware of the sort of rubbish that he continues to inflict on Territorians.

Senator Grant Tambling asked a question of the senator representing the minister in the Senate and she acknowledged how successful the scheme had been. However, she went on to say specific purpose funding for the scheme would not continue after 1987. She suggested that the states would now be able to fund the scheme through the general federal government capital grants program. Unfortunately, it appears that this suggestion from Senator Susan Ryan amounts to a sleight of hand. The bottom line is that, in taking away any specific funding in relation to the scheme and saying the states can secure funding under the general program, the federal government is severely jeopardising the funding of the scheme itself. Under this system, funding of the scheme would have to be prepared as a specific project which would then have to be included in all other submissions. Approval would then depend on what funds were available and on the comparable advantages of all the other projects which have been submitted for funding under that program. Most importantly, there is no indication from the federal government that the total level of funding has been increased to allow for the provision of the scheme under the general capital grants program.

Mr Ede: What priority do you give it?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, quite a high priority should be given to a service that provides to children in the outback of the Territory, who do not have access to television, the educational programs that are available to all other Australians. I put a high priority on that. Obviously, the member for Stuart does not, but I do not care because he is not responsible for trying to provide equal opportunities for all Territory students whereas, in an educational sense, I am responsible. I am sure that we all have evidence of the knocking attitude and the complete disregard that he has for anything that relates to Territory students except for promoting his own political advantage. I am getting sick of it and, as I said, so are other Territorians.

It is important that this particular scheme be continued. Under the present scenario, the Territory is unlikely to secure equivalent funding, if any at all, for the continuation of the loans scheme. I have sought support for this matter from my counterparts in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. I have written to the Territory federal members, representatives of both the ALP and the CLP, and to the ICPA. I will certainly pass on details to the member for Stuart although I am pretty sure from his attitude this morning that there will not be any support forthcoming from him. I ask all members of this House to use any influence that they have to ensure that Territory students can obtain access to the same sorts of programs that are the norm for other Australian students. The attitude of the member for Stuart in relation to education matters in remote areas is sickening. His performance is abysmal and that is something that the Leader of the Opposition should look at very seriously.

Vanderlin Drive

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will the future planning for the duplication of Vanderlin Drive from Mueller Road to the McMillans Road roundabout take account of the close proximity of houses in Karama to the road, and will consideration be given to relocating the road away from those houses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to be absolutely blunt about it, any concept of moving the road away from its existing alignment is totally impractical and uneconomic. The pertinent point in the honourable member's question is that there will be a progressive need to duplicate Vanderlin Drive from Lee Point Road through to the roundabout at the Berrimah Police Complex. The forecast for duplication at the Karama end would probably be at least 5 years away. What is proposed in the current budget is to undertake duplication from Lee Point Road to Paterson Street. That is seen as a high priority because of the large amount of traffic that uses that section and the very dangerous situation that occurs, particularly at the Lee Point Road end and the entrance to the Hibiscus Shopping Centre.

At Lee Point Road, there will be a roundabout which not only will be cost effective in itself but, as a solution to that intersection problem, it will lead to a much freer flow of traffic. There is a real problem at the entrance into Hibiscus Shopping Centre and that problem will be alleviated by the duplication which will provide acceleration-deceleration lanes into and out of the shopping centre.

The traffic at the Karama end will increase with people travelling to and from Palmerston and the rural areas and to and from the Trade Development Zone when it employs some 2000 to 3000 people in the not-too-distant future. The traffic will warrant the duplication. Unfortunately, the road alignment was located well before the houses. Hopefully, the people who bought homes there would have recognised that problem before they purchased. The problem is aggravated by the location of the council waste disposal area. I am aware of problems with pieces of paper blowing onto adjoining properties. The solution is not to dig up the existing road section or relocate it further away from the houses. It is more realistic and practical to provide some visual screen, by way of trees or whatever, and for the council to accept its responsibility in ensuring that rubbish does not blow from open trailers etc or, at least, is recovered as quickly as possible.

My information for the honourable member contains a bit of good news and a bit of bad. We will have a duplicated road at some time in the future but, unfortunately, it will not be relocated away from the boundary.

Funding for FORWAARD

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware that the organisation known as FORWAARD has had its funding withdrawn? If so, what is his government doing to provide funding to that organisation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would love to advise the House about the situation with FORWAARD and I will take a couple of minutes to run through it. FORWAARD is an Aboriginal organisation, based in Darwin, which has provided a residential rehabilitation program primarily, but not exclusively, for Aboriginal people. On 30 April 1987, as a result of a change in policy in DAA, and I stress that, a significant element of FORWAARD's funding was cut. DAA had decided, with a stroke-of-a-pen type of attitude I might add, to move from residential rehabilitation programs to preventive education programs - a nice bit of fancy footwork. The management of FORWAARD at the time believed that there was a continued need for a residential rehabilitation program in addition to the proposed preventive education programs. Funding was provided for FORWAARD, by this government, which allowed the group to continue operations until 31 August 1987, and that was after I talked with the committee of that particular organisation to try instil some common sense. This funding was intended primarily to allow for breathing space. FORWAARD needed the chance to develop new programs and to assess its future and the government needed to evaluate and assess where FORWAARD could fit into its overall drug and alcohol education and rehabilitation policy.

Unfortunately, FORWAARD has now apparently lost its principal source of funding - that is, from the federal government which is supposed to be looking after Aboriginal people. The organisation had a period of stability but it has now lost senior staff and officers to such an extent that its future now appears bleak. Aboriginal Hostels have withdrawn funding because the conditions of its funding have not been met. DAA appears likely to withdraw the remaining funding provided for outpatient preventive and education programs. In the circumstances, funding from the Department of Health and Community Services cannot be continued. Funding has been provided for cessation payments to staff.

Mr Speaker, it is important to ask ourselves why this has happened. FORWAARD has been placed constantly in a position where failure is an inevitable outcome. The people who have been involved deserve credit for having carried on for so long. FORWAARD has been asked to produce detailed planned programs, when the skills to do so have been absent; it has been asked to handle large sums of money without financial and administrative skills; it has had funding agencies impose different controls and conditions; and it has been required by funding agencies to follow different paths and to seek different aims. The organisation might be said to have been set up to fail. For instance, DAA's required change of direction in April, from residential rehabilitation to preventive education, was imposed without proper regard to the skills or experience of the management and the staff of the organisation.

What does the future hold, Mr Speaker? The Drug and Alcohol Bureau has been able to obtain the cooperation of DAA and AHL to participate in a review of drug and alcohol services to Aboriginals in the Territory. The Drug and Alcohol Bureau is doing all it can to speed up this particular process. The approach of DAA, which is now more cooperative and positive, should assist the process. All drug and alcohol programs are open to all Territorians. Nevertheless, there are programs specifically provided for Aboriginals with funding from Kalano, the Rockhole Rehabilitation Farm, family and youth workers at Maningrida, a worker among Darwin fringe camps and a substance abuse worker at Docker River.

The Northern Territory government has always taken a responsible attitude to the needs of Aboriginal people. This is yet another classic example of what this so-called ALP federal government is doing to the Northern Territory, and there are people here who stand here, on a daily basis, apologising for that federal government and its actions. It has totally disregarded 25% of the constituency of this Northern Territory in once again withdrawing funds from an area that is vital to the Aboriginal people.

Proposed Emily Lake in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to the proposed Emily Lake in Alice Springs. In the planning for such a lake is it considered that, at times, it would be necessary for water to be pumped into it to prevent it drying up and becoming unusable and, if so, where would the water come from?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently, Cabinet has made a decision which has placed the Department of Lands and Housing in the role of manager and overseeing agent for the development of all the feasibility studies necessary to determine whether the Emily Creek site can be proved up. Necessarily, an environmental impact study will be undertaken. In addition, the Department of Mines and Energy is required to do some drilling. The Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority will be required to clear the site. Part of it is a proposition that has been put before the government and has been a matter for some public discussion by McMahon Constructions. It has involved an overall strategy to develop stage 1 of Undoolya for 1250 lots, incorporating a recreation lake that represented considerable savings to the Northern Territory government. It is certainly something that I can quite proudly stand before honourable members and say that I am pursuing very actively. The report from the Department of Lands and Housing is expected to be finalised and before government prior to June 1988.

One of the aspects of the recreation lake at the Emily Creek site was the possibility, which has been investigated to the costing stage, of incorporating a pumping system and a pipeline from the town basin out to the actual dam site. It is not necessary to make the recreation lake at the Emily Creek site feasible. It was done as an option in part of the presentation to the government, because of the problems that have been experienced with the town basin and the excessive build up of the water level over recent times, as well as salt problems that occur within the existing residential area of Alice Springs. Part of the environmental impact study will be to address the issue of the salt content of that water at various times if, because of low levels in the recreation lake, it is necessary to pump water, but that is not a critical element of the proposal.

Mr Speaker, it has a reasonable way to go but Cabinet has given a very clear indication that, subject to the necessary technical and environmental aspects relating to the Emily Creek site, the government hopes to establish in the future a recreation lake for the residents of Alice Springs.

Air North Settlement

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

My question relates to questions I asked previously concerning the statement by the Chief Minister during the last sittings that a proposition had been put to the government by Air North for settlement of any legal actions outstanding over the aerial medical contract. Has the government reached an agreement with Air North over that question and does this involve the government in payment of legal expenses of Air North or any payments to Air North?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a file did go through my office yesterday regarding this matter. I am pleased to be able to say that the parties involved in the litigation apparently withdrew on the basis that the matter of costs would be settled. At this moment, Air North has been asked through its solicitors to provide details of the costs involved so the normal procedures for assessing costs can be undertaken.

Patents

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In the days when the Commonwealth was responsible for patents, a person seeking patent information could go to the State Reference Library, study the microfiche and take photocopies for the cost of a few dollars. Today, I understand the person has to go to the Patents Advisory Service where he is given the names of patent attorneys. He is told to write to them to seek information. The cost of this is between \$400 to \$1000. This is an impost on people. I ask if the former system could be reintroduced to the Patents Advisory Office.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not familiar with this matter. However, it is interesting that an almost identical question was raised with me by the member for Ludmilla yesterday. I have sought information from the department as to the public accessibility of patent information in the Northern Territory. I see no reason whatsoever why the information should not be as readily available to the public of the Northern Territory as it is to people anywhere else in Australia. I hesitate to say anything more than that at this stage because I do not understand the degree of confidentiality which might need to apply to files of patents. I will obtain this information and write to the honourable member or advise the House at the forthcoming sittings.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Oolloo Station Cattle

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, while I am on my feet I will answer a question asked of me earlier during these sittings by the member for MacDonnell relating to cattle on Oolloo Station. I have received advice from the government's law officers that the matter is before the courts at present and is the subject of a writ by the Rixons to the Northern Territory government, and that I should not speak of this matter in any way in the Assembly.

Deer Farming Project

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he give me up-to-date information on the new deer farming project that I have heard is in the process of commencement in the Adelaide River-Daly River area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, I am not a fount of information to the Assembly this morning. I will endeavour to obtain some information for the honourable member. I heard recently that there were parties interested in farming the Northern Territory deer. I am embarrassed to say that I am not even sure whether it is a native or a feral animal in the Northern Territory. I am told it is a feral animal. Certainly, my department would encourage any farming in the Northern Territory that would lead to a commercial venture of such livestock as would clearly be of benefit to the Northern Territory's economy. However, I will endeavour to find out for the honourable member if plans are firm by any particular party and known by my department and advise her of that information.

Air North

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is it a possibility that part of the settlement with Air North will be the payment of part of Air North's legal expenses incurred in the various challenges over the aerial medical contracts, and can the Attorney-General give an estimate of when this matter may be resolved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly cannot say whether it is part of a settlement or not. I can say that approval has been given for information about the litigation and Air North's costs to be forwarded. That will be assessed and I will then be in a position to advise whether or not approval has been given for payment of those costs under the normal processes of litigation.

Plumbing Inspections in Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Will he appoint a second plumbing inspector in Alice Springs? I point out that building approvals in Alice Springs have been severely limited because of the failure to appoint a second plumbing inspector.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member's information is inaccurate. I have recently had discussions with the Deputy Secretary of Lands and Housing, Southern Region, the Master Builders Association and various other people involved in technical areas in private enterprise. Some concern has been expressed that there are delays due to the large number of applications and some of the large developments taking place in Alice Springs. Internal arrangements are being made within the department to the full satisfaction of the Master Builders Association and others who have made representations to me.

One of the areas of particular concern has been the matter of engineering structural certificates in relation to certain development plans. In the past, it has been necessary, because of the size of developments and the technical expertise involved, to send the plans to Darwin. That has led to delays. Arrangements have now been made for a Darwin-based officer to make regular trips to the southern region to address that issue, expressly to ensure that the process is speeded up.

Reference to Head of Aboriginal Development Unit

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES.

I refer him to last night's debate during which he referred to the head of the Aboriginal Development Unit and stated that my arguments were based on sour grapes. He made allegations that she had, in fact, provided me with information which I used in my contribution to the debate. I ask if he is now prepared to retract those allegations and to apologise to the lady concerned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to answer that question because I made no reference to the head of the Aboriginal Development Unit. In fact, the member for Stuart made that reference in reply to jibes from members on this side of the House. I made no reference to the head of the Aboriginal Development Unit. I point out that the member for Stuart was again trying, as he and his cohorts tend to do, to create division between Aboriginal people and the rest of the Territory population. They have been trying to do this for some time and I am fed up with it. I am sure the member for Arnhem and the member for Arafura are fed up with it as well. All Aboriginal people get sick and tired of the divisions created by members opposite.

Reference to Head of Aboriginal Development Unit

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

I have a supplementary question. I will quote from Hansard to illustrate what we are talking about.

Mr HARRIS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The copy of Hansard he is reading from has been placed on our desks this morning. It has not been viewed by members who spoke yesterday and there is a period of time for corrections to be forwarded.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I refer to the page 76 of the Daily Hansard for Wednesday 28 October and the speech made by the minister.

Mr Hanrahan: Page number?

Mr EDE: Page 76, and we are talking about the division. He is stating that it has not been downgraded. I queried that, by means of interjection:

Mr Ede: It had an E4 before.

Mr McCARTHY: There was no E4 in that role.

Mr Ede: An acting E4.

Mr McCARTHY: There was an acting E4. In fact, that is exactly why the member for Stuart has it in front of him. It has come to him because of sour grapes.

Mr Ede: I have not met the lady.

Mr McCARTHY: It has all come out. I said I could have named the person, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, very obviously the minister was referring to the head of the division and I ask him if he will now withdraw that allegation. As he had stated earlier that he could have named the person, he brought out the allegation that that was the person who gave me the information. I ask him if he will withdraw that allegation.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the inference that we are referring to the same person there is quite ludicrous. In fact, I have a very deep respect for the head of the unit. That particular person is doing a magnificent job, and I am rather dismayed that the member for Stuart would bring out the references that he brought out yesterday and make accusations in this House that really showed the Aboriginal Development Unit and some of the persons in it in a bad light. I do not think that any of them would have wished that to happen yesterday, Mr Speaker. I certainly would not have.

I am very much aware of the difficult times that we are going through in getting that particular part of my portfolio into place, but it is being put into place. It is doing a great job. The head of that unit has my deepest regard, and I expect that she will continue to go on and do wonderful things for that part of my portfolio.

Mr Speaker, as the honourable member for Darwin pointed out, we have not had time to look at yesterday's Hansard. If you will bear with me for just a minute, I will read a short piece here. I presume I can quote from the unrevised issue as it has been done by the other side this morning:

There has been no downgrading in any way, shape or form of the Aboriginal Development Division. It is strong. It is important. It is a unique division and it will retain its autonomy within the employment and training area and it will continue to do the things that we expect of it.

Mr Ede: It had an E4 before.

Mr McCARTHY: There was no E4 in that role.

Mr Ede: An acting E4.

Then I went on to say that there was an acting E4 and, in fact, that was exactly why the member for Stuart had it in front of him.

Mr Ede: Exactly, exactly.

Mr McCARTHY: The member said: 'I have not met the lady'. That is what he said: 'I have not met the lady'.

Mr Ede: Just say she is a lovely lady.

Mr McCARTHY: It has all come out. I said I could have named the person. Mr Speaker, I rest my case.

Delays in Government Payment to Contractors

Mr COLLINS to TREASURER

I have heard in many centres over the last couple of months that the government is slow in paying contractors and the like. What does the government intend to do about restoring its good name in this regard?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen is assuming, of course, that we do not have a good name if he says that we have to restore that name. The member for Sadadeen comes to this Assembly with many stories. If he could give me details of the contractors concerned immediately, I will obtain the answer for him before lunchtime today on the payment and the status of those accounts that he has heard particular stories about.

Mr Speaker, this question is raised from time to time. When I checked, I have found that the speed with which the Treasury is processing accounts is indeed very encouraging. I ask the honourable member to give me, before lunchtime, details of those contractors that he is concerned about and I will provide that answer to this Assembly immediately on receipt of those names and accounts. However, I will defend the people in Treasury. I have checked this on several occasions and I have found that the time taken to process those accounts has been very short once the paperwork has arrived on Treasury desks. I ask the member for Sadadeen to name the contractors concerned so that, on his behalf, I may expedite the processing of those particular accounts if that is necessary. However, can I inform the House that I am particularly impressed with the speed with which accounts are being processed by the Treasury officials.

Gold Find Near Tennant Creek

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he inform the House whether or not Mr Hall's gold find to the east of Tennant Creek will continue to produce by the 44-gallon drum full or has more sober and scientific evidence been produced which would suggest other levels of extraction?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is interesting to note that I stood on my feet for 3 hours in the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill discussing a range of issues that are pertinent to my portfolio areas, and the opposition spokesman on mines and energy was not even present. There was not a single question on the industry that accounts for 18% of the Territory's GDP.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! The comments of the Treasurer are irrelevant to the question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Hall's gold find has been announced right throughout the world. It was a good luck story in a world of doom and

gloom. With the indulgence of the House, I would like to relate a story in relation to Mr Hall's gold find. Yesterday, my press secretary was on the telephone and my ministerial officer responsible for mines and energy came to him and asked if he would speak to a lady from New York.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker. Obviously, the government is intent on making a mockery of this question time. We have a very specific question from the member for Nhulunbuy concerning the gold find and whether the original, optimistic projections of the honourable minister have in fact been proved up. He wants to seek the leave of this House to tell us a story about a telephone call from New York.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would ask the minister to relate his answer to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, we will tell that story at another time and another place, but it is part of the story concerning Mr Hall's gold find.

Mr Speaker, it would appear at this stage that the gold find is not as extensive as was first thought. There is need for further drilling and testing of the area. I am pleased to have questions from the opposition but, as usual, they are questions that tend towards the negative. You never hear from them when things are going well but, when matters look like turning a little sour, in comes the opposition. What a fitting name! Never has there been a more apt description for the 6 people opposite - opposition to anything.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I think we have demonstrated our point.

Gold Find Near Tennant Creek

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

On what evidence did he base his claim that gold was being produced by the 44-gallon drum full from Mr Hall's mine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was acting on advice. I understand the term was 'buckets' or something of that nature.

Mr Smith: 44-gallon buckets?

Mr COULTER: Members opposite would be experts in the use of buckets. However, people on this side of the House share the excitement and we encourage people to be productive and get on with the job of developing the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I was informed by the Department of Mines and Energy that a substantial quantity of samples was brought into the department's office in Tennant Creek. I was told that it was a 44-gallon drum. That may have been a figure of speech, but there was a considerable quantity of samples. I can assure members that it was not a tobacco tin, although even a tobacco tin of gold these days would be quite valuable. Mr Speaker, if anybody turned up at your doorstep with a bucket of gold, you would not send him away as the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues would have. They would have said: 'This is not good enough, where is the 44-gallon drum?' They would have sent him away with his tail between his legs.

We are talking about a find 200 km south-east of Tennant Creek, out behind the Devils Marbles. A lady from the Department of Mines and Energy travelled out there on the Friday, but our mines expert did not arrive there until Monday.

Members interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Here we go again, Mr Speaker. Have a listen to them. You are producing \$1200m-worth of wealth for the Territory, but you got one wrong. What characters!

We have costeamed areas of the reef and it does not appear to be as extensive as was thought at first. But, do not give up, Mr Speaker! I still believe that to be one of the most prospective areas in the Territory and the member for Barkly may even recognise that himself. Recently, we apprehended a fellow down there with a bulldozer and a mineral detector. That fellow had taken from somebody else's EL \$600 000 worth of nuggets. Unfortunately for him, one of my inspectors arrived and took him to court. That is the type of value that we are talking about in relation to this particular region.

Block H Finniss River

Mr BELL to TREASURER

I asked this question of him during the Appropriation Bill debate and he refused to answer it then. Let us see how we go today. Will he table the advice he received in January this year as Acting Minister for Lands from the department in relation to the sale of Block H at Finniss River to Input Pty Ltd?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the honourable member likes to write to the Northern Territory Land Corporation, it may assist him in that particular regard.

Bagot Road Pedestrian Traffic Study

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question concerns the problem on Bagot Road near the Nightcliff Hotel. We heard in the last Assembly sittings that he had undertaken some investigations as to how that matter could be resolved and had set aside a sum of money for that. Could he inform the Assembly whether progress has been made, and whether final decisions have been reached?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, technical solutions for that social problem have been considered. There is no perfect solution. When people wish to cross an extremely busy road in the darkest part of the night, in a state that is not exactly conducive to their own welfare, the problem is significant and not easily solved by means of an overpass or a set of traffic lights. Those are not perfect solutions by any means. Through the member for Ludmilla, we have been able to talk to the Bagot Community from whence many of the hotel's patrons come. I understand that there may very well be a community-based solution in the form of a bus. That is a sensible, practical solution.

Pensioners and school children who need to cross further along still have a problem. A recommendation has been proposed by the Department of Transport and Works suggesting that pedestrian-activated traffic lights be installed as an interim measure to assess their effectiveness. We are waiting for comments from the police and other interested parties before finalising that decision. The real problem, unfortunately, is drunks crossing a public road. Statistics in that area and for the rest of Darwin indicate that many pedestrians who are involved in motor accidents are under the influence of alcohol. When the honourable member can produce a practical solution to that problem, I will be more than delighted to hear from him.

Maintenance of Rapid Creek Water Gardens

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question is delivered on behalf of the people of Jingili who seem to have lost their member during this question time. Some concern has been expressed by the people of Jingili and others about the change in ground maintenance contractors for the Rapid Creek Water Gardens. Can he assure this House that the water gardens are being maintained at a standard at least equivalent to that which was provided by the previous contractor?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is an indication of the absolute ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition that the water gardens has absolutely nothing to do with the Department of Transport and Works. I am certain that the member for Jingili, who is one of the most active members of this House, knows more about representing of his constituents than the Leader of the Opposition ever will.

Maintenance of Rapid Creek Water Gardens

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I address my supplementary question to the minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority. On behalf of the people of Jingili, who have expressed concern on this particular matter, can the minister assure this House that the Rapid Creek Water Gardens is being maintained at a standard equivalent to that offered by the previous contractor?

ANSWER

The answer is yes.

Local Government Involvement in Planning

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

If he will not entertain the idea of third party appeals to the Planning Appeals Committee or consider changing the composition of the Planning Appeals Committee, will he at least look at earnest appeals from local governments that attention be paid to the wishes of local residents, with special reference to the Litchfield Shire?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am always ready, willing and available to speak to any member of any local government authority in the whole of the Northern Territory about any planning issue.

Sludge Levels at Leanyer Sewage Ponds

Mr EDE to TREASURER

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Karama who has not got over his bout of lockjaw. Is the minister aware of the dangerously high sludge levels at the Leanyer sewage ponds and is he now prepared to give the answer he was not prepared to give when the member for Karama asked his 1 question in these sittings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I answered that question last week. The word 'dangerous' was actually used by the member for Karama. This is indicative of the opposition's performance in question time today. We have given members of the opposition every chance to ask questions and now they are repeating questions which were asked last week.

Cancellation of Elective Surgery at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is it true that elective surgery is being cancelled at the Royal Darwin Hospital? Why is the cancellation occurring and how long will this situation continue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am certainly honoured to be asked the first intelligent question of the day. I can assure honourable members that this particular question pains me more than some will probably realise. Negotiations have commenced with the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd to facilitate leasing of Wards 3A and 3B, together with 2 operating theatres and 3 delivery suites, for the establishment of a private hospital facility within the Royal Darwin Hospital. These negotiations are proceeding very well and rapidly, and the signing of the documents is imminent. Verbal advice is that the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd anticipates commencing operations on Monday 23 November 1987.

To achieve this stringent deadline of the lease agreement, the following timetable has been developed. Work will commence on Tuesday 27 October 1987 to give vacant possession of half the third floor by Monday 9 November 1987, and the remainder by Wednesday 11 November 1987. Elective admissions, especially for surgery, will be controlled from Thursday 29 October 1987 and, where possible, all elective admissions will cease for the period 4 to 6 November 1987 inclusive. Mr Speaker, all staff including doctors, were advised of these facts on 28 September 1987, and they were informed of the necessity to impose stringent controls over elective surgery during the periods I have mentioned.

It is expected that some inconvenience to the public and doctors will result from the possible restrictions on elective admissions. However, every endeavour has been, and will continue to be, made to ensure that inconvenience is kept to an absolute minimum. This timetable achieves the required reduction in authorised beds in the shortest possible time, whilst also minimising disruption to patients and staff of the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Mr Speaker, let me add that everybody, even those very near and dear to me, will be treated in the same way. In fact, I was due to go in to have a follow-up to my recent operation, but I am pleased to say that it is in the category of elective surgery. I received a phone call yesterday afternoon saying that, because of my decision, that has been put off until a date to be fixed.

Solar-Powered Car Race

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I believe a race for solar-powered vehicles is to be conducted between Darwin and Adelaide. What support has the government provided to the DIT entry to the world solar-powered car challenge?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to provide some information on this matter. The DIT has provided the only Territory entry in the Pentax World Solar Challenge, the car race for solar-powered vehicles from Darwin to Adelaide, which commences on Sunday 1 November from the Casuarina shopping centre. I would urge everyone who has an interest in any of those matters to be out at Casuarina shopping centre, not only for the start of the race on Sunday but also tomorrow when, I understand, there will be a display of the vehicles.

The Northern Territory government itself has supported the DIT project with a grant of \$60 000. The Power and Water Authority, the Tourist Commission and the Department of Transport and Works are the government organisations that have provided assistance. Assistance has also been provided by Sitzler Bros Pty Ltd, the RAAF, the community radio station Top FM - which also does a superb job broadcasting the question time of this Assembly - CIG, Dunlop, Radio Australia, Mr Stan Kennon, the AANT, the Institute of Engineers, Toshiba, Telecom, Bob Jane, the Computer Shop, Silent Appliance Systems, Coates Hire, Sleeman Dunkley Treacy Maunsell Pty Ltd, the Mobil Bagot, Warsash Pty Ltd and the Casuarina City Twin Cinemas. All have contributed to assist the DIT and, if I have left anyone out, I apologise. That demonstrates the large number of groups that have provided support for this entry.

I think everyone realises that the Territory is really at the sharp end of solar technology. We have been utilising solar energy for many years, for heating water, for pumping systems, for electrical illumination systems and for communication systems right throughout the Territory. It is important to realise that the DIT, with very minor resources, has provided a very competitive vehicle to enter this race. The chassis construction, the design, the body, the resistance tests and the electrical work has all been done by staff and students at the DIT.

I believe that this entry will be very competitive against entries from such giant organisations as General Motors, the Ford Motor Company, which is utilising its space technology, and a number of Japanese companies which have spent millions of dollars on developing very hi-tech vehicles. The DIT may be the mouse that roared in this particular event and I am offering all my encouragement. I would urge every member of this Assembly and every Territorian to provide a bit of assistance in terms of attending the start of the race or sending a telegram or whatever, because this particular event will put the Northern Territory on the map. The race is starting in Darwin and we

will have the eyes of the world on us. I believe the Territory entrant, designed and built by Territorian students and staff, with assistance from some RAAF personnel, will be very competitive and it will be right up there at the end of the race. I wish them all the best and I congratulate all those involved in the building, the driving and the commercial support of the venture.

Soapy Bore Water Supply

Mr EDE to TREASURER

I refer him to the debate during the last sittings of the Assembly regarding the lack of water for the school and community at Soapy Bore. I know that his people have been doing some work on it since then. What are the chances of the school receiving an adequate water supply so that it can become operational?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have spoken with the Director of the Water Authority who has been out to Soapy Bore and has assessed the situation, particularly the area where the houses have now been built, in relation to the tank and the water supply there. However, I simply took it that it was in hand, after speaking to him, and that the issues had been recognised and that we were looking at ways of addressing them. My briefing notes have not been updated recently and I have no further details than I have already supplied to the honourable member. However, I will be writing to him in the very near future to indicate what is planned for that particular area.

Darwin Private Hospital

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Will patients at the Darwin Private Hospital still have access to specialist services at the Royal Darwin Hospital following the opening of the private hospital?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there are contractual and employment arrangements which apply to specialists in the Darwin area. Firstly, there are the private specialists who make their own arrangements. They work now in the Royal Darwin Hospital on a sessional contract basis. I expect that they will be negotiating with the private hospital for visiting rights. I understand that that process is well under way. The majority of specialists at the Royal Darwin Hospital, who are employed by the department, have a contract of service which allows them to practice privately to a limited extent. These specialists will be able to make such private arrangements as their contracts allow.

For diagnostic services, particularly radiology and pathology, salaried specialists will be able to use their 35% right for private practice to provide these services to Darwin Private Hospital patients. Where a Royal Darwin Hospital specialist has an employment contract which does not allow for practice outside the hospital, at this stage, he would be precluded. However, I have asked my department to examine this matter and to report to me on the number of doctors in that category and the effect that a relaxation of their employment contracts would have on the activities of the Royal Darwin Hospital and the welfare of patients. I would point out that the private hospital

fully intends to attract to Darwin specialists in a range of fields. This would increase the overall number of specialists available to the Darwin population. I look forward with a great deal of excitement to the increase in the quality of services in the health area, particularly hospital services, that will be achieved by the opening of the private hospital.

Private patients being able to use the Royal Darwin Hospital after the Darwin Private Hospital has opened is a matter of interest to many people. It is expected that most people who are insured privately will use the Darwin Private Hospital. They will certainly be encouraged by the Royal Darwin Hospital to do so. It is not intended that privately insured people who, for one reason or another might still wish to use the Royal Darwin Hospital, will be prevented from doing so. Indeed, the Medicare agreement apparently precludes it from preventing that.

Damming of Daly River

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to TREASURER

Can he give me information regarding the damming of the Daly River for power generation, with particular reference to other river users, for example, pastoralists and recreational fishermen?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think the honourable member may be referring to a proposal that has been considered recently. I understand the minister for Industries and Development has an interest in the area as well which is largely in relation to small barramundi being able to travel up the river. That is a major concern. I understand a design has now been developed that will accommodate the movement of barramundi. Recently, I had the opportunity to look at concrete ladders that have been put in place in Canada to allow salmon to travel up and down the waterways. The ladders have dramatically increased the chances of the salmon travelling up the rivers. They no longer have to run the gauntlet of rocky boulders and grizzly bears. It has increased the salmon breeding population dramatically. Of course, the grizzly bears are not doing so well; they are buying cans of tuna.

Mr Speaker, the study is at a very preliminary stage and the barramundi problem was a major consideration. I understand that problem has now been overcome. However, there are many problems involved in the damming of any river in Australia. The member for Victoria River would be able to advise the House on some of the problems. If the honourable member would like me to keep her informed of developments in that area, I will do so.

'Land of the Lightning Brothers'

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

Did the Northern Territory government contribute financially to the production of the film 'Land of the Lightning Brothers'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would like to preface my answer with the brief comment that we have heard complaints from the opposition in the media and in this House about their inability to ask questions and lack of time. Members on this side

of the House were quite prepared to give members of the opposition a clear run today in terms of asking questions. However, all they could do was criticise the fact that no questions were coming from this side of the House. I do not refer to the crossbenchers.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister has been asked a specific question by the member for Casuarina. It does not relate in any way to an explanation of the attitude this government wanted to take in question time today.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The opposition has been allowed some latitude in prefacing its questions and the same latitude will be allowed to the Chief Minister.

Mr HATTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I simply wanted to make that point. I know that, once his front bench had blown the deal, the member for Nhulunbuy became so upset with it, he started reading a paper and then walked out of the House for a while.

I thank the honourable member for the question. The government provided a grant of \$20 000 in 1986-87 to the Australian Film Commission to produce the film called 'Land of the Lightning Brothers.' This film is set in the Gregory National Park and portrays the rich and diverse Aboriginal rock paintings in the area. The film will greatly enhance the Aboriginal cultural aspect of Northern Territory tourism promotion. The film will be screened on ABC TV on 17 November this year as part of the season of Aboriginal films. I would urge all honourable members to take the opportunity to see that film. It is yet another example of the way the Northern Territory government is active in promoting Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry.

Gold Find Near Tennant Creek

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Does he accept that, if sober and scientific evidence shows his public statements about Mr Hall's find prove to be extravagant or wild, investor confidence in the mining industry in the Northern Territory may be adversely affected?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure you that, unlike the member for Nhulunbuy, I have the utmost confidence in the intelligence of miners in the Northern Territory. They are very astute people and they understand the risks and the rewards of mining. Mr Hall's find may not prove to be as significant as was first thought. However, it is significant in that it confirms once again the potential of the area. I am not sure which extravagant claims the member for Nhulunbuy is referring to. If he could quote the specific remarks I made, I would be pleased to consider them in the context of the encouraging information that was supplied to me.

As I have said many times, I believe that Tennant Creek will become the Kalgoorlie of the Northern Territory. I believe that will happen in the very near future. I hope that the member for Nhulunbuy, the opposition spokesman on mines and energy, shares my enthusiasm. If he does not, I am prepared to make available to him a guided tour of the mines that are operating or about to commence operation in the very near future to reassure him that my confidence is not unfounded. It is not based on pub talk; it is based on hard

facts which demonstrate that the Northern Territory is about to enter into a boom period unparalleled in mining history. It was the anniversary of Al Jolson's death last Friday. He was the man who coined the phrase 'You ain't seen nothin yet' and I suggest to the member for Nhulunbuy that he ain't seen nothin yet either. We have not even scratched the surface of the potential for the development of mining in the Northern Territory. I have every confidence that my statements about the potential of the Northern Territory mining industry are echoed by every miner swinging a pick or shovel out in the hot sun, as they gouge away in their efforts to realise the potential of the Northern Territory. I congratulate them.

Benefits of the Pastoral Industry

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What benefits does the Northern derive from the pastoral industry, given allegations that the resources of the Territory are being exploited by the industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently honourable members may have heard some comments in the media about the usefulness of the pastoral industry to the Northern Territory and how it simply produces animals which are turned off from the Northern Territory for processing. I am sure honourable members will be interested to learn that, in the 1985-86 financial year, the total Northern Territory turn-off of cattle was 397 197 beasts. Of that number, 89 100 - or 22.4% of the total turn-off - were slaughtered in the Northern Territory in both domestic and export abattoirs, and 308 097 beasts were exported live either interstate or overseas. Some 43% of cattle are sent out of the Northern Territory for fattening and obviously the remainder go directly to abattoirs.

The issue reflects on the viability of abattoirs in the Northern Territory. The Leader of the Opposition's comments on this matter would seem to imply that, irrespective of the economics of an industry, one should simply require cattle property owners to turn off cattle to Northern Territory abattoirs without any consideration of whether that is profitable for them or not. Traditionally, store cattle have been sent interstate from the Northern Territory and the present situation is not significantly different. It is true that a number of Northern Territory abattoirs have closed down recently although, from memory, about 9 abattoirs, some of them quite small, are still operating.

It is unfortunate that industrial unrest has been an integral part of the abattoir industry in the Northern Territory. The member for Barkly has commented in this Assembly on how industrial unrest contributed significantly to the eventual downfall of the Tennant Creek Abattoir. No matter what the owners of the abattoir did, there was continuing industrial disruption and it reached such levels that Tennant Creek now has no abattoir at all.

Economies of scale militate against processing in the Northern Territory. Animals cannot be supplied to the abattoirs on a continuing basis throughout the year and this means that our abattoir owners are faced with a greater cost per beast than applies interstate. Most of our cattle now go to the large coastal abattoirs which can process the Northern Territory's turn-off as almost an incidental component of their annual through-put. Therefore, they can process cattle out of the Northern Territory far more cheaply than can

Northern Territory abattoirs. Obviously, whether they are from the giant companies that own large cattle properties in the Northern Territory or small individual holdings, cattlemen will sell their cattle to whomever offers them the best price. It is clearly a completely economically-driven industry, and so it should be.

The mention that the Australian Agricultural Company Organisation's properties in the Northern Territory might be taken over by the Sherwin group has been raised, and I am advised that the 3 properties of the AACO in the Northern Territory, Rockhampton Downs, Brunette Downs and Avon Downs, collectively holding about 100 000 head of cattle, have traditionally turned virtually all of their turn-off interstate anyway. Yet, in comments to the media, the Leader of the Opposition seems to be implying that, if this company is taken over, then these cattle will be sent interstate. They are already being sent interstate.

I am not pleased with the situation. As Minister for Industries and Development, one of my targets is to attempt to have processing of Territory primary products done in the Territory wherever possible. Indeed, the department is examining aspects of the abattoir industry such as how we can improve the economics of the industry by processing hides, offal and by-products from the Territory animal further than has been the case in the past. In most cases, because of the small scale, it is simply not economical to start taking all of the offal cuts and putting them in cartons. In the Northern Territory, most of those cuts are sent off to the offal plant or to the dump whereas the big southern abattoirs can take the tiniest cut of an animal and, if they have enough through-put, they can produce tonnes of the offal and sell to speciality markets. In the Territory, we are denied opportunities of that sort.

However, I will have the department examine the possibility that the government might be able to encourage some further processing of products like hides, at least, to improve the value of the animals in the Northern Territory by quite a few dollars per beast. The Pastoral Industry Study also bears clearly on this matter, and I would be interested to hear the comments of opposition members on this subject when, at a later sittings, we are able to debate that study which is really laying down a broad scenario for further development of the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. I look forward to the contribution of honourable members opposite at that time.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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

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25 June 1987

**2. University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-time students are enrolled at the University College of the Northern Territory?
2. How many part-time students are enrolled?
3. How many students who completed Year 12 at Northern Territory schools are:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents at the University College?
4. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Arts faculty?
5. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Science faculty?

20 October 1987

3. Aboriginal Employment

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In view of the Northern Territory Government's stated commitment to improving Aboriginal employment and in the light of recent reports indicating a decline in Aboriginal employment levels, what are the numbers of unfilled positions in each of the following categories:

- (a) Police aides;
- (b) Trackers;
- (c) Health workers;

- (d) Assistant teachers in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities; and
- (e) Teacher aides in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities?

5. Skywest - Aero-medical Services

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

What are the details of the cost to the Northern Territory government of the financial, legal and other arrangements made with the Skywest Company to finalise negotiations allowing Skywest to begin the aero-medical services in the Northern Territory?

20 October 1987

4. Motor Vehicle Accidents

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

How many persons have been:

(a) killed; and

(b) injured

in motor vehicle accidents in the Northern Territory so far this calendar year and who were travelling as passengers in the rear of utilities or motor trucks?

ANSWER

As at 30 September 1987:

(a) 7

(b) 27

Alice Springs Plumbing Inspections

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, my question is a repeat of a question I asked during the last sittings. I will ask the question first and then seek your guidance and perhaps that of the Chief Minister to find out who should answer it because there is some concern in construction circles in central Australia with respect to it. Will the Northern Territory government appoint a second plumbing inspector in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter is presently being addressed by my department. There are several issues involved. I have had discussions with the Master Builders Association, as has the Assistant Secretary South of the Department of Lands and Housing, in an effort to find an appropriate solution. One plumbing inspector is employed in the Alice Springs region and there is not enough evidence that a second full-time inspector is needed. However, following discussions involving myself, the MBA and the department, we are looking at alternative solutions to the problem. These have been put to the MBA.

The first alternative is to employ a retired or part-time plumber as an inspector to be on call in periods during which there are several applications before the department and the workload is obviously too much for one inspector to handle. The other alternative is to change one of the staff classifications within the department in the southern region to allow for a joint role of building inspector and plumbing inspector and to fill that position with an appropriate person. I discussed the matter with the Assistant Secretary South as recently as yesterday and this morning. I am very aware of the problem and, as soon as we are able to identify a suitable person to fill either position, we will be taking appropriate steps. As I explained during the last sittings, I am very conscious of the concerns being expressed by those people in the industry who are experiencing delays with the inspectorial function at certain times.

I am also pleased to announce a new development in relation to structural engineering matters, which is another issue that I addressed during the last sittings and one which would be of interest to the member for MacDonnell. There were delays in approving some building plans because, in the absence of suitable staff in the southern region, documents had to be sent to Darwin for checking. In order to resolve this problem, tenders have been called from private firms in the structural engineering field in Alice Springs.

I have subsequently advised the department, upon receipt of those tenders, of an appropriate person who will fulfil that function in Alice Springs, thereby negating any further requirement to send plans and drawings to Darwin for checking and approval. That will reduce delays quite significantly and enhance the efficient handling of applications submitted by private industry.

The specific question in respect of the plumbing functions is being addressed. There are 2 options before me at the moment and it is a matter of finding a person for the job. It is simply a question of sorting the matter out and finding an appropriate person.

Northern Territory Business Council

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to a recent press statement about a request from an organisation known as the Northern Territory Business Council for a meeting to discuss the state of the Northern Territory economy. I ask the Chief Minister to advise honourable members of the background to this meeting and of what action has been taken to put it into place.

ANSWER

As honourable members have been advised on many occasions, the Northern Territory economy is rapidly changing from what has been described as an economy based on the public sector to one driven by the private sector. There is no doubt that this fundamental change in the nature of the Territory's economy will be beneficial in the medium to long term. However, we should not deny that certain of the changes that we are going through will be painful to at least some sectors of the business community. Painful though they may be, they are producing the desired results. We are moving towards private development and an economy driven by private enterprise, which is the only sustainable base for our economy in the long term.

The Northern Territory government is no longer in the business of underwriting virtually every new business development. Our role is becoming that of a facilitator of private enterprise rather than its financier. The budgetary and structural changes implemented by my government in recent times are bringing about a real and sustainable economy where real jobs and real growth are being created in the private sector.

The government's role in the future will be to work in partnership with commerce and industry to let business get on with business. Our job is to keep taxation and government regulations in check and to help with marketing and promotion, and that is what we have been doing. We have seized the initiative and we are actively promoting the growing range of Territory products, capitalising on our proximity to the markets in South-east Asia.

I would ask honourable members to look at a few of the facts and at what has been occurring, particularly during the last year.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister was asked a question which concerned the Northern Territory Business Council and its request for a meeting. He was asked to supply some background on the Business Council's request and some background on when the meeting might take place. I have no problem with the Chief Minister providing evidence on the state of the Northern Territory economy. In fact, we will provide him with that opportunity today on a matter of public importance. I do not believe that it is appropriate for him to launch that debate in question time.

Mr HATTON: I wish to speak to the point of order, Mr Speaker. If I am to properly answer the honourable member's question concerning the background to and purpose of the meeting with the Northern Territory Business Council, it is important that I give some summary of the situation that has led to this meeting being called. That is my purpose in making these points.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, as I was saying, I would like honourable members to look at a few of the facts about what has been occurring in recent times. Mineral production is about to exceed \$1000m, exploration activity is expanding and new mines are opening. There is a boom in offshore gas and oil exploration that promises to outstrip even the tenfold increase of the past 2 years. Tourism has shown phenomenal growth with a 150% increase in international visitors over 4 years. Primary production is steadily increasing its export earnings. Non-residential construction approvals are higher than ever as private developments go up. There is plenty of good news about, news which the doom-and-gloom merchants opposite would have us believe does not exist. But there is no doubt, as I said earlier, that some sectors of the business economy are hurting at the moment.

It is against this background that I was approached by the organisation known as the Northern Territory Business Council which, I might add, was formed only in the last 3 weeks. As a result of that approach, I agreed to a meeting between its representatives and my full ministry.

I would like to address the issue of the formation of the Northern Territory Business Council. I have addressed this House and the public on numerous occasions about our government working with business. Last year, one of the initiatives that was put in place was the formation of an organisation, known as the Business Consultative Committee, which was working with the Minister for Industries and Development. During the last month or 2, there have been discussions between the minister and private sector organisations and it was felt that that structure was not an appropriate means through which to conduct more accurate and substantial discussions between the government and the business community in relation to a number of issues of concern to that community. It was agreed between the Minister for Industries and Development and the business community that we would adopt an alternative structure. That led to the formation of the organisation known as the Northern Territory Business Council, which will allow business to speak directly with ministers rather than working through a government structure. I might say that the Business Consultative Committee involved quite a significant number of senior public servants. The new organisation allows for more direct contact between the ministry and industry representatives.

Following private discussions with business representatives, I can assure honourable members that the intention is certainly to discuss the many difficult problems that are facing the business community as we experience this necessary adjustment to our economy. There is an inevitable shaking-out period and a lot of trauma is arising from that. The intention of the meeting is not simply to outline the problems because I can assure honourable members that the business representatives, together with my ministers, are well aware of those difficulties. What we are hoping to do, and what the organisations are hoping to do, is to sit down together and address positively any initiatives that may need to be taken to improve the method of identifying and easing the burden in this adjustment period.

Arrangements have now been made to hold the meeting next Monday morning. I look forward to this meeting with a group of positive Darwin business people who understand the current economic climate and want to contribute to the economic development of the Northern Territory. Contrary to what certain members of the local press and the economic illiterates opposite would have us believe ...

Mr Smith: At least we do not call them whingers.

Mr HATTON: ... there is no conflict between my government and the business community. I welcome its initiative in forming the Business Council and I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that my government will support and cooperate fully with it.

To respond to the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition, the fact is that many businesses out there are growing and developing at a rapid rate but it is also true that many people in the Northern Territory community have been living in easy times. With massive amounts of government money being pumped into the economy, their businesses and their business psychology have been based upon the assumption that they were operating in a government sheltered workshop, running from one government contract to the next. Those times have changed. If members opposite do not like that, they ought to get stuck into their federal counterparts who have been imposing massive restrictions on the finances available to our government. We are not whingeing about it. We are doing something about it but, in the process, that is hurting Territorians. We will go through the adjustment process and out of it will come a stronger and more vibrant Northern Territory economy.

We will not simply sit back and knock. We are doing it in the face of the continuous and unjustified attacks on the investment environment in the Northern Territory that the opposition have been imposing on us for the last 3 years. Yesterday, we had the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Actual and Contingent Liabilities which finally has given the lie completely to the opposition's unjustified and unreasonable attacks on the Northern Territory government's contingent and actual liabilities. Members opposite have done untold damage during the last 3 years with their attacks on investor confidence. It has taken a great deal of effort to try to turn that around. With the Leader of the Opposition running around Australia in his new-found desire to make contact with the business community and pretending that it is the first time that it has been done ...

Mr Smith: It has you worried, hasn't it?

Mr HATTON: Not at all, Mr Speaker. I had feedback and I might advise the Leader of the Opposition to do the talking himself next time instead of leaving it to his staff members to undertake discussions with the business community. The business people were quite surprised to find the Leader of the Opposition letting his staff do all the talking. I have no worries at all.

The Leader of the Opposition should get his facts straight before he ventures out. He had no briefings whatsoever on anything that is occurring in the Territory. He did not talk to people in the Northern Territory business community about it. We checked with them and they deny that he made any contact with them about the situation. Lord knows what he said to a number of the people he visited. If he intended to do something positive, he should have done more than merely obtain a bundle of glossy brochures from the Trade Development Zone Authority. He could have obtained some facts and figures to take with him so that he could have drawn attention to some of the initiatives that were occurring.

Mr Smith: The TDZ doesn't put out facts and figures.

Mr HATTON: The Trade Development Zone Authority does put out facts and figures. It is a shame that he did not get a full briefing. Had he done so, he would not have engaged in the unconscionable attack on the first Australian investor to go into the Trade Development Zone. I am talking about Hungerford Refrigeration.

Mr Speaker, we look forward to this meeting with the Northern Territory Business Council and the continuation of discussions with the business community in a more direct manner to address the real problems that are facing the Territory and to work in cooperation towards the building of a real economy. We do not deny that the process of readjustment is painful. It is hurtful but it is absolutely essential that we do it if we are to build a real economy.

Charge for Electrical Inspection

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is it the intent of NTEC to charge \$31 for the issue of inspection certificates for work inspected by approved licensed electricians on domestic electrical work?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Nhulunbuy for his question. In fact, he gave me notice of it through the channel that he normally uses: ABC radio. Unfortunately, the ABC is on strike today and I do not have an update on any questions that will be asked today.

The question relates to self-inspection. In fact, ministerial approval to prepare draft legislation to enable limited self-inspection was obtained on 21 November 1985. Implementation has been delayed during the last couple of years but, in its attempts to cut red tape and allow people to get on with self-inspection, this government has organised a facility by which licensed electricians can carry out their own inspections. This will cut down time delays which are very costly. Waiting for inspectors to arrive can result in considerable expense and add considerably to the cost of a home. The facility will allow licensed electricians to carry out their own inspections. This is not new. In fact, it happens in that very progressive state, the wonderful state of Queensland. I understand that it also occurs in a number of overseas countries. Random inspection of contractors undertaking inspection will be carried out by the Power and Water Authority to ensure that standards are maintained. I believe that it is a step in the right direction. It is an example of this government cutting red tape and allowing people to get on with the job.

Mr Leo: At a cost of \$31?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I previously mentioned the cost of waiting for an inspector to turn up. With the building boom that is still continuing in the Northern Territory, it is difficult to have building, plumbing and electrical inspectors on site when you want them. If you are about to pour concrete for footings and you have a concrete truck and 13 labourers sitting around waiting, \$31 pales into insignificance. There are many tradesmen, including plasterers, who would be only too pleased to absorb the \$31 to be able to get on with the job. The effect of this initiative will ricochet through the whole industry and it is something that this government can be very proud of.

The requirement for contractors to test their own work will bring us into line with the states in an attempt to improve the general poor standard of electrical installation in the Territory. Consultations are being carried out in relation to how the system will operate and these will continue until 27 November. I understand that there is general acceptance of the move throughout the industry.

Charge for Electrical Inspection

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary question. The minister has not yet told the House whether or not the fee is to be \$31. Could he also confirm, for the sake of the House and the populace of the Northern Territory, that the fee will not be levied only on new houses but will in fact be levied on all electrical work that requires inspection within the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, let me return to the first question and give some very definite answers. I do not know where the honourable member gets his information from. I thought that he was fairly clued up on this issue but obviously somebody has recently given him the wrong drum. The decision will apply only to domestic installations.

Mr Leo: For all domestic installations, not just new work?

Mr COULTER: You said all electrical work in your supplementary question. You should get your questions right or accept the answers that are given.

The first inspection fee is proposed to be \$31. That fee currently applies to subsequent inspections. We are trying to remove that impost and, if the member for Nhulunbuy cannot see the advantages of this move, he has a problem.

Efficient Management of the Public Service

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, there has been a great deal of recent comment about the efficient management of the public service. What steps has he taken to improve the efficient management of the public service and to link functions of the public service more closely to the business sector?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a very good question. As the member for Port Darwin pointed out, there has been considerable comment recently in the press about the public service and this has had a very unsettling effect on public servants, more so than any changes in administrative arrangements. In the last issue of the Sunday Territorian, the Secretary of the ACOA, Rod Ellis, commented extensively on the Northern Territory Public Service, all of which can be refuted. I am rather surprised that somebody of Mr Ellis' standing would do that. We all read recently in the Northern Territory News that even Frank Alcorta believes that Rod Ellis is a man of some standing and common sense but it is quite apparent to me that, once again, Frank has got it wrong.

In answering the question, I would like first to advise the Assembly that all departmental structures have been approved. The establishments for all departments are controlled by section 26 of the Public Service Act and have been approved by Executive Council, and our departments are functioning very well. As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, there has been a review of upper-level structures recently and we have initiated a review of levels from A1 to E3. That commenced last week and has also been the subject of considerable recent media comment. Much has been made of the fact that we are

carrying out a review. This is the first major review of the Northern Territory Public Service since 1978 and I would have thought that everyone would have welcomed such a review, not the least public servants. In fact, I am aware that many public servants are very glad that we have initiated this review.

There is no doubt that, in some areas of the public service, classifications have got out of kilter. We have established a group comprising senior personnel people in the major departments and a representative of the Trades and Labor Council. This was decided by Cabinet some weeks ago and the review is under way. It will be completed early in the new year. Following that, we will have a far better structure than we have had in the past - one that does have some equity across the board.

Mr Speaker, the subject of the question asked by the member for Port Darwin is one that is very important to me: the ability to make the public service interact better with the private sector. Much of what we have done in the last few months, for the first time, has brought the public service into closer interaction with the private sector. The first of those actions was taken by the Chief Minister in March when he created the Ministry of Labour and Administrative Services. In this case, 'Labour' means employment - far from what is suggested by the name of the party of the members opposite, this is something positive. Labour in this case is something positive: employment. Employment in the Northern Territory is a big part of this government's initiative. We are working to get people employed. In respect of buildings like the Beaufort Hotel, the Sheratons and the casinos, we hear knocking from members opposite, but every one of those projects has created employment in the Territory - employment that would not exist if we had had a Labor government.

One of the results of our actions this year was the removal of an anomaly in respect of recreational air fares. In the past, recreational air fares have not been available for intra-Territory travel for holidays. We were unable, for example, to provide a recreational air fare for an employee in Darwin who wanted to take his holiday in Alice Springs. The holidays had to be taken interstate. I have removed that obstacle and employees entitled to a return air fare to Adelaide can use the value of that air fare to travel within the Territory. That policy has been in place since August. That will create the ability for people from within the Territory to travel around the Territory, to stay in our Territory hotels and to use our Territory facilities instead of taking their holidays either in Asia or interstate. I believe many people will avail themselves of that opportunity. That is one way in which our policies have impacted on the private sector.

Our policy to use office accommodation built by the private sector is another example. The majority of our public servants are housed in buildings built by the private sector, operated by the private sector, maintained by the private sector and cleaned by the private sector. That is creating jobs. We do not have a policy of building our own monuments. We use buildings built by the private sector and we create employment by that means. That again is an example of interaction.

It has been my hope that a Department of Labour and Administrative Services would be developed within the current ministry. The Chief Minister has told me that he has approved that and I am very pleased that we will be developing a Department of Labour and Administrative Services. The emphasis will be on employment. Within that departmental structure, I have developed the ability to get out there, search out jobs and to employ people. I have

placed a strong emphasis on the ability to employ people in Aboriginal communities and in the non-urban communities of the Territory. That ought to please the members opposite but, of course, they will find a reason to knock it and to make it as hard as possible for people to be employed in those places. However, I am sure the members for Arnhem and Arafura will applaud that initiative.

In the development of a Department of Labour and Administrative Services, a strong emphasis will be put on providing services to the private sector in occupational health and safety, industrial relations and employment and training for our young Territorians. The initiatives that we are developing in that regard will go a long way towards overcoming our growing problem of unemployment in non-urban areas. 70% of our Aboriginal population is in non-urban areas - areas of high unemployment. That is a question that I intend to address and to overcome in my position as Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. Again, that will impact on the private sector.

A review of the Government Printing Office is currently under way. The Government Printing Office has operated at a loss for a long time - not a major loss but at a loss - and in competition with the private sector. We have much of our printing work undertaken by the private sector and we are reviewing our current operations at the Government Printing Office. It is my view that, in time, we will develop the ability to have the private sector handle most of the work that that particular facility is carrying out at present.

There is one other matter that I should comment on and that is the reduction in air fares for new recruits and the reductions in Territory allowance following our negotiations with the TLC. That has brought about a better equality with the private sector. We are no longer competing with the private sector in terms of providing allowances and air fares that it could not afford. The private sector in the Northern Territory is now on an equal footing with the public sector in being able to provide those sorts of conditions to employees. It is clear to me that, in the last 6 months or more, we have developed a range of areas that will assist the private sector in the Northern Territory and put in place the Chief Minister's and this government's initiative to create a private-sector-run economy.

Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I ask the Minister for Community Services and Health if he will confirm that, prior to the establishment of the Darwin Private Hospital, the Royal Darwin Hospital had 46 public maternity beds available and now has only 22 beds available to public patients or private patients seeking a bed in the public sector hospital with a doctor of their own choice?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, perhaps I could correct the honourable member on 2 points. I am the Minister for Health and Community Services. The Minister for Community Services and Health is the one who has to sign that declaration later this morning. It is not true that we had 46 public beds in the midwifery area. We had 46 beds available for public and private patients at the Royal Darwin Hospital. It is true that it is proposed that the number of beds in that particular area will be reduced to 23 at the appropriate time. I must stress that I have the capacity in the Royal Darwin Hospital to have 48 beds in that

particular area if they are required. I stress the point that that is without taking into account the 64 beds that are available in the private wards at the Royal Darwin Hospital. We can have a capacity there of 64 beds plus 48 beds if we need it.

The matter of admission to the private hospital has been raised a number of times. I do not know whether all honourable members are aware that one does not book into a hospital in the same way as one books into an hotel. People are admitted to a hospital via a doctor, specialist or whatever. It is the responsibility of those professional people to counsel according to the requirements, either medical or financial, of each patient. It is their responsibility to point those patients in the right direction as far as their hospital care is concerned. It is not a matter for the staff at the Royal Darwin Hospital or, for that matter, the Darwin Private Hospital to direct people or counsel people on where they ought to go. I stress that, in the past, it has been the habit that doctors or specialists have merely sent their patients along to the hospital and, because of the dedication of the hospital staff in the admissions area, the requirements of those patients have been catered for. That system definitely will change and the responsibility will rest squarely on the shoulders of the professionals in having their patients admitted to whatever hospital they see fit.

Territory Loan No 14

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, last week, the Treasurer announced he was seeking to have the Territory Loan No 14 extended from \$40m to \$48m and that this needed approval from the federal Treasurer. Given that the loan subscription closed last Friday, can he advise whether the extension was approved and whether the loan was fully subscribed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Casuarina for his question. In brief, the answer is yes in every respect to that question but I believe that it requires a fuller response. It became apparent from the enthusiastic level of public response to Territory Loan No 14 that the \$40m target that we had set would be reached comfortably well before the subscription date expired. Given the rate of response, approval was sought from the federal Treasurer for expansion of the loan from \$40m to \$48m and I am grateful that Mr Keating responded promptly in the affirmative. A range of investors and ladies with piggy-banks were willing to contribute more money. This loan was oversubscribed very early in its life and the \$48m was easily obtained as well.

Since the Leader of the Opposition has had his charisma implant and has learnt that things are going pretty well in the Territory and one doesn't need to knock anything, he should learn about confidence that is available and which is being displayed through the Territory loan. If this doom and gloom exists and people are so worried about lack of confidence in the Northern Territory, why were we able to obtain oversubscription of \$8m on a \$40m loan?

Mr Smith: After the stock market crash?

Mr COULTER: Ah, the stock market crash! There would have to be something negative that the Leader of the Opposition would find. He could not admit that things were going all right. I think he needs a tune-up on his charisma

implant because it is starting to slip and the real Leader of the Opposition shows through. It is so transparent. It will bring him undone eventually because he will never change. He will knock everything that he gets the opportunity to knock and he will never concede that anything is going well. Honourable members on this side of the Assembly are aware of that and I believe the public at large will soon see through that thin disguise of a new image which the opposition is trying to create around him.

The loan offered attractive and highly-competitive rates of up to 13.6% and, of course, that is another reason why there was considerable confidence in it. It won the endorsement of several well-known investment advisers, but it also demonstrated a gratifying public faith in the Territory and its future at a time when there were plenty of pessimists standing on their soapboxes preaching the end of civilisation as we now know it. For example, there was the member for Barkly's astonishing writings about the possibility of a Commonwealth takeover of the Territory. Who would have ever thought we would hear it?

Honourable members will be interested to hear that the Northern Territory Treasury is undertaking a survey of the subscribers to Loan No 14 to establish a profile of these investors in the Territory and I think the Leader of the Opposition would be interested in the results of that survey. He could call on them too. The only proviso would be that I doubt if they would give him their names so that he would be able to speak to them. That would be consistent with the attitude of the business representatives that he visited recently.

Indications are that surprisingly large numbers of subscribers are Territorians themselves, and that is something that I am very pleased about. If the salt-of-the-earth Territory people are choosing to invest their savings in Territory bonds, that is the best answer to the pessimists that I can imagine. One interjection by the honourable member for Stuart was that they are leaving at a rate of 1000 a week. That interjection was not picked up but I heard him make it.

Mr Ede: A month.

Mr COULTER: A week it was but, anyway, a month. The members for Fannie Bay, Arnhem and Arafura and myself have said many times, if it reaches the point where there are only 2 people living in the Northern Territory, 1 of them will be me. I believe that confidence in the Northern Territory still exists. We were built on hard times in the Northern Territory and we will continue to progress and develop. Territory Loan No 14 and the oversubscription that has supplied \$48m for development of the Northern Territory is only one example of the confidence that stills remains despite the attempts of the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite to knock the Territory at every possible opportunity.

NTGPASS

Mr COLLINS to TREASURER

Why did the Northern Territory government set up its own superannuation scheme when, as we heard yesterday, we inherited a \$120m liability from the Commonwealth and have an ongoing, accumulating debt of, according to the member for Stuart, around \$20m and, according to the Minister for Industries and Development, \$50m?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a good question. Yesterday, we passed the Superannuation Amendment Bill and that was a good opportunity to talk about that. However, because we do not like to go back over hard times and we do not like continually to knock the Commonwealth, I did not use that opportunity. However, honourable members will be aware of the activities of the Minister for Finance, Senator Walsh. Mr Speaker, you may remember that there was very little choice at the time about our accepting or not accepting that particular burden. In fact, it was thrust upon us.

Mr Collins: You could have accepted.

Mr COULTER: Well, we could have. Another option would have been interesting. If, at the time, those transferees had accepted a payout of their benefits, it would have bankrupted the Commonwealth system because it would not have had the money to pay them. That would have been a very interesting scenario at that stage. I forget the exact figures but I will get the detailed information and the timing of how it happened for the honourable member. I do not have that in my head at the moment but it makes very interesting reading indeed to see the amount of money that would have had to be paid out.

We found that we had a liability to Territorians, to people who had set up their homes despite the fact that some Commonwealth departments would not sell them houses and allow them to put down roots in the Northern Territory. We were not prepared to desert those Territorians who had spent a considerable time in the Northern Territory and we were not prepared to walk away from them as the Commonwealth was.

Premiums for Workers' Compensation

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Has the Work Health Act had any effect on workers' compensation premiums currently being charged by insurers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can give an answer to the member for Jingili. The Work Health Act has resulted in across-the-board reductions in all classes of occupational rates by the approved insurers. All rates have been reduced by at least 10% before discounts for good safety records are taken into account. The building industry, in particular, has benefited significantly from the new work health measures as rates for that industry have been reduced from the previous level of 18.2% to as low as 11.1%, which is a reduction of up to 38%. General farm rates have dropped from 9.2% to as low as 4.3%, a reduction of 53%. The authority's information base will allow for identification of hazardous workplaces which can then be targeted for remedial action in cooperation with employers and workers.

Such measures should ensure that costs associated with workers' compensation are kept to a minimum. They put the lie to many accusations which have been made and claims by the opposition and the TLC that our system would not work and that we should use the Victorian system. I do not need to highlight the problems with the Victorian system. It is in the red by at least \$500m and is going down the drain at a great rate of knots. Nevertheless, people like Mr Tullgren of the TLC continue to say at meetings

of the Work Health Authority's advisory council, of which he is a member, that we should adopt the Victorian model. How ridiculous!

Prison Trust Accounts

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, my question concerns the trust accounts in the names of the prisons in the Top End. I know there is a trust account for the Gunn Point Prison Farm. Why isn't there a trust account for Darwin Prison and Beatrice Hill Prison? Also, can the minister give me details of the general prison industries trust account?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, rather than give the honourable member details which may not be sufficient to fully answer her question, I will take the question on notice and supply her with the details.

METAL Training Scheme

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, can the minister advise if and when the METAL training scheme, which has been so successful in Darwin, will be expanded to include the Alice Springs region?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Araluen raised this matter during the last sittings. Unfortunately, I was not able to give him any good news then although honourable members will recall that I was well aware of the clear and justifiable need for such a program.

We are talking about young lives. About 80% of young Australians who ride motor bikes require ambulance treatment as a result of accidents in their first year of riding. Community-based training programs interstate, in which young riders are given appropriate levels of training, have led to reductions of as much as 45% in accident rates. Unfortunately, because of the constraints on government when making budget decisions earlier this year, the extension of the METAL program to Alice Springs was not funded. However, that did not stop us from going ahead with some planning, identification of appropriate sites and some training of personnel to eventually conduct the program. I am delighted to say that, as a result of some efficiencies and cost savings within the Department of Transport and Works, we are able now to allocate \$127 000 towards a building for the METAL program in Alice Springs. I am sure that, if it saves only 1 life, it will be well justified.

I mentioned efficiencies and savings in the Department of Transport and Works. We have heard a fair bit about poor morale in the public service. I can tell you, Mr Speaker, that I have visited at least 90% of my departmental staff in their various places of work to see what they are doing and to talk with them about meeting the challenges of this new era in which we have to do more with less. I can say quite frankly that morale is extremely high and I think that is a result of meeting the challenge of having to do things better. I am sure that, apart from METAL, we will be able to find ways of supporting additional programs. The Treasurer is glaring at me but I am sure other things can be accomplished.

We are not saving the money only through administrative measures. I mention administrative savings as being the source of funds for METAL. Like other departments, we have been reducing staff on a voluntary basis and staff numbers were to be reduced from 1440 to 1380 by Christmas. My department has not only met that target but surpassed it whilst continuing to provide an adequate level of service. I believe we have 20 fewer employees in the department than the number targeted for January and that is excellent. We have also reviewed the way we do things. A review of construction standards is already having some results. We now have a new method of constructing school buildings and other community buildings which involves a capacity for relocation. That means that, apart from an initial 10% saving in construction costs, long-term benefits will be far greater. In the context of constraints on the department and the reduction of staff levels, as well as the media hype, it is rewarding to talk with staff at the coalface and to see their enthusiasm for getting things done efficiently and effectively. The Department of Transport and Works is quietly getting on with its job of providing appropriate infrastructure so that the private sector can continue its economic growth.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that we will see the benefits of the METAL program in Alice Springs and, more importantly, of the savings which the Department of Transport and Works is making in its drive for greater efficiency.

Performance Incentives for Chief Executive Officers

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Can he confirm that a Cabinet submission has been prepared by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner which canvasses performance incentives for Chief Executive Officers of between 10% and 45% of salary and which also recommends that low-interest loans be made available to Chief Executive Officers and that annual air fares be made available to Chief Executive Officers and their families?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it sounds like another beat-up to me. Even if a Cabinet submission were being prepared, it would be inappropriate to speak of it here today. If it is a matter for Cabinet, it goes to Cabinet before it goes anywhere else. However, to put the mind of the Leader of the Opposition at rest, there is no such Cabinet submission being prepared.

Horticultural Industry

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In a ministerial statement in July, he foreshadowed additional assistance for the horticultural industry in the Territory. Is he able to advise what assistance is proposed, particularly in relation to marketing and training?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government takes the horticultural industry, as it does all other industries, very seriously. The Katherine region is emerging continuously as one of the big players in the Northern Territory's horticultural and grain industries. Recently, as a result of the representations made to the government by the Horticultural Advisory Committee, we have taken up its suggestion and instituted a position whereby

the government will be offering 2 horticultural scholarships in 1988 and encouraging promising young Territorians to take up a field of study in agriculture and horticulture. The scholarships will be for courses commencing at Northern Territory tertiary institutions and then flowing through into southern universities in due course. Hopefully, in this way, we can commence in a small way at least a stream of Territorians becoming professionals in what is a very exciting industry for the Northern Territory and one which has a very big future.

Major research is done on cropping in the Douglas-Daly Research Station. However, we are working on ways to develop more research capability in the Katherine region. At this stage, we do not have an experimental farm in Katherine. Some years ago, the current Katherine Rural College was a government research farm in that region. However, there is other land available in the region. The department likes to do some trial cropping on land under the control of farmers but monitored and sponsored by the government.

We are also proposing, as opportunities arise, to transfer some of the positions - not necessarily the people, depending on their wishes - in our horticultural section from the Darwin region to the Katherine region because there is a need to boost resources in the Katherine region. We will be doing that within the resources of the department by relocating positions within our structure.

The government recently launched the 'Territory Fresh' sticker, a small sticker which has been developed for retailers to place on quality Territory produce as it reaches the shelves of shops and supermarkets. This sticker is to be used by those retailers solely on top quality local produce. We are trying to identify for consumers in the Northern Territory produce which is produced here. Many Territorians no doubt would not be aware of the very wide range of top quality fruit and vegetables produced in the Northern Territory, particularly during the dry season. Many of them probably think that the goods on the shelves come from interstate. Even strawberries are produced in the Northern Territory on a commercial scale yet very few Territorians would appreciate that fact.

The 'Territory Fresh' sticker is to be used to try to encourage Territorians to buy Territorian and we hope that that will be a big success. It will depend largely on the attention and attitude of retailers. Retailers' shelves can be monitored to ensure that the sticker is placed only on top quality Territory fruit and vegetables. I hope I receive reports if ever the sticker is seen on any other fruit and vegetables or produce that is not of top quality. We would then propose to withdraw usage of the stickers from that particular store. We are the only people printing and distributing them.

As a result of input to the government by the Horticultural Advisory Committee, we propose to establish next year a database of information on prices and quantities of fruit and vegetables that is relevant to Northern Territory growers. Currently, we are gathering information as to how we might go about that in order that Territory farmers will have regular, up-to-date information on the quantities of goods being sold, the demand, where demand can be forecast, and certainly the prices on various interstate markets so they can make sales choices themselves in the Northern Territory. The government is doing a great deal to assist the horticultural industry and the Katherine region will play a big role in this regard.

Restricted Areas Inquiry Report

Mr EDE to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, on our latest advice, the Treasurer is still responsible for racing, gaming and liquor and I refer him to his reply on the Liquor Amendment Bill during the last sittings where he stated that the d'Abbs Report, the Restricted Areas Inquiry Report, was being given the very highest priority. Is it his intention to table that document today or tomorrow and give us the opportunity to debate it during these sittings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer is yes. It will be tabled during these sittings.

Funding for Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the federal Minister for Community Services and Health has taken a very difficult and arbitrary approach towards the Northern Territory's licensing of the hospital, has the minister received from the federal minister any undertaking at all that funding to the Royal Darwin Hospital - and I am talking about the base funding for the operation of the hospital - will not be cut or affected in any way as a result of the Northern Territory government's diminution of beds and control of beds in that hospital?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the agreements relevant to funding the Royal Darwin Hospital were put in place in February 1984 and, in fact, expired in June 1987. Despite the information the opposition has been fed through Dr Blewett's office - obviously originating from persons up here in the health area who have a particular aim in mind - there has been ongoing negotiation at departmental level for the renegotiation of that funding for this year. In fact, the previous agreement has been extended by negotiation to June or July of 1988. The reason for that extension was to enable negotiations relating to changes resulting from the private hospital to be taken into consideration and an appropriate funding level finalised. We did not have a specific written agreement from the minister as to what the funding would be in the future. Obviously, it is still under negotiation. We did have full knowledge at officer level of the negotiations and the financial agreements at the time. They are in place. Renegotiations are under way and the department has always been fully aware of that.

Pearl Shell Resources

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he advise when the untapped pearl shell resources in the Northern Territory waters will be exploited?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Assembly of those details. The re-exploitation of the pearling industry in the Northern Territory has been under examination for some time. As honourable members will be aware,

25 years or more ago, the Northern Territory had quite a substantial pearling industry. Before we opened it up once again for export, we wanted to be careful that we did not fall into a trap, as has happened in some other fisheries such as the northern prawn fishery and the barramundi industry, where the numbers of licences issued placed such a strain on the resource that governments were forced to buy some back. In the case of the pearl industry, the same principles apply. The resource renews itself naturally and can sustain a certain degree of harvesting without affecting the base resource.

A working group of Commonwealth and Northern Territory officials has now provided a draft development plan for the pearl industry. The Commonwealth is very much involved in this process because it has constitutional control over coastal waters from 3 to 250 miles offshore, which is the zone wherein most of the pearl resources will reside. The goal of the development plan is to develop a pearl culture in the Northern Territory based on shell collected in waters adjacent to the Territory. The plan has been accepted in principle and the Commonwealth minister has been requested to confirm that he is prepared to enter into the administrative arrangements necessary for the Northern Territory to administer that offshore area on behalf of the Commonwealth, in respect of the pearl shell industry. I am pleased to advise honourable members that the federal minister indicated yesterday that he is prepared to approve the pearl shell development plan and to allow the Northern Territory to administer that particular fishery.

A package of information and a draft advertisement have been prepared and will form the basis of an invitation to prospective participants in the pearl shell industry in the Territory. There are 2 current licences for the taking of pearl oysters in the Commonwealth waters off the Northern Territory. These licences will terminate at the end of this calendar year. No doubt, those operators will reapply for the more permanent licences which will be issued next year. The closing date for expressions of interest is proposed to be 15 February 1988. A date has been determined for selection of participants and licensing will take place on about 15 April 1988.

I am sure honourable members will join me in closely watching the development of the pearl industry in the Northern Territory. Licensees will be able to take some mother-of-pearl, as the shell is known, but the prime purpose of the licences will be the development of a cultured pearl industry in the Northern Territory by harvesting young pearl shell and establishing cultured pearl farms. Honourable members will be aware that we have one successful cultured pearl project here which has been run for many years by the Paspaley family. That particular farm has used young pearl shell harvested in Western Australia. In the future, however, we hope that Northern Territory pearl shell will produce some of the biggest and most valuable pearls in the world, as has occurred with the shell from Western Australia.

Outbreak of Meningitis

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware of the outbreak of meningitis over our borders in Western Australia and South Australia? The health service there is conducting a mass vaccination program. What is he doing for the citizens of the Northern Territory in that area? Is he aware that the ceremonial travel from that area up through central Australia is about to start and therefore the matter is of some urgency?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of all of the matters that the honourable member has mentioned. I have called for a full report from the department.

Site of New Dam for Darwin

Mr FIRMIN to TREASURER

Has the government determined where the new water reservoir for Darwin and its environs will be built?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as members would be aware, the question of where to build a new water reservoir for Darwin and to serve the needs of the budding horticultural industry and the aquacultural industry has been around for some 10 years. In the last several months, I have talked to various resident groups in Adelaide River, Batchelor and Berry Springs and put to them the options available to government at some of the sites that have been identified for the development of such a facility.

The first preference was for the dam to be built in the Batchelor region and I had a meeting with the Batchelor residents. Engineers from the Power and Water Authority worked very hard to produce a feasibility study for the development of the reservoir in that particular catchment area. I can inform honourable members that I have taken to Cabinet this week an interim report on the proposal to build the Batchelor dam and the results of that report suggest to me that the Batchelor dam should be deferred and that the Warrai dam at Adelaide River should be investigated as the preferred option.

The issue there is whether or not it is feasible in terms of engineering to develop a dam in that particular region. There is also another issue which needs to be resolved in that there are 2 sacred sites in the Warrai Valley. Of course, we have commenced negotiations with the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority to address the issues involved with the sacred sites in that region. I can inform honourable members that Power and Water Authority engineers will be out in the Warrai Valley. We have the advantage of having some core samples that were taken from the region in 1980-81 and we will be reporting back to Cabinet at a very early stage on the development of the Warrai dam and the 2 issues that have been identified: whether or not it is feasible in terms of engineering to build the dam in this location and whether or not the issues involved with the sacred sites in that area can be resolved. I am anxious to bring this to a head and to make a decision because it will affect several investments in the region. Many millions of dollars have been invested at Tumbling Waters, Acacia Gap, the Marrakai Crossing area, the Finnis River, Batchelor and the Adelaide River area.

I have said in this Assembly, in reply to a question from the member for Koolpinyah, that the government is aware of the rambutan plantations and the pastoral improvements that have occurred in the region of the proposed dam site at Batchelor. The Warrai dam site involves another problem. There are exploration licences over that particular region and we are having discussions with the Department of Mines and Energy and the miner involved so that he may start drilling to determine whether there are minerals to be exploited in the area before we flood it. We are also talking to Bill Doyle from Camp Creek who would be the landholder most affected in that area.

As I said, I am keen to bring this matter to a satisfactory resolution as fast as I possibly can because of the the possible effect on the livelihood and investments of people. Many people are now refraining from further development in the region as a result of the government's announcement that it would look at potential dam sites in the area. Nobody wants to build a new house only to find that it will be under 30 ft of water shortly afterwards. I am anxious to come to a decision on this issue to allow development to proceed as quickly as possible. I will keep the House fully informed on developments in this matter.

I would like to thank the people from the Department of Lands and Housing and the employees of the Water Directorate for the haste with which they are addressing this issue. It is to their credit that they have been able to assemble the interim report and present it to Cabinet in such a short time. Although it is some 30 days outside of the time frame which I outlined in an undertaking at the Batchelor meeting, sometimes ministers are a little impatient and attempt to resolve issues faster than is possible. I believe that both the Department of Lands and the Water Directorate have pulled all stops out to address this particular issue. I congratulate them and I appreciate their efforts.

Proposals to Dam Elizabeth and Blackmore Rivers

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In his answer to the previous question, the minister mentioned proposed dam sites that were being investigated. Could he tell me if investigations are to be carried on in relation to constructing a dam at the mouth of the Elizabeth River or at the mouth of the Blackmore River at Haycock's Reach?

ANSWER

Honourable members may be aware that, many years ago, one Phil Purich was in charge of water resources in the Northern Territory. He was very innovative and carried out many water projects in the Northern Territory. The member for Koolpinyah is very close to him.

The proposal to dam the Blackmore River at its mouth, where it is very wide, was discussed some 15 years ago. Another proposal which the Department of Lands is currently investigating and which would be of some benefit, although the people of Palmerston may desire some compensation, is the damming of the Elizabeth River. Given adequate compensation, I am sure that the people of Palmerston would be only too willing to allow that dam to go ahead. It could have a dual function as both a water supply and a recreational lake and the department is examining that. I am unaware of the status of the Blackmore River proposal but I know the investigation of the Palmerston proposal is well-advanced. It would also provide fresh water in a very short time indeed. I understand that salinity would practically disappear in the first year or perhaps 2 years.

Of course, detailed feasibility studies would be carried out before such a dam was built. Filtering and pumping stations would be required and these cost \$22m to build, with electricity costs of about \$750 000 per year. There would also be investigation of possible uses for the foreshores of any lake which was created. I will obtain information for the member for Koolpinyah on the work that was carried out some 15 years ago by Mr Kingston in relation to the Blackmore. I would also like to re-examine those proposals myself. I hope that the Blackmore option could also be looked at in terms of its feasibility and cost-effectiveness in providing water for the people of Darwin.

We need to make a decision on a dam proposal for Darwin. I believe construction would have to commence in approximately the mid-1990s to enable us to meet potential demand. The Department of Lands and Housing is looking at a dam which is an 85-year facility able to cater for a population of 1 million. Honourable members may think that we are looking too far into the distant future but I believe it is a visionary approach. Our immediate short-term needs, however, have to be met by the mid- to late-1990s. Any proposal that can cater for those needs should be fully investigated. The disadvantage of both the Elizabeth and Blackmore Rivers, of course, is that it would not be possible to release water downstream for horticultural use although it may open up some possibilities for aquacultural use.

Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the Northern Territory government making a contribution to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and, if so, is he able to indicate what the amount of that contribution will be?

ANSWER

I can advise the honourable member that our government has been approached by the Commonwealth government which has proposed a cost-sharing arrangement whereby the Territory would provide instructing solicitors and support staff to the royal commission. It would be premature to commit the resources contemplated until such time as the extent of the inquiry is known because of the possibility of the commission being over-resourced in the Territory. The Territory will provide court facilities and also reporting facilities if required, but it is considered inappropriate that the Territory meet the cost of providing transcripts. The Territory will bear the cost of its officials required to appear before the commission and does not consider the Commonwealth responsible for providing legal assistance to Territory officials.

The Territory government welcomes the commission and believes it can achieve much in addressing the concerns that all Australians have about this particular problem. As to the specifics of the dollars associated with the cost, these are matters which have not been finalised between the Commonwealth and ourselves. Cost-sharing arrangements between the states, the Territory and the Commonwealth will resolve themselves over the next few weeks.

Darwin Private Hospital Fees

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Mr Russell Schneider of the Voluntary Health Insurance Association of Australia said this morning on ABC radio that the Darwin Private Hospital charges are much higher than in many other places in Australia. He said:

And I am of the view it would be cheaper for my members to fly their sick contributors to Adelaide or Brisbane, have them treated there and then fly them back. And maybe we will look at doing that.

Has the honourable minister involved himself in discussions with the Darwin Private Hospital on the setting of its fees and is he satisfied that appropriate fee schedules have been established by the Darwin Private Hospital?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the discussions in relation to the private hospital were always based on whether or not the proposition was viable. We have a major company in Australia involved in the construction and the management of this particular private hospital and it is its commercial decision that it can run the hospital on a profitable basis. Obviously, there has been considerable concern about the charges that will be implemented by the private entrepreneur. Negotiations have been continuing with the various insurance companies so that the gap between the amount charged by the hospital and the amount recoverable from the insurance company is down to a reasonable level. I am advised that the level is now down to about \$10 or \$12 which is the average throughout Australia. At one stage, it looked like being about \$80 or \$90 and that, of course, would not have been acceptable to the consumer. If it were not acceptable to the consumer, he would not go to the private hospital and it would go broke. It is a business matter that is negotiated between the private hospital and the insurance companies and I am sure that they have arrived at an equitable level. The concern for the consumer is that the moiety be no more than \$10 or \$12.

Proposed Amalgamation of University College and DIT

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, my question refers to statements from the federal member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, about the amalgamation of the University College with the Darwin Institute of Technology. Has the minister received any details of such a proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question and I certainly hope that honourable members opposite will agree with me when I say that the honourable Mr Snowdon's performance on the matter has been nothing less than farcical. The first I heard of Mr Snowdon's much-vaunted proposal was when he issued a press release after speaking in the House of Representatives to the Students Assistance Amendment Bill on 19 November. In that press release, Mr Snowdon called on the Northern Territory government to carefully consider a federal government proposal to amalgamate the Northern Territory University College and the Darwin Institute of Technology. My immediate reaction was to

ask: what proposal? The Northern Territory government has not received any such proposal from the federal government nor have we received any official indication from the federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training that such a proposal might be on its way.

The matter became a little clearer after reading the speech Mr Snowdon made in the federal parliament when it was revealed that the so-called proposal was being prepared by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission - which I think honourable members would realise is soon to be replaced - for the federal minister who, according to Mr Snowdon, has yet to consider it. I would ask honourable members to consider that scenario for a few minutes. Mr Snowdon is asking this government to consider a proposal that we have not yet received, that we do not know exists and which, apparently, has not even been considered by the federal minister even though, supposedly, he is to put it to us. Obviously, that is a patently absurd statement to have made.

Mr Speaker, let me make something very clear. I am certainly not closing the door on anything the federal government may put to us in this regard. Indeed, I have written to the federal minister asking him to inform me whether or not any such proposal actually exists and, if it does, to send me details as soon as possible. I would like to make it very clear that this government will not accept any proposal which compromises the future of Northern Territory students at either the University College or the DIT. I will repeat that: we will not accept any proposal which will compromise students of either institution.

In saying that, I must express my disappointment and, I suppose, my disgust at the way in which Mr Snowdon has attempted to undermine the basis for any further discussions on the matter. One of the throwaway lines in Mr Snowdon's press release, which he was very quick to abandon, was that students at the University College 'are currently suffering from a lack of teaching staff and morale'. I think the Warden of the University College has very effectively and officially scotched those allegations. Indeed, our teaching-staff-to-student ratios are extremely good. I would also like to point out that the only person who has lowered morale amongst students at the University College is Mr Snowdon himself because he made those comments and accusations during examination time. It is pretty easy to imagine how students would have felt going into quite intense exams when the question of their future had been raised in a statement by the federal member. I reiterate that students at the University College and the DIT certainly have nothing to fear in that regard.

I do not intend to run through the whole history of the issue but I would like to make one point in regard to the amalgamation proposal, and I will quote from Mr Snowdon's speech to the federal parliament on 19 November:

The fact is the Northern Territory government could have had almost everything it asked for, with Commonwealth funding, if it had only agreed to it through the Darwin Institute of Technology, the established tertiary education venue in Darwin. The Territory government was told that, if it placed the university campus at the Darwin Institute of Technology, it would receive the necessary capital funds and that recurrent costs per student would be made available.

It is amazing that that allegation could be made by Mr Snowdon. To say it is 'untrue' would be a massive understatement - 'malicious slander' would be

closer to the mark. In fact, the Territory government was told nothing of the sort. We were told that we could have a maximum of 20 university places at DIT a year, spread over 3 years. Not 1¢ of capital funding was ever offered. I can assure honourable members that, had CTEC suggested that such arrangements could have been put in place for a reasonable number of university students at the DIT - and I remind honourable members that there are more than 200 students presently at the University College in its inaugural year and they are doing courses that are recognised throughout the country as being first class - I would have been very happy to negotiate for joint use of the DIT site. However, CTEC refused to budge from its stance of 20 places or nothing. We went through some rather exciting periods and abuse was heaped on officers of the Territory government by the Chairman of CTEC during that period.

We now see that more than \$7m of federal funding is going towards a building at DIT simply to cater for present demand. That was something that was needed desperately, and it has been catered for. However, that is simply for the students that are presently there and for the administrative needs of that institute. I wonder how much luck we would have had in obtaining another \$5m to put in university-level laboratories at DIT, another \$1m for temporary accommodation for 1 year and funds to expand the library which would have been under extreme pressure.

I reiterate that I am willing to discuss any reasonable proposal that is put to me by the federal government regarding our tertiary education. It is worth noting that, if the Territory had received university funding on a per capita basis equal to the rest of Australia, no more and no less, we would have received \$12.2m this year. Something is wrong when Territory students are not treated equally with other Australians. We are used to it but it rankles and we continue to fight for equality in this country. However, there is no avoiding the conclusion that the Northern Territory federal member has behaved abysmally on this matter. I certainly hope that, in future, he represents Territorians in the federal House and not simply the minority views of certain people in his party who are thousands of miles away.

Recognition of Aboriginals at Arltunga

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Mr Speaker, I refer the minister to a letter that appeared in the Centralian Advocate from Irene Sandy and other students at Yirara College expressing concerns that park interpretation at Arltunga does not include any recognition of the importance of Aboriginal people at Arltunga. In that letter, she says:

I think Arltunga history about the miners is all right but it is missing out something. What about the Aboriginal people? They were there before the miners and nothing is said about them in the history. The Conservation Commission should recognise the importance of the Aborigines at Arltunga. It should put signposts and have the Aboriginal history included in the visitors guide and in the pamphlets.

What efforts have been put in train by the Conservation Commission to remedy this shortcoming?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in my view, the Conservation Commission in the Northern Territory does not have any shortcomings at all. I find its operation generally impeccable. I am not aware of the details of what the member is referring to. However, what I can say is that I am very proud of the Conservation Commission's efforts in restoring Arltunga. In fact, the funding from the Commonwealth government through the Commemorative Program and the Australian Bicentennial Program and the contributions of the Northern Territory on a dollar-for-dollar basis has restored Arltunga virtually to its original status. One of the surprising things about Arltunga today is the cooperation between the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory and the Department of Mines and Energy in restoring and making available certain of the pits and mines in the area for tourists.

I have been to Arltunga several times and I wonder whether the member for MacDonnell has been there several times. From my visits, I am aware of aspects of Aboriginal culture that are there for people to see. In all Territory parks and certainly in areas of historical significance, the Aboriginal people have been recognised. Perhaps what the member for MacDonnell is alluding to is the level of recognition that is given at certain times. If the students of Yirara and the member for MacDonnell feel offended in any way because there may have been an oversight or an omission, in their terms, I am happy to ask the Conservation Commission to examine the matter. However, in doing so, I would officially place on record again that, in my view, the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory is one of the outstanding organisations for conservation of the environment in the Northern Territory and, in fact, in Australia. Everyone involved with the Arltunga project certainly deserves the praise of honourable members here.

Federal Industrial Relations Bill

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Is it true that the federal government intends to reintroduce the Industrial Relations Bill next year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is my understanding that that is the case. The Industrial Relations Bill is of paramount importance to the Territory and it is appropriate that I advise the Assembly of developments in that area. Honourable members will be aware that the federal Minister for Industrial Relations withdrew the bill from the House of Representatives immediately prior to the July election, and we can all imagine why that was done. I think it is true to say that everybody except the federal government disagrees with and has concern over the provisions and likely effects of the Industrial Relations Bill in its present form. The Northern Territory government is certainly no exception to that. The federal Minister for Industrial Relations has recently advised that he intends to reintroduce that bill in the autumn sittings of the federal parliament next year. I understand the minister has agreed to allow us to put our views forward and we will be making the fullest use of that option.

One area of particular concern to the Northern Territory is the proposal in the bill to amend the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. In its present form, the bill seeks to revoke that section of the Self-Government Act dealing with the establishment of those Northern Territory tribunals covering

police and prison officers. I have already written to the minister requesting that that amendment be not proceeded with. There is no doubt that the police and prisons arbitral tribunals have served the Territory extremely well over the years and the federal government has given no reason for the revocation of those tribunals. In fact, it would find it very difficult to give a reason that would stand up.

I have also advised the federal minister of the possibility that there may be further requests for changes to the bill. This will depend on the report from Sir John Moore concerning his examination of the options for a system for industrial relations in the Northern Territory following a grant of statehood. Honourable members should be aware of the importance of any moves by the federal government to change the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The Northern Territory government is specifically precluded by the Self-Government Act from legislating in respect of industrial relations. It follows that the dominant system of industrial relations operating in the Territory is that dictated by the federal act and any changes to it will have a direct effect on the whole of the work force in the Northern Territory. That is not the case in the states because they have control over the arbitral acts in their own jurisdictions. The Northern Territory should certainly be the same. Honourable members can be assured that this government will be extremely vigilant in its scrutiny of the federal government's intentions in this most important area and that it will take every opportunity to protect the Territory's interests in the passage of this piece of legislation through the federal parliament.

High Voltage Electricity Transmission Line

Mr REED to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he provide any information on the proposal to construct a high voltage electricity transmission line linking Jabiru, Katherine and Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am indeed in a position to advise the honourable member of the latest developments in the proposal to develop 2 transmission lines, one connecting Darwin and Katherine and the other Darwin and Jabiru. Expressions of interest were called for both proposals recently and a short list of tenderers has been compiled. I believe about 5 companies are on the short list.

The line to Katherine is of particular importance to the member for Katherine in the context of recent blackouts there and the opening of the new power station. That new gas-powered generating facility has a 19.5 MW capacity. There is, however, rapid growth in that region. Indeed, the member for Katherine is very privileged to represent such a rapidly growing region and I am sure that, if he had had the opportunity to contribute to debate on yesterday's matter of public importance, he would have been able to tell the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition just what development means in his region. In terms of the development we believe will occur in Katherine within the next 3 years, the new \$33m power station that has just been commissioned will require updating and upgrading. In fact, the generators at the power station are presently operating at 1 MW above their original design capacity. We believe that the 19.5 MW capacity available at Katherine will be exceeded within the next 3 years, at today's rate of expansion. Whilst the contractors who developed the Katherine Power Station went to the trouble of installing an additional pad to mount another generator, there is now some consideration

being given to offsetting the cost of running a line from Darwin to Katherine by not proceeding to mount that fourth generator. That will considerably reduce the cost of the line.

There have been some other recent developments along the road to Katherine. These include a proposal to develop a large generating capacity at Cosmo Howley. Indeed, NT Gas has negotiated with Dominion Gold, the operators of Cosmo Howley, to set up a very large generating capacity in that region. There is now a proposal to investigate further the possibility of supplying electricity on a grid into the Douglas-Daly region. I know that the member for Victoria River is very supportive of that proposal which would make a big difference to the farmers in the region. I am sure that the Minister for Industries and Development would also be very excited about the possibility of having reticulated electricity in the farm region there. It would open up the possibility for additional mine sites in the area to be linked into the system. I believe that an electricity conduit, together with the pipeline, will further open up the Pine Creek district to mining ventures.

The next century will be about energy and people who have energy at a price will be in front as we pass the year 2000. The Territory is very fortunate in having the opportunity to be in that position. It is interesting to note that lead, silver and zinc smelting operations are now being conducted in Europe. That is because of the very low cost of nuclear power which is running at some 2c per kilowatt hour. That is why raw material is being transported to Europe for smelting. It requires a lot of power to melt these base metals down to a state wherein they can be used. The Northern Territory is in an excellent position to be able to provide electricity through its gas and the large uranium resources that it has.

In terms of the line to Jabiru, we have employed a consultant to do an environmental impact statement on the possibility of running a powerline through the Kakadu region to Jabiru to bring Jabiru on line with the Channel Island Power Station. This will provide an additional base load for the Channel Island Power Station and, the more gas that we can burn through the pipeline corridor, the quicker we will reach a point where we can stabilise electricity prices in the Northern Territory. The more electricity we use, the better it is for everybody.

This project is proceeding and the interest in terms of design, construct and finance is extremely high. There is to be rapid development of the region at Jabiru, including the new crocodile motel and the proposed 200-bay caravan park. If Jabiru is to become the hub for tourist infrastructure in that area that, some years ago, the Prime Minister told us it would become, then it will require power. That power can be supplied from Channel Island by running electricity out into that region. The Prime Minister said that he would give us \$70m and honourable members are fully aware of the facts: we received 7 barbecue plates. The order was messed up, Mr Speaker. The consultant is working on the route for the line to enable it to proceed through Kakadu and he will have his environmental impact study report ready very soon. I am hopeful that both projects can start early next year.

Industrial Tribunals and Awards on Statehood

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Does he agree with his Minister for Labour and Administrative Services that it would be desirable for the Northern Territory to set up its own system of industrial tribunals and awards to be administered by a Northern Territory body after the achievement of statehood?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not agree with the honourable member's interpretation of what the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services said. If he is seeking a clarification of my view and the view of our government, I will give it. Whilst we believe that, on the achievement of statehood, the equivalent powers in respect of industrial relations that apply under the constitutional arrangements between the Commonwealth and the states should apply, that does not necessarily mean that, in the administrative or organisational arrangements, there should be a separate tribunal. That can be done by way of a combined commission of the Commonwealth and Northern Territory. A considerable amount of preliminary work has been done on the practicalities of that sort of a structure. As the honourable member will be aware, Sir John Moore, the retired immediate past president of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, is working as a consultant for our government preparing an options paper for consideration on the whole industrial relations powers question. As I said at the last sittings, we anticipate some results from his consultancy early next year.

We anticipate that there would be a combined commission of the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory. That would certainly be the most attractive option financially. In terms of the practical operation of the industrial relations system in the Northern Territory, it would overcome many of the difficult problems, such as the Moore and Doyle case issues and the jurisdiction-jumping and competing jurisdiction problems that the states are plagued with. Those are matters we would like to avoid and certainly would be determined to avoid so far as the Northern Territory is concerned. I am aware, as I know the honourable member is aware, that all participants in the industrial relations community - employers, the trade unions and the tribunals - are of a similar view.

Crop Contract Scheme

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Now that the government has announced the details of its Crop Contract Scheme for the coming cropping season, what is the extent of plantings proposed for this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise honourable members of the crop plantings for the coming year because it is an interesting story and one which accords with projects across the Territory in that it is a story of growth. The estimate for cropping in the year 1987-88 will be approximately 10 010 ha. Compared with the 1986-87 figure of 7816 ha, this represents a 28% increase. I will give brief details of the crops being planted on those 10 010 ha which I am sure will be of interest to honourable members.

150 ha of peanuts will be planted as compared with last year's figure of 440 ha. The area of production of peanuts, in particular, will be reduced considerably for a number of reasons. There were a couple of bad experiences with peanuts in the last cropping year, as honourable members may have been aware. We had a bad year generally, seasonally at least. 1900 ha of maize will be planted. This is a marked increase over last year's production of 1187 ha. This increase should provide sufficient grain for the Northern Territory market and is in line with a conscious effort to provide more maize for the stockfeed industry. Of this area, 930 ha are covered by the Crop

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ERRATUM

The following 3 questions and answers were omitted from the printed version of the Parliamentary Record. They should be inserted at the end of Questions for Thursday 26 November 1987.

Any inconvenience resulting from this omission is regretted.

Editor of Debates
4 August 1988.

Upgrading of Drains

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to a matter I raised in the adjournment debate last night. Will he consider a staged program for the upgrading of drains in Territory towns to a standard at which local councils will be prepared to take over their maintenance and management?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen has raised an issue that is of special concern to me, particularly in the Alice Springs area. The drains referred to are the responsibility of the Northern Territory government until they are upgraded to a standard sufficient to allow local governments to take them over.

I am pleased to inform the member for Sadadeen that funds have been allocated in this year's budget for the Department of Lands and Housing and certain upgrading work will take place on a priority basis. The Bradshaw drain will be upgraded first, followed by the Larapinta drain, followed by problem areas in Sadadeen. That, of course, is no reflection on the member for Sadadeen. It is a genuine coincidence because the drain in Sadadeen is by far the most modern and requires the least amount of maintenance.

The Larapinta drain is of the greatest concern to me. In fact, only last week, I directed that certain urgent works be undertaken at the junction of Larapinta Drive and the drain because of the large amount of water that had accumulated there. I must admit that that action occurred as a result of a direct representation to me by the member for Araluen who expressed considerable concern about the long grass and mosquitoes breeding in the water that had collected around in the drain. Mr Speaker, you would be very much aware of the problems experienced in Alice Springs during times of heavy rain and major flooding. Those problems need to be dealt with as a matter of some priority, particularly in the Alice Springs area.

I am not aware of any significant concerns in any of the other major communities throughout the Territory. However, to take on board the question from the member for Sadadeen, I will certainly ask the Department of Lands and Housing to investigate the matter. In due course, I will report to the member for Sadadeen in writing.

Statistics on Visitor Numbers

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he advise of any statistics he has on visitor numbers in the Northern Territory so far this year and the revenue derived from that source, and is he able to advise whether the target of 1.1 million tourists by 1991 is still achievable?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, following a preliminary survey, we announced a figure of 762 000 visitors to the Northern Territory this year. That figure has been revised downwards by the small number of 25 000. It has been very difficult to quantify the amount of money that contributes directly to the Territory economy. However, estimates put the amount at close to \$300m. I can say that

the average growth rate in all areas of visitation to the Northern Territory is 15%. That applies to both international and domestic tourists and, incidentally, happens to be some 5 times the national average.

I believe that many factors will contribute to an ever-increasing number of visitors coming to the Northern Territory. Of course, one reason is that, in the Top End, we have yet to experience the full overseas impact of 'Crocodile Dundee'. People are still arriving on the east coast of Australia and, because of the cost and lack of services, many of them are only going to Ayers Rock before exiting through Sydney or other east coast ports. In discussions that I held in Sydney prior to departing overseas, a group of some 20 wholesalers advised me that they were reorganising completely their itineraries and programs.

Traditionally, whether we like it or not, most tourists have 4 major images of Australia: Ayers Rock, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Opera House and the Barrier Reef. Most visitors to Australia spend 2 nights in Sydney, transfer to Ayers Rock, then to the Barrier Reef and then exit. Anybody who has tried to obtain a room in Sydney during the last 6 months will realise that he will be required to pay between \$190 and \$240 per night for a room. That cost is having a major impact on the visitors into Sydney. The planes are full and an extra 7 services are booked into Australia. I think Qantas recently leased 2 jumbo jets overseas. That means that the pressure on Sydney will become unbearable.

For 6 months of next year, it will not be possible to get near Brisbane because of Expo. All of the itineraries are being redeveloped so that there will only be 1 night in Sydney. That means that places such as Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Alice Springs and Darwin will benefit. That is one small aspect of the reason why I believe that the target of 1.1 million visitors to the Northern Territory by 1991 will be achieved.

In addition to that, we have not experienced a full year of traffic on the newly-sealed south road. We have not yet had finalised the possibility of 1 or 2 international flights into Darwin in 1988. As a result of negotiations being undertaken by the Minister for Transport and Works, there is a very strong chance of more flights, particularly since Qantas and Singapore Airlines have reached agreement on extra services into Australia.

One thing that I found outstanding in my visit overseas, both in America and major countries in Europe, was the staggeringly high profile of the Northern Territory as compared to the rest of Australia. We promote and market the Northern Territory overseas as 'Australia's Northern Territory'. Thus, we definitely identify with Australia. We are not very parochial as yet. Unless one goes overseas and talks to people, it is difficult to grasp the full impact of the 'Crocodile Dundee' film. In every briefing that I had with tour operators and the press, what was on their minds was 'Crocodile Dundee'. I believe that, once 'Crocodile Dundee II' hits the market, we will have another rush. Let us hope that, in the interim period, most of the infrastructure that will obviously be needed to handle these people can be developed.

There is some hope on the horizon that finally the airport facilities within the Northern Territory will be recognised by the federal government as being a very important link in the national tourism network. One of the most important things that I found during my trip was the untapped potential of the east coast of America. Of some 20 wholesalers in Los Angeles, for example, nearly every one has transferred a subsidiary operation to New York and

Toronto, and that is seen as one of the fastest growing areas of tourism, particularly to Australia. The Northern Territory Tourist Commission is addressing that as a matter of priority. Unfortunately, Queensland, which happens to have unlimited dollars and resources, has approximately 16 people in the United States. The Northern Territory has 3 people to cater to 260 million people in America and 60 million people in Canada. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Northern Territory has a far higher profile than Queensland has. That must be vindication of the fine marketing efforts of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. Certainly, operators in the Northern Territory are aware that there will be an ever-increasing number of tourists.

In conclusion, I will comment on the matter of the bed tax. My visit overseas convinced me how important it is that the Northern Territory government stick to its guns to ensure that the tax is introduced. Wherever I went in America and Europe, praise was heaped on the various governments and organisations that levied these charges on hotels. For example, Colorado raises some \$16m per annum from visitors and every cent goes into a trust fund and is spent on marketing Colorado. I think that our industry needs to become aware that the Northern Territory government has made this commitment, and that it is making this effort to promote the Northern Territory overseas and within Australia with remarkable success. It is only fair and proper that the industry realise that the efforts of the Northern Territory are limited in their funding, and that it should make a small contribution. When it realises that every cent raised through the tourism marketing duty will be spent on marketing the Northern Territory, I think it will see further success for tourism in the Northern Territory.

Prevocational Course in Katherine

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it true that the 4 instructors from the Territory Training Centre Annex at Katherine will not have their contracts renewed at the end of the year and that this will mean the end of the very successful prevocational courses that have been run in Katherine? Of the 10 people completing the course this year, already 7 have jobs.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot give the honourable member a yes or no answer at this stage because I have made arrangements to meet the federal minister to discuss several matters in relation to federal funding of particularly successful programs which seem to have some financial problems in the rearrangement of the federal Department of Education and Training. I believe that we are only talking about administrative problems. Certainly, I shall be making the federal minister aware that we have a number of successful programs which have been supported by the Commonwealth.

At this stage, there seems to be a possibility that some courses have not been recommended even though they follow the stated line of the federal government and the Prime Minister indicated that there would be extra emphasis on training, especially in respect of Aboriginal people. The courses provided at the Katherine Rural College are excellent. They are rated by the industry as being first class. Every year, every person who has undertaken the course mentioned by the member for Stuart has managed to obtain employment. That indicates not only that the program is working successfully in terms of its educational value, but that it is providing the training that industry requires.

I am most hopeful that we can reach a successful arrangement with the federal government regarding the continued funding of such courses. There are a number of others that are in limbo at the moment because of the changes. However, I think we can sort the matter out. I assure the honourable member that I will be making personal representations in an effort to ensure that that course and a number of others continue to be funded. Quite often, the Northern Territory government is castigated for not being able to provide training opportunities in remote areas. We have programs that are far more successful than the programs that were finally put into place interstate and we must ensure that they continue.

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.

20 October 1987

3. Aboriginal Employment

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In view of the Northern Territory Government's stated commitment to improving Aboriginal employment and in the light of recent reports indicating a decline in Aboriginal employment levels, what are the numbers of unfilled positions in each of the following categories:

- (a) Police aides;
- (b) Trackers;
- (c) Health workers;
- (d) Assistant teachers in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities; and
- (e) Teacher aides in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities?

5. Skywest - Aero-medical Services

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

What are the details of the cost to the Northern Territory government of the financial, legal and other arrangements made with the Skywest Company to finalise negotiations allowing Skywest to begin the aero-medical services in the Northern Territory?

23 February 1988

15. School Cleaning and Maintenance

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What were the amounts paid out during 1987 for contracts to provide:

- (a) ground maintenance; and
- (b) cleaning

for each primary and secondary school in the Northern Territory?

19. Northern Territory Land Management

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many grants of land have been made to the Northern Territory Land Corporation (NTLC) since its inception in 1986?
2. How was each grant valued and what was the valuation in each case?
3. For what purpose was each grant of land?
4. Which parcels of land were so granted?
5. When was each grant made?
6. Was each decision to grant land discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which grants were not discussed?
7. How many grants of land were made to its predecessors, the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (NTDLC) and the Northern Territory Conservation Land Corporation (NTCLC)?
8. How was each grant valued and what was the valuation in each case?
9. For what purpose was each grant of land?
10. Which parcels of land were so granted?
11. When was each grant made?
12. Was each decision to grant land discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which grants were not discussed?
13. Which parcels of land have been purchased by the NTLC, the NTDLC and NTCLC?
14. What was the purchase price of each such parcel?
15. For what purpose was each such parcel purchased?
16. When was each such purchase effected?
17. Was each decision to purchase land discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which purchases were not so discussed?
18. Of which parcels of land has the NTLC, the NTDLC or the NTCLC divested itself by way of sale, grant, gift, or any other process?
19. For what reasons were the transactions referred to in question 18 above carried out?
20. When was each transaction referred to in question 18 above carried out?

21. How was the value of each grant, sale gift or other divestment of land valued and what was the valuation in each case?
22. Was each transaction referred to in question 18 above discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which such transaction were not so discussed?

Reference: Notice of Determination in respect of Gregory National Park (Northern Territory Portion 3124) to the Northern Territory Land Corporation - Northern Territory Government Gazette No G32 of 12 August 1987, page 3.

20. Staffing of Giles House

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many staff are employed at Giles House?
2. In which categories are these staff employed?
3. How many people have held the position of Superintendent at Giles House during -
 - (a) 1984;
 - (b) 1985;
 - (c) 1986; and
 - (d) 1987?
4. Of the other staff employed at Giles House, how many changes have there been in each category of staff in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987?

21. Parks and Reserves - Tourists

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

What was the number of visitors to each of the following parks, reserves or lands managed by the Conservation Commission in 1985, 1986 and 1987:

Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve;
Arltunga Historical Reserve;
Finke Gorge National Park;
Glen Helen Gorge Nature Park;

Berry Springs Nature Park;
Butterfly Gorge Nature Park;
Daly River Nature Park;
Douglas Hot Springs Nature Park;
Holmes Jungle Nature Park;
Howard Springs Nature Park;
Imbrawarra Gorge Nature Park;

Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park;
Katherine Gorge National Park;
Keep River National Park; and
Mataranka Pool Nature Park?

22. Macassan Prau Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. How much has the Macassan prau re-enactment cost the Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences?
2. What is the estimated cost of construction of a second prau?
3. What is the anticipated cost of getting a second prau to the Yirrkala museum?

23. Advertising - Channel Eight, Darwin

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How much did government departments and authorities spend on advertising on Channel 8, Darwin in 1987?
2. What was the breakdown of that amount by department and authority?

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987?
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey?
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips?

25 June 1987

2. **University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-time students are enrolled at the University College of the Northern Territory?
2. How many part-time students are enrolled?
3. How many students who completed Year 12 at Northern Territory schools are:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents at the University College?
4. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Arts faculty?
5. How many:
 - (a) full-time; and
 - (b) part-timestudents are in the Science faculty?

ANSWER

1. 67 full-time students (plus 11 additional full-time enrolments for semester 2 approved to date).
2. 144 part-time students.
3. (a) 18 full-time students (10 in Science faculty; 8 in Arts faculty).
(b) 1 part-time student (Arts faculty).
4. (a) 45 full-time students.
(b) 119 part-time students.
5. (a) 22 full-time students.
(b) 25 part-time students.

Total enrolment (including 9 external students) = 220.

23 February 1988

**6. Darwin Private Hospital
Staffing**

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. How many staff members at the Darwin Private Hospital are on leave from the Royal Darwin Hospital?
2. Are those staff covered for superannuation by virtue of the arrangements related to their leave of absence, rather than proper employer-employee provisions which would be the case in a private hospital established under normal conditions?

ANSWER

1. There are currently 22 employees of the Department of Health and Community Services working at the Darwin Private Hospital. All have applied for and been granted 12 months leave without pay from the department, including approval to engage in outside employment with DPH during the 12-month period.
2. Superannuation arrangements for the employees concerned is a matter of personal choice. As members of either the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme or Northern Territory Government and Public Authorities Superannuation Scheme they may choose to continue their contributions, thereby retaining entitlements, to either scheme during their period of leave without pay. Alternatively, they may be able to negotiate superannuation coverage arrangements with Darwin Private Hospital but that is a matter between individual employees and DPH.

**7. Royal Darwin Hospital and Darwin Private
Hospital Integration and Disease Control**

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. What are the details of the integration of Darwin Private Hospital and the Royal Darwin Hospital in respect of facilities such as theatres, bearing in mind the stringent controls needed for control of infectious disease, in a way that is compatible with the infectious diseases policy of the Royal Darwin Hospital?
2. Have actions circumventing the fly prevention measures introduced at the Royal Darwin Hospital several years ago taken place at the Darwin Private Hospital?
3. Did any formal liaison take place between the Health Department and the Darwin Private Hospital as far as the integration and liaison of infectious disease control within the Royal Darwin Hospital building is concerned? If not,
(a) why was the decision not to consult made; and

(b) was it made with the minister's knowledge?

ANSWER

1. Darwin Private Hospital accepts the need to comply with RDH procedures to maximise disease control.

The advice of the RDH Infection Control Sister has been sought to ensure that infection control guidelines are uniform throughout the hospital. Weekly discussions between the Chief Executive Officers of the 2 hospitals routinely address the question of infection control.

2. Yes - with the exception of prohibiting pot plants. In 1983, the cause of a fly problem was traced.

As part of the measures introduced at that time, all pot plants were removed from the hospital even though they were not found to be a source of the problem. Advice from entomologists involved in fly control is that pot plants should not be a source of breeding for flies providing that care is taken in selection of soil and regular cleaning of the pot is carried out to prevent discarded food rotting in pots.

RDH will not be re-introducing pot plants because of the work involved in keeping the soil clean. DPH have elected to use pot plants and have agreed to maintain them adequately.

3. Yes. Written into the lease agreement are clauses requiring DPH to take reasonable steps to ensure that its activities do not interfere with RDH, including causing illness to patients in RDH. The Territory has the right to inspect DPH for the purpose of infection control.

All cleaning and processing of linen and instruments used in surgery is either carried out in RDH or in a manner that is required of RDH staff.

**8. Royal Darwin Hospital
Relocation of Wards**

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. Were maternity patients and paediatric patients placed in close proximity on the seventh floor of the Royal Darwin Hospital because of overcrowding while the Darwin Private Hospital was being established, in the contravention of proper procedures with a view to the prevention of cross infection and at risk to those patients.
2. Has this practice and any other similar practices, ceased? If so, why were such practices, to quote the Minister's colleague, the Member for Port Darwin, regarded as 'acceptable inconveniences and a price for the establishment of a private hospital'?

ANSWER

1. Prior to handing over the third floor to Darwin Private Hospital on 11 November 1987, statistics showed 50% of all deliveries over a 12-month period were private.

Midwifery bedstate at that time was 46 beds.

Unpredictable fluctuations in numbers required that any patients in excess of the designated maternity beds be accommodated in general wards. It was judged that a substantial proportion of maternity patients would seek admission to the private hospital and so reducing the demand for maternity beds in the public hospital. However, the the 2 weeks following the opening of the private hospital, up to 46 maternity beds were maintained depending on demand.

Ten of these beds were initially located on the seventh floor and were used as an interim measure only. These beds were reserved for ante-natal patients only and were strictly segregated from the paediatric patients. Although this is well within infection control standards, the arrangement was restrictive to these ante-natal patients. Consequently, wards 5B and 6B were expanded by utilising vacant areas to accommodate maternity admissions in lieu of the seventh floor.

From 9 December 1987 midwifery bed numbers were reduced to 23 with an expandable capacity of up to 30. This reflects actual demand.

2. The practice ceased within 2 weeks when the Private Hospital became fully operational and attracted maternity admissions.

**9. Royal Darwin Hospital and
Darwin Private Hospital**

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is the Royal Darwin Hospital acting as a purchasing agent for the Darwin Private Hospital's supplies, including pharmaceutical supplies? If so,

- (a) what is the cost to the taxpayer of such a service;
- (b) what fee, if any, has been established for that service; and
- (c) in what way does this reflect a thorough estimate of the costs to the taxpayer of the public hospital's overall purchase of goods?

ANSWER

Under the agreement with Darwin Private Hospital, the Royal Darwin Hospital supplies medical sundries and pharmaceuticals to the private hospital at purchase cost plus 10%. It has been

assessed by the Chief Pharmacist that the actual cost to the Royal Darwin Hospital of handling and issuing these goods equates to a 10% on cost.

Products that attract federal sales tax are not supplied by the Royal Darwin Hospital.

There is a nil net cost to the public moneys.

10. Work Health - Hospitalisation

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. Has a policy been adopted by the Work Health Authority and its adjunct in the Department of Mines and Energy vis-a-vis the type of hospitalisation of workers suffering injuries or illness? If so, will such patients be placed in the Royal Darwin Hospital as private patients or will they be placed in the Darwin Private Hospital?
2. What would be the cost if such patients were to be exclusively placed in the Darwin Private Hospital, given studies of previous hospitalisation of work-related injury and illness cases?

ANSWER

1. There has been no change to the admission policy of the Royal Darwin Hospital. Patients have the right to be admitted with a doctor of their choice (private) or as public patients. Territorians now have a third choice - to be admitted to a private hospital.

The question of respective insurance coverage is a matter between patients and their insurers. Following advice from TIO, patients admitting as motor vehicle accident victims are advised that TIO does not cover private admission charges.

2. The Work Health Authority may be able to answer this question.

**11. Royal Darwin Hospital
Availability of Beds**

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. Did the minister say, in the Legislative Assembly on 22 October 1987, that private patients would be encouraged to place themselves in the Darwin Private Hospital? If so, how is this undertaking by the minister reconciled with the assurances he gave the Federal Health Minister on 24 November 1987?
2. Did the Royal Darwin Hospital have 46 public maternity beds available prior to the establishment of the Darwin Private Hospital and does the public hospital now have only 22 beds

available to public patients or private patients who seek a bed in the public sector hospital with a doctor of their own choice? If not, what are the reductions in public bed numbers?

3. Will the minister provide an undertaking that no patient will be encouraged or forced to a maternity bed outside the public wards of the Royal Darwin Hospital because of maternity ward cutbacks?
4. In emergency circumstances, will the Department of Health rent or lease back from the Darwin Private Hospital beds for public use?

ANSWER

1. No. However, on 29 October 1987, I stated that, 'It is expected that most people who are privately insured will use the Darwin Private Hospital. They certainly will be encouraged by the Royal Darwin Hospital to do so'.

Hansard of that same day also clearly records my statement that: 'It is not intended that privately insured people who for one reason or another might still wish to use the Royal Darwin Hospital will be prevented from doing so'. This is in line with the assurances given to the Federal Health Minister.

2. The Royal Darwin Hospital did have 46 designated maternity beds and now has 23 so designated. The demand for maternity beds has reduced from an average of 32 prior to the private hospital opening to 22 now. Such a reduction was expected as 50% of maternity patients had previously elected to be admitted as private patients. A significant percentage of patients seeking private admissions have chosen to seek admission to the private hospital. The maternity ward is accommodating all patients seeking admission to the Royal Darwin Hospital.
3. Demand for maternity beds fluctuates and it is standard practice to accommodate overflows in other wards within RDH. This practice will continue.
4. Provision has been made in the agreement to lease back staffed beds from the Darwin Private Hospital should the need arise.

12.

**Commissioner of Taxes
Unpaid Tax**

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

The Northern Territory Treasury Annual Report 1986-87 on page 17 has the following table:

	Number of Inspections	Unpaid Tax Detected	Tax Collected
1981-82 (9/12)	146	380 221	380 221
1982-83	148	846 213	655 888
1983-84	206	873 135	801 725
1984-85	176	595 505	437 224
1985-86	195	1 779 757	512 892
1986-87	128	1 422 155	642 504

1. Why is there a discrepancy between the unpaid tax detected and tax collected in each year since 1982-83?
2. What action is being taken to reduce or remove this discrepancy?

ANSWER

1. Specific details relating to individual tax payers cannot be given as these may breach the confidentiality provisions of the tax legislation. However, the discrepancy between unpaid tax detected and tax collected during the relevant years is accounted for by a number of factors.
 - (a) In many instances although the tax is identified in a particular year, arrangements may be entered into which provide for the tax to be paid over a period of time extending beyond that year. This is accepted practice and a number of such arrangements have in fact been entered into. The tax collected will progressively be credited to the relevant year, which will narrow the gap between unpaid tax detected and tax collected over time.
 - (b) Tax identified as unpaid may be subject to dispute. Taxpayers have the right to challenge an assessment. This may proceed through objection, to appeal to the Supreme Court with a consequent delay in collection. If the assessment is varied, or overturned, the total tax outstanding for the relevant year is adjusted accordingly.
 - (c) Tax identified through inspection may relate to a company that was in, or has subsequently gone into liquidation. The amount of tax ultimately paid after liquidation processes have been completed depends on the amount available for distribution to creditors. The amount rarely equals the identified tax liability and it may take some years to finalise payment.

- (d) In 1985-86 community councils were assessable for pay-roll tax as they did not fall within any of the recognised exemption heads. Since then these organisations have, by an amendment to the act, been accorded local governing status and entitled to exemption from the tax.

Steps are now being taken to reduce the outstanding tax by the amount previously assessed for these organisations.

- (e) There will always be some degree of lag between the identification of tax and its collection and this may cross financial years.
2. Apart from some \$200 000 in disputed assessments yet to be settled and the adjustment for community councils of some \$1.1m, action to reduce the balance of tax outstanding is being taken through normal recovery processes by arrangements, recovery action by the Department of Law and for companies in various stages of liquidation, through the appropriate legislative avenues.

13. Yulara Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. What is the nature of the Northern Territory Government contribution to the proposed \$17m Yulara development?
2. How much is it expected the Northern Territory contribution will cost?

ANSWER

1. It is proposed that an additional 60 housing units be constructed at Yulara for the Housing Commission as part of the 1988 program.

In conjunction with this program, and to keep pace with the increasing visitation to the resort, there will need to be some augmentation of the Yulara power station by the Power and Water Authority during 1988-89.

2. The housing cost is estimated at \$5m, as part of the \$17m total program. The balance of that program will be funded by the resort owning company. As it will be invested in revenue producing assets no increase is expected in the level of the general annual support payment made by the government to Yulara.

The cost of power augmentation has not yet been assessed by the Power and Water Authority.

14. Spaceport Facility

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has a feasibility study been undertaken into a spaceport facility in the Northern Territory? If so:

- (a) who undertook the study; and
- (b) what were the broad results of that feasibility study?

ANSWER

- (a) A feasibility study was conducted by a working party comprising:

Mr Geoff Chard (Chairman) Department of Industries and Development
Mr Ian Prince, Department of Industries and Development
Mr Ian Gordon, Department of Transport and Works
Ms Jane Large, Northern Territory Treasury
Mr Sam Durland, Department of Industries and Development (representing Nortrade)
Ms Barbara Singer, Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory
Mr Ken Ward, Department of Lands and Housing
Mr Graham Bailey, Department of Lands and Housing

In addition, assistance was given to the working party by:

AUSSAT Pty Ltd (Dr Gordon Pike)
CSIRO (Office of Space Science and Applications - Dr Ken McCracken)
Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce
Department of Science

- (b) Having regard to the availability of a suitable area of land required for launching purposes located as near as practicable to the equator, the study focused on a site to the east of Darwin.

The 4 common launch trajectories are the equatorial (equatorwards of east); 28.5° (from due east); 57°; and 108°.

In terms of frequency, the equatorial trajectory is overwhelmingly the most common, and the 108° the least common.

With reference to the preferred site, or any other possible coastal location, the study indicated that the drop zones for the various booster stages involved in launching vehicles into space coincides with centres of population in the cases of the equatorial, 28.5° and 57° trajectories.

Government considered the outcomes of the study and because of the range safety problems have decided against pursuing the prospect of establishing a launch facility in the Territory.

16.

Adult Education

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What were the number of positions of Adult Educator -
 - (a) available; and
 - (b) filledby location in 1986 and 1987 and the expected numbers at each location in 1988?
2. What were the numbers of full time and part time positions providing support services to Adult Educators in each TAFE office in urban centres for the years 1986 and 1987 and what are the projected numbers for 1988?

ANSWER

See following table.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

YEAR	ADULT EDUCATION - STAFFING													
	1986				1987					1988				
LOCATIONS *	B3	B2	B1	SA2	B3	B2	B1	SA2	A4	B3	B2	B1	SA2	A4
Darwin	1°	2°	4°		1°		2°						2°	
Pularumpi		1°		1°		1°					1°			
Milikapiti		1°		1°		1°					1°			
Croker/Warruwi		1°				1°								
Palmerston						1°	1°		1°	1°	1°	1°		1°
Bagot		1°		1°		1°		1°			1°		1°	
Belyuen		1°		1°				1°					1°	
Gunn Point			1°				1°					1°		
Darwin Prison			1°				1°					1°		
Nguiu		MS				MS					MS			
Darwin Rural		1°			1°	1°					1°			
Maningrida		1°		1°		1°		1°					1°	
Oenpelli		1°		V		1°		1°			1°		1°	
Jabiru		1°				1°					1°			
Nhulunbuy	1°	1°	1°	V		1°	1°	3°		1°	1°	2°		1°
Angurugu		1°		1°		1°		1°			1°		V	
Umbakumba		1°		1°										
Alyangula						1°								
Numbulwar		1°				1°					1°			
Yirrkala		1°		V		1°		1°			1°			
Galiwinku		1°		1°		1°		1°			1°		1°	
Milingimbi		1°		V		1°					V			
Gapuwiyak			1°				1°					1°		
Ramingining				1°		1°		1°			1°		V	
Katherine	1°	2°	5°	1°	1°	2°	3°	1°	1°	1°	2°	3°	1°	1°
Kath'n/Warruwi							1°				1°			
Kalano												1°		
Kalkaringi		1°				1°								
Barunga		1°		1°		1°		1°			1°		V	
Ngukurr		1°				1°					1°			
Lajamanu		1°				V					V			
Alice Springs	1°	1°	3°	1°	1°		2°		1°	1°	1°	2°		1°
Finke		1°												
Yuendumu		1°		1°		1°		1°			1°	1°	1°	
Hermannsburg		1°				1°								
Yulara		1°				V								
Tennant Creek				1°	1°	1°		1°	1°	1°	V	2°	1°	1°
Borroloola		1°		1°		1°		1°			1°		1°	
Elliott			1°			1°								
Kintore		1°				1°		V			1°			
Ali Curung				1°		V		1°					1°	
Ti Tree						1°					1°		1°	
Santa Teresa		MS		1°		MS		1°			MS			
Total Positions	4	31	19	20	6	31	15	16	5	5	26	15	16	5

*1988 Locations as at 27 Jan 1988

Explanation

- B3 Band3 Level Senior Education Advisor/Regional Coordinator based in Regional Centre
- B2 Band2 Level Senior Adult Educator or Senior Lecturer
- B1 Band1 Level Adult Educator
- SA2 NTPS Untrained Adult Educator. Normally held by community Aboriginal person.
- A4 NTPS Officer based in Regional Centre for Clerical Support.
- ° Adult Educator at location for all or part of the year
- MS Subsidy paid to Mission Authority to provide Adult Educator at location.
- V Position vacant for majority of year.
- NB 1988 locations of Staff are anticipated.

17. First Home Owners Scheme

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many grants were made out under the First Home Owners Scheme?
2. How much money was applied for this scheme by the Commonwealth?
3. How much was applied for this scheme by the Northern Territory?
4. What variations have been made by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments to this scheme since its inception in 1983?

ANSWER

The questions are not relevant to the Northern Territory Government. The first Home Owners Scheme commenced 1 October 1983 and was administered by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction.

It is now administered by the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health, corner Litchfield Lane and Knuckey Street, PO Box 2310, Darwin; Telephone 811339. The Northern Territory Government has not been involved in the administration of the scheme.

18. Crown Land - Proposed Development

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

What is the current status of the proposed development referred to in the Determination of grant of Crown Land in the Northern Territory Government Gazette No G45 of 11 November 1987 (P4) which refers to Section 1574 Hundred of Guy?

ANSWER

The former Minister for Lands and Housing approved the grant of a freehold title over section 1574 Hundred of Guy to the Conservation Land Corporation for a hunting and recreation area.

This is one of the more popular hunting and recreation areas close to Darwin. Development will be of a low level and comprise of boundary fencing already in place with perhaps some barbecue areas.

The vesting of the land in the Conservation Land Corporation will enable a formal management plan to be prepared and proper management and control exercised over activities in the area. The present study into the wetlands east of Darwin may have a bearing on further development plans.

Report 'Who Speaks for Katherine?'

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

When did he first see the report 'Who speaks for Katherine?'

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I first saw the report entitled 'Who Speaks for Katherine?' on the day that the Leader of the Opposition and the ABC attacked me. I want to be very accurate about the time because the Leader of the Opposition has been trying to mislead the people of the Northern Territory on a number of matters recently and this is just one of them. I first saw the report on the day that he was working with the ABC to put together an item on the matter on the 7.30 Report.

Tourism Study 'Towards 2000 and Beyond'

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he advise honourable members concerning the study called 'Towards The Year 2000'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I came under attack during the last Assembly sittings in 1987 because of the government's supposed lack of direction in developing tourism in the Northern Territory. At that time, I answered the member for Stuart's criticism by telling him that we were well advanced with the development of a major study entitled 'Towards the Year 2000'. A study group is currently travelling throughout the Northern Territory and is well advanced in discussions with the entire industry. The aim is to develop a strategy that will not only lead to a review of our policy and direction but address the issue of what infrastructure will be required for the future of tourism in the Northern Territory. This relates particularly to information concerning growth, bed rates, the type of accommodation required - whether it is budget, middle-of-the-range or 5-star - and the expansion in areas which are coming under extreme pressure, such as camping grounds.

In these times of economic hardship, members opposite argue that the Northern Territory economy is in such a state of decline that all is lost. On this side of the Assembly, however, we share a renewed optimism for the future of the Northern Territory. I can say that unequivocally because of a confidential document which landed on my desk this morning and which is about to be circulated among members on this side of the House. It is an update of the tourism infrastructure which is planned or under construction in the Northern Territory and it states that the amount of money planned to be spent on tourism and related infrastructure in the Northern Territory is \$600m. That represents a 50% increase on the amount which I advised this House of in September and October last.

'Towards the Year 2000' includes a major study of the wetlands of the Top End and a major study of the Gulf region. An additional study is looking at a 5-year plan for tourism development. It is a very important initiative because it comes at a time when there is increasing competition in Australia to attract both international and domestic travellers.

One particularly important aspect relates to our image. Not so long ago, everybody automatically thought of the Northern Territory as the outback of Australia. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland all now lay claim to the outback of Australia. The outback now includes Mildura, Broken Hill and western Queensland. In fact, Queensland is rude enough to claim that the Gulf country in the Cape York region is outback Australia. We have not exactly lost the initiative because I think we will always retain the basic identity of being the true outback but it is important to note that interstate governments are initiating massive advertising campaigns to take advantage of what we have created: the image of outback Australia. We are therefore working on developing a new approach and part of the purpose of my forthcoming overseas visit is to promote an image which was very successful in the last marketing exercise: the equity participation of Aboriginal people in tourism and the development of further infrastructure.

I have 4 documents that I will table for the information of honourable members. There is a brochure that has been distributed to every pastoral property in the Northern Territory encouraging them to become involved in tourism. That is one of the images that we will be developing. The opportunities are infinite for members of the pastoral industry to become involved in tourism. There is a brochure aimed at Aboriginal communities explaining in fine detail answers to all the questions that they may have about tourism. It is entitled 'Tourism Awareness'. There is a new guide to Northern Territory Aboriginal tours, arts and crafts entitled 'Come Share Our Culture'. Also, I will table for the information of honourable members the document that has won just about every possible award: 'People of Two Times'. That document dates from 1985.

This study will highlight many of the problems that have already been identified and, more importantly, it will put them in perspective. It will set a direction in which the Northern Territory needs to head to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is developed within the necessary time frame to enable the people of the Northern Territory to benefit greatly from the obvious economic advantages of tourism. I believe that, ultimately, it will become one of the biggest income-generating and employment industries in the Northern Territory.

Report 'Who Speaks for Katherine?'

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Can he confirm that a copy of the report 'Who Speaks for Katherine?' was handed to an officer of his department in October 1987 - 1 month after the report was completed? Can he also confirm that the person who supplied the copy of the report was the Secretary of the Katherine Social Planning Committee and that the person who received it was the secretary of his own department? If he can confirm that, can he tell this House why he did not get to see that copy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not brought to the Assembly copies of all the so-called interim reports on this matter. I think, Mr Speaker, there are about 6 or 7 of them.

Mr Smith: So you have seen interim reports and done nothing about them?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr DALE: I was handed those reports by the chairperson of that committee a couple of days ago when he came from Katherine to talk to me about this subject because he was so disgusted with the Leader of the Opposition's misrepresentation of the entire issue. It seems that all the Leader of the Opposition has done since last year is to change his hairstyle and downgrade the health and community services portfolio in opposition ranks by taking it away from a very reasonable and responsible member, Mr Lanhupuy.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I have asked a very specific question and the minister is doing his best to avoid it. He should either answer or sit down.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, that simply shows how long it takes to get a totally incompetent person upset.

Transportation of Handicapped Children

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Could he advise what arrangements, if any, have been made this year for the transportation of handicapped schoolchildren within the Darwin area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Ludmilla has an ongoing interest in handicapped children. Honourable members will no doubt be aware that the member has the Ludmilla Special School within his electorate and that he takes a very specific and constructive interest in that school. The contracts for the transportation of handicapped school children in the Darwin area have now been finalised. 10-year contracts have been let, worth a total of \$272 000 per annum. The contracts were re-let late last year after some rationalisation and reassessment of the tender documents which has resulted in some savings as well as an improvement in the level of the service itself. Contracts have been awarded to 3 companies: Ace Taxi Trucks, Keetleys Tours and Chadwick's Transport and each will be serving specific areas. In addition, there is provision for taxi transport of some specific individual schoolchildren.

The Territory government is very mindful of the need and the right of all Territorians to education and I am sure that the new service will prove to be most acceptable and most efficient. I congratulate the companies which have won the contracts. I understand that they have special new equipment designed to last for at least 15 years. Once again, I compliment the member for Ludmilla on his very positive attitude towards this sector of the community.

Incidents at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I preface my question by thanking him for his previous vote of confidence. Is it a fact that a security guard has been assigned to the maternity ward at Darwin Hospital? Is it also a fact that this follows 2 attempts at baby snatching by psychiatric patients from the adjoining ward? Finally, when will he make some lasting arrangements to protect newborn babies and their mothers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there was a second incident of a person from the psychiatric ward wandering into the maternity section of the hospital in the last week or so. I was concerned about the incident and I have instructed the management of the hospital to take all necessary steps to ensure that such an episode does not recur.

Tax Estimates

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

On Friday 29 January 1988, the Leader of the Opposition was quoted on ABC radio as saying that the latest quarterly accounts showed that Territory taxation is down 7% on estimates in the areas of stamp duty and payroll tax. Can he confirm this situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Casuarina for his question. It is my sad duty to inform this House that the Leader of the Opposition has got it wrong again. We know the Leader of the Opposition is going through a difficult time with his charisma implants, a new hairstyle and the aggressive nature that we have witnessed for the first time this morning. Probably, this results from the activities of the committee that has been established to advise him. I have to tell him that the advice he is receiving is still not helping his image at all.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister has been asked to address a specific question and has not come within a bull's roar of that at this stage.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would ask the minister to relate his reply to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I was merely trying to point out that no amount of advice can help the Leader of the Opposition. He is about as organised as a tossed salad and as politically effective as Dennis Thatcher.

Mr Speaker, before we examine how he got it wrong, I would like to quote a comment which the Leader of the Opposition made on ABC radio this morning in his contribution to the economic debate. He said: 'It is no use denying that problems exist'. We should carve that in granite as a testament to great socialist economics. Our gloomy spokesman on economic affairs has absolutely no idea what the problems are or how to address them. How anyone who cannot understand quarterly accounts can purport to offer informed comment on our economy, I don't know. The last time we issued financial statements, he could not tell the difference between an annual and a quarterly account, as the Hansard will show. This time, he can't add up.

For the benefit of honourable members opposite, I will outline the real situation on our stamp duty and payroll tax estimates. Our 1987-88 budget shows provision for an estimated \$18.025m revenue from stamp duty and \$54.5m from payroll tax. Our estimates on each have been revised downwards by \$975 000 and \$400 000 respectively; that is, the expected total revenue from these 2 items of \$72.5m is down by a total of \$1.375m. My calculator indicates this to be a 1.9% reduction and nowhere near the 7% alleged by the Leader of the Opposition.

As always, the quarterly accounts provide only an interesting snapshot of the budget at that particular time. They are not a good indicator of end-of-year results unless they refer to the end of the June quarter and I never use them as an opportunity to express either praise of or concern for the budget's progress. I keep telling the Leader of the Opposition about this but he cannot help himself and insists on making inane statements predicting doom and gloom every time such accounts are released. Even the member for MacDonnell reckons he could do a better job as Leader of the Opposition. The mind boggles, Mr Speaker!

The Leader of the Opposition reminds me more of Walt Disney's sorcerer's apprentice than of a wizard. Obviously, he is recognised as such by the member for MacDonnell. We all know how dangerous a little knowledge was in the hands of the apprentice. I believe that Mickey Mouse starred in that production and Mickey Mouse economics is an apt description of the Leader of the Opposition's financial abilities.

Proposed Anderson Development

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

There has been considerable comment of late concerning the proposed Warren Anderson development. When will he be in a position to release further details on that particular proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question because it gives me the opportunity to make a few basic facts clear. Firstly, the government has received a proposal which has the potential to inject a significant amount of capital works into the Darwin economy.

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, in response to the member for Koolpinyah, I would suggest she looks very carefully at what she says about ripping up the Stuart Highway and the multiplier effects for the Darwin economy. It might help a road contractor and an asphalt maker, but what will it do for businesses in Winnellie and Berrimah and many of her subcontractor constituents who are suffering as a consequence of reduced outlays on capital works?

The reality of the situation is that a proposal has been brought to government which provides a very interesting and potentially exciting conceptual structure for this end of the city. If it is responsible and viable, it could provide the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the future structure of this section of the Darwin central business district.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: More office space will not help the situation.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I wish the member for Koolpinyah would button up and listen. She might learn something.

Mr Speaker, at this stage, we have simply received a proposal. The government is giving it serious and priority consideration in terms of the economics, practicality and the appropriateness of the project. No decision has been taken, even in principle, to proceed with this venture. It is, however, being examined very seriously. I am not prepared to be bulldozed into rushing the decision and neither is my government. We will address the

matter seriously and as a matter of urgency. When the full analysis has been completed, I will be in a position to advise the honourable member whether we will proceed with it or not. I will then be in a position to address the many questions that are of obvious concern to the community, particularly matters that the member for Koolpinyah keeps chattering on about across the room.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Aren't you going to tell us when you tell him?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I will be happy to advise all honourable members of the situation if a decision is made during the course of these sittings. Otherwise, statements will be made publicly and honourable members will have the normal opportunities to find out exactly what is going on. I can assure all honourable members that we are undertaking a detailed analysis of the cost benefits of the proposal to the government and to the Northern Territory community as a whole before making any final decision.

Tenancy of Howard Springs Community Health Clinic Building

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I have heard well-founded rumours that the minister has made up his mind concerning the tenancy of the Howard Springs Community Health Clinic building which has been vacant for over 6 months. Can he confirm whether a decision has been made in relation to which private medical practitioner has been successful in gaining the rights of tenancy for that building?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all honourable members will be aware that the community health centre at Howard Springs was closed because we had to make cutbacks after the federal government made enormous cuts affecting our budget. I said that, despite the closure of the centre, people who lived in the area previously serviced by it would not experience any reduction in the quality of services which they had previously received. Let me say that that is in fact the case up to this time.

I also said at the time that I believed that the closure of the centre should encourage some private practitioners to show an interest in setting up business using the facility. That, in fact, has been the case. Several doctors have put submissions to me concerning the provision of private GP services using the facility and, I might add, some of the submissions have also proposed pharmaceutical and dental services.

I have also received submissions for other uses of that building and I am now looking for other premises in the area to accommodate those services.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Are you going to tell us what they are?

Mr DALE: When the appropriate decisions have been made, I will certainly be letting the Assembly know.

The submissions have all been considered in detail. It is true that it appears that one general practice will be going into that particular facility. Negotiations on the actual details of the deal are being examined at the moment. I anticipate that the general practitioner service will be operational in the Howard Springs area by the end of April.

Traffic Roundabout in Alice Springs

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

At what stage are the plans for the establishment of a traffic roundabout at the major Alice Springs intersection of Stott and Leichhardt Terraces?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, works on that particular intersection are about to commence. A \$270 000 contract has been awarded to an Alice Springs company and work is expected to be completed by May or June this year. Honourable members will be well aware that the intersection has been extremely dangerous and was the scene of a fatal accident late last year. The member for MacDonnell, who resides in Alice Springs, might not be particularly interested in this matter but I certainly applaud the member for Araluen for his interest in road safety matters.

In addition to the work on Stott Terrace, a study is well under way on all intersections and traffic flows in Alice Springs. It is being undertaken by ...

Mr Bell: I wrote a letter about that 9 months ago and I still have not heard anything.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell is again illustrating his lack of attention in this House because the matter was reported on in the November sittings last year. The study will address all of the intersections and dangerous locations in Alice Springs and, I am sure, will lead to some sensible, practical and economic solutions to those problems.

The problem of the intersection referred to by the member for Araluen will be solved by the installation of a roundabout. Honourable members may be aware of the benefits of roundabouts as opposed to more formalised traffic signal arrangements. It is interesting to note that some public relations work carried out in Darwin recently by the Department of Transport and Works has indicated that some sectors of the community are concerned about the use of roundabouts. It seems that some people who are entrenched in their driving habits and have not been exposed previously to the use of roundabouts have some fears about them. These people tend to be older than 45, and perhaps honourable members might like to help allay such fears.

Roundabouts are certainly a cost-effective means of traffic control. They do not have the maintenance costs of traffic lights and they certainly help with traffic flow. Interstate experience and the operation of the few roundabouts which exist in the Darwin area now show that they are a most effective means of solving traffic congestion and, more importantly, dangerous situations which may result in serious or fatal accidents.

Child Protection Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is it a fact that his department has been unable to provide trained child protection workers to investigate reports of child abuse, except during office hours? Has this been the case since May 1987? Is it a result of his department's failure to negotiate appropriate pay levels for after-hours work?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, welfare workers have of course been very busy working in the area of child abuse and I intend making a ministerial statement regarding that matter during these sittings. It is also the case that there have been negotiations with welfare workers concerning the terms and conditions under which they will operate after-hours services. That matter is still being negotiated with the Public Service Commissioner.

Results of Minister's Overseas Visit

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

He recently undertook an overseas visit, on behalf of the Chief Minister, to Hong Kong and South-east Asia. What positive achievements or new initiatives have developed as a result of that visit?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, since becoming responsible for this portfolio, this was my first trip to Asia on Trade Development Zone business although I have visited Brunei on matters not related to the zone. My recent trip was very useful in assessing the progress of our Trade Development Zone in the Asian region and in observing how the Northern Territory is being represented by our various agents. Honourable members will be aware that the Trade Development Zone has agents in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore-Malaysia and Taipei in Taiwan. I went to all of those places on this trip and participated in seminars for potential investors conducted by the Trade Development Zone Authority. These seminars had been organised over preceding months in advance of my attendance.

In addition to the seminars, we held many meetings with potential investors, some of whom had been to Darwin on more than one occasion during the past year and prior to that to examine the prospects for their establishing businesses here. We also held a series of press conferences at each centre, with the exception of Singapore, where we advised substantial gatherings of the local media. I point out to honourable members that it is not always easy to raise enough interest in places like Hong Kong to get together a decent-sized press gathering. That is because, as a world centre of finance and business, it is a place where there is a great deal of news which, in many cases, is seen as having more importance than information generated by the Northern Territory. However, I was very pleased to see that, as a result of the hard work of our representatives there, we were able to put together a press conference attended by representatives of 10 separate organisations, including radio as well as newspapers, leading to extensive coverage.

It is important to note that every state of Australia is now represented in Hong Kong, which is the centre of the push for Asian investment. With one exception, all states use local Hong Kong agents rather than people from Australia. Australian Embassy staff in Hong Kong advised me that the Northern Territory's profile in Hong Kong, in circles in which investment is chased, is the highest of all the states. The Northern Territory is very highly regarded by the embassy staff because of our policy towards investment here and because of the attitude taken by our representatives in Hong Kong in their many approaches to the embassy, particularly on matters relating to immigration and business migration. During the last couple of years, there have been many contacts between the staff of the Trade Development Zone, particularly its chairman, Ray McHenry, and immigration officers in Hong Kong. I was very

pleased to hear those officials of the Commonwealth government offer unsolicited praise for the way the Northern Territory government has gone about its business.

It appears that, unlike most of the states, the Northern Territory is seeking manufacturing investment in Hong Kong. We are seeking to bring people here to establish either a new business or a branch of their existing business and to create jobs for Australians with the attendant economic spin-offs for the whole of the Northern Territory and, indeed, the nation. It seems that many of the people who are seeking investment in places like Hong Kong, under the Business Migration Scheme, are primarily attempting to sell existing establishments, office blocks, or other forms of real estate. Whilst, I am sure that the states also seek investment in the form of overseas businesses carrying out manufacturing activities in Australia, that is the Northern Territory government's only thrust. We are not up there trying to sell off pieces of the CBD just because that will enable an investor to come here under the Australian Business Migration Plan. I am sure that is what lies behind the positive approach of the staff of the Australian Embassy to the Northern Territory government's thrust. It was certainly very good to hear that praise.

In Bangkok, 125 people attended our major seminar, which was held in the Australian Embassy. It was conducted very professionally by staff of the Trade Development Zone. Videos with a Thai commentary were shown. They depicted the zone in Darwin and the investment opportunities that exist. We also had interpreters present to translate speeches from people such as myself and the chairman of the authority. I am told that it is exceptional to attract 125 manufacturing investors to a seminar in a place like Bangkok. Normally, you are considered to be doing very well if you get 40. People there are very busy. The Thai economy is in really good shape with high levels of growth and high levels of investment from countries such as Japan, which are building vehicle factories, parts factories and so on at a furious pace. Thus, of all people in the Asian region, the Thais do not have many reasons to pack their bags and waste half a day at a seminar organised by some distant government such as that of the Northern Territory.

However, our local representatives in Bangkok have been hand-picked as people with the right connections with industry organisations. I point out that the Asians place an enormous emphasis on their respective industry associations. We have been targeting executives of chambers of commerce and chambers of manufacturers. A very good rapport has been built up and that is what resulted in 125 people attending the seminar.

As a result of that trip, between 35 and 45 new people will be coming to Darwin to have a look at the Trade Development Zone. Normally, such people come for 1 week and receive complete briefings on the government's policy and incentives for developing in the zone. We brief them on the transportation system, the communications systems, the education system and the real estate market. When investors move to the Northern Territory, they know exactly what they are letting themselves in for. They know exactly what our rules are, the nature of Australian wages and conditions and whom they can bring from overseas to assist their factories to become established and to train local workers. They know the cost of accommodation for any executives who may be based here, the costs of car registration and so on.

One group of Asian business people is leaving Darwin today at the end of its visiting program. That brings to a total 217 the number of Asian people who have paid their own way to Darwin to receive briefings on the Trade

Development Zone. Many of those people are in receipt of continuing information in respect of the zone.

I point out to honourable members that the trade zone now involves 80 non-government jobs. There are 4 manufacturers in place as well as the bond store. A couple of manufacturers are talking about expanding their existing establishments and I am sure that that will be the order of the day for the future.

Attracting investors has been a slower process than we had originally hoped that it would be. We are now working on the basis that the average time between the first contact with an interested company and its actual setting up in the zone will be approximately 2 years. It is a long, slow process. Once you become involved in migration procedures, the whole system bogs down to a fair degree.

While I was away, I had the opportunity to meet with the Thai partners in the Northern Territory Thai fishing joint venture which operates from Darwin. It is sending fish products interstate and has even sent trial shipments of fish products to the United States to see whether a market exists there.

In Taipei, I met with 10 members of the Taiwanese fishing organisation that has been licensed to fish Australia's northern waters for the last 9 years. I made it very clear to that organisation that the Northern Territory government would not support a renewal of a licence after October this year, when its current licence expires, unless that licence contains a condition which will lead to the establishment of shore facilities in Darwin. The representatives accepted that as a matter of principle and sought our assistance in negotiations with the Commonwealth to extend the period of the licence. To date, these have been issued for periods of 12 months. As the representatives rightly claimed, it is difficult to expect people to spend considerable money investing onshore in a foreign country when they only have a 12-month period in which to recoup their expenditure. We will be supporting a licence period of at least 3 years but hopefully it will be 5 years. I have reason to believe that the Commonwealth is amenable to that proposal.

I advise honourable members that the trip was very successful. Probably, it should have been my third visit rather than my first since assuming this portfolio. I see very good reasons for my making occasional visits to those areas in the near future. People in Asia place great store by having a government minister address their organisations.

Electrical Connection Fee

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Has the Power and Water Authority commenced charging a connection fee of \$5000 to consumers who wish to connect 50 kVA and more?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will get back to the honourable member with an answer during the course of these sittings.

Spillage at Ranger Uranium Mine

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he completely satisfied that the spillage incident at Ranger Uranium Mine on 2 February was contained without damage to the environment and that all safety procedures were followed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Casuarina for his question. Of course, his concern is twofold, arising from his membership of both the Northern Territory government and the Sessional Committee on the Environment. I understand that, in fact, he is the chairman of that committee.

I received a report on the incident at Ranger within 24 hours of its occurrence. In summary, the report said that the incident was minor and of no real concern, that no spillage occurred outside the restricted release zone, that personnel were not exposed to any danger and that no detriment to the environment had occurred. Senator Richardson made great play of the fact that he had demanded a report and so on. As a matter of courtesy, I have forwarded to him the report which I received.

What happened was simply this. On 1 February, Ranger restarted its mill after a 2-month shutdown. As is usual during start-up, froth was produced in one of the processors and it was allowed to flow in controlled fashion into the bunded area under the tanks that run-off was to flow into. The pump returning the liquid to the tank began to cavitate, causing the liquid to build up until it flowed through a crack in the bund. Some of this liquid flowed into a drain which discharges into the retention pond, which is exactly what is supposed to happen in these circumstances. Hardly a big deal, Mr Speaker, for Ranger, the Department of Mines and Energy or the Office of the Supervising Scientist. It was a very big deal, however, for the radical element of the environment movement: Chernobyl Mark II or the beginning of the end of civilisation as we know it. It just proved, they said, that the Coronation Hill project had to be stopped. Curious logic, Mr Speaker! How does a potential goldmine at Coronation Hill relate to an actual mine at Ranger? The mining processes are totally different and, in any case, the safety net worked just as it was supposed to do.

I am no longer surprised by the verbal excesses of the environmental lobby but what does surprise me is the apparent credibility it still retains with the media after so many examples of blatant exaggeration, scaremongering and half truths. If it continues in its present direction, people will be arrested for eating eggs on the grounds that they are consuming unborn chickens. We have come to expect immaturity from the messengers of doom in the Environment Centre, but I wish the media would show a bit more maturity in its reporting of the Environment Centre's outrageous beat-ups.

Sadadeen Secondary College Stage 2

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In view of the likelihood of overcrowding at the Sadadeen Secondary College in 1989, when does the government intend to build stage 2 and have it ready for use?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can advise the honourable member that the second stage of the Sadadeen Secondary College is on the design list. I am currently investigating, as part of the research into the Commonwealth's Green Paper, the further development of the interface between ASCOT - the Alice Springs College of TAFE - and the Sadadeen Secondary College. However, the member for Sadadeen can rest assured that the government of the Northern Territory has the situation well in hand.

Higher Education in the Northern Territory

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Higher education is in the spotlight at the present time and we must make sure that we are united in our efforts to come to grips with the issue; otherwise, Territorians will be disadvantaged. Unfortunately, it appears at present that those involved are moving in different directions. What is the minister doing to ensure that the Territory approach to the federal government regarding this very important issue is a united one?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Port Darwin for his question. My comments this morning relating to public squabbling were directed at the people whom I expect to sit down rationally around a table to discuss matters. They have, in fact, already begun to do this. I was attempting to say that this cannot be achieved through letters to the editor and disruptive activities circumventing the consultation process, such as reports falling off the backs of trucks or being wrapped in brown paper and changing hands in a bar. Mr Speaker, all I am saying is that people in responsible positions should not be seen to be choking themselves to death in public. However, I support rational debate and any public discussion of these matters has my full support. The more of it, the better. I am happy to see it happen.

It is important to note that, some 3½ weeks ago, I instigated a working party made up of those people who are directly involved in the decisions on and in the formulation of various responses to the Green Paper. These people, who come from the University College, the DIT and the Department of Education, have already sat around a table. They have developed their positions. We cannot really expect them to agree, but what I wanted to achieve was a starting point which related to people's known positions, their areas of agreement and their areas of disagreement. This has been achieved. The DIT council met last night. I have spoken to its chairman and I am aware of its direction. I have spoken to Professor Thompson at the University College and I am aware of his position.

Last Friday in Melbourne, I chaired a meeting of the Australian Education Council which involved the education ministers of all states and the federal minister, John Dawkins. There was unanimous agreement at that meeting concerning the general direction and the 5 principles of the Green Paper and it is important to note that direct discussions with the federal minister certainly highlighted areas not sufficiently addressed in the Green Paper. One of these relates to formula funding based on enrolment numbers and the student units which relate to those enrolments. Many things are happening in the area of higher education, including amalgamation, consolidation and other initiatives.

To his credit, John Dawkins gave a very detailed explanation at the ministers' meeting of matters of relevance to amalgamation and consolidation in such places as Tasmania, the Western District of Victoria, South Australia and various outback areas of New South Wales and Queensland. The matter is virtually an open book. In this context, one very important fact is that we have a timetable in place for the development of a submission to the Commonwealth. That has been agreed upon with the federal minister. I have fixed dates for continuing discussions. A further meeting of the Executive Council of the Education Ministers of Australia will take place in Melbourne in April, where the matter will again be raised. My prime objective is this: to achieve a situation that allows every Northern Territory education institution equal rights, on an equitable basis, with such institutions in the rest of Australia. That, of course, includes the appropriate funding.

In this context, I welcome some of the comments made on this morning's Territory Extra by the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education. He said: 'We must have a tertiary institution which not only is, but is perceived to be, equal with anything here in Australia or overseas. We also have to ensure that our education system fits in with the Territory's needs'. That is quite correct although he is about 3 weeks late. He also said that the Green Paper is a window of opportunity. It certainly is, but members opposite have a different interpretation of what that means. They believe it is an opportunity for them to backtrack at a million miles an hour on some of their previous statements on the establishment of the University College of the Northern Territory.

The member for Stuart knows full well that, this year already, enrolments at the University College total 440. We were not anticipating that level of enrolment until 1991. I have to ask the member for Stuart: what do Territorians want, and what do they need? Is their disinterest in the University College so obvious? Of course it is not. They are very encouraged by the quality of the degrees and the various courses at the University College, otherwise they would not be enrolling in the numbers that they are. The 440 enrolments at the University College include about 15 overseas students.

It is also important to note the level of enrolments at the DIT. Enrolments in advanced education courses are: external 199, full-time 826, and part-time 766, giving a total of 1711. Enrolments in the TAFE area are: external 46, full-time 314 and part-time 1855, making a total of 2215, coupled with 55 overseas students. By the way, that enrolment brings revenue to the college of some \$400 000 this year. Total enrolment at DIT is 3981.

There was one further comment that the member for Stuart made this morning on Territory Extra, and I will not be too tough on him because I would like to give him the opportunity to correct it. However, he did make it, and I am rather aghast if it reflects the direction of honourable members opposite because, if it does, we are in all sorts of trouble. He said: 'If we can put together something this year, a package which will allow our tertiary institutions' - and this is the part which counts - 'to be fully funded by the Northern Territory government with both recurrent and capital expenditure, to give us that standard excellence that we all agree on'.

Would the honourable member like to say that he was a bit excited at the time and could not collect his thoughts, and that really he meant the Commonwealth government? Mr Speaker, that remark shows the member's lack of attention to detail in addressing issues of considerable importance. We all know the role that the Commonwealth plays in funding higher education, not only in the Northern Territory but all over Australia.

What I want to highlight is that we have a process in place and a timetable. The member for Stuart is quite correct in saying that the Green Paper presents a window of opportunity. Face-to-face discussions with the federal minister were required to ensure that the directions which we want to consider and discuss in the Territory would be considered in the light, not only of their true merit to the education system in the Northern Territory but in terms of the best possible end result for Northern Territorians. Because of our enrolment figures, the funding formulas contained in the Green Paper will seriously disadvantage the Northern Territory unless there is consideration of special circumstances. That discussion has taken place and certain undertakings have been given by the federal minister.

I welcome the member for Stuart's announcement that he will be travelling to Melbourne or Canberra to catch up with the federal minister. I hope that he does not perform his usual trick of disrupting the whole process with his ranting and raving. I have a direction in place that has been accepted by the federal minister and I will be pursuing it rigorously to ensure that Northern Territorians are not disadvantaged in any way, shape or form in the areas of higher education, TAFE funding and the development of future facilities. It is an area of great concern to me. We have 5 or 6 different options open to us, all beneficial to Territorians and it is just a matter of reaching agreement with the federal government. I am very pleased with the attitude towards the Northern Territory displayed by the federal minister. I hope I can welcome similar comments and constructive criticisms from members opposite.

Effluent Overflow in Ludmilla Creek

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I refer to the widely reported problem of sewage effluent overflow in Ludmilla Creek in my electorate. Can he assure me that there is no health risk to the people of my electorate, particularly to the children of the Ludmilla Preschool, the primary school and the Montessori school and, secondly, that the problem is being addressed and will be rectified?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Ludmilla for his question. The issue has been of great concern to him and he has made representation to my office on several occasions over the last few days in relation to it. I can assure him that the sewage effluent backup has not gone as far upstream as the Ludmilla school or the area around his own electorate office. Ludmilla Creek appears to have become identified with the well-known creek which people sometimes refer to as a result of the opening of a valve to allow the ingress of stormwater into the sewerage system. The valve is left open during the wet season to allow this excess stormwater to dissipate more readily, mainly to protect some low-lying blocks in the Ludmilla area, particularly in section 4052.

The problem has arisen as a result of the sewerage pipe in that region developing cracks and slips in the joints which allow stormwater to enter the creek. The product that emerges is somewhat diluted as a result of the excessive flow of water but the Leader of the Opposition, who I understand has some expertise in this area, can verify that the material entering the creek included some matter rather more solid than water.

The problem with the pipe is being addressed by the Power and Water Authority which will carry out a process known as 'reveal and seal'. A television camera is placed in the sewerage line and travels along it. It has been suggested that some sympathy should be extended to the monitor in this process as he studies the passage of the television camera through the sewerage network. It is not an easy job. We on this side of the House of course are used to it because we get a fair bit of it thrown at us from the opposition from time to time. The reveal-and-seal process will identify the location of cracks in the joints, after which a special epoxy resin will be used to seal the lines. There is no need to dig up large strips of pipeline to carry out repairs. The procedure will cost in the vicinity of \$700 000 and that has been budgeted for.

The problem need not have been as great if a valve, which was installed to prevent the backup of material during heavy storms, had not been left open for an inordinate length of time. Officers will be paying more attention to the opening and closing of this valve in the future. I can assure the member for Ludmilla that the reveal-and-seal process will begin soon and I sincerely hope that that new name which has been given to the creek will soon be changed.

Incidents at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Will he confirm that a psychiatric patient from Ward 5 in the Royal Darwin Hospital was recently found on the sixth floor in the Special Care Nursery where premature babies are kept in humidity cribs or on life support systems?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm that at this stage. The honourable member referred to the sixth floor. I assume he is not referring to the recent case where a patient went from Ward 5A to 5B. I shall seek advice on the matter and advise the House during these sittings.

Shared Equity Home Ownership Scheme

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can he advise on the progress towards implementation of the proposed Shared Equity Home Ownership Scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Shared Equity Home Purchase Scheme is one of the innovations promised by this government. It will provide the opportunity for single-income families to be able to purchase part equity in a house and, in future years, to take up full equity. Such a program has been introduced in other areas of Australia with very limited success. A scheme was presented to Cabinet recently and, after some discussion, it was felt that there needed to be some changes to the scheme. I am concerned to ensure that mistakes which have occurred in southern states should not occur here. I have asked my department to investigate some aspects of the scheme, to examine the problems interstate and to produce a revised version. However, I would like the member for Karama, whose ...

Mr Bell: Why did you promise it at election time?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I can assure the member for MacDonnell and all honourable members in this House that not only will the concept provide assistance to low-income families but that it is a concept of which we are very proud. It will come to fruition. I can assure the member for MacDonnell that, prior to the next election, even constituents in his electorate will be able to participate in the scheme. Instead of deriding the scheme ...

Mr Bell: Not deriding.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will cease interjecting. I warned a number of honourable members yesterday. Today, I will tolerate none. I advise honourable members, as I have in the past, that this part of the parliamentary proceedings is being broadcast throughout the Territory. In fairness to the general public, honourable members should remain silent while questions are being asked and replies are being given.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, instead of deriding the scheme and the time involved in processing it, the honourable member should be concerned about the fact that, when the scheme was rushed into operation in some of the Labor states, it was found to have great problems which caused undue hardship to people who could least afford it. Most sensible people would agree that, before such a scheme is introduced in the Territory, we must ensure that all the pitfalls are covered and that it will not cause problems for the people who participate in it. It should achieve what it sets out to achieve, which is to enable single-income families to purchase at least partial equity in a house and to give them some stake in the Territory. The derisory comments of members opposite typify their attitude because they do not care about ordinary Territorians. They would rather see us rush into some process that causes hardship. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that I will not be doing that.

Magistrate's Dismissal of Case

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is it legal for a magistrate to dismiss a case when the prosecution is not in court on time, as happened in Alice Springs recently?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I believe that, under standing orders, it is not appropriate for me to give a legal opinion in this House to another member.

Child Protection Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

This is the same question that I asked yesterday and I hope I will get a straight answer. Will he confirm that there has been no after-hours child protection service by trained staff since May 1987, and will he confirm that this means that, at the time when children are most at risk, no trained staff are available?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in late May 1987, the welfare workers ceased providing after-hours welfare services in support of a demand for higher remuneration for participation on the after-hours roster. In July 1987, I approved a basis for negotiation with welfare workers to recommence the service in Darwin and Alice Springs with improved remuneration. The Public Service Commissioner's office has been negotiating with the relevant unions since that time.

Mr Speaker, 2 separate offers have been made to the unions and have been rejected. They have simply failed to respond. In fact, the unions have had an offer from the Public Service Commissioner now for quite some weeks. Probably unfortunately, I have been flagging my intention to take action in relation to the problem of child abuse. I wonder whether the unions' lack of response is an attempt to place pressure on me when I introduce measures to assist some of our children in the Northern Territory.

The service is being carried out by senior public servants. I know that the welfare workers of this Northern Territory government's Department of Health and Community Services are extremely dedicated people, and they are overworked. We are looking forward to negotiating a reasonable settlement to this dispute but, if the unions want to sit on their hands whilst we are waiting to implement measures in respect of child abuse, there is little that I can do to provide the appropriate services to the people of the Northern Territory and, particularly, our kids. Now that he has been given the enormous task of taking on the shadow ministry of health and community services, I would advise the member for MacDonnell to get off his butt. He should not just be sitting around and criticising what is happening in a very delicate area; he should get out and try to negotiate with the unions to resolve the issues.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I think the terms being used by the honourable minister are decidedly ...

Mr Dale: You used it yesterday.

Mr BELL: In answer to that interjection, Mr Speaker, I very rarely use anatomical reference of that sort inside the parliament. In terms of vocabulary, I appreciate that the Minister for Health and Community Services has a fairly severe limitation to a basic 500 words of English, but I would suggest that the half dozen of them that are offensive and unparliamentary should be ruled out of order.

Mr Dale: I have never claimed to be a linguist who sits around doing nothing but study words; I am a doer. I withdraw the term that I used, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I had not ruled on the point of order. I believe that there are probably more descriptive terms which I would regard as being unparliamentary. I do not know that the term used by the honourable minister would, at least in this instance, be regarded as unparliamentary, but possibly there are more refined words that could be used.

Army Worm Infestation

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he outline what controls on monitoring procedures have been introduced to combat the recent army worm infestation found in Top End grain crops?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, an outbreak of day-feeding army worm, *Spodoptera exempta*, which honourable members will be familiar with, was reported by several farms in the Katherine district on 28 January. These day-feeding army worms rarely cause extensive economic damage to Northern Territory crops. I am informed that the last serious outbreak occurred in February and March 1973, when quite large numbers of larvae severely damaged crops throughout northern Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The infested properties in the Katherine area have now been sprayed successfully. The spraying recommendations came from the department's entomologists in Darwin. All other crops around Katherine were inspected and all farmers were warned of possible army worm infestation, either directly, by phone or via broadcast rural reports.

The damaged sorghum crops have recovered extremely well from the army worm attack and only minimal yield losses should result. The entomology section has established a chain of pheromone traps which, as honourable members will be aware, are designed to capture only army worm moths. These traps are located on properties from Gunn Point to Daly Waters and should enable the early detection of any future army worm outbreak which will, of course, be responded to promptly.

Norman Lawson Case

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

Has he formally rejected a request from Mr Henry Lawson for a coronial inquiry into the suspected death of his son, Norman, and if so, can he explain on what basis?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Arafura for giving me the courtesy of advance notice of this question. The Norman Lawson case is a very tragic one, particularly for the family concerned. To remind honourable members, on Sunday 19 October 1986, Norman Lawson went to the old South Alligator crossing with 4 other persons. On Wednesday 22 October 1986, he was seen to walk away from the river crossing carrying a throw net. Since then he has not been sighted. An extensive police search and investigation has failed to locate Norman Lawson. The latest development is a recently reported sighting of Norman in the Darwin area and that is being investigated by the Darwin CIB. The investigation is being conducted as a missing person inquiry and is not subject to a coronial inquest.

To answer the honourable member's question specifically, the coroner has perused the file and has found that there is insufficient evidence to reach the conclusion that Lawson is deceased. It is not, therefore, within his jurisdiction to conduct an inquiry and that is why there has been no coronial inquiry. The matter has been referred to the coroner and he has said that there is insufficient evidence that young Norman is in fact deceased and therefore he could not conduct an inquiry. The matter is being treated seriously by the police as a missing person inquiry and the latest sightings are being investigated with vigour by our CIB.

Cullen Bay Marina Proposal

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Constituents of mine in Kahlín are concerned about recent activities in the form of drilling surveys being carried out in the area that is proposed to be developed as a marina. I ask the minister, what is the reason for the work presently being carried out, and what is the current position of the Hans Vos marina proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to be able to advise the member for Port Darwin, who has certainly pursued this matter on behalf of his constituents in recent times. The geotechnical survey work carried out in early February was supplementary to work carried out last year to ascertain the condition of the bottom of the harbour in that region, both in terms of the bedrock levels and consistency and, of course, the nature of the deposits above that. Obviously, that work is very important in order to estimate construction details precisely and, therefore, construction costs of the works associated with the Cullen Bay Marina.

Honourable members would be aware that, some 2 years ago, this government determined that it would support the development of a ferry terminal there, which previously was to have been located close to the Legislative Assembly building. When Hans Vos and his colleagues came forward with a proposal for a marina that would provide facilities for private boat owners, yachties and people who wished to live in that environment, his suggestion was that the terminal might be best associated with his development. The government was keen to see him pursue those endeavours and, in negotiations, has determined the most appropriate arrangements for a level of government investment to provide ferry facilities which would cater to charter boats operating in the harbour, now and in the future.

The work at Cullen Bay certainly had no impact on the environment. I suppose people assumed that the project was commencing, but the activity was simply survey work carried out by means of a small boat. The developer is now in a position to refine his estimates of costs and the market value of his proposal. He has received from the government a list of specific lease terms for the total development and that is adequate for him in his discussions with potential investors. We certainly wish him well because the marina would provide a much-needed facility and a most appropriate one for Territorians and tourists. It would also provide a level of construction work which would benefit the community. The ball is now very much in the developer's court; it is up to him to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposal and I look forward to hearing from him in the near future. I understand that he and his colleagues are currently interstate talking to potential investors and I hope that he will be able to proceed very shortly.

Northern Territory Pavilion at Expo

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Is it a fact that the Northern Territory Cabinet has made a last-minute decision to mount a pavilion at Expo, 10 weeks before Expo starts? Is it a fact that construction of the pavilion will cost in the vicinity of \$300 000 and is it also a fact that, as a result of making the decision at the eleventh hour, all construction and other work on the pavilion will have to be done by companies from outside the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will seek to address this rather convoluted and confusing question in the best way possible and take the opportunity to provide some information to the House in respect of the Brisbane Expo. It is true that Cabinet has taken a decision that the Northern Territory will now participate in the Expo in Brisbane. The government's earlier decision was that, because of the costs involved and the budgetary restraints imposed on the Northern Territory in the last 2 years, we could not afford to go ahead with the presentation at Brisbane Expo. At that time, a number of the states were equally considering their positions in relation to Expo.

Late in January of this year, Sir Lew Edwards, the organiser of the International Expo, wrote to me as Chief Minister requesting that we reconsider our position. He advised that he had kept aside some prime space at the Expo in case we were prepared to reconsider but that we needed to make a quick decision. He advised that, at that stage, all states were now participating in the Expo and also that its success is now well-assured with 7.1 million visitations already having been pre-sold.

Obviously, Expo will provide a significant opportunity for marketing of the Northern Territory both as a tourist destination and as a place for business investment. As a result, Cabinet took the decision to send officers from the Department of Industries and Development and the Tourist Commission to Brisbane to examine the feasibility of the Territory participating in the Expo. The report from that group came to Cabinet last week. It proposed that, for a total of \$500 000, we could mount a creditable and beneficial display at that Expo. Assistance is available from the federal government in the form of a \$100 000 subsidy and Expo organisers have offered to make staff available, at no cost to us, to hand out pamphlets and other information at the display. It will be used as a principal vehicle for marketing the Northern Territory, both for tourism and industry development, and the budget

allows for displays within the period. We are quite confident that the money will be efficiently and effectively used to promote the Northern Territory as a place to visit and a place to invest in.

We were assisted in our decision when our first budget review indicated the success of our strategy of restraint in recreating the financial foundations of our budget which has given us the opportunity to participate in more positive promotion of the Northern Territory. In that regard, I particularly compliment the many people throughout the public service who, over the last year, have gone through quite considerable trauma due to the reorganisation and restraint that has necessarily been imposed on them. Their efforts have greatly assisted us in achieving a balanced situation and have created the opportunity for us to act far more positively in promoting the development of the Northern Territory. I compliment the many people in the public service who, in difficult circumstances, have done a creditable job to assist us in what has been a very difficult and traumatic task. The government is confident it will be a positive initiative.

In respect of the honourable member's final point, I cannot provide details about who will be undertaking the development. The stand will be set up in Brisbane. We have been advised by the people who put forward the proposal that there is sufficient time to develop the stand and to display a very presentable face for the Northern Territory at this Expo. I look forward to its success and to our participation in what will be a very successful Expo.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, over the last 4 years ...

Mr Ede: No spin-offs for Territory business?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, if our government is down there promoting the Northern Territory as a place for investment and as a tourist destination, there will be a direct benefit to the businesses of the Northern Territory and the development of jobs in the Northern Territory. At the moment, I am unable to advise whether or not a specific contract is being let to a Northern Territory firm to construct this particular facility in Brisbane.

Darwin, Katherine and Jabiru Electricity Transmission Link

Mr REED to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he able to provide further information regarding the proposed electricity transmission line to link Darwin, Katherine and Jabiru?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am indeed in a position to advise the member for Katherine on developments in relation to the 132 kV transmission lines that are proposed to be constructed - one from Darwin to Katherine and another from Darwin to Jabiru. These are innovative proposals which offer an opportunity to put a power grid across the top half of the Northern Territory from some of the mining corporations developing in the Pine Creek and Cosmo Howley areas and perhaps even to provide reticulated electricity to the Douglas Daly farm region. I have spoken in this Assembly before about the economics of providing a powerline to connect the Katherine region with the Darwin Channel Island Power Station and the various economies that could be achieved as a result of that.

I would like to add that we have had full cooperation from Energy Resources of Australia who have entered into the spirit of the project on the basis of 'let's see what the bottom line is and then we will negotiate'. It has been extremely cooperative in its attempts to see this project become a success.

For the past 12 months, the authority has been pursuing proposals regarding the construction of the 132 kV transmission line interconnectors from Darwin to Jabiru, a distance of 270 km, and to Katherine, a distance of 300 km. Consultants have been appointed to coordinate work necessary for environmental impact statements and the preparation of transmission line and terminal substation technical performance specifications. Should project approvals be obtained, the present schedule is for completion by October 1989.

On 3 October 1987, the authority called for expressions of interest from parties seeking to design, construct, finance and own the interconnectors. By 11 November 1987, the registration closure date, 25 expressions of interest were received. After additional information was directed to the interested parties, 15 formal expressions of interest were registered and on 26 November 1987, 5 pre-qualifiers were issued detailed project performance specifications and invited to submit detailed proposals by 15 February 1988.

Mr Speaker, those processes have been carried out and a Cabinet submission will be made when the proposals have been assessed. We are looking for both legal advice and financial advice on the packages that have been provided to us and this is currently scheduled to be available by the end of March 1988. I will not go into the proposals in great detail because of their confidential nature, but they do offer Territorians a great opportunity to participate in the development of the tower structures for the 2 lines. The initial project proposals were budgeted at about \$62m. I understand that considerable savings can be achieved by having the 2 powerlines considered together.

There are some grey areas in terms of positioning power transmission lines in Kakadu National Park. We have engaged a consultant to work on that proposal and I certainly hope that it gets the go-ahead from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is not unusual to have power transmission lines in national parks and I certainly hope that common sense will prevail and that we do not have to put plastic branches on the towers to camouflage them. The need to supply power transmission lines into Jabiru is evident, now that we are developing Jabiru as a hub for Kakadu National Park. The development of the motel unit, and the interest in developing a new 200-bay caravan park indicate the need for increased power supplies. Electricity is presently supplied from the power house at Ranger Mine.

Equally, the rapid growth of Katherine, which was expounded upon by the opposition yesterday in a very negative way, has led to increased demand for electricity. With the new supermarket consuming almost 1 MW and the meatworks coming on stream and consuming about 1.5 MW, there continues to be an increasing demand for power in the region. When we developed the \$33m power station for Katherine, we installed an additional bay to supply another generator on that site. It is hoped that the economies of scale that may be achieved by the development of an interconnector from Channel Island to Katherine will alleviate the need to supply that additional generator and that we will be able to meet the needs via the excess capacity which currently exists at Channel Island Power Station. I, for one, look forward to the development of these 2 very exciting projects within the near future.

Assistance to New South Wales Liberal Party

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he assure the House and the people of the Northern Territory that no persons in the employ of the Northern Territory government or receiving incomes deriving from the Northern Territory coffers, have been sent or will be sent to New South Wales to assist Nick Greiner in his attempt to emulate Robert Askin?

ANSWER

No, I will not.

Incident at Berrimah Police Headquarters

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he give any information about an incident that occurred at Berrimah Police Centre earlier today?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question because, in the course of some heated debates in the last 24 hours, there has been some criticism to the effect that the police force has no human face, and people such as the Leader of the Opposition have inferred that the police are somehow engaging in unreasonable practices. In that context, I think it is valuable for all members present to hear of an incident which occurred this morning and which shows the extent to which our police are actively and sensitively involved in assisting members of the community in a multitude of ways.

I am advised that this morning a couple residing at Palmerston suddenly realised that their eagerly-awaited baby had decided to make an entrance into the world with very little warning. In the dash to town, they realised the impossibility of reaching the Royal Darwin Hospital in time and the father-to-be, who was driving the car, became quite distressed. What did he do? He drove immediately to where he thought he would get the best help in the quickest possible time. He went straight to the Berrimah Police Centre. There, in the car park, 2 police officers who were in the process of coming off duty after the midnight shift, assisted the couple to successfully deliver a baby daughter. The officers were Senior Constable Gary Wenck and Constable Fiona Pooley. The baby was delivered safely and the mother and child, both in good health, were taken by ambulance to Royal Darwin Hospital.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the 2 police officers, who were obviously tired after a long and strenuous evening on night shift, for their prompt and considerate assistance. I add my own thanks to those of the parents of the child for this prompt and efficient assistance. It is yet another example of the way in which our police force acts in a wide range of areas to support the community. It also demonstrates how members of the force are regarded by the community as people to turn to when help is needed, contrary to the ill-informed criticism that comes from members opposite from time to time.

Pastoral Leases and Covenants

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Is the government equally vigilant in its administration of all pastoral leases and their covenants, especially in the Top End and, if slackness in fulfilling these covenants by lessees is apparent in some cases, what will he do to make pastoral lessees responsible for their stewardship of government land?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no knowledge of anything that would indicate that preferential treatment is being given to any particular pastoralist in any area.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Do you want me to tell you which one?

Mr MANZIE: If the honourable member can supply me with information which she thinks may lead me to suspect that there is a possibility that this is happening, I will certainly take up the matter on her behalf and also on behalf of the government. Obviously, within reason, we have a duty to ensure that people do the right thing in relation to their land and in relation to covenants. I think we would also expect the officers concerned with that work to utilise some common sense in not acting immediately according to the letter of the law, but enabling problem situations to be resolved with goodwill on both sides. Most certainly, if the honourable member believes that there is a problem and can provide me with details, I will address it.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Psychiatric Patient at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, earlier today, I was asked a question by the member for MacDonnell regarding an incident of a psychiatric patient - or 'dangerous person', to use the term I think he used - going to Ward 6 of the Royal Darwin Hospital. Mr Speaker, I have received no report of an incident of that nature involving the special care nursery. However, I would advise the honourable member that, if his informants are going to give him a day-by-day description of every single incident that takes place at the Royal Darwin Hospital so that he may concoct questions ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Health and Community Services used the term 'concoct', which implies that I am telling lies to the Assembly. I request that he retract that.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I was simply implying that the honourable member is being given information by staff at the hospital, and is using that to put together questions to ask in this House.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr DALE: Perhaps I understand the word 'concoct' better than the honourable linguist does. However, I would point out to the honourable member and his informant that, if an unfortunate woman happens to be under some stress and strain that requires her to be in Ward 5A, and if that lady has had a baby at about that time, then I think it absolutely reasonable that such a woman, escorted by a nurse, should be able to go and see her own child. I

hope the member for MacDonnell does not want me to lock that woman away from her child.

TAB Turnover

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

Can he advise that the immediate TAB turnover increased following linking with the Victorian TAB last year and that the increase has been sustained through 1988?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly can provide that information to the member for Casuarina. May I preface my answer by saying that I am in a position to talk about racing, which is far more than members of the opposition appear to be able to do. Yesterday, I rang the office of the Leader of the Opposition to find out who was the shadow spokesman on racing. Nobody knew who it was and I was told that I would be rung back. Later, we rang again. They were still not sure but it would appear that there has been ...

Mr Leo: I have always been the spokesman. I am over here, Barry.

Mr COULTER: Could somebody tell the Leader of the Opposition's office staff that, please, because they don't know.

Mr Leo: I told you yesterday.

Mr COULTER: It appears that there has been a division. Racing has been kept within one area whilst the member for MacDonnell has kept, say, the casinos. My job would be made considerably easier if I knew, and the Leader of the Opposition might also be happier if he knew, who the shadow spokesman on racing was. He never knows who is behind his back anyway.

Mr Speaker, the TAB turnover has been a very big success story. The TAB was knocked by the opposition which argued that it should not have been set up and had no place in the Northern Territory. The government, however, resolved to bring in the TAB.

The TAB turnover for 1987-88 is now estimated to be \$30m. For the benefit of honourable members, the turnover in 1985-86, when the opposition was canning the TAB, was \$18.6m. In 1986-87, it was \$22.6m. The TAB budgeted for a turnover of \$25.8m this year, a 14% increase on the previous year's. However, turnover is now expected to reach \$30m, which will be a 33% increase over the 1986-87 figure.

The increase can be attributed to 4 factors. As the member for Casuarina mentioned, the first is the linking of win/place pools with the Victorian TAB. Sky Channel has made a fantastic success of racing right throughout Australia. The interest that is now shown in racing as a result of the advent of Sky Channel has helped promote that industry considerably.

With PubTAB, we have come a long way in 3 years. Three years ago this Legislative Assembly had legislation outlawing alcohol on betting premises. Today, we have betting premises in hotels. PubTAB has been an outstanding success. Whilst the shadow spokesman on racing wants to talk to me about that, the facts cannot be denied. The turnover and the amount of money available to racing has increased greatly since the advent of PubTAB. I guess

the opposition will knock that too. I will deal with that when members opposite knock it, as they have knocked every other government initiative.

The flow-on from major promotional campaigns from 1987 has also had a dramatic effect on racing in the Northern Territory. The extra increase from PubTAB has not reduced the turnover at agencies and that is interesting. I guess that is one of the issues which the shadow spokesman will raise when he gets ...

Mr Leo: What has it done to the oncourse bookies, mate?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the honourable member asks what it has done to oncourse bookies or what it has done to the people attending race clubs. When the TAB legislation was introduced, the member for Fannie Bay, who was then the responsible minister, brought into this Assembly an article which predicted exactly what would happen to racing crowds in Australia on the basis of what had occurred in North America: the crowds would diminish. At Flemington, one of the biggest racecourses in Australia, less than 5000 people attended a recent meeting. Reduced oncourse attendances happen to be a fact of life but the opposition has no understanding of the facts of life. Racing will continue, though, and the major carnivals will be the drawcard. The money that is contributed via PubTAB and so on will assist racing throughout Australia.

The contributions from TAB to the Racecourse Development Fund, which is 1.5% of turnover, will increase to \$450 000 this year against the original budget of \$387 000. It is estimated that the TAB's net profit will be around \$1.2m and this will result in the doubling of the TAB contribution to Consolidated Revenue this year. The contribution to the Industry Assistance Fund will be \$600 000. I accept that there has been a downturn in receipts from bookmakers' turnover tax, but I suggest that that is simply a fact of life. I would like to point out to the shadow spokesman on racing that Pioneer Park in Alice Springs now has an Adelaide-based bookmaker who flies there each weekend. That is an example of confidence in Northern Territory racing and I congratulate the person concerned. We have heard opposition members whingeing about TAB before. I have demonstrated to this side of the House that the TAB has been very successful in the Northern Territory.

Assistance to New South Wales Liberal Party

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

How many people in the employ of the Northern Territory government have been sent to New South Wales to assist the New South Wales Liberal Party in the forthcoming New South Wales election, for how long have those people been sent and what is the cost to the Northern Territory taxpayer of sending those people to New South Wales?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, let us put this into its proper context. It is true that, during election campaigns right around this country, political parties assist each other in fighting such campaigns. That has never been regarded as an improper course of action. It was not regarded as improper by members opposite when, during the last Northern Territory election campaign, they brought in Premier Bannon and his staff, federal ministers and their staff ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question has been asked and the Chief Minister will be heard in silence while he gives his reply.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the point that I am making is that assistance provided by political colleagues around the country is not an abnormal practice and it has never been regarded as an improper practice. The Leader of the Opposition took advantage of such assistance during his campaign last year. The member for Barkly and his group took advantage of people on the government payroll when fighting his election campaign last year. If I believe it will be of assistance to us ...

Mr Smith: Who is us?

Mr HATTON: The Northern Territory. If we decide that it is appropriate to follow what has been a common practice around this nation - providing assistance to political colleagues - I will do so. I was asked specifically in the first instance if I would give a guarantee that we would not do so and I said no.

Mr Speaker, I do not propose to answer the details of the honourable member's question.

Mr Leo: You do not intend to answer any part of it.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am prepared to consider putting assistance into election campaigns elsewhere if I believe it is appropriate. I do not apologise for it.

Government Consultancies

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

How many consultancies does Mr Graeme Lewis have with the Northern Territory government and what is the purpose of those consultancies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to my knowledge, Mr Graeme Lewis has no consultancies with the Northern Territory government.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
LNG Plant at Alice Springs

Mr COULTER (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, in Tuesday evening's adjournment debate, the member for MacDonnell asked some questions about the LNG plant to be established at Alice Springs. In particular, he was interested in the supply of LNG to Yulara. I would like to provide the information that the honourable member was seeking.

A contract was signed on 16 April 1987 between Energy Equity Corporation Ltd and the Power and Water Authority for the purchase of supplying regasified LNG at Yulara. Energy Equity Corporation Ltd will purchase gas from the Power and Water Authority to be supplied from the Palm Valley to Alice Springs gas pipeline, liquified at the Brewer Estate and delivered by road transport to the Power and Water Authority power generation facility.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I am quite sure the Clerk will correct me on this if I am wrong. I am certainly interested in the minister's answer but I believe that, whilst ministers are given a certain latitude to answer questions that have been asked in question time at some other stage, this does not apply in relation to questions raised in adjournment debates, as this one was. I believe that the minister's answer could be supplied in the adjournment debate.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The question is a legitimate one and the minister is entitled to supply an answer.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell said that he was interested in what the story was. I congratulate him for having the foresight to be interested in this particular matter because it is on the leading edge of technology and of great interest to Northern Territorians, particularly those who live in his electorate. If members listen, they will learn about some of the things I have put in place.

As I said, the regasified LNG will be available at Yulara and it will be delivered by road. One of the particularly exciting things about this aspect of the project is that the vehicle transferring the LNG to Yulara will also be running on LNG. In fact, as the LNG is being vaporised in the truck, the truck will be specially modified so that it can run on LNG. This has great potential for Northern Territory road transportation. The member for Barkly has been talking about this issue for some considerable time and I am sure he shares my interest in this very exciting project.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move a motion of dissent against your ruling.

Mr Speaker, speaking to the motion of dissent, what we have here is an unparalleled attempt by the Minister for Mines and Energy to extend the concept of question time as it has been used traditionally in this House and, I am sure, in other parliaments. I have never previously seen a situation in this House where a minister has risen in question time to provide information in relation to a question that was asked in an adjournment debate on a previous day. Mr Speaker, if you examine the logic of that, we might as well forget question time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am advised by the Clerk that a motion of dissent from a Speaker's ruling must be moved at once. Otherwise, it must be put on notice.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I move dissent against that ruling.

Mr Speaker, the position you have put to us is ludicrous. It has always been the practice of members on this side of the House to treat motions of dissent very carefully. We certainly do not treat them lightly. Mr Speaker, what you have just said in your ruling is that, when I put a matter to you 30 seconds or 45 seconds after it occurred, it was too late. I cannot accept that that is an undue delay. Mr Speaker, your ruling prevents us exercising our right to issue a challenge to yourself on the substantive question that was put to you in relation to whether the Minister for Mines and Energy can use question time to answer a question that arose during an adjournment debate. Mr Speaker, to argue ...

Mr Coulter: It is a success story; that is what you are worried about.

Mr SMITH: We are quite happy to hear the answer.

Mr Speaker, to argue, as you have done, that a time lapse of 30 or 40 seconds makes it too late to put forward a dissent motion is absolutely ludicrous. We needed time to investigate what the standing order said. Do not forget, Mr Speaker, that the minister has done something which has never been done before in the history of this House. Before moving dissent motions, we need sufficient time to check the record to ensure that there is a point to argue. Mr Speaker, for you to say that 30 seconds is too long a period of time to take to do that is to debase the position you occupy in terms of ruling this House impartially and fairly. That is the basis of the dissent motion that we have put, Mr Speaker. Your ruling is not impartial and it is not fair because it deprives us of the opportunity to move a motion of dissent on a previous ruling which relates to a substantial matter that has never been addressed in this House before. That is why we are moving this dissent motion.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I would like the opportunity to put in context the seriousness of a dissent motion. I would also like to destroy the Leader of the Opposition's ridiculous motion of dissent. Mr Speaker, what we are actually debating is your ruling on the impartiality or fairness of a direction given to you by standing orders.

Let me make this point. If, as the member for MacDonnell stated in his speech in the adjournment debate, members opposite were seriously interested in hearing the answer to the question, they could simply have allowed the Minister for Mines and Energy to continue and to let question time proceed. The hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition's argument is shown by the way he is debating this dissent motion in question time, which is broadcast live, when he could be asking questions. That makes a mockery of what he says.

Mr Speaker, we on this side of the House have no doubt about your impartiality and fairness in directing the proceedings of this House.

The hypocrisy and stupidity of the Leader of the Opposition's motion of dissent is demonstrated by precedent. A motion of dissent against the Speaker's ruling is one of the most serious motions that can be moved in a parliament under the Westminster system of government. It is more serious than a censure motion against the government because it calls into question the whole operation of the House. If the basis of the opposition's original point of order is that it is being denied fair use of question time, and that this side of the House is using questions asked in the adjournment debate to influence the time spent in answering questions without notice, it is wrong. The minister was answering a question which was fairly asked and which warranted an answer. As the Minister for Mines and Energy has said, the question deserved an answer.

This motion of dissent is nothing more than a silly game being played by the Leader of the Opposition in an effort to improve his standing and show that he is more aggressive. That is fair enough from his point of view but the course of action that he has taken is absolutely stupid. He has taken that course of action, to my mind, without any serious consideration of the seriousness of a motion of dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

There is no doubt in my mind that we will now debate the motion of dissent quite fully. I would suggest that there will be very little time left for answering questions in this House. Mr Speaker, this side of the House has no doubt at all concerning your impartiality and the fairness with which you rule this House in the interests of ensuring that fair and equitable debate takes place. The Leader of the Opposition has not only acted out of character but in a manner that puts in question the ability of the opposition to represent the people of the Northern Territory. I have no doubt that the Leader of the Opposition has no idea of the seriousness of his motion of dissent. Mr Speaker, we will vote against, object to and, as far as I am concerned, destroy any attempt by members opposite to pass a motion of dissent against the Chair.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I will not take long because it will not take long to destroy the argument put forward by the Leader of Government Business. It is based on the concept that any minister can stand up here at any time, without a question being asked in question time, and make a ministerial statement on any subject which has been raised in any debate during a sitting of this parliament. That is absolutely ridiculous.

We have provision for ministerial statements ...

Mr FINCH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! With respect, the point before the Chair at the moment is a question of dissent from your ruling. It has nothing at all to do with the original debate.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Mr Speaker, I would just like to say a few words on this matter without inflaming the situation and perhaps to bring the discussion back within the bounds of reason without the hype and yelling and screaming. It is a pity that we are perhaps proving to the people of the Northern Territory, in this morning's broadcast of question time, that we are probably not competent to run the place.

Mr Coulter: Speak for yourself.

Mr TUXWORTH: I am speaking for you too because if you could hear what is going on you would be bloody ashamed of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TUXWORTH: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I would like to make a couple of points, the first one being that it is quite common for ministers to rise and answer questions on issues of current public importance, before, during and at the end of question time. Over the years, it has been done most commonly at the end of question time so as not to interfere with the proceedings of question time itself, because ministers are referring to matters that have been raised on another day. It is not common for questions raised in adjournment debates a day or 2 before to be discussed in question time as the Minister for Mines and Energy did this morning, unless they relate to a matter of current public importance.

I would also say that the matter raised by the minister is a very important issue, one that deserves worthy debate in this Chamber with 4 or 5 speakers on each side, not a few throwaway lines from the minister in question time. I invite him to re-present the information as a ministerial statement so that everybody can have a chew on it, because it is very important to the future of our economy.

The Leader of the Opposition is reflecting his frustration or exasperation and perhaps was a little quick to draw and shoot this morning. I must say that I have some sympathy with him in the sense that he moved a motion of dissent from your ruling and you then continued by inviting the minister to respond to the question. That perhaps was a rather cursory way to treat this very serious motion of dissent.

Mr Speaker, I think it probably would not be a bad idea if we all went for a tea break and came back in 5 minutes and started again. If the day is going to continue like this, we might as well not proceed.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak to the motion of dissent from your ruling that the first attempt to put a motion of dissent was not in accordance with standing orders in that it had not been made forthwith. I understand I have described the situation correctly, despite the toing-and-froing and histrionics we have seen from members opposite.

Mr Speaker, I refer to standing order 82, 'Dissent from Ruling'. I will read that standing order for the benefit of honourable members and others who may be witnessing the events this morning:

If any objection is taken to any ruling or decision of the Speaker, such objection must be taken at once and a motion of dissent, to be submitted in writing, moved which, if seconded, shall be proposed to the Assembly and debate thereon shall proceed forthwith.

Mr Speaker, the issue is whether or not your ruling on the first attempt to put a motion of dissent was in accordance with standing orders. The standing order quite clearly says 'at once'. The words 'at once' mean what they say. They mean 'immediately'. The Leader of the Opposition did not act immediately; he debated with one of his colleagues what action he should

take. That is my assumption; they were huddled together. Whilst the honourable minister was proceeding with his answer to the question, the Leader of the Opposition rose and moved a motion of dissent.

Mr Speaker, I fully support your ruling on the matter. You are bound by the standing orders of this Chamber, which are prepared and submitted by the members of this Chamber. You are not solely responsible for the form and contents of the standing orders; this House is. It is your responsibility to enforce those rules and you have done so fairly and properly.

Mr Speaker, this whole exercise by the Leader of the Opposition can only be described as petulant. Childish petulance has led him to carry on in this way and to waste the time of this House, as he does from time to time. Every time something goes wrong, he continues to exercise ...

Mr Smith: If you don't want a question time, we won't bother coming.

Mr HATTON: There he goes again, Mr Speaker, just as he and his colleagues continually do, breaching standing orders by interjecting and talking over the top of the member who is speaking.

Mr Speaker, it is a fact that members opposite, particularly the member for MacDonnell, regularly use the adjournment debate to ask a multitude of questions of members on the government benches.

Mr Bell: That is my right.

Mr Leo: You have the whole day to make ministerial statements.

Mr HATTON: Listen to them, Mr Speaker. That is the honourable member's right. I do not deny him that right but it is also appropriate under standing orders for ministers to use question time to answer questions which have been put to them. Mr Speaker, the member for Barkly has quite rightly indicated that, in the past, question time has been used to answer questions that have been asked on the previous evening.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister is no longer addressing the dissent motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. He is addressing the matter of your ruling on my point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. I ask the Chief Minister to relate his comments to the motion.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I apologise if I have done that. I was merely trying, by way of explanation, to emphasise the point that both your rulings were quite proper and in accordance with the standing orders. This serves only to exemplify the extreme petulance which is so readily displayed by the Leader of the Opposition whenever he is frustrated in the little games he would like to play in this House.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, there are 2 issues at stake here. To respond to the Chief Minister's comments about standing order 82, his insistence on a particular interpretation of the phrase 'at once' is to ignore the question of the conduct of the Assembly's business. I also draw the attention of honourable members to standing orders 113 and 258.

I believe that, in the context of the dissent motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, 2 issues need to be considered: the original ruling about

the statement being made by the Minister for Mines and Energy and the question of whether the dissent ruling 'at once' is appropriate. I speak in support of the Leader of the Opposition's dissent motion. His motion of dissent from the original ruling was appropriate because, as standing order 113 says, 'an answer shall be relevant to the question'. Let me say, parenthetically, that I appreciated the answer that the honourable minister was giving but ...

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Members opposite have been insisting that the debate be totally and specifically relevant and you have supported that, Mr Speaker. I ask that you rule that the member for MacDonnell is not addressing the motion before the House.

Mr BELL: Speaking to the point of order, Mr Speaker, as I said at the outset of my remarks, there are 2 procedural issues that have become inextricably interwoven. One of them is the issue of the appropriateness of a motion of dissent in these terms. In fact, that is the second point. The original point at issue was the appropriateness of the comments being made by the Minister for Mines and Energy. I do not believe that it is appropriate to insist that this particular debate be restricted to the second of those points. As I said, it is important for the good conduct of business in this House ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! What is the point of the order?

Mr BELL: With respect, Mr Speaker, I am speaking to the point of order raised by the the Chief Minister.

Mr SPEAKER: I will rule on it.

Mr BELL: I want to finish my comments on the point of order if I might. Mr Speaker. I believe you have to rule against the point or order called by the Chief Minister because these 2 issues have become inextricably interwoven and deserve a full and frank debate in this Assembly. The fact of the matter is that if the Minister for Mines and Energy ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am ruling now on the point of order. My advice is that I can pull any member up if I am convinced one way or the other. There is a point of order raised by the Chief Minister and the member for MacDonnell must confine his remarks to the dissent motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, in the context of an Assembly that sits for 30 days per year and has a 6-man opposition which does the government like a dinner day after day, I can understand the government being sensitive about this. As far as I am concerned, the dissent motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition was quite appropriate.

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I despair. The member for MacDonnell is himself a member of the Standing Orders Committee and I would have hoped that he understood standing orders. When his contributions and those of his leader show their lack of understanding of the detail of the standing orders of this House, I can only wish that Senator Bob Collins were back here as Opposition Leader. Certainly, when he held that position, there was no doubt in the minds of members on this side of the Assembly concerning his knowledge and comprehension of the operation of the House. The span of attention and concentration of members of the opposition has been clearly demonstrated to be lacking. The initial 35-second delay, which members of the opposition would interpret as being 'at once', also clearly illustrates that.

Mr Speaker, we are discussing the basic question of whether you have correctly and impartially interpreted the standing orders relating to a motion of dissent. All members on this side of the House have absolutely no doubt whatsoever that you have done so and it is time we got on with the job.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, in closing the debate I think all members of the parliament owe an expression of thanks to the member for Barkly. I think that sometimes we get carried away with things in here but, certainly, members on this side of the House have been expressing our frustration over what appears to be an increasing use of question time by ministers to make ministerial statements. What happened today was a new government initiative in making ministerial statements on questions asked 2 days ago. The next initiative I expect from the government is for a minister to rise and answer a question that was asked 2 or 3 years ago in this House which, Mr Speaker, would be equally legitimate according to your ruling.

The dissent motion before the House relates simply to the interpretation of the words 'at once'. What I would put to you, Mr Speaker, is that it is in the interests of the procedures of this House that the words 'at once' not be interpreted literally. Does 'at once' mean within 1 second? That is the sort of question that arises. What does 'at once' mean? Is it within 1 second, within 5 seconds or within 10 or 15 seconds? The point of view that I have put in this debate is that the motion of dissent was put at once to you, Mr Speaker. It was put within a period of 30 seconds, after it had been written out, which is, of course, a requirement. Moving dissent is not simply a matter of rising to one's feet and saying, 'I wish to move dissent'. The motion has first to be written down. The motion was written down and presented to you and I would think that any reasonable person, either in the Chamber or listening on radio, would interpret a period of 30 seconds as a reasonable time for that to occur and as being, practically, within the meaning of 'at once'.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the ruling of the Speaker that the Leader of the Opposition's original motion of dissent was not made at once be dissented from.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6

Mr Bell
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Smith
Mr Tipiloura

Noes 15

Mr Coulter
Mr Dale
Mr Dondas
Mr Finch
Mr Firmin
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Harris
Mr Hatton
Mr McCarthy
Mr Manzie
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Poole
Mr Reed
Mr Setter

Motion negatived.

Mr COULTER (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, as I was saying before I was interrupted, the LNG will be stored at Yulara in liquified form and regasified by heating prior to use as a fuel.

Subsequent to the signing of the contract, the detailed design work for the LNG plant has been nearly completed. An agreement has been reached with TMOG Resources Ltd for the use of part of its Brewer Estate site for the LNG plant and a pipeline licence application has been submitted for the 10 km spur line from Palm Valley to the Alice Springs gas pipeline to the Brewer Estate. Land has been acquired at Yulara to house the gas storage facility. The Yulara Corporation advised recently that its requirements for electricity on current peak load, which is 3 MW, will increase to approximately 6.5 MW. Therefore, the use of LNG at Yulara will greatly exceed that envisaged in the original contract. It is a fantastic success story and part of the gas program that the Northern Territory government has entered into.

Next week, I will have one of the senior directors from Equity Corporation in the Northern Territory and it is my intention to organise a full briefing with the member for MacDonnell on how he can obtain further information on the availability of LNG for remote communities within his electorate. I will be endeavouring to contact the member for MacDonnell and to arrange a meeting with the executive from Equity Corporation when he is in Darwin next week, in an attempt to further pursue the utilisation of LNG throughout the Northern Territory.

Teachers Membership of School Councils

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

On radio this morning, the President of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation gave the impression that teachers and Department of Education employees would be precluded from involvement with school councils. Mr Speaker, I believe the Teachers Federation president's comments to be incorrect and irresponsible and my question to the minister is: do the proposed school council regulations preclude teachers and Department of Education employees from becoming involved with school councils?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Port Darwin for his question on what certainly is a topical matter at the moment. In a nutshell, the answer to his question is no. Departmental employees and teachers are not excluded from being members of school councils. I make that point because much of the discussion in the broader community is along the lines that the regulations governing the constitution of school councils exclude teachers or departmental employees. In fact, they limit the total number of teachers and departmental employees to one third of the total numbers on a school council. In fact, there is even better representation than 33.3% because the principal of the school is automatically appointed to the school council, therefore making the percentage in the vicinity of 40%.

Mr Speaker, I welcome the question and the opportunity to clarify the situation for the general public because, as I said, there is considerable misinformation being spread by certain people. Let me start with the consultation process. Discussions were held in all centres of the Northern Territory in 1987 on the issue of devolution. The government has made no secret of the fact that it wishes to ensure that schools are governed by the parents and the wider community. I think that is a very sensible move. It is

also fair to say that there has been a general apathy among parents and the wider community towards becoming involved in the running of schools. Members on this side of the House see such participation as the linchpin of future devolution of full control of schools, including financial aspects. The government's policy is that parents must be given more say and there must be more power for schools to be accountable to their community. I can think of no better group of people to be in charge of school councils.

Under the new regulations, department employees represent one-third of the makeup of school councils, plus the principal. They also have the opportunity to have a secretary or registrar in support. There will be provision for a departmental nominee on school councils although that is not a mandatory requirement. It will occur as a result of discussions between the secretary of the department and the various school council chairpersons. There is no discrimination. Any departmental officer can stand for election at an AGM within the one-third allocation. It is interesting to note that departmental employees, who constitute about 3% to 5% of the population, have access to approximately 40% of the places on school councils. Parents and the wider community, which make up approximately 95% to 97% of our population, have access to approximately 60% of the places on school councils. I would have thought that that was very fair and equitable.

School councils can determine, either in their constitutions or through the AGM election process, what proportion of the one-third consists of teachers or other employees of the Department of Education. No employee is denied the opportunity to stand for election. In my view, teachers get a fair go. They also have full access to staff meetings, departmental committees, panels of various types and professional associations. Mr Speaker, I must stress that it is the wish of this government to work in partnership with teachers and parents and the wider community.

The regulations allow for the cooption of people in the community with special expertise to assist schools. That is a very sensible move. If, in relation to a particular project, a school council requires architectural, financial or banking experience, it has the opportunity to coopt that expertise. Again, that is in line with our policy on devolution.

One comment of the Leader of the Opposition showed that he had no idea of how to read and correctly interpret the regulations. He said that I had the power to exclude even the Chief Minister from membership of a school council.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member for Port Darwin asked a question of the Minister for Education concerning the right of access of parents to school councils under the new regulations. The Minister for Education is talking about comments I made about the role of MLAs and the minister's power over them.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would ask the minister to relate his remarks to the question.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I would like to clarify for the Leader of the Opposition that the point that he missed, in paying such a great deal of attention to questions asked within this House, was a reference to comments made by the President of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation on radio this morning and the remarks made by himself ...

Mr Smith: Why are you talking about comments made by me?

Mr HANRAHAN: I am doing so in the context of the question - as well as answering on the issue of teacher and parent representation on school councils.

Mr Speaker, because it has been raised, I will clarify the reasons for the regulation change which allows for the cooption of MLAs and local government representatives onto school councils. I state again that that is not a mandatory requirement. It is up to the school councils themselves to decide whether or not they want local government representatives and or the local MLA.

Mr Smith: And then you have to agree.

Mr HANRAHAN: My approval will be required if the school council takes its opportunity under the AGM election process and has a full number of elected representatives. If a council then wishes to coopt the local government representative and the local MLA, which would take its membership over the number provided for under the regulations, I will allow it to do so. I do not think that that is an unfair course of action.

Mr Speaker, to respond more pertinently to the member for Port Darwin, as a result of the meetings that have been held recently throughout the Northern Territory, under the auspices of the Education Advisory Council, concern has been expressed to me in relation to the correct interpretation of various aspects of the regulations. Since the gazettal of the regulations, I have received advice of concerns from COGSO, secondary schools, school council chairpersons, individual councils and parents and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. I have taken action in that I have extended the date by which Annual General Meetings of school councils are to be held from 15 March to 30 April. This extension will allow all school councils to amend their constitutions and hold their elections in accordance with these regulations. This will also allow further consultations to take place in an area where I have a particular concern and where there will be particular problems. That is in Aboriginal communities and smaller communities which have school councils.

I have indicated to the representatives of COGSO and the various school councils that, after 30 April, I will review any individual problems that arise. I am aware that various school councils have encountered problems. As I said, I have given an undertaking to meet with various representatives of school councils and COGSO after 30 April to ascertain exactly what the problems are and, more pertinently, where the problems are, and to sit down and see if we can solve them.

The Secretary of the Department of Education has clarified the situation that relates to part-time and temporary employees who are not actually involved in the one-third component. This category includes relief teachers, part-time instructors, casual employees and so forth. The secretary of the department has also given an undertaking to the various chairpersons throughout the Northern Territory that he will consult with the particular council concerning the individual departmental employee who will join the school council. As I say, this is not a mandatory requirement, but it is a necessary requirement to make sure that the flow of information and communication is improved.

I stress that this government believes that the parents and the wider community must make up the majority representation on school councils and must become involved if we are to proceed down the path of devolution.

Criminal Compensation for Rape

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is the increase in compensation claims under the Crimes Compensation Act due in part to an increase in claims by victims of rape pursuing their entitlements under the act and, as a result, is it true that the Crimes Compensation Act is under review with a view to rape being excluded as an offence for which criminal compensation can be claimed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the question of whether the criminal compensation area is under review, the answer is yes. In reply to the question of rape being excluded as an offence for which criminal compensation can be claimed, the answer is no.

Freighters in Darwin Harbour

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is the status of the 3 freighters which have been lying at anchor in Darwin Harbour for several months?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am asked quite often about those 3 vessels. I can indicate to this House that they are not the first 3 vessels of the Northern Territory government's own shipping line. The response I often give is that the port is so busy these days that the ships are waiting to be processed. I need to talk at some time about how busy the port is.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Talk about how long it takes to process a ship.

Mr FINCH: In reply to that interjection, Darwin has an excellent record in the rapid processing of ships. In fact, ships very rarely have to anchor in the harbour and wait to come alongside. As well, cargoes are moved away to their destinations extremely rapidly after unloading. That is in contrast to the current situation in Sydney where the container loader system is causing delays of 2 to 4 weeks in the dispatching of cargo.

In respect of the specific question, those vessels have been there since November. They are Philippines-registered vessels crewed by Filipinos. The problem is that their ownership is in dispute. The dispute pertains to the purchase price of the vessels. The parties to the dispute are the Bank of Brazil and some Scottish companies. Temporary managers of the dispute have been appointed by the Supreme Court and local solicitors are handling that matter. In the meantime, Burns Philp is supplying all stores, fuel and water. The vessels were not carrying cargo when they arrived. At the moment, no payment is being made to the Port Authority but there is some spin-off to the local community through the provision of stores.

Mr Speaker, I hope that the day will come when we will have a significant flow of traffic in the port. The Port Authority is working very hard to encourage additional freight, particularly by offering land bridging from the South-east Asian region to other parts of Australia and, in the interim, using backloading on road trains. When the rail system is in place, that will provide further advantages.

Mines Safety Control Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

I remind him of an undertaking he gave in the Assembly last year when he assured me that he intended to amend the Mines Safety Control Act by redefining 'mine' within the act so that employees employed by mining companies but not necessarily working on a mine site may be covered by the Work Health Act as opposed to the Mines Safety Control Act. When does the minister intend to proceed with that amendment to the Mines Safety Control Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to provide an accurate response off the top of my head. I will provide the information to the honourable member during the course of these sittings.

Psychiatric Patient

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Impressions may have been gained from comments made by members of the opposition yesterday that the person involved in an incident where a nurse was injured with a star picket at Berry Springs last weekend has been wandering around the maternity ward for months. Is this correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would suggest that that was probably the main aim of the matter of public importance raised yesterday by the opposition. I have made inquiries into the matter so that I could absolutely assure the people of the Northern Territory that what the opposition was leading them to believe was not the case. There have been no reports of this person ever having entered the maternity ward and no evidence whatsoever to suggest that he has ever done so.

The person concerned was not permitted to leave the psychiatric ward without an escort. The visit to Berry Springs was an essential part of the treatment of the patient. The patient is now in Ward 9 where an assessment will be made of his current condition and where the trigger for his latest emotional outburst will be sought. I hope that allays any fears that this person was roaming around the corridors of the maternity ward.

Violent Videos and Films

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What are he and the government actually doing, as opposed to simply talking about doing, to restrict drastically the flood of vicious, violent videos and films into the Territory, in line with the restrictions wanted by decent, responsible members of the public?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I find the tenor of the question rather strange. If the honourable member had a look at the legislation that she herself was involved in passing through this House, she would have a full comprehension of the restrictions and the requirements set out in the act.

I would notify the honourable member that I am presently preparing for the Australian Censorship Ministers' Conference which is to be held in March. I am also in the processes of looking at the provisions of exemptions which were made in the legislation that we passed in this House 2 years ago regarding the display of R-rated videos as well as X-rated videos. I will be notifying people in the video industry of the government's decision in relation to the removal of that exemption by the end of June.

A great deal of concern is being expressed around the country in relation to the classification of videos. The concern is being directed away from X-rated videos into the area of R-rated videos. There have been a number of instances where some sort of connection has been suggested between R-rated violent videos and incidents of extreme violence occurring in specific areas of Australia. I believe that the Censorship Ministers' Conference will be dealing with that particular issue. I am certainly very concerned about the fact that, in a number of instances, young members of our community have unrestricted access to material of this type. I was recently made aware of a report that suggested that the incidence of violence depicted in R-rated video material, in comparison with X-rated material, showed it to be very violent. The report suggested that there was a connection between the behaviour of some young people and the content of these videos.

To return to the member's question regarding the classification legislation that was passed in this House, a process in which she was involved, that legislation lays out restrictions very clearly and concisely. Obviously, the government is moving along in conjunction with those laws. If the honourable member believes that they should be changed, it is within her prerogative to introduce a private member's bill to suggest changes. If she is aware of any instances in which she considers that the government is not complying with the legislation, I would be interested to hear of them.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Mines Safety Control Act

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, during the course of this question time, the member for Nhulunbuy asked me if I could provide information on what we are doing about the redefinition of a 'mine'. I have had the opportunity to get across the subject since the question was asked.

On 24 November last year, I referred to a possible amendment to the definition of 'mine site'. I was responding to a claim made then by the member for Nhulunbuy that the definition of 'mine' in the Mines Safety Control Act meant that all employees of a mine, including clerks, typists and the like, were subject to the safety provisions of that act as opposed to the Work Health Act or some other safety regime.

As I understood it, the honourable member's reference was to requirements under the Silicosis and Tuberculosis (Mine-workers and Prospectors) Act, for all workers working on a mine, even in offices, to be x-rayed annually. I can advise the honourable member that that particular requirement was rectified on 23 December by means of Regulations 1987 No 53 of the Mines Safety Control Act, which empowers the Chief Government Mining Engineer to designate areas of silicosis risk and the Chief Medical Officer to denote the frequency of x-rays. In addition, the Mines Safety Control Act is currently under review and will be circulated to industry for comment next month.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in question time on Thursday 25 February 1988, when the Minister for Mines and Energy was answering a question which had been raised by the member for MacDonnell during the previous day's adjournment debate, a point of order was raised by the member for Nhulunbuy seeking my ruling on whether it was appropriate to answer such a question during question time. My reply was to the effect that the question which the member for MacDonnell had raised the previous day was a legitimate question and the minister was entitled to supply an answer.

It has long been a practice for ministers to receive a call during and at the end of question time to answer questions asked of them during previous sittings either during question time or during the course of an adjournment debate. This has been done with the indulgence of the Chair and thus in Hansard the parenthetical words 'by leave' have been included in some such cases despite no leave having been sought.

I have always considered that question time is the most appropriate time for members from both the opposition and the government backbench to obtain information from ministers. It is also an appropriate time for ministers to provide information previously sought by members although I will not countenance answers which are more in the nature of ministerial statements than direct answers to questions previously asked. I heard the question asked by the member for MacDonnell on Wednesday 24 February and, in view of the practice of this Assembly, I was perfectly satisfied that it was appropriate for the Minister for Mines and Energy to answer the question asked as and when he did.

Entry to Darwin Prison

Mr SMITH to MEMBER for MacDONNELL

Did you or did you not attempt to enter Darwin Prison yesterday as stated by the Minister for Health and Community Services on ABC Radio this morning?

ANSWER

I must confess that my breakfast this morning was ...

Mr COULTER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Unless there is business before the House on which the Leader of the Opposition is seeking information, he is not at liberty to ask a question of a member of his backbench.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, standing order 110 clearly states: 'Questions may be put to a member, not being a minister, relating to any bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the Assembly, of which the member has charge'. Mr Speaker, quite clearly, my question relates to the business of the Assembly. I am sure that the members opposite will prove that later in this question time if this particular point of order is upheld.

Secondly, it is clearly the business of the member concerned because he was not only the member concerned in the incident, but he also has responsibilities recognised by this House as the shadow minister for health and community services. In our view, it is quite appropriate for this question to be asked of the member for MacDonnell, the shadow minister for health and community services.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I wish to address this point of order, not for the purpose of prolonging the debate and further absorbing the time of the House but because I think it is important for honourable members to note standing order 110. It refers quite clearly to 'any bill, motion, or other public matter connected with the business of the Assembly, of which the member has charge'. I would submit that the reference to any 'public matter connected with the business of the Assembly' would refer to something on the Notice Paper.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I would point out to you that there is precedent for this situation. During the time I have been a member of this Assembly, I have been asked a question by an honourable member opposite. That question did not relate to a bill. I will try to recall the question. Meanwhile, I suggest that the matter could be deferred whilst a ruling is obtained and discussed again later in question time. As I recall it, I was asked whether certain of my actions related to the Labor Party's policy on uranium. At that stage, I was the shadow spokesperson on mines and energy. The question was allowed and I answered it.

Mr BELL: In speaking to the point of order, I would like to reply to the contribution made by the Chief Minister. He is very good at reading and quite correctly read standing order 110. It refers to public matters before this Assembly. The Chief Minister is well aware that there has been fulsome debate on the public issue of the care of Ward 9 patients and that representations on the issue have been made to me as a member of this Assembly. I have no doubt that it is an appropriate matter to be addressed in question time. It is a public matter before this Assembly and there can be no doubt about that.

Mr Coulter: Of which the member has charge?

Mr BELL: In answer to the Treasurer's interjection, I point out that, with respect to the business of this House, I have charge on behalf of the opposition for matters relating to health and community services. I have no doubt that the matter upon which the Leader of the Opposition has sought to elicit information from me falls within the ambit of standing order 110.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am advised that the member for MacDonnell has no business on the Notice Paper related to the question asked of him. There is therefore a point of order and I must disallow the question.

Proposed Hi-tech City

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he advise the Assembly of any details of the proposed hi-tech city which is being studied by the Commonwealth and state governments and can he inform the House concerning the Territory government's attitude towards it?

ANSWER

The project has the strange and possibly bureaucratic name of Multi-function Polis. That is the heading in government agenda papers and conference agenda papers dealing with the subject. A request originating in Japan has led to the federal government initiating a study into the possibility of establishing a city in Australia, comprised of persons coming from outside Australia, with a view to solving many problems and creating a stimulus to the Australian economy. Press releases from the Leader of the Opposition have referred to the Northern Territory's bid for what he has called the hi-tech city.

The Chief Minister and the Treasurer had some discussions in Japan quite some time ago with a Japanese senator representing the relevant Japanese minister. The matter was raised in those discussions to test the Northern Territory government's reaction on a very preliminary basis. The matter was raised formally at the Conference of Ministers for Industries and Technology in Christchurch late last year. The Commonwealth sought the reaction of the states to the establishment and funding of a major feasibility study into this matter. There was some caution in the reaction of various state ministers and myself. It was the first time that we had had input on a formal basis and I believe there was some political trepidation about leaping forward and saying: 'Yes, we will be in the front line in developing such a new city in Australia'. There was, however, concurrence at the meeting that a full feasibility study should be developed. To that end, the states and the Northern Territory are contributing to the feasibility study. The study is expected to cost somewhere between \$2m and \$5m. I am not sure of the actual timetable for its completion.

As I said, the idea was first floated by the Japanese government with the Australian government. The concept is a little vague at the moment, but basically it is for the establishment in Australia of a group of people from foreign governments and from private enterprise who would build a new city based on leisure, recreation, education and high technology research. The idea has developed somewhat from the initial concept of a single metropolis somewhere in Australia to, possibly, one centre with a number of regional sub-centres spread around the country. That, I believe, is the concept which will be developed in the feasibility study. The whole of Australia may share in what could be a very exciting event. If the project goes ahead, it could be a major step in the history of Australia.

Mr Ede: A pity the opposition wasn't running this.

Mr PERRON: If the member for Stuart takes any interest in this matter, which is of major importance, he might care to keep his interjections to ...

Mr Ede: Why don't you make a ministerial statement so that I can?

Mr PERRON: Perhaps the honourable member wants to waste even more of question time than the opposition has done already this morning. If not, I am sure honourable members will be pleased to hear about this matter from time to time as it develops further and, if the opposition has no interest in the matter, so be it. I am sure other Territorians do and certainly my colleagues on this side of the House are taking a keen interest in the matter. The Northern Territory government has contributed \$40 000 towards the feasibility study and that will enable the Territory government to have some input as well as keeping completely up to date with its progress. I will undertake to keep the Assembly informed, from time to time, on the matter.

Leave Loading

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the government's attempt to remove the 17½% leave loading from public servants the spearhead of an attack on the families of working people throughout the Territory, is the government allowing itself to be used by right-wing forces as a front organisation for a nationwide attack on workers' families, will the government explain how on earth this attempt can be justified in light of its attempts to attract workers to holiday in the Territory and will the government withdraw its application to have the leave loading removed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member has asked me a number of questions. The answer to the first 2 is no. With respect to the third question, I can advise honourable members that, during the course of debates over public service terms and conditions of employment, the trade union movement was advised that the issue of the 17½% leave loading would be submitted to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for determination.

It is a fact that the trade unions were opposed to any moves in respect of the leave loading. I can understand that particular position. It is a matter that has been the subject of considerable and contentious debate in the Northern Territory and elsewhere in Australia. The matter will be resolved by the body that should resolve it and that is the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. If the honourable members opposite wish to continue to support ...

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr HATTON: I note the interjection from the member for Nhulunbuy. He has often made the point in this Assembly that, if matters need to be raised in respect of terms and conditions of employment, they should be dealt with through the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission where both parties can present their arguments. That is exactly the process that is being adopted in this particular case. Quite frankly, I have been surprised at the overt reaction of the trade union movement. If the unions believe their case is strong, then they should be confident that they can win the matter before the commission. Their actions seem to indicate that perhaps they do not believe they have a particularly strong case.

Mr Speaker, this has been a contentious issue in the community for some 15 years. The ...

Mr Smith: What it indicates is that the workers of the Northern Territory are concerned about it.

Mr Ede: They want to know why you are trying to screw their rights.

Mr HATTON: ... circumstances surrounding particular matters have been contentious for many years. Whether members opposite like it or not, it is a fact that many people in the community find little justification for the provision of the 17½% loading for workers other than shift-workers. The issue will be finalised through the processes of conciliation and arbitration and we should let the arguments stand on their merits in that jurisdiction. The government's move is not a spearhead for any sort of attack on anybody. It is a matter of principle that is being addressed through the appropriate forum.

Police Administration Amendment Bill

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to the proposed Police Administration Amendment Bill. Can he confirm that he has received representations not to pass the Police Administration Amendment Bill, in its present form, from no less a personage than the Secretary of the Nightcliff Branch of the Country Liberal Party, Mr Eugene White, and will the Chief Minister accede to his representations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there are people in the community who do not support this particular legislation.

Mr Smith: Only the secretary of your own branch!

Mr HATTON: That applies equally within my own party. I do not propose to debate this particular matter in question time. Since the honourable member has raised the matter, I might add that the bill was discussed at considerable length during the central council meeting of the CLP last weekend. At that central council meeting, the party strongly endorsed the approach which the government is taking.

Gidgee Bush

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

On your behalf as the member for Braitling, Mr Speaker, I ask what action the government has taken to combat the problems caused by what is commonly called gidgee bush?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as you would well know, the problem of gidgee poisoning, particularly in the area north-east of Alice Springs, has plagued a number of properties for many years. It is very pleasing to see the initiatives taken by some of those pastoralists as a result of their frustration with the inability of governments and others to come up with answers to this problem over the years. They have themselves funded a certain amount of research into the problem and seem to be making some considerable progress in finding a solution to it.

The research is being carried out by the University of New England and, naturally enough, the group has sought funding from the Northern Territory government and others to assist with it. The research is directed towards the development of rumen detoxification of fluoroacetic acid in cattle. For the benefit of honourable members to whom that is not perfectly clear, it is the development of bacteria which can be implanted, as it were, in the stomachs of cattle and which will neutralise the effects of gidgee. To date, progress has been very encouraging. In January, the Northern Territory government approved a grant of \$14 000 to the group and I understand that the Australian Meat and Livestock Research and Development Corporation is expected to provide some funding towards this project next year.

Gidgee poisoning does not affect properties in the Northern Territory only. It also affects some properties in south-western Queensland and severely reduces their productivity. It has caused great hardship to some property owners. I commend those people who have undertaken and funded research themselves. I hope that their target of finding a solution within 3 years is met and I wish them the best of luck. I will be pleased to keep honourable members informed about developments in this matter and to provide further government assistance where possible.

Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority

Mr LANHUPUY to CHIEF MINISTER

Has he asked for a report on the operations of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority? If he has, could he advise me whether he intends to make it public?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter has been referred to the Minister for Lands and Housing and I refer the question to him.

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I advise the House that the review has been completed. The report has been delayed because of numerous legal actions affecting people involved. I will be taking the report to Cabinet for its consideration and Cabinet will decide on what action, if any, is to be taken, including whether or not to release the report publicly.

School Council Regulations

Mr SETTER to ACTING MINISTER for EDUCATION

With regard to the recent change in regulations governing school councils, can he confirm whether these changes apply to school parent associations and parent and citizens associations? If not, will there be any effect on their operations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have heard a number of people suggest that there may be a way of avoiding the new regulations in respect of school councils. I advise people who are thinking along those lines that a number of school councils are holding meetings this week to consider the new regulations. I expect that the councils will realise that the new regulations are sensible and that they reflect the wishes of the majority of the community. Those who do not realise that and who seek to defy the wishes of the government will only shoot themselves in the foot. Continued refusal to adopt the new regulations will ultimately mean that school councils will lose the ability to play a real and positive role in the management of their schools. In such cases, control will revert to the old system under which the department deals directly with the principal.

Milatos Project

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, there has been press comment and reports that indicate that the Milatos motel and golf links project includes provision for a casino and gaming floor. I direct this question to the Chief Minister because I understand that, as coordinator of the government's activities in relation to tourism and gaming, he may be across the matter. Does the Northern Territory government still have an agreement with the Diamond Beach Casino operators that guarantees them sole casino rights in Darwin for some years to come? If such an agreement exists, does Mr Milatos have the authority or the approval of the government or the present casino operators to offer such facilities to any new operator who might manage his motel and golf links project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, whilst it is true that I have been involved in this particular project, the question refers specifically to a range of agreements with the current operators of the Diamond Beach Casino. To ensure the accuracy of the answer, the minister responsible for racing, gaming and liquor will deal with those aspects.

Mr TUXWORTH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As a matter of clarification, I directed my question to the Chief Minister because his office was quoted in the press as being supportive of the project. I assumed that he was the minister to take the question.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, to assist the honourable member, I will advise that Mr Milatos has approached the Northern Territory government seeking support. I understand that he has lodged applications for a direct land sale in respect of the development of a tourism-related hotel development in conjunction with the upgrading of the public golf course at Palmerston Park. There have been discussions, over some considerable time, in relation to the proposal. I have been involved in discussions with Mr Milatos. Because the proposal involves land currently under lease to Darwin City Council, there have also been considerable discussions with the council in terms of the actual development and the various proposals and conditions. As often happens in such matters, the details can evolve and change.

The proposal would involve what is currently known as the Darwin Markets area, part of a public street and the corner of a gully at this end of the public golf course area. The proposal therefore involves the road reserve, land currently under the control of Mr Milatos and land currently under lease to Darwin City Council. The proposal incorporates an offer by Mr Milatos to spend \$2m to upgrade the public golf course to an executive 9-hole course to be controlled and operated by the council as a public golf course.

In the discussions in respect of the hotel proposal itself, Mr Milatos has raised the possibility of obtaining an extension of the existing casino licence to operate a separate gaming room in his hotel. I would refer the question concerning detail of this proposal to the Treasurer in the context of his responsibilities for racing, gaming and liquor.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, as the member for Barkly would be well aware, there is an exclusivity clause in the licence arrangements with the casinos in the north and the south. The southern licence is held by Ford Dynasty Pty Ltd and the other is held by the Aspinall group. I suppose the borders of the 2 regions would meet around Tennant Creek or the Tropic of Capricorn.

I can advise the member for Barkly that, under the exclusivity agreement with the casino operators that considerable discussion has occurred with the current operators in respect of providing alternative venues for casino operations within the Darwin region. Mr Milatos has been involved in discussions with Mr James Osborne of the Aspinall group in relation to having a gaming facility in his proposed establishment in Palmerston Park. This is a commercial decision to be made by the operators. Because of its interest in terms of legislation on gaming and the licensing of premises, the government will be following those negotiations with interest. I can advise the member for Barkly that detailed discussions and negotiations have been entered into by the Aspinall group and Milatos in relation to the provision of a licensed premise within the new development.

Flat Rating System

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A number of local government organisations have expressed an interest in what is termed 'the flat rating system'. Does the Local Government Act provide for flat rating and, if not, will legislation be amended to allow such a system to be introduced?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is concern among local government bodies that the ability to institute a flat rating system may have been lost to them. Certainly, flat rating was possible under the old Local Government Act. As a result of a challenge to that provision in another state, this ability appears to have been lost. A number of amendments to the Local Government Act are being processed currently. In fact, one of those will be the ability to levy a flat rate in council areas. Those proposed amendments have not yet gone to Cabinet but I hope in time to be able to bring to the Assembly a list of amendments, including that particular provision.

Leave Loading

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister will agree that, in the unlikely event that he achieves his aim of removing the 17½% leave loading for Territory public servants, other Territory workers would lose the loading together with workers throughout the country. That is because the government's challenge relates to a federal award. I ask whether he has carried out any economic analysis of the effects of a national loss of \$3000m in the spending power of Australian citizens and the effects of this upon the Territory tourism industry and small business?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am somewhat flattered at the compliment that is being paid to this government by the member for Stuart, who seems to assume that we are launching a national campaign of some sort. I know that argument has been expounded by members opposite in order to beat up emotions in relation to this particular case.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that you and other members will be well aware that particular cases throughout Australia need to be determined individually by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Although the trade union movement may seek to develop this case into a full-blown national test case, I have no evidence that other governments or other employers are seeking to develop similar cases.

There are, of course, 2 sides to every economic analysis. If it is true that \$3000m is expended on wages and salaries in the form of the 17½% loading, that is a very significant cost to Australian business. I am only quoting the figures used by the member for Stuart and I cannot confirm them but, if that is the case, the other side of the coin is that removal of the loading would free up \$3000m for investment which would create a few more jobs in this country.

Changes in Aboriginal Affairs Administration

Mr REED to CHIEF MINISTER

What, if any, discussions have taken place with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs concerning proposals for the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the proposals enunciated in his statement 'Foundations for the Future'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately I must advise the House that there have been no discussions with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on this matter. This is of particular concern to the Northern Territory. Whilst the proposed new organisation propounded by the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will apply throughout Australia, we must remember that approximately 25% of the Northern Territory population is Aboriginal. These people are a very significant element in our community, which is not the case in New South Wales where the Aboriginal population numbers 45 000 in a total population of 5 million, which is less than 1%. We are talking about nearly a quarter of our population and the minister's proposals will have profound and significant effects on the administration and the role of government in the Northern Territory.

It would seem appropriate, therefore, for the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to take the time at least to fully brief and consult with this government, as he indicated he would do during the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Ministers' Conference in Perth last year. He has done nothing of the sort. In fact, he has been in the Northern Territory for some considerable time, moving around Aboriginal communities and consulting with them. I do not object to that at all. It is quite an appropriate course of action for a minister involved in such a matter. I do, however, believe that he might appropriately take some time to talk to the government of the Northern Territory about the implications of the new structure for government administration throughout the Northern Territory.

I wrote to the Prime Minister on 20 February relaying our concerns and the concerns expressed by Aboriginal people at the hasty introduction of Mr Hand's proposals and the lack of genuine consultation. The Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government has also written to Mr Hand to express these concerns which include the undue haste to introduce the commission, inequitable representation on the regional councils, the unnecessary bureaucracy introduced by the proposal for zones, boundaries incompatible with Aboriginal community interests, the apparent lack of Aboriginal control of the commission and the interests of traditional people being made subservient to those of non-traditional urban dwellers. Members of this Assembly should be concerned with these developments.

As I have said, the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory comprise about 24% of our population and are not some insignificant minority group to be subjected to centralist social engineering experiments. The fact is that Aboriginal communities have been taking up the Northern Territory community government model as the most appropriate form of community organisation. Nowhere in the minister's proposals do we see any acknowledgement that such far-reaching community development models are being adopted in the Northern Territory. This government continues to receive representations from Aboriginal communities expressing their concern at the Commonwealth's actions and we will continue to represent those concerns to the Commonwealth. The

indecent haste and urgency with which this matter is being handled by the federal minister is doing Northern Territory Aboriginal communities a great disservice.

Mr Smith: He has talked to more of them than you have.

Mr HATTON: His proposals are badly thought out and they are creating significant concern in Aboriginal communities. And, in response to the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition, I would ask him to talk to his own colleagues, including Senator Collins, who also have real concerns about the proposals and have found real concerns among Aboriginal people.

There is no question that the federal minister should sit down with the Northern Territory government to address our real concerns about the implications of his proposals for the Northern Territory, as he undertook to do last year and has failed to do so. I have some serious concerns about the proposal in terms of its impact on the whole concept of federalism in our nation and whether it is actually a tool designed to create a nation within a nation. Our concerns and questions need to be addressed and we need the opportunity to speak with the federal minister.

We have received representations from the Aboriginal Development Commission seeking our support in opposing the minister's intention to disband its organisation, which is providing development finance for Aboriginal communities. The minister's intention is based on the view that it is perhaps inappropriate for the commission to be involved in some matters that could be classified as social issues, when those are also being dealt with by other organisations involved in Aboriginal affairs.

Report on AIDS in Schools

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ACTING MINISTER for EDUCATION

When will he release to me, and to other members who may not have already seen it, the government report on AIDS in schools, as promised in a notice in the Sunday Territorian of 21 February, which stated that the report would be sent to all MLAs for comment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will contact the department for a briefing on the report and the undertaking that was given by the Minister for Education and I will ensure that his wishes are carried out. If that is what he said, I will personally deliver a copy of the report to the member for Koolpinyah during the next 15 minutes.

Maldives Airport Facilities

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has the federal government promised money to the Maldives to upgrade airport facilities there?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not able to confirm absolutely whether the federal government has or has not done so. However, I have received fairly reliable advice that some \$2m has been allocated through the Department of Foreign

Affairs to the Maldives, which is an island nation close to Sri Lanka. Of course, that gesture gives us great heart here in the Northern Territory. In a spirit of communication and dialogue, we have come a long way in terms of the potential development of the airport in Darwin and it is now up to the federal government to make its decision. Following a subsidy of some \$10m to Vanuatu and \$2m to the Maldives, there must be a great chance that the Northern Territory, with its potential to provide great development of the economy in Australia, will receive a reasonable hearing.

In the last 2 weeks, we have forwarded to the federal minister, Senator Evans, a proposal that outlines the basis upon which we believe development should proceed. That includes separation of the land from the terminal building through to McMillans Road, enabling us to put into place a series of developments which would not only be of benefit to the aviation industry but would also help to make the whole proposition viable. We are looking for a direct grant of land or, at the very least, a reasonable lease period, such as 40 years. Previously, we have gone through negotiations to try and make ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister was asked whether federal assistance would be provided towards airport construction or reconstruction in the Maldives. He is now talking about the Darwin Airport which is at least 3000 km away from the Maldives.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the relationship between the granting of federal government funds towards airport construction onshore and offshore is very pertinent. Quite clearly, in asking his question, the member for Karama intended to relate that funding to the local scene which, I would have assumed, was of importance even to members opposite.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, in speaking to the point of order, I refer you to standing order 109 which says: 'Questions may be put to a minister relating to public affairs' - and this may be considered to be a public affair - 'to proceedings pending in the Assembly, or to any matter of administration for which he is responsible'.

Mr Speaker, I appreciate that the minister and perhaps even the member for Karama are prone to a degree of self-indulgence, but even to contemplate that the Minister for Transport and Works in the Northern Territory is in any way involved in Australia's foreign affairs is to draw a very long bow. Personally, I am eternally grateful for the happy circumstance that he is not so involved. However, what is more important to this House is that the question should clearly have been ruled out of order. It has nothing to do with the Northern Territory or the administration of funding within the Northern Territory. It has nothing to do with any developments within the Northern Territory and it was clearly out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, I would remind all honourable ministers to relate their replies to the questions. There is some validity in the point of order raised by the member for Nhulunbuy and I therefore suggest that the member for Karama rephrase his question.

Federal Funding for Airport Facilities

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has the federal government given money to the Maldives for the upgrading of airport facilities and does he believe that appropriation of that money to the Maldives will affect the probability of redevelopment of Darwin Airport?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Karama has asked for an opinion.

Mr PALMER: Will the moneys appropriated to the Maldives have an effect on the redevelopment of Darwin Airport?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would hope that, in a meeting next week with the federal minister for Transport and Communications, Senator Evans, I will be able to confirm positively whether that is so or not. Honourable members may not be aware that, unfortunately, the new Minister for Land Transport and Infrastructure Support, Hon Peter Morris, is on sick leave following an appendix operation. Clyde Holding, who formerly held that portfolio, was on leave for most of the time he held it. Since Peter Duncan moved to another portfolio, it has been difficult to find out anything positive.

However, I hope to see Senator Evans and to clear up, once and for all, the extent of any grant or contribution by the federal government to this project. We hope to be able to get on with the job as soon as possible. We have advertised for expressions of interest from contractors, financiers and designers. We would like to be able to commence construction by about July and complete the project by the end of 1989, ahead of the Maldives.

Assistance to New South Wales Liberal Party

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Does he intend that the Northern Territory taxpayer will provide the Liberal Party in New South Wales with any assistance other than the provision of an unspecified number of personnel for an unspecified period of time and at an unspecified cost? If he does intend to provide any extra assistance, what will be the nature of that assistance and under what budget allocation will it be made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask the honourable member to put that question on notice so I can find out what the blazes he is talking about.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Changes in Aboriginal Affairs Administration

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): I will take the opportunity to clarify my answer to a previous question in relation to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I advised that there had been no discussions with the minister. I have been advised that the federal minister met, over breakfast in Alice Springs, with the Northern Territory Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government to discuss matters of concern to this government. Although that meeting does not affect the substantive point I was making, I apologise if I inadvertently misled the Assembly. I rise simply to correct the matter. It does not detract from my major point that there must be substantial consultations between the federal minister and the Northern Territory government.

Videotape and Transcript

Mr SMITH to SPEAKER

Mr Speaker, have you been able to assure yourself that the videotape and transcript supplied to you by the Chief Minister in his reference to you on the possible breach of privilege were official ABC video and transcript supplied by the ABC or were they supplied from other sources, possibly in breach of the Copyright Act?

ANSWER

I will have further discussions with the Clerk and give the information to the honourable Leader of the Opposition tomorrow.

Assistance to New South Wales Liberal Party

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the total cost to the Northern Territory government of the campaign assistance which the Chief Minister has given to Nick Greiner for the forthcoming New South Wales election and under what budget allocation was this campaign donation made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must assume from that question that the honourable member is referring to a specific financial donation to the New South Wales Liberal Party.

Mr Leo: As far as I am concerned, any Territory expense in that election is a campaign donation.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the issue of the actual dollar value of the Territory contribution is a matter that I will ask the honourable member to put on notice.

News Report on School Councils

Mr REED to ACTING MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it his intention, as the acting minister, to sack school councils if they do not comply with new regulations for councils, as was stated in a report on last night's Channel 8 news?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. It gives me an early opportunity to respond to the offensive item which went to air last night on the Channel 8 news. As all honourable members will recall, in question time yesterday, I did not at any stage refer or even hint at any possible dismissal of any school council for any reason whatsoever. In response to a question from the honourable member for Jingili, I said that any school council which did not comply with any new regulations would not be doing itself any favours because it would eventually and ultimately cease to be a legal school council. In that situation, I said, the government would have no option but to revert to the previous system under which the Department of Education dealt directly with the school principal. In other words, by

failing to comply with the new regulations, school councils would surrender their authority to make decisions affecting schools.

That is a far cry from what appeared last night in the news item concerned. Aided and abetted by the member for Stuart, who should know better but cannot help himself, the reporter stated in absolute terms that school councils would be sacked by me if they did not toe the line. The reporter offered his opinion that, as acting minister, I was uncertain about what might happen if school councils rejected the new regulations. He had no reason to form such an opinion as the matter is clear and simple. I went to some lengths in the interview to explain that and to stress that councils would not be summarily dismissed.

Mr Speaker, given the capacity for concern by parents about the future of school councils and given the efforts of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation to facilitate confusion and concern, I am extremely angry about the Channel 8 news item last night. I have lodged a complaint with the station's news editor and I hope that the reporter concerned redresses the matter publicly. I have stressed that I am not being thin-skinned. As honourable members will know, I have been involved in many a controversial issue in my time in politics and I have never lodged a complaint about the way I was handled by the media. I have no previous record of ever lodging a complaint about media reporting in the Territory. This matter, however, went far beyond the bounds of what might reasonably be expected.

Employment for School Leavers

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER FOR LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What action has the government taken to ensure that school leavers are able to find meaningful employment in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as honourable members would be aware, considerable concern was expressed last year about the ability of the Northern Territory to employ school leavers at the end of 1987. In fact, approximately 1700 students were expected to leave school at the end of last year and there was some uncertainty about how many of them would be able to be employed. On the assessment of my department, it was believed that about 60% of those students would obtain employment on leaving school and the other 40% would gradually be employed over a period, with a number continuing with further education.

As a consequence of the concerns and the obvious need to facilitate the employment of school leavers, the Territory government committed itself to a program of school-leaver employment and traineeships at a cost this year of about \$870 000 and \$1.5m over a period of 4 years given that, obviously, some of the traineeships will continue into other years. At the base grade, we were able to take on 44 positions, 12 of which were part of the Australian Traineeship Scheme whilst the remainder were base-grade positions to be taken in over a period of months for a 4-month duration and then gradually absorbed into the public service.

A number of industry training committees have been established. In retail business, 24 participants were started on 14 February. As you are aware, Mr Speaker, the Tourism Training Committee has been working extremely well in the Beaufort Hotel and the young people who have completed the courses have been excellent participants in the tourism industry; it is considered that

that initiative should continue. We have also put money into tourism training committees in Alice Springs.

Whilst there has been a downturn in the area of manufacturing, the construction industry agreed to take on a further 5 apprentices this year, with support from the Territory government. In connection with that, I agreed with the Masters Builders Association that construction apprentices employed by the Northern Territory government would become available for the association's pool so that the government would not be competing with the construction industry and so that government apprentices will be exposed to other aspects of the industry during the year. The 5 extra apprentices which the industry agreed to take on are in addition to those which it originally agreed to. The automotive industry also agreed to take on an additional 5 apprentices with support from the government. In the area of local government, another industry training committee has been established.

For some years, we have had a group intake scheme for Aboriginal people who were seeking employment in the public service but could not obtain it, basically because they lacked the necessary skills. This year, the group will involve 40 positions, which is 10 more than previously anticipated. I think that program will always be needed but I have changed its emphasis to include training for the private sector and to expand beyond the exclusive Aboriginal intake.

We have established 30 positions in pre-vocational courses. These are for young people who are seeking employment in an area but who lack skills and, therefore, cannot get a job. We have been able to reach an agreement with the Department of Education which will provide off-the-job training which will count towards their apprenticeship training. Mr Speaker, you are probably aware that those pre-vocational courses were previously funded under the Group One-Year Apprenticeship Scheme which was funded by the federal government and cut out last year. The courses were run at the Territory Training Centre and all students who participated in the scheme last year were able to get apprenticeships at the end of their training. It was of concern to me that such an option would not be available to young people this year but we have been able to retain it in conjunction with the Department of Education and there has been a very good response.

The architectural and engineering area has agreed to take on 12 cadetships and, again, we have provided support. I believe we have covered the field very well. We have not gone out to find jobs or to fund employers to take on young people, but we are seeking to train people for future jobs. I believe that that is the way the government should go. We should not try to create jobs which are not really necessary but we should look for young people who, with a little extra training, will not find it very difficult to get a job. That is exactly what we have done with these school-leaver initiatives. I have every confidence that the programs will be successful and able to be expanded in future years.

Cabinet Decision on Higher Education

Mr EDE to ACTING MINISTER for EDUCATION

Would he confirm that Cabinet has made a decision in the last few days to abolish the Darwin Institute of Technology, amalgamating the upper level courses into the University College and incorporating the balance, including all Technical and Further Education courses, into the Department of Education, and is it true that the higher education planning group, which will now have

to implement that decision, contains no representatives of the faculty associations or student bodies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if that is an example of the exercise of responsibility by the shadow spokesman in what is probably one of the most serious portfolios that anybody could ever hold, I am astonished. The content of his question is pure fabrication, designed to raise concern in the community. It has no substance whatsoever and it typifies his approach to one of the most delicate portfolio areas that anybody can be entrusted with. It concerns the welfare of our children in the Northern Territory and the role of government authorities in that, and the member for Stuart's approach should be condemned. Of course, Mr Speaker, the answer is no.

Police Administration Amendment Bill

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to this morning's interview on Territory Extra where he was asked by the interviewer whether, as has been suggested, some particularly prominent court cases are coming up in which he believes Williams Case will be used as a defence. I refer to his answer which was: 'There are, in fact, a couple of cases'. What are the cases and is it the intention of the government to commence the legislation in such a way that it will apply retrospectively?

ANSWER

Would the honourable member repeat the last part of that question please?

Mr BELL: I appreciate that the Chief Minister has difficulties with this legislation and I am more than happy to repeat my question. What are the cases to which the Chief Minister referred on the Territory Extra this morning? If these cases refer to offences that have already occurred and if it is the intention of the government that the substance of this legislation should apply to them, is it the intention of the government that the commencement date for the legislation will not be, as is normally the case, either the time of its passage or a future time but some time in the past; that is, will it be retrospective legislation?

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, now that I have the question clear, the answer is that it is not intended that it be retrospective legislation. I am not a lawyer any more than the opposition spokesman is a lawyer. I will not seek to interpret how legal counsel will argue cases in court any more than I would ask the shadow spokesman on police matters to seek to interpret how matters should be dealt with within the courts.

The reality is that there are cases before the police at the moment and that they arise regularly because of the very nature and requirements of police investigations ...

Mr Bell: What are the cases? Give us an example.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I will give some examples that may indicate the problems that exist as a consequence of the recent High Court decision and the problems that arise ...

Mr Smith: The 1986 High Court decision.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting. The member on his feet should be heard in silence.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I had not intended to use question time to debate the Police Administration Amendment Bill as the debate will take place tomorrow and I will have plenty of opportunity to do so then. However, I have been asked specific questions on this matter and I will take the opportunity to deal with them now in question time.

Mr Speaker, the fact is that, whilst the judgment in what is known as Williams Case did not change the common law ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As the Chief Minister said, he has been asked specific questions. There is a bill before the House and the substance of that bill should not be debated. The question related to statements he made on Territory Extra this morning in reference to the legislation. The 2 questions were enunciated quite clearly by my colleague and they should be answered specifically. The substance of the bill should not be debated.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I would ask the Chief Minister to relate his reply to the questions.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am seeking to place my answer in context so that the member opposite will not be subject to any confusion when I refer to 2 particular matters which have been cited to me by the police as illustrations of the need for this legislation. Williams Case clarified a grey area in the common law, and that clarification will place an onus ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister is continuing to debate a bill before the House. He has not yet attempted to answer the questions put to him by the member for MacDonnell. He has not attempted to specifically answer the 2 questions. The first asked what cases are presently being prosecuted by the police that will be affected by this legislation. The answer should simply name them. The other question asked whether the legislation will apply retrospectively or not. The minister has not attempted to answer those questions; he has attempted to debate the bill.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, one of the questions has been answered already and I am entitled to answer in the way that I believe will most clearly address the question put by the member opposite. I am seeking to do that and I would have done so already if I had not been interrupted continually by spurious points of order.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Chief Minister was attempting to put into context his reply to the member for MacDonnell's fairly detailed question.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am merely trying to outline the fact that the whole purpose of this bill is to counteract the judgment in Williams Case which made a specific declaration on what was a grey area of law and which was recognised by the legal profession as such. The judgment places an obligation on a defence lawyer to raise Williams Case when and if circumstances arise that would enable him to use it as a technical defence. That is a proper obligation on a defence lawyer.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to go into the details of specific arguments which have been dealt with and, undoubtedly, will be dealt with again. I will not name particular cases for obvious reasons. I do not intend to refer publicly to matters that will go before the courts. I do, however, wish to refer - as the Leader of the Opposition has done - to matters that have been sanitised against identification of individuals. I think that is the proper course of action to adopt.

On a Saturday afternoon, an accused person A induced two 7-year-old boys to enter his room at a house in a remote locality. The boys, B and C, upon being induced to enter the room, were threatened by the accused A who held a knife to one of the children's throats and told the youngster C to lie on the floor and cover his head with a sheet. The accused A then instructed B to lie on his stomach and proceeded to have anal intercourse with him. The act having been done, the accused again threatened both boys with the knife, warning them of dire consequences should they report the incident to anyone.

The matter came to police attention late on the Saturday afternoon. The accused's whereabouts were unknown. The accused, incidentally, resided in the house next door to the house of the victims. Information was received late on Saturday night that the accused had returned to the house. Police, knowing that the offender was a bolter, arrested him at midnight. The Criminal Investigation Branch in Darwin was advised at the earliest opportunity and detectives flew to the scene and commenced interviewing the accused at 2 pm, which was the earliest opportunity available. Full and frank admissions were made. The accused was flown out the following morning. He consented to a medical examination and the taking of pubic hair and blood samples. The accused was brought, forthwith, before the next available court hearing on Tuesday at 2 pm. The point is that, technically, the offender should have been brought before the 10 am court hearing in Darwin on the Monday, 1½ days earlier. This was totally impractical and would have made any effective investigation impossible. There was no realistic alternative to the course of action taken.

I refer to another matter, Mr Speaker. Following verbal instruction today from the officer in charge of the CIB, I submit the following. In late January 1988, 4 adult youths were apprehended in Darwin. The time was 0300 hours and they were apprehended whilst interfering with a motor vehicle. The offenders were not arrested at this time; they were conveyed back to the Berrimah Police Centre. They were placed in separate interview rooms. Computer inquiries revealed that the vehicle the youths were travelling in had been reported stolen in Alice Springs. One person was also wanted for questioning in relation to an unlawful entry and a sexual assault plus a number of unlawful entries and stealing incidents in Alice Springs. Another youth was also wanted for questioning in relation to a number of unlawful entries and stealing in Alice Springs. It was also ascertained that the group may have been responsible for interfering with a number of vehicles in the Darwin area, obtaining fuel. An expensive camera, suspected to be stolen, was located in the stolen vehicle. Due to the number of persons and the number of offences, totalling 94, interviews were delayed until detectives commenced duty. During this time, I am advised, the youths were happy to remain at the police station. I must say that, should they have sought to leave, they undoubtedly would have been restrained and technically would have been regarded as under arrest, although without having been charged.

One youth was arrested at 1145 hours, a second at 1520 hours, another at 1600 hours and a fourth at 2257 hours. A further youth was interviewed and then charged at 2308 hours. The delay in arresting these offenders was due to

the need to complete the various interviews. All 4 were refused bail, their rights explained and they appeared in court the next day.

Mr Smith: Who refused bail?

Mr HATTON: The police.

Mr Smith: Did you get a tape of the interviews?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am happy to provide copies of proceedings to the Leader of the Opposition. I do not have copies here, but I will arrange for them to be circulated to members of the House.

Mr Speaker, both of the cases I have described impact directly upon the principles that are addressed in the bill and which relate to the decision in Williams Case. Those sorts of situations are not uncommon and occur regularly as a result of the necessity for police to carry out investigations. Members will note that the matters I have mentioned are not instances of organised crime. They do, however, deal with complex matters which need investigation.

In respect of the second matter I outlined, it is quite clear that people were detained initially as a consequence of interfering with a vehicle. Following on from that, some 90-odd other charges arose as a result of police investigations. In Williams Case, the person was detained originally in connection with 3 offences and a further 26 were later identified. Those 26 were eventually thrown out because the evidence was not acceptable. That is totally consistent ...

Mr Smith: That is not right. That is not what the judgments in Williams Case say. Why don't you get across it?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I have read Williams.

Mr Smith: Well, read it again before the debate tomorrow, please.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the trial judge ruled that that evidence was inadmissible.

Mr Smith: Why? That is the question. Why was it ruled inadmissible.

Mr HATTON: Because the person had not been brought before the court ...

Mr Smith: When he should have been.

Mr HATTON: ... 20-odd hours earlier, rather than being held whilst the police continued to investigate the additional matters.

Mr Speaker, that is precisely the situation. It is right for police to carry out investigations prior to bringing matters before the courts. The member for MacDonnell asked last week if I could provide some examples of cases which would be affected by the legislation. Now that I have done so, I look forward to watching him crawl down Mitchell Street at lunchtime.

Vanderlin Drive Duplication

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What stage has the duplication of Vanderlin Drive reached?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has a great interest in traffic matters in the northern suburbs and I am pleased to advise him that works costing \$1.1m have commenced on Vanderlin Drive. The works commenced in January and are due to be completed by 18 July. There will be some interference with traffic flows because work will be in progress while traffic continues to utilise Lee Point Road and Vanderlin Drive. The works include a roundabout, and we heard some discussion about roundabouts the other day. A fairly large roundabout is to be installed at the intersection of Vanderlin Drive and Lee Point Road and the traffic lights there will continue to operate whilst that is being constructed.

As a PR exercise, departmental officers recently visited the Casuarina and the Hibiscus shopping centres and displayed the proposed works. Comments from the public were generally supportive, as one would expect. However, concern was expressed by some residents whose properties are adjacent to Vanderlin Drive that the duplicated roadway would be too close to the rear of their properties and that noise from it would be disturbing to them. That will not be the case, Mr Speaker. The noise levels should not alter at all and might even diminish due to a freer flow of traffic. The question of visual impact has also been attended to and an amount has been set aside in the contract to ensure that appropriate planting is undertaken.

I was concerned about some allegations from residents who stated that, when they bought those properties, the sales people stated on behalf of the developer that no roadworks were proposed in the future along Vanderlin Drive. I am having that matter investigated because, if that was in part of the sales pitch and even - as some people suggest - part of the contract, I would be more than concerned.

Some people on the Wulagi side of Vanderlin Drive have also expressed concern that access to and from their area might be interfered with to some extent. These matters have been referred to traffic engineers who have tried to balance such considerations with matters of safety. I believe that the best possible solution for all concerned has now been arrived at.

Mr Speaker, whilst there will be some minor interruption to traffic during the construction period, I believe that progress of the works will be in the general interests of northern suburbs residents, particularly those in VRD Drive and Leanyer Drive, which will experience less traffic.

Insurance Cover for Earthquake Damage

Mr POOLE to TREASURER

This question is addressed to the Treasurer in his capacity as minister responsible for the Territory Insurance Office. Shortly after the earthquake which struck Tennant Creek on 22 January this year, stories emerged which suggested that TIO policy holders were not covered for earthquake damage. Can the Treasurer advise whether or not this is the case?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, 10 claims have been received by the TIO for compensation for damage as a result of the earthquake. The total value of these claims is about \$550 000. Of that figure, \$500 000 is estimated to relate to damage to the gas pipeline. The honourable member is correct about immediate rumours

which suggested that TIO policy holders were not covered for earthquake damage. I am happy to tell him that all relevant TIO policies carry an automatic earthquake cover with no additional premium. I understand that the policies of some insurance companies do not include earthquake cover but TIO policies definitely do so.

As a matter of interest, the TIO building in Tennant Creek stood up to the quakes and shakes very well. Being a steel-framed building, the only damage was minor cracks to the plaster.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Cabinet Decision on Higher Education

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, whilst I am on my feet, I will refer to the Cabinet decision in relation to the question which was asked of me earlier by the shadow spokesman on education. For the benefit of all honourable members, I will read from the decision. Cabinet:

(a) directed that all negotiations with the Commonwealth over the future of higher education will be conducted by the NT Minister for Education; (b) authorised nominees of the Minister for Education to enter into preliminary discussions with Commonwealth nominees as a precursor to the formation of the joint planning committee; (c) agreed that negotiations should be conducted on the basis of the preferred options presented in the submission; and (d) directed the minister to report back to Cabinet prior to any commitments or undertakings being entered into with the Commonwealth.

In terms of the available options, I will refer to a recent transcript of statements made by Nan Giese, who seems to have been much more able to come to grips with the third option than has the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. In a radio interview, she said: 'The options are described in the paper as 3 basic options. It does not say in any way that they are exhaustive so I do not believe that this paper excludes any options'. She is absolutely correct in relation to the third option and we will be discussing that in more detail later. I hope that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will pay attention today because he may learn something.

Future of Darwin Institute of Technology

Mr EDE to ACTING MINISTER for EDUCATION

Will he investigate whether the Secretary of the Department of Education yesterday went to the DIT and told members of the Darwin Institute of Technology that a decision had been made to abolish the institute, that its upper-level courses were to be incorporated into the University College and that the balance of courses were to be returned to the Department of Education? Following such an investigation, will he report back to this Assembly on the matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have come a long way from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's earlier assertion about an alleged Cabinet decision. He has now come back with something else that he has heard. We saw him duck out to the phone to obtain another rumour. He must have a rumour machine that he can plug into. If question time went for 1½ hours, he would be exhausted from running in and out. We would have to pick him up for his last question.

The shadow spokesman on education's question will be answered during the course of the debate on the first item of general business later today.

Assistance to New South Wales Liberal Party

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Will he extend to other members of the House the same facilities that he has extended to Nick Greiner so that they may be able to support candidates of their choice in the forthcoming New South Wales election?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a preposterous suggestion.

Mr Smith: Why?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have continually warned members this morning and I finally warn the Leader of the Opposition that another interjection will result in his being named.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Brisbane Expo Exhibit

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, earlier in the sittings the member for Stuart asked a question relating to the Northern Territory government's decision to participate in the Brisbane Expo and whether work on the exhibit would be done in the Northern Territory or in Brisbane. I inform honourable members that planning is at an advanced stage even though the decision was made fairly recently. A model of the Northern Territory's exhibit is currently on display in the committee room and will be there until about 12.30 pm today for any honourable member who may care to look at it. I can advise honourable members that the design of the model and its construction will be undertaken within the Northern Territory.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I would very much like to hear a full description of what will happen at Expo. However, as I recall, the question was asked of the Chief Minister. The minister who is presently speaking has never even been asked a question about Expo in Brisbane or the Northern Territory's involvement in it. I do not see how standing orders can be extended for a minister to answer a question that he has never been asked in any context.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the Territory's participation in Expo is within my portfolio responsibility.

Honourable members will be pleased to know that virtually the only work that will be undertaken interstate will be the assembling of the stall, the blowing-up of photographs which the Territory does not have the capacity to undertake and possibly some electrical wiring. The exhibit will be predominantly tourism oriented with an emphasis on Aboriginal culture and industry and development. Incorporated in the display will be a theatre with seating for 30 people, a shop where 5 products unique to the Northern Territory can be sold and a homestead replica featuring a School of the Air exhibit. When honourable members see the model that is on display, they will indeed see that the Northern Territory's exhibit will do the Territory credit.

It will be unique at the Expo, I am sure. The majority of the work and expenditure will occur in the Northern Territory until the exhibit opens.

Fringe Benefits Tax

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

Last year, he was a very strong opponent of the fringe benefits tax. Could he advise the House of the Northern Territory government's liabilities in respect of fringe benefits tax this financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is indeed a very timely question. We have heard so much about the federal government's balanced budget and, in fact, the surplus that it intends to achieve this year. We all know that one of the major factors in that outcome is that the fringe benefits tax recouped over \$1000m more than was originally estimated. Anybody in Australia could have told the government what that tax would do to various industries, particularly motor vehicle retailers and restaurateurs.

The honourable member has indeed waved a red flag at a bull by mentioning the fringe benefits tax for it is in my opinion that it is the worst tax ever inflicted on the citizens of Australia. It erodes the very principles which have forged and made this country. I could go on about it for the whole morning but I will not. Honourable members should note with cynicism, however, that the federal Treasurer keeps getting delightful surprises about how much revenue the fringe benefits tax is raising for him. In 1986-87, the tax operated for only 9 months. It was estimated that it would raise \$335m. In fact, it produced over \$500m. In 1987-88, estimated revenue is \$750m and I understand that the federal Treasury is excitedly hoping that it will actually collect more than \$1000m. We could perhaps be forgiven for suggesting that the fringe benefits tax is keeping the federal government afloat financially.

To address the honourable member's question specifically, the Territory government's estimated fringe benefits tax liability for 1987-88 is \$7.5m. The biggest component of that is the \$3.8m which the government will pay on recreational air fares. The Territory government paid \$4.6m in the 9-month period of 1986-87, plus a further \$500 000 relating to a back adjustment, following an assessment by the Australian Taxation Office on the tax liability for air fares of compulsory transferees. We paid it reluctantly. We disliked the tax as much as ever we did.

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that, in Japan, companies are allowed to deduct their entertainment costs as legitimate tax-free expenses. One only has to have a look at the industries that have been developed as a result of that measure. It helps money to circulate in the economy. If the Leader of the Opposition has any doubt at all about the ability of the Japanese to run their economy, he should look at their surplus and the way that they are travelling the world today looking for investment opportunities. There has been no greater success story than that of the Japanese economy and we could all learn from looking at how it has been able to achieve its success. In Australia, we seem to have a lemming-like tendency to create a suicide pact in which we do exactly the opposite. We close down restaurants and we close down car retailers in order to provide millions of dollars which are drastically needed to keep this federal government afloat.

Vanderlin Drive Duplication

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

This relates to an answer he gave to a previous question. In view of the concerns expressed by residents in his electorate regarding the realignment of Vanderlin Drive and the ensuing noise problems, will he now consider the realignment of Vanderlin Drive where it abuts residences in Karama or will he consider other noise abatement measures?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to reiterate for the honourable member the advice that I gave him last year. There is absolutely no way in the world that one could contemplate bulldozing the very expensive bitumen alongside those houses in Karama. I emphasise again that, in the long term, the road will be duplicated all the way through to the highway. The setback between the road and the property lines was certainly based on normal practice. The road was there long before the houses were orientated and I believe that what is required is simply some landscaping to provide screening. There will not be any realignment of the road.

School Council Regulations

Mr LANHUPUY to MEMBER for STUART

I preface my question by pointing out to the House that the member for Stuart has a motion before the House seeking to disallow the Education (School Councils) Regulation 1988. I refer the member to legal advice he mentioned in debate in this Assembly and I ask whether that advice showed that the Secretary of the Department of Education advised school councils incorrectly concerning the range of employees covered by the regulations. Will he now table that advice for the benefit of members?

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! This question is out of order in that it refers to a matter which is not yet before the House.

Mr Smith: It is before the House; it appears on the Notice Paper.

Mr HATTON: Notice has been given but it is not yet before the House.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I will speak to the point of order and not to the fact that government members do not want to know the answer to the question. On the Notice Paper, under the heading 'On or Before 17 May 1988 Business of the Assembly', there is an item headed 'Education (School Councils) Regulations - Motion for Disallowance'. It reads: 'Resumption of debate on the motion of Mr Ede (25 February 1988) - That the amendments of the Education (School Councils) Regulations, as contained in Regulations 1988 No 4 and made under the Education Act, be disallowed'.

In prefacing his question, the member for Arnhem made reference to the disallowance motion which I have just read. His question clearly relates to that. It is an item on the Notice Paper. Mr Speaker, I refer you to standing order 110 which states that: 'Questions may be put to a member, not being a minister, relating to any bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the Assembly, of which the member has charge'. The member for Arnhem's question relates to a matter which is the business of the Assembly and is on the Notice Paper. I moved the motion and I therefore have charge of the business. The question is clearly allowable under standing order 110.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, far be it from me to claim the same knowledge as the Clerk in advising the Chair. However, it is obvious that there is no point of order. Indeed, you have made rulings in this House over the last week which would indicate that the member for Arnhem's question was properly directed. It is the responsibility of the member for Stuart to reply to the question. It relates to a matter that is before the House. Whilst the question does not impinge upon the substance of the motion, it does impinge upon legal matters which relate strictly to the motion. Mr Speaker, it is my belief that you must rule against the Chief Minister's point of order.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I take the point made by the member for Stuart. He does have carriage of a matter that is substantively before the House, and I withdraw the point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Stuart has a motion before the House and may now proceed to answer the question.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been challenged regarding this legal opinion, both by the Chief Minister, whom I thought would be very eager to obtain a copy, and by the Minister for Education, who is presently elsewhere.

I am quite prepared to table the advice that I have received. It states quite clearly that the letter circulated by the Secretary of the Department of Education to chairmen of school councils and school principals is incorrect at law. I have also received advice which indicates that the department itself obtained legal advice from the Department of Law which supports the advice I received.

Mr Speaker, I now seek leave to table the legal advice which I have received.

Leave granted.

I believe that it is vital for the future of school councils that they have clear advice on the situation regarding temporary, part-time and casual teachers as well as janitors and other people who work for schools and whether such people are, in fact, employees under the definition of the regulations or not. As I said, the letter from the secretary of the department said that such people were not employees and, therefore, were not covered. In fact, the legal opinion which I have just tabled makes it quite clear that such people are employees and, as such, are covered by the one-third restriction.

Mr Speaker, I have tabled my advice in the Assembly. I would ask the government if, in the interests of all members and in the interests of this debate, it will table the advice that it has received from the Department of Law so that all members can know just where it stands and so that all school councils can know where they stand.

Plastic Bag Manufacturer in Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has a manufacturer of plastic bags, located in the Trade Development Zone, approached the government for additional assistance? If so, has such assistance been granted and what is its nature? Lastly, in round figures, how many plastic bags have been produced by the manufacturer?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have information before me that would enable me to answer the honourable member's question at this stage. I will endeavour to obtain such information and advise him during the course of these sittings. I am aware that the principals of the plastic bag manufacturing company located in the Trade Development Zone have been in Darwin during the last few days, negotiating various matters associated with their business, but I really cannot inform the honourable member further without seeking advice.

Private Child Care Centres

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Can he assure me that full heed will be paid to reasonable requests from parents in relation to the care of their children in private child care centres with regard to government competition, staff ratios, toys, staff qualifications and so forth and that primary regard will not be paid only to staff members of the Children's Services Bureau of his department?

ANSWER

As a responsible member of this parliament, I always listen to the constituents of the Northern Territory.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Videotape and Transcripts

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, earlier today the Leader of the Opposition asked me a question concerning copyright for the transcript and video of the ABC 7.30 Report on February 25 1988. Pursuant to standing orders 87 and 253, the Chief Minister tabled the transcript and the video in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday March 1 1988. This is a proceeding in parliament. Under these circumstances, in my view, the question of copyright in relation to the Speaker's action does not arise.

School Council Regulations

Mr EDE to ACTING MINISTER for EDUCATION

If he agrees that the introduction of the new school council regulations has generated appalling levels of confusion, does he now intend to re-regulate and does he not agree that the only sensible course is to abolish the new regulations entirely?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure if the member for Stuart was in the House yesterday but we debated the regulations then. We removed much of the confusion which, in many instances, had been generated by him. The government's intention with the regulations is quite clear now. There were a number of issues that needed to be clarified yesterday. The intention in respect of part-time employees has been clarified. The reference to ministerial veto has now been amended to avoid any misconstruction. We have made it clear that the principal is an ex-officio member. The government has taken considerable measures to provide clarification for the opposition on some of the issues on which it had been confused. The intentions of the Minister for Education, as outlined in the Assembly last week, will be carried out.

School Council Regulations

Mr EDE to ACTING MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, the comments we have just heard do not answer my question. I would like the acting minister to advise when the amended regulations will be brought into place. What is the position of schools that are holding their AGMs tonight? They cannot abide by the old regulations because they are to be changed. They cannot abide by the amended regulations because they have not been put into place yet and they do not know what they are. They do not know whether they should be abiding by the regulations that were in place 6 months ago. It is completely confusing.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a pity that the member for Stuart did not use his time in the adjournment debate. If he has a question to ask, one would expect him to ask it.

Mr Ede: I ask questions during question time.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, you have to take your hat off to him and his colleagues at the ABC. They have made a pretty good job of confusing this issue and the way they work together is a credit to them. The amendments to the regulations will be attended to as soon as possible. They are being drafted and as soon as that process is complete, the matter will be attended to.

Local Government Elections

Mr REED to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Will those persons living within the recently extended local government boundaries in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs be entitled to vote or

nominate for election to respective councils and, if so, what are the closing dates for both enrolment and nomination?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there has been some confusion about the status of people in areas outside the old boundaries but inside the new boundaries of Alice Springs and Katherine in respect of their eligibility to nominate for election and to vote at the council elections to be held in May. I can assure them that they have that ability. The gazettal notice makes it quite clear that they will be able to enrol and nominate. The rolls close on 25 March, the closing date for nominations is 29 April and the polling date for the council elections is 28 May.

Some confusion has been created unnecessarily because it was said that the councils would take over responsibility for the charging of rates on 1 July and that they would take responsibility following the May elections. Some people thought that, because responsibility for the new areas would not be taken over until that time, people living in them would not be permitted to enrol, vote or nominate for positions on the councils. That is not the case, and that is quite clear from the gazettal notice. I will repeat those dates again for the benefit of those who did not pick them up: the rolls close on 25 March, the nomination date is 29 April and the polling date is 28 May.

Videotape and Transcript

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Who was the person who made the videotape of the ABC 7.30 Report tabled in this Assembly by himself on Tuesday, who was the person who made the transcript of that videotape and who authorised the taping and the production of the transcript?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the tape recording was made in my office on my authorisation and I will deal with the matter later. I have no further specific comment to make at present. Later during the course of this question time, I intend to address in more detail the specific issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I wish to ensure that my comments are both proper and comprehensive because I do not want to mislead the Assembly or fail to answer the question comprehensively.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to raise a matter of privilege. It is this. Section 48A of the Commonwealth Copyright Act quite clearly sets out restrictions in terms of how members of parliament can take copies of printed material or, as in this case, video material. It says that it can be done '... for the sole purpose of assisting a person who is a member of a parliament in the performance of the person's duties as such a member, by an authorised officer of a library, being a library the principal purpose of which is to provide library services for members of that parliament'.

The Chief Minister has just told this House that the copy of the videotape was made in his office. It was not made in the parliamentary library, which is the only way that it could have been made without breaching copyright. Mr Speaker, I believe that a prima facie case exists that the Chief Minister

has breached the copyright laws of Australia. Such a breach is equivalent to the crime of common theft.

The point of this matter of privilege is that, by tabling in this House material which has been copied illegally under the terms of the Copyright Act, the Chief Minister has bought this House into disrepute.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation on this matter at a later stage.

Leave granted.

Mr SPEAKER: I am not quite sure whether the Leader of the Opposition is asking for this matter to be referred to the Privileges Committee. If that is his request, I will have to consider the matter and advise him at a later date.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, that is the response that I expected from you.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr FIRMIN to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, in this House last year we had a constant barrage of criticism from the opposition concerning the operations of Hungerford Refrigeration. I ask the Treasurer, in his capacity as minister responsible for the TIO, is he satisfied that Hungerford Refrigeration is proving to the TIO that it is a worthy vehicle for investment of policyholders' funds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the TIO is indeed happy with the continuing progress of Hungerford Refrigeration in the Trade Development Zone. Sales have been growing steadily and, for the last 3 months, have run at more than \$200 000 per month. That will be a revelation to the Leader of the Opposition, who has not yet managed to find a positive word to say about this company. According to him, the TIO's assistance to Hungerford Refrigeration was a complete waste - 'a financial sinkhole', he called it. I believe that the TIO's actions to assist Hungerford Refrigeration have been completely vindicated.

The board of the TIO has had faith in the advanced technology installed by Hungerford Refrigeration and in the company's enormous potential. That faith is now starting to receive its reward. Difficulties are still being experienced with bad debt problems with some company clients and slow payment of debts, and there are claims and debts from the past still to be settled either by way of negotiation or in court. It is hoped that, in 1988, the Leader of the Opposition will not continue to act as a de facto representative of the interstate companies making claims on Hungerford Refrigeration and that he will allow any such claims to be settled in the usual manner. We have seen the results of his cheap political point-scoring in relation to this matter.

Hungerford Refrigeration has a future in the Northern Territory, particularly in the Trade Development Zone. The fact that sales are now running at \$200 000 a month is an indication that the TIO's faith and confidence in Hungerford Refrigeration has been totally vindicated and that its investment in that company will be rewarding for all policyholders.

Police Administration Amendment Bill

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to his comment on the ABC radio news this morning that he was prepared to accept amendments to the Police Administration Amendment Bill. Will he please advise the House which amendments he is prepared to accept and in which areas of this complex issue he is prepared to accept amendments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that particular statement needs to be placed in context. What I said was that, as is the normal practice, the government is receptive to rational argument but not to emotional polemic. That is what I said, although those were not the specific terms I used.

Mr Speaker, that is a natural and reasonable response. It has been the approach adopted by the government. I would remind honourable members that, during the course of a particular debate yesterday, a number of points were made with respect to school council regulations and, as a consequence of the arguments that were presented in the House and the legal opinion that was tabled only yesterday by the member for Stuart, the government was prepared to move ...

Mr Tuxworth: He offered last week.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the member for Barkly went on television last week claiming that the opinion had been tabled. He was wrong then too.

Mr Tuxworth: He tried to table it last week but you would not let him.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart did not try to table it. He indicated that he was prepared to table it if we asked him to. He has always had the opportunity to seek leave to table the opinion or to table the opinion. I would argue that it would not have been received. It was not put forward last week, Mr Speaker, but that is an aside.

My point is that if, during the course of the debate on the Police Administration Amendment Bill, matters arise which ...

Mr Ede: Are you fed up with running this government?

Mr Smith: I'll send you the bill for your ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is getting a bit carried away with himself. The fact that he addressed a few areas of confusion that needed clarification and that the government acted responsibly by taking those points into account in the interests of the community should not be seen as indicative that the member for Stuart is running this government. That is drawing an extremely long bow.

I repeat that, in respect of any legislation before this House, the government is always prepared to look at rational and responsible amendments that may be proposed as a consequence of community consultation or that may arise in the course of debate in the Assembly. Yet again, I refer honourable members to amendments made to the Work Health legislation during the committee stage, as a consequence of the debate that occurred at that time.

As members of a responsible government, we are prepared at all times to deal with legislation as it is supposed to be dealt with in this House. We do not adopt a dogmatic, fixed approach. We do not consider that it is politically damaging to accept rational amendments. My government has never done that and will not do that. I regard that as a responsible and proper approach for government and in accord with the proper role of this House. I will continue to promote that view.

Police Administration Amendment Bill

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I would like to nail this down because it is one of the most contentious pieces of legislation that has come before the Assembly for some time. It is being put through at very short notice.

Mr SPEAKER: I suggest the honourable member ask his question.

Mr BELL: Will the government accept amendments in respect of the following issues that were the subject of the so-called committee amendments: first, the right to communicate with a friend or relative - proposed as section 142; secondly, the tape recording of confessions and admissions - proposed as section 143; and, thirdly, the savings clause, proposed as section 143A, which included amongst other matters an affirmation of the right to remain silent?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, these are matters that will be dealt with during the course of the debate. I will reserve my government's position on any matters associated with the bill for the debate later today.

Closure of Rivers to Commercial Netting of Fish

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In recognition of the value to the Territory economy of recreational barramundi fishing, will the minister consider extending to other rivers in the Territory his recent decision to close the Mary River to commercial netting?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it has been put to me on a number of occasions that the government should extend to other areas of the Territory its recent actions in respect of the Mary River. Honourable members will be aware from recent press announcements that the closure of the Mary River to commercial fishing was confirmed quite recently following evaluation of a report on the monitoring of the Mary River system during the past year or so. The government decided to close the Mary River to commercial fishing indefinitely and to introduce a new buy-back scheme to reduce the netting effort by the commercial industry of barramundi in Northern Territory waters right across the board. Cabinet approved the purchase of 5 more licences, each involving 1000 m of net, from the commercial fishery.

The commercial fishermen argued very strongly that, in the context of attempts to reduce the impact on fish stocks in the river, restrictions should also be placed on recreational fishing. The government accepted that

argument, as did the recreational fishing associations, to their credit. The Mary River system is recognised as the Northern Territory's greatest barramundi-breeding resource and we have now placed a number of restrictions on recreational fishing within it. These apply only to the Mary River system. The first is a prohibition on the use of cast nets. We have also imposed a bag limit of 2 fish per person per day. The normal barramundi bag limit in the Territory is 5 fish per person per day. We have introduced, for the first time in the Northern Territory, a minimum length of 50 cm for barramundi taken from the river by recreational fishermen. Honourable members may consider that a bit large for a minimum-sized barramundi bearing in mind that 50 cm is half a metre. The decision was based on expert advice. Indeed, some of the experts argued that the minimum size should be larger but we were not quite prepared to go along with that. The idea of having a large minimum size is to allow barramundi to reach the stage at which they change sex and become females capable of reproduction.

In relation to the Mary River system only, we have established an area of tidal influence which will be closed to recreational fishermen for the barramundi-breeding period which is currently recognised as extending from 1 October to 31 January inclusive. At the moment, no commercial fishermen in the Northern Territory can fish for barramundi during that period and that has been the case for some time. Within the Mary River system, this now applies to recreational fishermen also.

The honourable member asked whether we would extend some of these new controls on both commercial and recreational fishermen to other rivers. The government has not made a decision on that matter as yet. We believe that there should be some monitoring of other rivers prior to making such decisions, to determine whether there has been such a severe depletion in fish numbers that relief from fishing pressure is required to allow stocks to regenerate. To date, we have not commenced such heavy monitoring systems in the Daly River and Victoria River, the 2 rivers most frequently named as those which might be set aside for recreational fishing by locals and tourists as distinct from commercial fishing. I am happy to keep the situation under constant surveillance. I am a great supporter of the barramundi industry, which brings enormous economic benefits to the Northern Territory. We need to do everything reasonable to protect the resource, without going overboard. As resources permit, the Fisheries Unit in my department will mount monitoring programs of those rivers in order to be able to make judgments on the basis of scientific information rather than emotion.

Pearl Farming Licences

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What is the current situation in relation to the issue of pearl farming licences in the Northern Territory and have any expressions of interest been received from Aboriginal organisations or groups?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the honourable member that we are currently assessing applications for pearl licences in Northern Territory waters. As honourable members will be aware, the pearling industry has been largely defunct in the Northern Territory for in excess of 20 years and it is believed that there are now sufficient stocks to justify the issue of a number of licences.

The recent calling of applications brought a very good response. We received 21 applications for a maximum of 5 licences to be issued. It may be that less than 5 licences are issued but that will depend on the assessment of the applications which is currently in progress. The assessment panel includes a Commonwealth fisheries officer. The waters to be fished for pearl shell are Commonwealth waters but, under an agreement with the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory is to manage the fishery. Another panel member is a former employee of the Western Australian Fisheries Department. He is very knowledgeable about the pearling industry in Western Australia and, together with officers of my department and the Treasury, is a member of the panel which is assessing the applications.

Whilst I would not normally name applicants for licences, the honourable member specifically asked whether Aboriginal organisations had applied. I am prepared to confirm that that is the case. They will, of course, be assessed along with the other applicants.

Sunday Alcohol Sales

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Does the government support supermarkets selling alcohol on Sundays?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is good to receive a question of that nature from the opposition. I have had the same question put to me on a number of occasions recently by members on this side of the House.

The whole question of liquor, liquor sales and liquor licences is under review at the moment. There have recently been some dramatic changes in the availability of liquor in Queensland where 24-hour liquor sales have been proposed in various locations, for the tourist trade. This was not acceptable to the Bjelke-Petersen government but I understand that it is now being seriously considered. In fact, the Chairman of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission recently visited Queensland to look at the legislation and proposals for its introduction. What we are doing is not just another review. Whilst I would be the first to admit that the liquor industry and the commission have had more reviews than the Tivoli Theatre, I am fair dinkum about this one.

There are a number of other issues, including the d'Abbs Report, which the member for MacDonnell referred to, and the implementation of some of that report's recommendations. A petition signed by 6000 people has been tabled in this Assembly, indicating that those people would like supermarkets to be able to sell alcohol on Sundays. That is valuable information from the community at large. Of course, I have also had representation from the Australian Hotels Association on the same issue.

The legislation itself is currently under review and we have a full-time officer working on that. I have advised the Cabinet and the party room that I will have a comprehensive and detailed report on the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission before them within 2 months. The sale of alcohol in supermarkets is one of the issues which is being addressed.

Light Vehicle Fleet Management

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Would he explain the rationale behind the proposed introduction of a pilot scheme for light vehicle fleet management?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is part of ongoing research by the Department of Transport and Works to find more cost-effective ways of going about its business. In recent years, major organisations and government departments have examined and, in some cases, implemented private leasing or full-management schemes for their vehicle fleets. The Northern Territory government has a considerable number of vehicles, some 1500 of which are in the small to medium range. That has a significant impact on the Territory budget. The research is another responsible approach by the Department of Transport and Works to determine whether there are some financial gains in having private enterprise either lease vehicles to the government or perform full-management services.

During his very colourful history, the member for Araluen spent a period working for a major motor vehicle leasing company and I appreciate his contributions and comments in regard to this matter. We are about to advertise a package involving 120 small vehicles. We are looking for a variety of submissions either on total full vehicle management or leasing. Information required from tenderers will include an indication of the utilisation of local resources - suppliers, mechanics and so forth - in their schemes. I mention that deliberately because one of the fears expressed is that perhaps some multinational or large national company will come in here. I can assure honourable members that we will be looking for maximum local participation. We have already received a considerable number of expressions of interest from locals.

I am confident that the scheme will work. After 12 months, we will determine exactly what savings are afforded by such a scheme. I will be able to report to the Assembly at that time.

Employment in the Territory

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Can he advise whether the figures bandied around by the Leader of the Opposition last Thursday, which purported to show that 8000 jobs had been lost in the past 6 months, accurately reflect the real labour situation in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to comment on that issue. The member for Stuart said that the figures came from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. That is what concerns me. Quite clearly, there are sets of ABS figures which basically laugh at one another. The Australian Bureau of Statistics would be the first to admit that the figures are based on very flimsy evidence.

Graphs that I have been shown recently indicate that there is a decline in employment figures in the Northern Territory. The graphs indicate that public service employment has declined at a steeper rate than that in the private sector. The problem that I have with the ABS figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition ...

Mr Ede: How do you work your figures out?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I know exactly how many people have left the public service during the last 12 months.

Mr Smith: 700.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, that is not correct. The actual figure is about 500. The Commonwealth Public Service and the Northern Territory Public Service combined constitute approximately one-third of the overall employment figures in the Northern Territory. The other two-thirds relate to the private sector. Even if employment were decreasing at the same rate in both sectors, the maximum fall would be 1500 to 2000 jobs.

Another factor that lends strength to my argument is that, while there has been a downturn in jobs, there has also been a downturn in recipients of social security benefits. Between August and November 1987, there was a reduction of about 700 in the number of people receiving social security benefits. At the same time, there was an increase of about 1600 in numbers of people aged between 15 and 65 in the work force.

Mr Ede: Where did you get those figures from?

Mr McCARTHY: ABS, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: ABS!

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I told you at the beginning that the figures laugh at one another. That is exactly what I am trying to point out: the ABS figures laugh at one another. The ABS figures indicate a downturn of 7000 to 8000. We know how many positions have been lost in the public service, which constitutes about one-third of the Territory work force. If the downturn is equivalent in the private sector, the maximum number of jobs lost would be 1500. Even if we say the figure could be 2000, that is about as far as we can go. A downturn in social security recipients and an increase in population: it is quite clear that the figures laugh at one another.

Mr Speaker, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has itself pointed out that it has changed the basis of its collection of figures. If one takes a sample of people unemployed in Fannie Bay and another in Palmerston, the figures would be quite different. At Port Keats or Yirrkala, the sample would result in different figures again. Given our very small population and the small samples taken, I have very little confidence in the ABS figures in relation to employment. There is no way that we have a downturn anything like that suggested by the ABS figures which have been bandied around by the Leader of the Opposition. I have no problem in saying that. Given the decline in the public service, I am fully confident that there has not been the sort of downturn in the private sector that is indicated by the ABS figures.

Liquor Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

I address my question to the Chief Minister because I assume that he is still the head of the government. Does he believe that citizens should be penalised by the state if they have committed no crime? If he does not believe that, why does his government continue to support the provisions of section 96 of the Liquor Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer to the first part of the question is that, obviously, we do not believe people should be penalised if they have committed no crime. Of course, that begs the issue in respect of section 96 of the Liquor Act. I assume from the content of debates in this House that the honourable member is referring particularly to the confiscation of vehicles or property where a person has been charged with a particular offence. The legal argument is very complex. It may touch upon matters of evidence and a multitude of other circumstances. The reason this government has continued to support the confiscation provision in the Liquor Act is the continuing and very strong representations from Aboriginal communities. I am advised that they believe that it constitutes a deterrent. Obviously, people charged with offences are presumed innocent until proven guilty. While a matter is before the courts, confiscated goods are held but, in the event of a person charged being found not guilty, such goods are returned.

Mr Speaker, I am not a lawyer but the underlying principle is that, if a person commits an offence under the Liquor Act, the property of that person which was used in committing that offence ought to be forfeit as part of the punishment for the offence. The legalities and technical details of that are matters that I would leave in the hands of the court.

Liquor Act

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, my supplementary question is: does the Chief Minister believe that, under the Northern Territory's legal system, the guilt or innocence of individuals should be judged by the courts?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask for your ruling. I believe that I am being asked for a legal opinion.

Mr Leo: No, I am asking you for a personal opinion.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I advise the member opposite that I am awaiting your advice in respect of the matter I have referred to you.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, I am prepared to rephrase the question if that would help matters.

Mr SPEAKER: I would suggest that that might be advisable.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, is it the Northern Territory government's policy to penalise persons when they have not been convicted by a court for any crime? If that is not the government's policy, why does it insist on the maintenance of section 96 of the Liquor Act? Quite clearly, that section of the act enables the government to penalise persons who have been proven by a court to be entirely innocent.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have already answered the first part of that question. In respect of the second part of that question dealing with section 96 of the Liquor Act and the interpretation of that act which the honourable member is

presupposing in his question, I will refer the matter to the appropriate minister.

Mr Leo: It is a matter of law.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, if it is a matter of law, the honourable member should not be asking the question in this House.

Mr Leo: I am asking whether or not you support it.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, it is a law of the Northern Territory. As a responsible government, obviously we support all Northern Territory laws.

Mr Speaker, I will refer the details of the Liquor Act and its administration to the relevant minister.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, for the benefit of honourable members who may not be as familiar with this legislation as is the member for Nhulunbuy, section 96 of the Liquor Act deals with forfeiture.

Mr Speaker, may I tell you why section 96 is included in the Liquor Act? It is there largely at the insistence of Aboriginal traditional tribal elders. I have had the opportunity of travelling the Territory and discussing this very issue with such people and I can tell honourable members opposite that they are not representing the views of their constituents. I will give one example of the hundreds I could give if I had enough time. I will not name the communities or people involved.

I attended a meeting in one community. The women were on one side of the fence and the men were on the other. The men said: 'This grog-running has to stop. It is causing big problems in our community'. They went on to give details about what was happening and asked us to stop it. The women then had their chance to speak. One of them stood up and came forward. 'You see all these men sitting next to this fence here?', she said. 'They are the biggest grog-runners in this community. They use the council truck. They cover the grog with a load of sand and they bring it into the community'.

Mr Speaker, the confiscation provision is in the act at the insistence of Aboriginal people following widespread consultation right across the Northern Territory. They did not want people to run grog into their communities. They have seen confiscation as a way of stopping it by removing the means of supply. I could give examples of cartons of grog being thrown from a bus as a police car followed behind. Whether or not the people throwing cartons are innocent or guilty, it is fairly obvious to somebody who gets hit with a carton of Vic Bitter that the vehicle is carrying grog. The confiscation provisions were incorporated at the insistence of tribal elders who wanted vehicles carrying grog to be taken from their owners immediately.

Mr Ede: That is absolute rubbish. It assumes that it doesn't matter whether the vehicle owner is guilty or innocent. It just says, 'To hell with them'.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, that is an example of the opposition's hypocrisy.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister will withdraw that word.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I withdraw it unreservedly.

We have been out to consult with the people. They have pleaded with us: 'Look, alcohol is a problem here. We don't want it here, please'. There have been cases where vehicles have been seized by the elders and taken away and burnt. Alcohol is one of the most serious problems in Aboriginal communities and it was at the insistence of tribal elders that section 96 was included in the Liquor Act.

Mr Speaker, the issue has been under review through the d'Abbs Report in which the forfeiture of vehicles and the effectiveness of dry-area legislation is discussed. Let me tell you, from my personal experience, that this confiscation provision is included at the insistence of Aboriginal people. They requested it when the legislation was first put together and that is why it continues to be in the act.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Plastic Bag Manufacturer in Trade Development Zone

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asked me 2 questions about a company in the Trade Development Zone. He asked whether the company had approached the Trade Development Zone Authority for additional assistance and about the nature of that assistance. He also asked if I could provide details of how many plastic bags had been produced by that manufacturer in the Trade Development Zone. I am now in a position to respond to those questions.

I will not go into the history of the matter because it is not strictly relevant to the question but, under the agreement with the Trade Development Zone Authority, the company is eligible for assistance in the training of local employees. I am informed that the company has trained 4 local employees, in accordance with the agreement, and has approached the authority for the agreed reimbursement. This has not yet been finalised as the company has not supplied the required evidence of its expenditure. It is estimated that the amount in question would not exceed \$2000.

I have no information of any other requests for any extension of assistance to the company. However, I should advise the Assembly and the Leader of the Opposition that the partners of the company are currently in dispute and negotiations are being closely monitored by the Trade Development Zone Authority.

On the question of production by the company, to date it has produced approximately 15 000 plastic bags. The majority of this production has been for a sample order to a local firm. The remainder of the factory's production has been used in the company's marketing.

Transport and Works Involvement at Tennant Creek

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Given that his department is the government's principal construction agency, what is the extent of its involvement in Tennant Creek following the series of earthquakes that rocked the town earlier this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am extremely pleased to report on the most excellent and very responsible role played by the Department of Transport and Works following the series of earthquakes in January in Tennant Creek. There were 4 major quakes on 22 and 23 January, the biggest measuring about 7 on the Richter scale. Officers of the Department of Transport and Works moved quickly and were on site on 23 January, the second day of the quakes. Their role involved assessing damage sustained, advising residents of the extent of that damage and on their options with regard to repairs etc. A phone-in service was available from 24 January and calls from residents were responded to by engineers and building personnel by way of inspection and advice. Also, all public buildings were inspected. In all, 45 Housing Commission homes, 15 private homes and the abattoir were inspected. The department provided structural specialists and support staff for all of those inspections.

Despite the relatively high intensity of the earthquake, which measured 7 on the Richter scale, public buildings and all major office buildings sustained only minimal damage and performed quite well structurally. The damage was limited mainly to cosmetic and minor damage. Inspections of housing and private dwellings by the department revealed only minor damage.

Although the quakes could not be called a natural disaster, they certainly were a very significant event in the minds of local people. One pleasing feature was the excellent response of the Emergency Service, police and local council personnel. Alongside that, was the balanced, rational advice of the Department of Transport and Works which was extremely valuable in reassuring the community. The major problem which residents face at such a time is in understanding the significance of events or the potential problems. Although technical services are very important in such a situation, it is also very important to communicate with the local community to ensure that things are under control.

I understand that the local member was in town at the time. I am not suggesting for one moment that he was responsible for the earthquakes but, true to form and for the sake of much-needed media coverage, he put forward some alarmist views to the NT News. He stated that the damage to homes was probably quite extensive and suggested that all 2-storey buildings in the town had suffered severe structural damage and had been evacuated. Although it is not a matter for major debate, it is sad that the honourable member did not take the opportunity to help console his electorate and to provide some constructive support to the community. His alarmist statements were not in the least bit supportive.

One of the biggest problems with natural disasters, whether they be cyclones in Darwin, bushfires in Victoria or earthquakes in Tennant Creek, is misinformation spread among the public. People are nervous enough anyway. What is required is a very balanced and rational approach. One would certainly hope that there will be no further earthquakes in Tennant Creek and also that, in the event of similar events in any electorate, local members will seek to be supportive and positive rather than alarmist and negative.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, earlier today the Leader of the Opposition, pursuant to standing order 83, raised as a matter of privilege the tabling on 1 March 1988 of a video and transcript of a portion of the ABC 7.30 Report of 25 February 1988. The Leader of the Opposition claimed

that, by copying the video and having a transcript prepared, the Chief Minister had breached the Copyright Act and that, by tabling the video and transcript, the Chief Minister had tended to bring the Assembly into ridicule or contempt. He asked that I refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges.

It is not the responsibility or the province of presiding officers to interpret or to adjudicate upon actions taken by members which could be governed by statute. That is the province of the judicial process. I do not propose to refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges.

STATEMENT

Letter from Northern Territory Football League

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I received the following letter from the President of the Northern Territory Football League following our message to the team yesterday.

Dear Mr Speaker,

On behalf of the players and management of the Northern Territory Football League team, I wish to express my sincere thanks for the good wishes of honourable members. Today we play the all-Australian amateurs in the semi-final. When our team takes the field, they play for their team, the game and the Northern Territory and all Northern Territorians are in our hearts and in our minds.

Tony Shaw
President

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Given that some of question time has been taken up with various notices, is it possible that you would intercede with the government to allow an extension of question time to allow us to ask the questions that we have not had time to ask?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The first statement I made related to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition and the second statement took only a few seconds.

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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.

23 February 1988

15. School Cleaning and Maintenance

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What were the amounts paid out during 1987 for contracts to provide:

- (a) ground maintenance; and
- (b) cleaning,

for each primary and secondary school in the Northern Territory?

19. Northern Territory Land Management

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many grants of land have been made to the Northern Territory Land Corporation (NTLC) since its inception in 1986?
2. How was each grant valued and what was the valuation in each case?
3. For what purpose was each grant of land?
4. Which parcels of land were so granted?
5. When was each grant made?
6. Was each decision to grant land discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which grants were not discussed?
7. How many grants of land were made to its predecessors, the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (NTDLC) and the Northern Territory Conservation Land Corporation (NTCLC)?
8. How was each grant valued and what was the valuation in each case?
9. For what purpose was each grant of land?
10. Which parcels of land were so granted?
11. When was each grant made?
12. Was each decision to grant land discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which grants were not discussed?
13. Which parcels of land have been purchased by the NTLC, the NTDLC and NTCLC?
14. What was the purchase price of each such parcel?
15. For what purpose was each such parcel purchased?

16. When was each such purchase effected?
17. Was each decision to purchase land discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which purchases were not so discussed?
18. Of which parcels of land has the NTLC, the NTDL or the NTCLC divested itself by way of sale, grant, gift, or any other process?
19. For what reasons were the transactions referred to in question 18 above carried out?
20. When was each transaction referred to in question 18 above carried out?
21. How was the value of each grant, sale gift or other divestment of land valued and what was the valuation in each case?
22. Was each transaction referred to in question 18 above discussed at Cabinet level? If not, which such transaction were not so discussed?

Reference: Notice of Determination in respect of Gregory National Park (Northern Territory Portion 3124) to the Northern Territory Land Corporation - Northern Territory Government Gazette No G32 of 12 August 1987, page 3.

20. Staffing of Giles House

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many staff are employed at Giles House?
2. In which categories are these staff employed?
3. How many people have held the position of Superintendent at Giles House during -
 - (a) 1984;
 - (b) 1985;
 - (c) 1986; and
 - (d) 1987?
4. Of the other staff employed at Giles House, how many changes have there been in each category of staff in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987?

22. Macassan Prau Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. How much has the Macassan prau re-enactment cost the Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences?
2. What is the estimated cost of construction of a second prau?
3. What is the anticipated cost of getting a second prau to the Yirrkala museum?

23. Advertising - Channel Eight, Darwin

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How much did government departments and authorities spend on advertising on Channel 8, Darwin in 1987?
2. What was the breakdown of that amount by department and authority?

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987?
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey?
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips?

17 May 1988

27. Primary and Secondary Education

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

During the period 1980 to 1987:

1. What was the rate of teacher turnover by -
 - (a) year of service;
 - (b) gender;
 - (c) location (whether it be rural, urban, secondary, primary); and
 - (d) size of school?
2. What was the average recruitment cost per teacher?

3. What was the turnover rate of teachers in secondary schools in the following subjects -
- (a) Maths;
 - (b) Science; and
 - (c) English?

32. Land Degradation on Cattle Stations

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. Who are the CSIRO officers that claimed land degradation was 'rife' on Territory cattle stations?
2. Where are these officers based?
3. Were these same officers the ones who wrote to you (as reported in the Legislative Assembly) saying that no base data is available on which to judge degradation and sought Territory money to establish this base data?
4. Has a decision been made by government in regard to the CSIRO request for funding to establish a land data base and, if so, what was that decision and, if no, when will the decision be made?

35. School Film Library Service

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What money does the Department of Education expect to save (going from past experience) from the decision to pass on transport costs of films to schools outside Darwin of films on loan from the Film Library Service to the schools?
2. Does the government intend to review the above decision and, if so, when?

**36. University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many students are doing full-time courses at the University College?
2. How many students at the University College have come from interstate?
3. How many students have come because their examination scores have precluded them from entry into interstate universities?

4. What advantage does the Territory government expect from paying the education costs of interstate students with Territory taxpayers' money?
5. What is the annual cost to the Territory taxpayer of the 'connection' between the University College and the University of Queensland?
6. What services are provided by the University of Queensland for the money provided by the Territory?

38. 'Towards the 90s'

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. Is the Education Advisory Council considering a revised edition of the 'Towards the 90s' paper?
2. If so, when will -
 - (a) their Report be available;
 - (b) opportunities be made available for public response to the revised paper; and
 - (c) the Minister undertake to allow a debate in the public arena and in Parliament before a decision on implementation is taken?

39. School Council Regulations

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-page advertisements were placed in Territory newspapers recently, to explain the government's position on newly-introduced School Council Regulations?
2. Which newspapers were used?
3. What was the total cost of all such advertising?
4. What is the expected saving of passing the cost of freighting audio-visual material ex-Darwin?

40. Truancy Officers

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Does the government intend to reinstate Truancy Officers with the Department of Education in 1988?

41. Preschool Vacancies in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many 4-year-old children, or children about to turn 4 in Alice Springs are not able to attend preschool on turning 4 because of staff or facility shortages?
2. What is the approximate waiting time for children over the age of 4 years to gain preschool entrance?

42. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

43. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

44. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

45. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

46. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

47. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

48. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

49. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

**51. Northern Territory Land Corporation
Receipts**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS AND HOUSING

With reference to page 9 of the Northern Territory Gazette No. S56 of 7 August 1987 upon which appear receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory Land Corporation:

- (i) from which source or sources did the Northern Territory Land Corporation receive \$385 961 as indicated; and
- (ii) on which item or items was \$96 624 expended?

52. Child Welfare - Custody

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. Currently how many children in the Northern Territory are living away from their natural parent/s as a result of actions taken by Community Welfare and Northern Territory courts?
2. How many of these children came from the northern region of the Territory?
3. How many of these children came from the southern region of the Territory?
4. How many of these children live in -
 - (a) foster homes (private families);
 - (b) government-run homes or institutions;
 - (c) private institutions; and
 - (d) other types of accommodation?
5. How many children were taken away from their parent/s on the grounds of -
 - (a) neglect;
 - (b) physical abuse;
 - (c) sexual abuse;
 - (d) parents incapable of looking after their children due to -
 - (i) alcoholism;
 - (ii) drug abuse;
 - (iii) mental state; and
 - (iv) immaturity;
 - (e) poverty; and
 - (f) other?
6. What is the average cost to the taxpayer for the weekly keep of children housed as under question 4?
7. How many hours of court time were taken up by these cases in 1987 in the Territory whether the children were taken away from their parent/s or not?

8. How many of the children currently taken away from their parent/s were interviewed by the Magistrate -
 - (a) alone;
 - (b) with the parent/s in attendance and Community Welfare Officers absent;
 - (c) with Community Welfare Officers and parent/s present; and
 - (d) with Community Welfare Officers present but parent/s absent?
9. How many children have attempted to return to their natural parent/s in 1987?

53. Kormilda College - Expenditure

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What Territory government money has been spent at Kormilda College on -
 - (a) teacher housing;
 - (b) boarder accommodation;
 - (c) classrooms;
 - (d) landscaping; and
 - (e) other areas in Kormilda,since the take-over by the new Board of Management?
2. Are there any arrangements to recoup this money?
3. What ongoing commitment does the Northern Territory government have to provide money for Kormilda College?
4. What fee structures are proposed for Kormilda College students?
5. What arrangements have been made over the title of land at Kormilda College with the new Board of Management?

**54. School Councils Regulations
Advertising**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What was the total cost of advertising -

- (a) explaining the changes to Schools Councils Regulations; and

(b) encouraging parents to be involved in School Councils,
from February 1988 to the present time?

55. Territory Super Plastics

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. Has the Trade Development Zone taken away the licence to operate of Territory Super Plastics?
2. What was the nature of and cost of the incentive offered to Territory Super Plastics by the Trade Development Zone?
3. What action is the Trade Development Zone taking to recoup the money it put into Territory Super Plastics?

56. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible?
2. For what purpose was each request made?

**57. Advertising Campaign
'We're Building a Secure Future'**

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. What is the total cost of the current Northern Territory government advertising campaign on the theme 'We're Building a Secure Future'?
2. How much money is being spent on -
 - (i) television;
 - (ii) radio; and
 - (iii) newspaper advertising,for this campaign?
3. Of the money spent on television advertising, how much is being spent on Imparja?
4. How much money is being spent advertising in each of the newspapers in the Northern Territory?

58. Illegal Grape Varieties Grown in the Territory

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. Is the Minister aware of recent discoveries in the Mildura and Medindie areas of illegal grape varieties that are claimed to endanger the Export Table Grape Market (currently worth some \$90m to Australia), which could have introduced new diseases into this country to the detriment of the Table Grape Industry?
2. Are any such illegal varieties being grown in the Territory?
3. Is the variety claimed by Territory Grape Farms to be Perlette, indeed that variety: in light of the fact that Territory Grape Farms Perlette comes in after its Flame Seedless, whereas Perlette from other Territory growers comes in ahead of Flame Seedless?

59. Open Space Development Strategy

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Will the Northern Territory government carry out the development objectives outlined in the Open Space Development Strategy prepared by Land Systems Pty Limited, dated September 1986?

24 May 1988

60. Freeholding of Special Purpose Leases

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many Special Purpose Leases were there in the vicinity of -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Katherine;
 - (c) Tennant Creek;
 - (d) Alice Springs; and
 - (e) elsewhere in the Northern Territory as at 1 July 1978?
2. For what purposes had these been granted?
3. How many of these Special Purpose Leases had been granted at 1 July 1978 on -
 - (a) a rental basis;
 - (b) payment of current market value; or
 - (c) some other basis?

4. If they were granted on some other basis [3(c)], what was that basis?
5. How many holders of Special Purpose Leases, as of 1 July 1978 were offered freehold title to lots over which the Special Purpose Leases were held for each of the following periods -
 - (a) the financial year 1978-79;
 - (b) the financial year 1979-80;
 - (c) the financial year 1980-81;
 - (d) the financial year 1981-82;
 - (e) the financial year 1982-83;
 - (f) the financial year 1983-84;
 - (g) the financial year 1984-85;
 - (h) the financial year 1985-86;
 - (j) the financial year 1986-87; and
 - (k) the financial year 1987-88?
6. On what terms were these Special Purpose Leases offered for the above financial years [5(a) to (k)]?
7. How many of these offers were accepted?
8. How many Special Purpose Leases were granted in each of the following periods -
 - (a) the financial year 1978-79;
 - (b) the financial year 1979-80;
 - (c) the financial year 1980-81;
 - (d) the financial year 1981-82;
 - (e) the financial year 1982-83;
 - (f) the financial year 1983-84;
 - (g) the financial year 1984-85;
 - (h) the financial year 1985-86;
 - (j) the financial year 1986-87; and
 - (k) the financial year 1987-88?
9. For what purposes were these Special Purpose Leases granted for the above financial years [8(a) to (k)]?

10. How many of these Special Purpose Leases had been granted in each of the financial years [8(a) to (k)] on -
 - (a) a rental basis;
 - (b) the payment of current market value; or
 - (c) some other basis?
11. If they were granted on some other basis [10(c)], what is that basis?
12. How many of the holders of Special Purpose Leases referred to in Question 8 were offered freehold title to the lots over which the Special Purpose Leases were held for each of the following periods -
 - (a) the financial year 1978-79;
 - (b) the financial year 1979-80;
 - (c) the financial year 1980-81;
 - (d) the financial year 1981-82;
 - (e) the financial year 1982-83;
 - (f) the financial year 1983-84;
 - (g) the financial year 1984-85;
 - (h) the financial year 1985-86;
 - (j) the financial year 1986-87; and
 - (k) the financial year 1987-88?
13. On what terms were these Special Purpose Leases offered for the above financial years [12(a) to (k)]?
14. How many of these Special Purpose Lease offers were accepted for the above financial years [12(a) to (k)]?

20 October 1987

3. **Aboriginal Employment**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In view of the Northern Territory Government's stated commitment to improving Aboriginal employment and in the light of recent reports indicating a decline in Aboriginal employment levels, what are the numbers of unfilled positions in each of the following categories:

- (a) Police aides;
- (b) Trackers;
- (c) Health workers;
- (d) Assistant teachers in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities; and
- (e) Teacher aides in Aboriginal schools on Aboriginal communities?

ANSWER

As at 8 February 1988 the number of vacancies in the above categories were as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| (a) Police Aides | 1 |
| (b) Trackers | 7 |
| (c) Health Workers | 19 |
| (d) Assistant Teacher | Nil |
| (e) Teacher Aides - not a separate designation. | |

5. **Skywest - Aero-medical Services**

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

What are the details of the cost to the Northern Territory government of the financial, legal and other arrangements made with the Skywest Company to finalise negotiations allowing Skywest to begin the aero-medical services in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The identifiable costs to the Northern Territory government of the financial, legal and other arrangements made with the Skywest Company to finalise negotiations allowing Skywest to begin aero-medical services in the Northern Territory amount to \$229 354.53. This amount is broken down as follows -

Settlement arising out of legal action (damages and costs)	\$226 426.27
Cost of visit by Secretary, Department of Health and Community Services and the Secretary, Department of Law to Perth to negotiate with Skywest (airfares, accommodation, meals)	\$ 2 928.26
TOTAL	\$229 354.53

The new contract arrangements have resulted in significant savings over the previous arrangements. The extent of the saving on a monthly basis is in the order of \$70 000.

23 February 1988

21. Parks and Reserves - Tourists

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

What was the number of visitors to each of the following parks, reserves or lands managed by the Conservation Commission in 1985, 1986 and 1987:

Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve;
Arltunga Historical Reserve;
Finke Gorge National Park;
Glen Helen Gorge Nature Park;

Berry Springs Nature Park;
Butterfly Gorge Nature Park;
Daly River Nature Park;
Douglas Hot Springs Nature Park;
Holmes Jungle Nature Park;
Howard Springs Nature Park;
Imbrawarra Gorge Nature Park;

Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park;
Katherine Gorge National Park;
Keep River National Park; and
Mataranka Pool Nature Park?

ANSWER

This question should have been directed to my colleague, the Minister for Conservation. However, I have requested the information from the Minister for Conservation and his reply follows.

The Conservation Commission has taken positive steps in recent years to improve visitor monitoring in its parks and reserves.

Visitor use information is of crucial importance if the Commission is to satisfy the demands of what is, as you will note from the figures below, a rapidly increasing visitor load while at the same time protecting the amenity and other values of the areas that these people come to enjoy.

The estimated total number of visitors to each of the areas identified, region by region, for the years 1985, 1986 and 1987 is set out in the following tables.

ALICE SPRINGS REGION

AREA	VISITOR NUMBERS		
	1985	1986	1987
Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve	180 000 m	196 000 * (8.9%)	224 700 (14.6%)
Arltunga Historical Reserve	6 000 m	11 400 m (90.0%)	12 700 (11.4%)
Finke Gorge National Park	40 500 h	54 700 h (35.1%)	56 700 (3.7%)
Glen Helen Gorge Nature Park	No Specific Data Available (see Ormiston Gorge data below **)		
Ormiston Gorge and Pound National Park **	59 000 m	70 000 m (18.2%)	98 000 m (39.4%)

Key: h - high reliability data
m - moderate reliability data
l - low reliability data
(%) - percentage increase in visitor numbers from
the previous year

* - Visitor numbers for the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve for 1986 and 1987 are projections based on 1985 data using estimated annual increases in tourist numbers and resident populations, they are necessarily of low reliability.

** - Data for Ormiston Gorge, 10 km east of Glen Helen Gorge along Larapinta Drive, is considered indicative of visitor numbers in the West MacDonnells District generally.

DARWIN REGION

AREA	VISITOR NUMBERS		
	1985	1986 *	1987 *
Berry Springs Nature Park	141 500 h	150 700 (6.5%)	165 800 (10.0%)
Butterfly Gorge Nature Park	9 000 m	9 900 (10.0%)	11 700 (18.2%)
Daly River Nature Park	20 000 l	21 300 (6.5%)	23 400 (9.9%)
Douglas Hot Springs Nature Park	23 300 m	25 600 (9.9%)	29 300 (14.5%)
Holmes Jungle Nature Park	15 000 l	15 500 (3.3%)	16 000 (3.2%)
Howard Springs Nature Park	150 000 h	158 100 (5.4%)	170 400 (7.8%)
Umbrawarra Gorge Nature Park	8 500 m	9 400 (10.6%)	11 000 (17.0%)

Key: h - high reliability data
 m - moderate reliability data
 l - low reliability data
 (%) - percentage increase in visitor numbers from
 the previous year

* - Visitor numbers for 1986 and 1987 are projections based on 1985 data using estimated annual increases in tourist numbers and resident populations, they are necessarily of low reliability.

KATHERINE REGION

AREA	VISITOR NUMBERS		
	1985	1986	1987
Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park	12 800 h	13 400 h (4.7%)	13 400 h (-0.1%)
Katherine Gorge National Park	138 000 m	164 000 l (18.8%)	202 000 m (23.2%)
Keep River National Park	2 000 m	3 200 l (60.0%)	6 700 m (109.4%)
Mataranka Pool Nature Park	50 000 m	90 000 l (80.0%)	130 000 l (44.4%)

Key: h - high reliability data
m - moderate reliability data
l - low reliability data
(%) - percentage increase in visitor numbers from
the previous year

17 May 1988

25. **Commissioner of Taxes**
Unpaid Tax

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I refer to the table on page 17 of the Northern Territory Treasury Annual Report:

1. Why was the number of inspections only 128 in 1986-87 compared to 195 in the previous year?
2. How many average staff years were deployed to inspection work within the Inspection and Enforcement Unit during each of the financial years ended 30 June 1982 to 30 June 1987?
3. What has been the coverage ration (total inspections divided by total registered taxpayers) for those same years?

ANSWER

1. The decline in the number of inspections between 1986-87 and the previous year can largely be attributed to staff shortages.

This problem has since been overcome by:

- (i) the upgrading of existing positions (thereby attracting qualified accounting staff); and
- (ii) the recruitment of 2 additional investigation officers.

The Investigation and Enforcement Unit is currently at full strength.

2. Average staff years deployed to inspections:

1981-82	1.02*
1982-83	1.58*
1983-84	3.18
1984-85	2.90
1985-86	2.88
1986-87	1.97

* Unit staff by 2 inspectors only.

3. Total inspections as a ratio of total registered taxpayers:

1981-82	0.14
1982-83	0.13
1983-84	0.17
1984-85	0.13
1985-86	0.14
1986-87	0.09

26. Arrears Administration Fee

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. What was the total amount of arrears administration fee imposed on Housing Commission loans during 1987?
2. Upon how many loans was the fee imposed?

ANSWER

An Arrears Administration Fee (AAF) is imposed monthly on each Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme (NTHPAS) loan which is \$50 or more in arrears. The Fee consists of 10% of the outstanding instalment balance.

1. The total amount of Arrears Administration Fee imposed on NTHPAS loans during 1987 was \$125 594.30.
2. Arrears Administration Fee was imposed on 462 loans during 1987.

**28. Trade Development Zone Authority
Trade Missions**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many trade missions:
 - (a) were convened during 1987;
 - (b) in which cities were these missions convened; and
 - (c) on which dates did these meetings take place?
2. Were the missions separately targeted to types of industry?
3. Outside the trade mission effort, how many potential investors were approached on a one-to-one basis during the calendar year 1987:
 - (a) within Australia; and
 - (b) overseas?

ANSWER

1. The Trade Development Zone Authority does not normally undertake trade missions as a form of promotion. Promotional activities are generally by way of seminars and, to a lesser extent, trade fairs.

Seminars and trade fairs which were held, or participated in, by the authority during the course of 1987 are as follows:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>February</u>		
10	Seminar	Sydney (to Japanese companies participating in the Return Japanese Investment Mission to Australia)
16	Seminar	Melbourne (in conjunction with the Australian Chamber of Manufacturers)
26	Seminar	Bangkok
<u>March</u>		
2	Seminar	Kuala Lumpur (in conjunction with the Malaysian Manufacturers Assn)
4	Seminar	Singapore (in conjunction with the Singapore Manufacturers Assn)
<u>May</u>		
8	Seminar	Singapore (Business Migration)
11	Seminar	Sydney (in conjunction with the Chamber of Manufacturers of NSW)
12	Seminar	Kuala Lumpur (Business Migration)
13-15	Trade Fair	Sydney Export 88
20	Seminar	Hong Kong
25	Seminar	Kaohsiung
27	Seminar	Changhua
27	Seminar	Taichung
28-30	Trade Fair	Darwin (NT Expo)
<u>August</u>		
10	Seminar	Bangkok
<u>October</u>		
20	Seminar	Taipei
21	Seminar	Changhua

2. Promotional activities by the authority primarily target manufacturing industry, specifically export manufacturers. However, at overseas seminars, small numbers of people attend in order to obtain more general information about the Northern Territory.
3. It is not possible to provide a complete record of the numbers of inquiries generated or companies approached by the Zone Authority. TDZA promotional activities yield a wide range of inquiries on an individual basis to both the Zone Authority and its consultants.

29. Territory Insurance Office - Claims

Mr COLLINS to TREASURER

During the period 1 January to 31 December 1987, how many claims have been -

- (a) made on the Territory Insurance Office;
- (b) settled within 48 days of being made; and
- (c) settled within 60 days of being made.

ANSWER

Though short, the honourable member's question will take a long time and considerable expense to answer.

Like all insurers, the TIO maintains such statistics as are necessary for underwriting purposes; however, it is neither practical nor cost effective to maintain statistics of settlement times. To obtain them now would require a search of all files handled by the TIO in 1987. The size of that task can be seen from the fact that in 1987 the TIO handled 3480 claims in the workers' compensation class alone.

I can only indicate to the honourable member that it is TIO policy to handle all claims promptly and fairly. If he has any specific complaints, I would be happy to have them reviewed.

30. Kulgera Tourist Venture

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has a government loan been given to Mr Jeff Sutton, or a company with which he is associated, for a tourist venture at Kulgera?

If so -

- (a) when was the application made and to whom;
- (b) what is the amount of the loan;
- (c) what are the terms of the loan;
- (d) who approved the loan;
- (e) how was the loan effected and through which government agency; and
- (f) what security is there for the loan?

ANSWER

No government loan has been given to Mr Jeffery Sutton or any company with which he is associated, for a tourist venture at Kulgera. However, financial assistance in the form of an interest rate subsidy of \$70 000 was provided by the Tourist Commission to the National Australia Bank in support of commercial borrowings by a company of which Mr Sutton is a director to purchase Kulgera Road Side Inn.

This assistance was made available contingent on the directors entering into an agreement which provided for the upgrading of the Road Side Inn involving a minimal expenditure of \$500 000 within 24 months. Many of these improvements are already underway and the Northern Territory Tourist Commission has been monitoring the situation closely to ensure compliance with the agreement.

31. Beaufort Liquor Fees

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How much has the Beaufort Hotel -
 - (a) paid in liquor licensing fees since it opened; and
 - (b) outstanding in licensing fees to date?
2. Over what period of time has the Beaufort Hotel accumulated the outstanding licensing fees?

ANSWER

The licence for the Beaufort Hotel became effective on 17 March 1986. A licence renewal fee of \$43 721.03 was paid in January 1987. A further licence renewal fee of \$31 758.17 was paid in January 1988.

There are no outstanding licence fees to date. The 1988 licence fee will be due and payable on 28 July 1988 and will be based on purchases for the period 1 January 1988 to 30 June 1988.

33. Police Prosecutors

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many Police Prosecutors are there in Alice Springs?
2. How many Police Prosecutors are there in Darwin?
3. How many cases were prosecuted in Alice Springs in February 1988?
4. How many cases were prosecuted in Darwin in February 1988?

5. What was the average time taken per case in Alice Springs in February 1988?
6. What was the average time taken per case in Darwin in February 1988?

ANSWER

1. There are two (2) Police Prosecutors in Alice Springs.
2. There are seven (7) Police Prosecutors in Darwin.
3. 448 offences were prosecuted in Alice Springs in February 1988.
4. 1068 offences were prosecuted in Darwin in February 1988.
- 5.) No records are kept nor can any meaningful assumptions be
- 6.) made about 'average time taken per case' in either Alice Springs or Darwin.

34. Late Prosecution

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Does the Honourable Attorney-General intend to try to reinstate a case before the court in Alice Springs which was recently dismissed by the Magistrate because the Prosecution was late?

ANSWER

No.

I understand the case referred to involved a prosecution in February for a summary offence, which was dismissed under s.63 of the Justices Act, because the prosecutor was not present when the case was called.

Under s.162A of the Justices Act upon a request from the Crown a Justice may reserve a question of law arising in connection with the hearing of a matter. The procedure is used only in a limited number of cases where there is an important point of law to be resolved and the matter is otherwise one of importance. Given (a) the minor nature of the offence; (b) the relevant law in relation to dismissal of matters for want of prosecution; and (c) the delay since the Justice made his finding; it seems unlikely the Justice would agree to state a case. Of course such a procedure would not reinstitute the proceedings rather it would only determine the question of law to be considered in relation to later matters before the Court. In any event, however, from the information before me I consider that in this instance the Magistrate's decision would stand if the question of law was considered by the Supreme Court.

You should note that there is no appeal from a dismissal of a complaint (see s.163 of the Justices Act). I do not consider there are any reasons to amend such a provision which generally follows the applicable law throughout Australia.

**37. Darwin Institute of Technology
Foreign Student Numbers**

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many foreign students attend the Darwin Institute of Technology?
2. What is the total amount of fees received this year from foreign students to 31 March 1988?
3. What has been the cost to DIT of the recruitment of foreign students, taking into account the offices opened in Asia, their staffing and trips taken by DIT staff to Asia in the past year?

ANSWER

1. The total number of overseas students at the Darwin Institute of Technology is 60. This comprises 48 full fee paying students including 6 studying the English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and 12 Commonwealth government sponsored overseas students.
2. The total amount of fees received to 29 February 1988 is \$171 256. This amount is expected to reach in excess of \$250 000 by the end of July when all fees for 1988 will have been collected. It should be noted that some students are paying their fees using the instalment system.
3. Total cost for the period 1 July 1987 to 29 February 1988 is \$85 586 which includes agents fees, travel, advertising and other administrative expenses.

The number of trips undertaken by DIT staff to Asia involved 16 officers at a total cost of \$40 852. Of this amount, approximately half related to promotion of courses and student recruitment and half to the delivery of off-shore components of courses.

50. Housing Commission Tenancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many Housing Commission tenancies:
 - (a) ceased in -
 - (i) December 1987,
 - (ii) January 1988, and
 - (iii) February 1988; and
 - (b) commenced in -
 - (i) December 1987,

(ii) January 1988, and

(iii) February 1988?

2. What were the tenancy cessations and commencements for each of the above months, 12 months previously?

ANSWER

See following tables.

HOUSING COMMISSION TENANCY CESSATIONS

<u>December 1986</u>	<u>1B/R</u>	<u>2B/R</u>	<u>3B/R</u>	<u>4B/R</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Darwin	13	46	145	5	209
Katherine	-	2	10	1	13
Alice Springs	5	31	12	1	49
Tennant Creek	1	5	16	1	23
	<u>19</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>183</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>294</u>
<u>January 1987</u>					
Darwin	12	40	98	6	156
Katherine	7	1	5	3	16
Alice Springs	4	11	20	1	36
Tennant Creek	-	1	18	1	20
	<u>23</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>228</u>
<u>February 1987</u>					
Darwin	13	33	75	-	121
Katherine	4	-	8	-	12
Alice Springs	3	23	35	2	63
Tennant Creek	-	4	9	-	13
	<u>20</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>209</u>
<u>December 1987</u>					
Darwin	17	53	107	11	188
Katherine	1	-	4	1	6
Alice Springs	20	28	24	1	73
Tennant Creek	2	5	12	2	21
	<u>40</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>288</u>
<u>January 1988</u>					
Darwin	16	43	120	5	184
Katherine	7	9	12	3	31
Alice Springs	4	27	25	4	60
Tennant Creek	5	2	7	1	15
	<u>32</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>164</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>290</u>
<u>February 1988</u>					
Darwin	21	56	101	6	184
Katherine	3	3	14	-	20
Alice Springs	10	28	33	-	71
Tennant Creek	2	6	16	-	24
	<u>36</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>164</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>299</u>

HOUSING COMMISSION TENANCY COMMENCEMENTS

<u>December 1986</u>	<u>1B/R</u>	<u>2B/R</u>	<u>3B/R</u>	<u>4B/R</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Darwin	10	31	61	2	104
Katherine	7	2	10	-	19
Alice Springs	9	19	36	1	65
Tennant Creek	2	2	12	1	17
	<u>28</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>205</u>
<u>January 1987</u>					
Darwin	18	43	89	3	153
Katherine	1	-	2	1	4
Alice Springs	12	20	29	-	61
Tennant Creek	2	2	13	-	17
	<u>33</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>235</u>
<u>February 1987</u>					
Darwin	13	35	88	3	139
Katherine	2	1	6	1	10
Alice Springs	5	15	39	3	62
Tennant Creek	2	7	10	1	20
	<u>22</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>231</u>
<u>December 1987</u>					
Darwin	14	43	74	5	136
Katherine	-	8	10	-	18
Alice Springs	8	31	23	-	62
Tennant Creek	3	3	7	-	13
	<u>25</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>229</u>
<u>January 1988</u>					
Darwin	5	54	97	6	162
Katherine	4	5	-	-	9
Alice Springs	6	27	30	4	67
Tennant Creek	1	2	8	-	11
	<u>16</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>135</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>249</u>
<u>February 1988</u>					
Darwin	14	36	111	5	166
Katherine	5	8	11	1	25
Alice Springs	-	12	35	-	47
Tennant Creek	3	4	12	-	19
	<u>22</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>169</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>257</u>

Darwin International Grammar School

Mr EDE TO MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is the Mr Koh who is involved with the Darwin International Grammar School that same entrepreneurial disaster area, the Mr Koh who was involved with Raffles and Burgundy Royale when it went bankrupt, and what protection and guarantees has the government extracted from the Darwin International Grammar School concerning the \$8.7m investment that it proposes to make into that school?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, here we go again. Before we even get off the ground, the opposition starts knock, knock, knocking.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Stuart's question was heard in silence. The minister's reply will be heard in silence likewise.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, if the shadow minister for education wishes to make a personal attack on a shareholder of a company that is interested in building an international grammar school here, then so be it. He can go outside and have that argument.

The answer to the question is that Hishamuddin Koh is a shareholder of the company Education Holdings.

Darwin International Grammar School

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, the honourable minister did not answer the question. I asked what guarantees and what protection the government had for its investment, given the fact that Mr Koh has been involved already in a number of businesses in the Northern Territory into which the government has put money and especially given the fact that, in some of those instances, the Northern Territory government and ordinary businessmen in the Northern Territory have suffered significant financial loss as a result of Mr Koh's involvement. I think it is fair that the minister advise what protections and what guarantees he has sought and had provided to him with regard to the international grammar school.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): A point of order, Mr Speaker! This is question time. It is not statement time for the opposition. The member for Stuart is arguing a case rather than asking a question seeking facts.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. I ask the honourable member to reach a conclusion and ask his question.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I am asking the honourable minister if he will advise this House what protections and what guarantees have been sought and have been provided by the Darwin International Grammar School in relation to the \$8.7m which he has promised to provide to it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there are ample guarantees for the Northern Territory government. I might say initially that no money will be paid by the Northern Territory government until the school is operational at the beginning of next year. The Darwin International Grammar School will provide an essential service to the Northern Territory people, and the guarantees in relation to the possibility of its going broke are well and truly covered in an agreement with the Northern Territory government. I have indicated very clearly that no up-front money is required and that any money to be provided will be allocated in the budget. The amount is \$1.45m per year over a period of 6 years, and no money is to be paid out until the building is actually constructed.

Darwin International Grammar School

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Yesterday and today, the Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, Col Young, said on the radio that he was aware that the minister's office was being flooded with telegrams and letters protesting the government's funding of the Darwin International Grammar School. Are Mr Young's allegations correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is the sort of nonsense that we hear from the Northern Territory Teachers Federation Executive. It is trying to beat up a storm over this issue and should be condemned for doing so. I believe that many of the teachers outside this building today are not aware of the facts. Col Young and Bob Wharton have both been deceptive in relation to information.

Mr Bell: Say that outside, Tom.

Mr HARRIS: You should listen!

To say that my office has been flooded with letters is not accurate. I have received 3 letters, 1 from a school and 2 from federation members at regional offices. That is the extent to which my office has been flooded with letters. The Department of Education has received the same letters. The federation executive is trying to beat up a storm by misinforming people in the community, and it stands condemned for that.

Bob Wharton and Col Young, both members of the federation executive, have been playing politics on this issue. To have a person like Bob Wharton, an executive member of the Teachers Federation, seconding motions at an ALP conference condemning the government's handling of education is something which needs to be looked at carefully. I am not objecting to people being members of parties, but I do object to someone who is in an executive position in which he deals with me as Minister for Education moving motions relating to education at an ALP conference. The teachers of the Northern Territory should look very closely at the executive of the Teachers Federation. I believe that, if teachers knew the facts, they would not be demonstrating outside today.

I will point out some of the deceptions that have been perpetrated on the community. The first was the statement from the Teachers Federation that the government would pay \$8.7m up-front to the international grammar school. What a load of nonsense! People in the community believed that.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I am sure that, like myself, you heard the question. It was very specific. It asked how many letters and telegrams the minister had received in relation to the government's decision to fund the Darwin International Grammar School. The question was very clear. I can accept that the minister did not understand it but, Mr Speaker, I suggest that you remind the minister of the question and request that he stick to the point.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the minister to relate his answer to the question.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I believe that I have answered the question satisfactorily. There has been deception right throughout this whole exercise and the Teachers Federation executive stands condemned for its actions.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Is it a fact that he knew Hungerford Refrigeration faced a threat of going into receivership about 10 days ago and, if so, why did he neglect to inform either his Chief Minister or the Treasurer? Secondly, is it also a fact that he briefed the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority to try, or that the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority tried of his own volition, to delay the announcement that the company would be put into the hands of a receiver until after this sittings of the Assembly? Thirdly, is it true that the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority, Mr Ray McHenry, flew out to Singapore or other points north on Sunday and will not be available to assist either the minister or the receiver in the following days?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did not get all 4 points of the honourable member's question.

Mr SMITH: I will repeat them for you.

Mr PERRON: It might have been useful if he had asked them one at a time or had provided me with an advance copy.

In regard to questions about whether or not I was aware of, or tried to defer, any decision by the directors of TIO in respect of whether Hungerford Refrigeration would be placed in receivership, I can assure the honourable member most emphatically that I certainly did not, nor would I at any time even suggest that such a decision should be deferred pending a Legislative Assembly sittings. Clearly, such an action would be grossly improper. It would be absolutely crazy for any politician even to attempt to influence such a commercial decision. My understanding of the situation is that the board of Hungerford Refrigeration has been waiting for some 2 or 3 weeks now for a decision by the federal government on the successful tenderer for an air-conditioning contract for houses at Tindal. The company has been concerned, I believe, about the inordinate and unexplained delay by the Commonwealth. Indeed, it may not even yet have been advised formally whether or not the company, which was one of a small number of tenderers, has been awarded the contract or not.

In response to the honourable member's last question, about the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone, it is true that he left Darwin on Sunday. He is in Singapore. I spoke to him last evening by telephone, as I will be doing

regularly during his trip overseas. Obviously, he is available to advise me in that regard. However, the Manager of the Trade Development Zone is in Darwin and is able to assist with these matters. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition, who clearly does not comprehend what is involved in overseas marketing and Trade Development Zone promotion ...

Mr Smith: It doesn't appear you do either.

Mr PERRON: ... that it will involve a series of meetings in several countries and that will take some weeks. You do not organise such an event involving many people, many activities and considerable expense and then decide at the last minute that you will cancel it and stick around Darwin because the Leader of the Opposition wants to try to create a storm in a teacup. He has my blessing and I would have insisted, had he asked me, that he go on such a trip rather than cause enormous damage to that promotion by pulling out at the last minute.

Premiers Conference

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

Compared to the result of last year's Premiers Conference, can he report to this Assembly on the outcome of this year's Premiers Conference and its implications for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for asking this question because, unlike some of the subjects that have been debated here, the Premiers Conference is a matter of extreme interest to Northern Territory people and to our government because it creates the foundation for our ability to determine a budget for the coming financial year. There has been considerable press discussion about the Premiers Conference and I would like to take the opportunity to outline briefly the results from this year's Premiers Conference for the Northern Territory and how those results compare to the outcomes for other states in Australia.

This year, in a combination of financial assistance grants, hospital grants and what is called the Loans Council Program, which is the general purpose capital grants and loans, the Northern Territory will be provided with \$779.6m as compared with \$779.5m last year. To all intents and purposes, it is the same dollar figure as for the previous year. As members would be aware, the clear position put by the Commonwealth in respect of all states and the Northern Territory was that funding would be on an equivalent dollar value to the 1987-88 funding in those particular categories.

The funding was calculated on a premise by the federal government of a 5.5% inflation rate in the coming financial year. I must say that we find that prediction overly optimistic and the states generally are of that view. We are concerned that there may be some higher real cuts if the inflation rate rises above the estimated 5.5%. As a result of negotiations during the Premiers Conference, the federal government has agreed that, to the extent that the inflation rate exceeds 5.5%, funding will be increased by that differential percentage. Put simply, for example, if the inflation rate becomes 6.5%, that will mean, on the advice of the Treasurer, that our funding in these categories will be increased by 1%, thereby maintaining the real cuts that have been applied.

Another aspect of the Premiers Conference is a meeting of the Loans Council. Not being a state, the Northern Territory is not a member of the Loans Council, and our representative at the council is the federal Treasurer. All of the semi-government borrowings and the 'global limits' for semi-government loans taken out by Northern Territory governments since self-government have required the specific approval of respective federal Treasurers. Obviously following negotiation with the Northern Territory and submissions from the Northern Territory as to what moneys are required for putting the essential capital infrastructure into the Northern Territory, those Treasurers have approved the levels of loans.

Last year, our semi-government program was set at \$65m. We have an agreement with the Commonwealth with respect to any operating losses that are incurred by NTEC as a result of the adjustments that have been taking place in the winding back of subsidies for NTEC and in the adjustment process as the gas pipe system comes into place. I understand that, last year, that amounted to some \$6.3m. The preliminary global limit that has been provided for the next financial year is \$95m, and that is a \$30m increase on the basic \$65m. I understand that the arrangement for additional borrowing capacity to meet NTEC operating losses is still in place. That gives us a significantly higher capacity to put in some important capital infrastructure in the Northern Territory and, in that respect, we have done significantly better than the states, all of whom had dramatic cuts made in their semi-government loans programs. I must say that, in this particular area, the Commonwealth government chose to pick out Queensland for special treatment this year, and it has incurred a \$367m reduction in its loans program. Of course, as members will be aware from media reports, the Premier of Queensland has refused to sign the loans agreement and that means that the Commonwealth will need to go into bilateral agreements with the various states which have agreed to the global limits rather than merely signing the general Loans Council agreement.

There is an average of something like an 11% reduction in global limits for the states and additional loans of some 30% in the Northern Territory. However, from the finances that have been provided to the Northern Territory in general funding, the \$779.6m, the Commonwealth has deducted from our financial assistance grants the \$57.5m cut that was recommended by the Grants Commission. It is important to recognise that that figure was never \$44m. It was \$44m plus the negative special grant that we lost in this year's financing. In terms of our base line funding, it is \$57.5m. That has been offset this year by what is known as a special revenue assistance provision for the Northern Territory. A similar provision has been made for Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia.

Mr Smith: There wouldn't be many people in Tennant Creek who will listen twice.

Mr HATTON: It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition finds it really boring for people to be informed of what is occurring in relation to the budget.

Mr Smith: It is a very boring delivery.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, that is not a satisfactory situation for us because it still leaves the sword of Damocles hanging over the finances of the Northern Territory with respect to the Grants Commission report. What we have achieved is the right to fight another day. We have an agreement with the Commonwealth to address many of what we believe to be the inaccurate assumptions and calculations that have been made in the Grants Commission's

assessment. We will be doing that with the federal government through Treasury over the coming months.

Before I make my final point, I would like to pay tribute to those people in the Northern Territory who supported this government in what obviously has been a very difficult task. Members are aware that the Northern Territory has suffered rather badly and been discriminated against by the Commonwealth, particularly during the last 2 or 3 years. We all know of the difficulties that that has created for the people of the Northern Territory and for this government in seeking to maintain balanced accounts. I appreciate the support that this government received from federal members for the Territory, particularly Senator Collins, and from the Northern Territory Business Council, in lobbying the federal government. I was very disappointed, however, that the Leader of the Opposition saw fit not to open his mouth publicly on the subject and made no representations whatsoever to the federal government.

Mr Smith: That is not true.

Mr Coulter: He made some representations but they were negative.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, my information is that, in fact, the Leader of the Opposition was urging from behind the scenes that the Territory's funding should be cut in order to make life hard for the Territory government and to improve his own stocks in the community. I would like to think that that did not occur but I am afraid my sources are pretty good. I believe that members of the ALP organisational wing were promoting that cause also. That is absolutely disgraceful. I believe that the stunt pulled by the Australian Teachers Federation was disgraceful as well. It was an attempt to play stupid, dangerous politics in the context of the Premiers Conference with a letter that was both nonsensical and inaccurate.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I appreciate that the bulk of the Chief Minister's answer has been relevant to the question which was directly related to how the Northern Territory fared at the Premiers Conference and the implications of the Premiers Conference for the finances of the Northern Territory. The Chief Minister has now strayed from that subject and is making a snide, bitter, personal attack. If he wants to do that, I am prepared to take him on in this House at any time. However, Mr Speaker, I would suggest that it is in the interests of this House and in the interests of your authority in it, that you rule that the Chief Minister confine himself to answering the question.

Mr COULTER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member has not yet raised a point of order? What is it?

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, my point of order was made very clear at the outset of my remarks. The Chief Minister is not addressing himself to the question and I would suggest that, for the sake of this House and your own standing in it, you rule that he confine his answer to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: The Chief Minister will relate his answer to the question.

Mr HATTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In fact, I was answering the question.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister has just reflected on your ruling and should be asked to withdraw his last remark.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the question asked me to report to this Assembly on the outcome of this year's Premiers Conference and its implications for the Northern Territory. I was referring to a matter that was directly relevant to the Premiers Conference. It concerned a scurrilous letter from the Australian Teachers Federation under the signature of one Di Foggo, containing false allegations in respect of the Darwin International Grammar School, with the clear intention of encouraging the federal Treasurer to reduce the finances to the Northern Territory. That letter could have done untold damage to the funding of government services, including educational services, but I am pleased to report that its impact was so negligible that the Commonwealth did not even mention it. I raise the matter because it is an example of the type of dangerous practice which the Teachers Federation is indulging in with the collusion of the opposition. The letter was an attempt to undermine the ability of the Territory government to put its case to the federal government in order to protect the finances of the people of the Northern Territory. I am pleased to say that the federal government saw through that stupid nonsense and, in fact ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister has the advantage of having both the question and answer written down in front of him. I would suggest that you direct him to confine his answer to the question and that he stick to his script rather than continuing to trip off into fairyland in an effort to evade the question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HATTON: We are becoming used to the opposition's tactic of trying to disrupt us by continually raising spurious points of order.

My point is that some very good Territorians, including Labor politicians, have been prepared to stand up and fight for the Territory. It is a shame that some other people in the Territory have been playing stupid little games which actually threaten the livelihood of members of their own organisation. Fortunately, the federal government respects the fact that we have been managing our finances responsibly and was not prepared to listen to the nonsense contained in the Teachers Federation letter. It has provided us with reasonable finances and, whilst it will be tight, we are confident that we can bring down a balanced budget without any major shocks to the Northern Territory community.

TIO Involvement in Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Unfortunately, personal explanations have to be given at the end of question time and I do not have the opportunity now to respond to that outrageous nonsense from the Chief Minister.

Is the Treasurer aware that the TIO's involvement with Hungerford Refrigeration encouraged local businesses to extend credit to the company? Is he aware that the TIO's involvement was taken as a de facto guarantee of that company's future, and will he now advise the House whether it is his intention to ensure that the TIO makes good any losses incurred by local businesses through their involvement with Hungerford?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is indeed heartening to see that the Leader of the Opposition is now concerned with the fate of Hungerford, particularly in relation to people who may have suffered or are in financial difficulties as a result of his actions. It is to the Leader of the Opposition's shame that a book has been compiled detailing actions of his which have brought this company into the political sphere.

Mr Speaker, I will not digress from the question but, in answering it, I would like to say that the Leader of the Opposition has raised the matter of Hungerford Refrigeration as an issue at 3 very strategic times: the first was before the federal election, the second was before the Barkly election and the third is today. He had to raise Hungerford as an issue today for his own political survival, because he is under threat from the fellow behind him who laughed first.

I can advise honourable members and the Leader of the Opposition that the Territory Insurance Office has assured me that it will look closely at those in hardship, particularly those who have consistently supported the company in the past.

Trade and Tourism Links with Guam

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

During a visit to Guam last year by a group from Darwin, including the Chief Minister and myself, discussions took place regarding the opening of trade and tourism links with the island. Can the minister advise the House of any further developments since then and whether there is any opportunity for long-term trade links with the area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Industries and Development has followed up the visit referred to by the honourable member. An officer has visited Guam to hold discussions with air force personnel concerning specific needs for goods which the Northern Territory might be able to supply, either locally sourced or freighted through Darwin from elsewhere in Australia. An extensive report has been prepared and is now being evaluated and discussed with people who may be able to participate.

One of the severe difficulties we have to face in providing services to Guam is transportation. Air links are not particularly frequent and sea links are even less so. I have been approached recently by a company from Western Australia which is proposing to run charter 707 services from Western Australia to the Philippines and to Guam to supply some of those places with Australian food products. The company is interested in the possibility of making Darwin a stop on that particular route and in ascertaining what might be available here that would fit into its plan. It is very early days at the moment and it would be a brave man who would predict that such trade would commence and become regular because there are so many approvals to be obtained along the line.

It is notoriously difficult for any operator to try to break into the Australian air transport system and compete with international airlines. In particular, companies such as Qantas go to enormous lengths to eliminate or reduce any competition. There are also difficulties in obtaining approval in

places like Guam. I understand that the American armed forces operate on a basis of approved manufacturing facilities which are inspected by American officials and approved prior to their taking any large quantities of goods from those particular establishments. If the transportation does not involve large quantities, some of those systems may be bypassed and perhaps that may pertain in our case. We will continue to pursue this possible new destination for Territory-produced goods or goods transited through the Northern Territory which may have an economic benefit to the Territory. If something firm results from it, I will keep honourable members informed.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

On 3 April 1987, did he say in a press release that the investment of Territory funds in Hungerford Refrigeration could be justified by: '(1) an assessment provided by a leading firm of chartered accountants into the company's prospects; (2) a report provided by a professor of mechanical engineering into the company's technological viability; and (3) large export orders that had already been secured by the company'? Will he now table the list of large export orders that had been secured by the company at that time together with the departmental or governmental assessment of that list, the assessment of the leading firm of chartered accountants together with the departmental or governmental evaluation of the assessment and the report of the professor of mechanical engineering with the department critique of that report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition might table his list of questions so that I can keep track of what he is asking. Fair is fair. Could I perhaps have ...?

Mr Smith: I want you to table the reports.

Mr COULTER: Could I have a list of the questions, Mr Speaker? He has asked an inordinate number of questions.

Mr Bell: It is called a question without notice. Answer it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will maintain silence. I think the minister's question is quite reasonable.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the list of questions is quite long and I will provide the Leader of the Opposition with the answers during the course of these sittings.

Mr Smith: Will you table the information or not? It is a simple question.

Mr Bell: It has been in the paper for 2 days and you have not done your homework.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will not countenance continued interjections from any member, particularly not from the member for MacDonnell who has been warned more than once during these sittings.

Alice Springs Central Business District

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES AND ENERGY

What action is the government taking to ensure that the central business district in Alice Springs north of Stott Terrace will be connected with natural gas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think the honourable member is alluding to an issue in Alice Springs which is controversial at the best of times: the tunnelling or trenching of roads. That becomes particularly controversial when it concerns roads that have been upgraded or constructed recently. I am not aware of current negotiations between the company wishing to reticulate the gas and its discussions with the Alice Springs Town Council and the Department of Transport and Works. I believe that some other roads are involved in this reticulation and I will provide the member for Sadadeen with details of the current status of this worthwhile project. It has become complicated because of the trenching and the opening of roads. I understand that the preference of the Department of Transport and Works would be for tunnelling. However, that particular method involves a cost penalty. As I said, I will provide the member for Sadadeen with the latest details of the negotiations.

Borrooloola Community Health Centre

Mr REED to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has a contract been awarded for the construction of the new Borrooloola Community Health Centre and, if so, can he provide details of the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Katherine for his question. I am well aware of his interest in that region. Many of his constituents visit that area frequently. After some lengthy negotiations regarding that particular tender, I am pleased to announce that a contract was signed recently with L & R Builders of Tennant Creek for a sum of approximately \$638 000. Of course, that represents a considerable saving on that project. I think the original budget figure was about \$830 000. The contract should take about 30 weeks to complete. I believe work was commenced during the last week or 2.

The extended negotiations on and assessment of the tenders reflect a vexed question amongst contractors in the Northern Territory at the moment, that of abnormally low tenders. Whilst there is a need to examine fully the merits of the lowest tenderer, in the end it was recommended by the Tender Board that the lowest tenderer be bypassed on this occasion. The second lowest tenderer was L & R Builders of Tennant Creek. That will be excellent for the Tennant Creek community itself. On my recent visit there, members of the local building fraternity were quite delighted with the injection given to their local work levels. I find it quite interesting that now the Tennant Creek business community is finding it most appropriate to deal directly with the Northern Territory government, through its ministers, to establish just what is happening with regard to the community's welfare.

Proposal to Amend Firearms Act

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Following public remarks he made recently regarding his government's intention to amend the Firearms Act without prior consultation with the firearms specialist groups and after being told quite definitely and exactly what the gun lobby did and did not want in respect of his idea to introduce a permit to purchase all firearms, and taking into account the changed views of the Premiers of New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania in relation to amending their state gun laws, what does the government intend to do now?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Koolpinyah for this question because there is no doubt that firearms legislation has been one of the more interesting political issues in Australia, particularly over the last 6 months. In one respect, I think the honourable member for Koolpinyah is inaccurate in her assumptions. In fact, our government has been working very closely with the various firearms specialist groups. Indeed, the legislation that we have in the Northern Territory provides what are probably the best gun laws in the country and that was put into place in close consultation with the gun community. At the moment, any proposals for amendment to our legislation are being discussed fully with the gun lobby and the executives of the various sporting shooters associations and so on. I believe there is to be a meeting this Friday evening to discuss the legislation.

With respect to the question of the permit to purchase which the honourable member raised particularly, I must advise the House that we have never pressed the point for a permit to purchase but, at the moment, we are faced with a situation where the Commonwealth government has threatened blatantly that, in any state or territory that does not have, amongst other things, a permit to purchase, it will use its customs and excise powers to block the transmission of any firearms into that state or territory. Whether the federal government is capable of achieving that in the states is one question, but its overriding powers on almost everything in respect of the Northern Territory place us in a particularly vulnerable position.

Last year, there was a lot of heat and hullabaloo with special Premiers Conferences being called by Mr Hawke and company to which we were dragged for an urgent debate on guns. I might say here that the gun lobby has since corresponded with me thanking me for putting some rationality into the debate, and that correspondence came not only from within the Northern Territory but also from around Australia in respect of the nonsense that was being propounded by the Labor states and, in particular, by the previous Premier of New South Wales who thought he would make an election issue out of the matter. Recommendations from the Australian Police Ministers Council were due to be discussed last week at the Premiers Conference. It was very interesting to note that, when we reached that item on the agenda paper, the Prime Minister recommended that additional agenda items, including firearms matters, be dealt with by way of correspondence and not be debated at all at the Premiers Conference.

Certainly, Labor governments in this country have learnt their lesson about taking illogical stances in respect of firearms. That is not to say that we should not have strong firearms legislation and reasonable and proper controls. That is also supported by the gun lobby. As far as possible, it is important to avoid the abuse and misuse of firearms and their potential to

become a threat to society. We believe that our laws in general require amendment. Before the fuss was raised by New South Wales, we were examining a series of amendments in preparation for holding discussions with firearms groups. We are still discussing those. They include such things as procedures for appeal, the re-registration of weapons, the duration of shooters' licences and permits to purchase. We were being driven to that by the Commonwealth government's threat to use its powers to force us either to enact such provisions or it would ban the transmission of any firearms into the Northern Territory. That was a clear and open threat made at the Police Ministers Conference by the federal government. We have been able to obtain much more rationality from the federal government but there is still much more work to be done. In consultation with the gun lobby, we will examine our legislation through the proper processes. When we have reached what we believe is a reasonable and fair arrangement, we will be in a position to advise exactly what we will or will not do. That will be done by way of debate on bills brought before this House.

Darwin International Grammar School

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

At this morning's stop-work meeting of teachers, Col Young said that the Darwin International Grammar School had received land for the establishment of that school at no cost. Is that true?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is not correct and that is another example of misinformation being provided to the community. It is disappointing. I do not mind people having a say against a particular proposal but the fact is that the Darwin International Grammar School will be required to pay full market value for its lease over the property which may be converted to freehold title after 12 years upon request by the school. It is a condition of government support that the site be used only as a school. Again, we hear carping from members opposite. Unfortunately, teachers have been misinformed once again by the executive of their federation on this very important issue.

The demonstration in front of the Assembly has caused a great deal of disruption to the children of Darwin and their families. It is this misinformation which is causing the teachers to react in this way. If they have the facts and the truth, they will discover that Col Young, Bob Wharton and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation Executive are doing all this for their own political ends. I might add that they have even issued a roster of teachers from different schools to picket the Assembly, not only today but throughout these sittings.

Mr Speaker, I would like to indicate to you the type of nonsense that is being issued. This is from a paper in relation to an industrial campaign relating to DIGS. It indicates that groups of teachers 'should continually troop in and out of the public gallery'. That is the sort of nonsense that they go on with. There is a list of things involved in the deception by Col Young and Bob Wharton who have issued this information. A whole range of untruths need to be refuted. If the teachers knew the facts, I do not believe that they would be standing out there. They would be in the schools where they are supposed to be. What we are doing is establishing an international grammar school to cater for kids from right throughout the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: They don't care about our kids. They just want to get a few bucks for themselves.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart should be condemned for that statement. He knows that we are concerned about the kids in the Northern Territory. He is not concerned about the kids in the Northern Territory; he wants them to go interstate. He is not interested in bringing them back here where they should be educated. What about the children at Tennant Creek and in the Barkly region? They need access to education. We do not have boarding facilities that will cater for all of them at the moment. This is part of the whole process.

If Col Young and Bob Wharton want to play politics, they should stand for election, as they have in the past, and they will be beaten again. If they want to stand for the Teachers Federation executive, that is fine but they should keep out of politics.

Reduction in Qantas Services

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TOURISM

What effect will the recently-announced reduction in Qantas services through Darwin have on the incoming tourist market?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there are some difficulties with the proposal by Qantas to cut its 3 services per week down to 2. On the one hand, the new scheduling of the services will allow better flexibility for stopovers for international travellers going out of Australia. However, with the new services, it will certainly be almost impossible to provide direct connections into Darwin from European countries, apart from the UK. I am sure all members are well aware that the northern European tourist market is very important to the economy of the Northern Territory, particularly in the wet season. Most of our visitors who come to the Top End in what are low peak periods as far as the domestic market is concerned will no longer have direct access. I have raised this question with the local manager of Qantas and he is aware of the problem.

Yesterday, I arranged an appointment for the Chairman of the Tourist Commission, Bob Doyle, with the Marketing Manager of Qantas. He is travelling to Sydney today to undertake discussions which, hopefully, will alleviate some of the connection problems. We have asked the General Manager of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation to join with us in putting pressure on Qantas because it also was unaware of the connection problem for inbound tourists. We are certain that Queensland will also suffer on the circular routes that come in through Darwin and go out through Cairns and, in some respects, that could have an effect on the long-term promotion of the market in Queensland. The Tourist Commission is well aware of the problem and I believe we are taking the right steps to try to overcome it.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

When was he first aware of the fact that TIO had nearly doubled its original exposure in Hungerford Refrigeration from \$750 000 to about \$1.4m? Secondly - and I hope he can answer 2 questions at once - why didn't he see fit to inform the public of the fact that his original statement of the total Territory exposure to the company no longer reflected the truth?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer is very simple. The opposition's mentality would have it that this company should have its business discussed on the front page of the newspaper every day. When the TIO Board made its decision on behalf of policyholders to enter into the Hungerford venture, it was always envisaged that there might be a need to provide increased capital for the company. The Leader of the Opposition should remember very well when extra money was required because it was required as a direct result of actions by him which led to a curtailment of credit. It was required when he first started opening his mouth, when he first became a debt collector for the Queensland companies, when he first came into this Assembly and told ...

Mr Smith: It appears that I will be a debt collector for Northern Territory companies now.

Mr COULTER: ... everybody that Hungerford was no good and that we should close it down because it had a problem. Its problem was that it needed money to maintain a liquidity position, as a direct result of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. That is a fact and it can be demonstrated.

Mr Smith: Prove it.

Mr COULTER: That is no problem.

The Leader of the Opposition tried to play the white knight yesterday when he told the workers: 'I have come among you to help you'. He was rightly thrown out of the place because the people involved had had enough of him. He closed the place down and then had the nerve to turn up there. However, I digress.

I believe that the TIO provided additional moneys in 2 stages. The first, I believe, involved up to \$250 000 and then there was a further \$500 000 that actually went into the company.

Mr Smith: When?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will provide you with the dates. I think the question asked when it was brought to my attention.

Mr Smith: That is right.

Mr COULTER: A document delivered to me on 7 September 1987 stated: 'In view of these problems and the repeated claims that creditors are not being paid, all of which related to the inadequate funding, the TIO Board has decided, after lengthy discussions, that a further injection of funds amounting to \$500 000 should be made to allow the new management a clear run in getting the company onto a profitable footing'.

There was an additional amount of money. I was advised that: 'Following the move to Darwin, which will not be completed for another 2 weeks, and following new overseas orders, trade credit has not been extended to the company in Darwin, most of this part being forced to operate on a cash basis. This is in addition to similar problems ...'. The advice continued: 'The TIO Board has therefore decided to earmark up to \$250 000 for temporary cash-flow assistance over the next few months. At this stage, only \$100 000 is provided'. That advice was sent to me on 14 May 1987.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I ask the minister to table the document he is quoting from.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Ludmilla.

Mr LEO: A point of order Mr Speaker! The Leader of the Opposition has asked you to direct that the Treasurer table the document he has quoted from in this House. He is obliged to table that document.

Mr SPEAKER: Which standing order is the honourable member referring to?

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, I am sure that the Clerk will confirm that the document must be tabled under standing order 255, which refers to documents relating to public affairs.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister shall table the document unless he declares that it contains some confidential material from which he has not quoted.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I read sections from a range of documents which are of a confidential nature. The Leader of the Opposition asked for information on certain matters and I will ensure that ...

Mr Smith: It is the old tale. You are not prepared to let people look at the full story. You quote selectively.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, these are confidential documents.

Mr Smith: That is disgraceful.

Mr COULTER: You asked me for a date and I simply read from my notes concerning the dates and amounts of money. I answered your question.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, may I speak to the point of order?

Mr SPEAKER: The point of order has been ruled on.

Shipping Service Between Singapore and Darwin

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT AND WORKS

In spite of the often-expressed scepticism of the opposition concerning this government's continuous work to establish trade links and infrastructure to support local businesses, I believe that negotiations have been taking place to provide another sea link from Darwin. I ask the minister to advise the House of what is happening in relation to the establishment of a regular shipping service between Singapore and Darwin.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer is very simple. Already the local firm of Perkins Shipping Pty Ltd provides an extremely valuable 5-weekly service carrying a mixed cargo. It is the objective of this government to provide frequent and more regular calls to and from the Port of Darwin and one particular target is Singapore, from which transshipment is available to any other port in the world. Darwin's geographic position enables us to provide land transportation to the southern part of Australia. Singapore is some 5 days' shipping time from here and it is obviously logical to use one central road corridor to the south and, in due course, the rail corridor, to provide access from southern Australia to the major markets of South-east Asia.

During my recent visit to the area, I contacted about 10 shipping companies, 4 of which showed significant interest in providing a service. We have provided them with up-to-date information on available freights and projected freights and we trust that, perhaps very shortly, we will see the introduction of a regular, frequent and extremely valuable feeder service to and from Singapore.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

In question time yesterday, I requested the Treasurer to table certain documents relating to his public statements on the viability of Hungerford Refrigeration. Will he now table those documents?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would like to inform the Leader of the Opposition that I will be making a ministerial statement on Hungerford Refrigeration. The question he alluded to yesterday will be fully answered during the course of that ministerial statement.

Pearling Licences

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Why haven't the successful applicants for the 5 licences for cultured pearls recently advertised been informed and allowed to get on with opening up the new fields?

Mr Leo: Because Nick didn't get one.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note the interjection from the member for Nhulunbuy. He seems to have some information whose source we would be really interested to know.

Following the agreement earlier this year with the Commonwealth on what has been termed an 'offshore constitutional settlement' whereby the various fisheries in the Northern Territory and Commonwealth waters were divided up by agreement between the Commonwealth and the Territory, the pearl oyster fishery was to be managed by the Northern Territory joint authority in accordance with the laws of the Northern Territory. In fact, that joint authority is an authority under the OCS agreement comprising the federal and Territory ministers responsible for fisheries. Decisions in regard to the pearl oyster fishery in the Northern Territory are to be determined by that joint venture.

As honourable members will be aware, applications for participation in the Northern Territory pearl industry closed on 15 February this year. I advised the House that 21 applications were received to participate in that industry. Between 15 February and mid-April, applications were assessed by 3 officers, 1 from the Commonwealth, 1 from the Northern Territory and an adviser who was an ex-Western Australian public servant who was a participant in a scheme for the development of the pearl industry in Western Australia. That adviser is a very knowledgeable person. To date, however, the joint authority has not made a decision on the recommendations of the joint working party and, at this stage, I cannot advise honourable members when a decision will be made.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

When a TIO management team took control of Hungerford Refrigeration, when was the decision taken to halt production in the company's Queensland plant in

order to relocate in the Trade Development Zone? When was the management team in a position to resume full production in the Trade Development Zone? For the export orders received by Hungerford and quoted by him on 3 April, what were the contract delivery dates?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will include the answers to those questions in my statement to this House. As I understand them, the questions are: when did the TIO assume control, when did production halt in Queensland and when did it start up again in the TDZ, and what were the delivery dates for the export orders of which I spoke on 3 April 1987?

Air-conditioning of Preschools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Acknowledging the recent requests by preschools for the installation of air-conditioning, could he explain his department's policy and what action he intends to take to accede to these requests?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been set up! I thank the honourable member for his question. I think that every member of this Assembly has been lobbied on occasion by various groups interested in education issues, particularly in relation to the preschools located in their constituencies. The matter of air-conditioning is not as straightforward as it may seem. In fact, some professionals believe that air-conditioning is detrimental to the good health and welfare of children attending preschools. Preschools differ from primary schools because they are set up to assist students in the transition from the home to the school environment. The 4-year-olds who attend preschool move frequently in and out of the preschool building and there is a professional opinion that frequent movement in and out of an air-conditioned environment could be detrimental to health. I acknowledge that there has been concern and, in fact, the government changed its policy. We acknowledged that there was a need to install air-conditioned withdrawal areas in new preschools and that is what the government is doing.

We are also looking at the design of the buildings and their location because we want to ensure that we take account of the natural environment and the prevailing winds. This can make the surroundings much more pleasant than they are at present in some situations. We are also looking at schools that have a particular problem with heat. We have investigated those with a view to having air-conditioned withdrawal areas.

I inform honourable member that I am aware of the concerns that he and other members have expressed in relation to air-conditioning in preschools. There is an opinion that it would be detrimental to health if the whole areas were air-conditioned. That is being examined by the government as well, and I might also say that we are seeking to ensure that all primary schools are air-conditioned. There are some primary schools that still lack that facility and I am sure members would be aware of that.

Thus, the whole issue of air-conditioning in preschools is being examined. We are installing air-conditioned withdrawal areas in new preschools and we are examining older schools with a view to installing air-conditioned withdrawal areas if required. We are also seeking professional advice in

relation to whether or not it is detrimental to health if a preschool is air-conditioned.

Company Charges for Children's Travel

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I remind him that, in December 1978, a specific company decided to charge adult rates for children under the age of 13 or 15 without consulting the Northern Territory government or the communities concerned. Could he advise what action he has taken to ensure that, in future, such decisions are taken in consultation with the government and the communities affected?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can advise the honourable member that discussions were held with the company relating to its charging of adult rates for children. That action was acknowledged readily by the company and it indicated that it would rectify the matter. The honourable member suggested that the company ought to be able to consult its records and provide recompense. The company has been advertising and suggesting that communities might provide it with a list of people affected, including dates of travel etc, and it would be more than happy to reimburse them. I have had the assurance of the company that it will not reintroduce such a system. I understand that it regrets the action that was taken.

Services to Intellectually-disabled Persons

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

He gave a commitment prior to the 1987 election that special services and facilities would be provided to intellectually-disabled adolescents and adults. Can he advise the Assembly what steps he has taken to fulfil that commitment?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question. This follows on from an adjournment speech by the member for Koolpinyah last night. In order to ensure the future of all Northern Territorians, we made commitments in relation to such persons. The number of disabled persons who now reside permanently in the Northern Territory has grown. Some years ago, if somebody had a disabled child, he or she was taken from the Territory to reside elsewhere. As we mature towards statehood, this government recognises that we must provide facilities for all Territorians to ensure that their future is secure in the Northern Territory and they do not have to go elsewhere. To that end, we gave commitments prior to the last election, in particular in 3 areas of providing respite care for the parents who have ...

Mr Bell: I didn't think your election promises mattered.

Mr DALE: They don't to you, but this is another proof that in fact ...

Mr Bell: They don't to the people at Yulara.

Mr DALE: We will get onto that later.

Mr Bell: We will indeed.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, the first project was to provide full-time residential care for socially-incompatible, disabled adolescents and adults.

Mr Bell interjecting

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I am sure that all the people listening on radio will note that the member for MacDonnell continually interjects while I talk about this most serious problem that has needed to be addressed by the Northern Territory government. It is quite clear that the opposition members, particularly the member for MacDonnell, have no concern whatsoever for the disabled people of the Northern Territory or for the parents of those disabled people. He can interject as much as he likes. I will stay on my feet until I can convince him that we in the Northern Territory government will certainly look after these people.

The second project was to fund community-based organisations to enable them to provide full-time residential accommodation for an additional 6 severely intellectually-disabled children aged between 5 and 16 years. The third project was to provide funds for evening and weekend care for disabled children up to the age of 5 years.

In relation to the first project, we have identified a suitable property at No 28 Girraween Road, Howard Springs. We advertised through the usual channels but, in the advertisements seeking changes to the zoning of that particular area, it was referred to as a facility for disadvantaged youth. Unfortunately, those words were totally incorrect.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: So I was right.

Mr DALE: Certainly, you were right. Last night, the member for Koolpinyah rightly pointed out that error. Of course, the error was noticed by the department and it was rectified in subsequent advertisements. The people living in that area have been given a comprehensive briefing. That was delivered by hand yesterday so that they would be fully aware of the type of people to be accommodated in that facility. Of course, the sale is subject to consent approval by the Northern Territory Planning Authority and that will be discussed at its meeting tomorrow. That should be well and truly up and under way. I will not go on at any great length. The capital cost of that project is about \$240 000. The operational, ongoing annual budget for that is about \$360 000, Mr Speaker, so you can see that, in ensuring the security of the people of the Territory, we put our money where our mouth is.

The second project, the multiply-disabled children's urban facility, will be placed at 46 Chapman Road, Nightcliff. That will provide housing for 6 multiply-disabled children. The capital cost involved is about \$220 000, with an ongoing commitment of a further \$0.25m in operational costs. The third facility is being negotiated with the Spastics Association, and that facility will be set up at the Henbury Avenue establishment.

I want to point out to the member for Koolpinyah that, of the 3 projects, it is interesting to note that 1 is in the electorate of the Chief Minister, 1 is on my own electorate and the third is in Koolpinyah. We certainly look forward to the people down in Koolpinyah ...

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr DALE: That is not properly represented and therefore we have to protect the people down there in some way.

Mr Speaker, we are happy that the people in the rural area will be able to provide a much-needed facility for these people and the appropriate respite care that their parents are looking for.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he confirm that, on or about 6 April 1987, he had a meeting with the Northern Territory Traders Association which is, of course, the credit association for the Northern Territory, and can he confirm that, at that meeting, the association informed him of serious concerns it had about the credit-worthiness of Hungerford Refrigeration and, therefore, its potential impact on local suppliers? Can he further confirm that another meeting was held later on the same day at which the association repeated its concerns to the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority, Mr McHenry, and the Directors of Hungerford Refrigeration, Mr Hawke, Mr Temple and Mr Hungerford? At that meeting, was the association requested to withdraw its criticism of Hungerford and, indeed, to apologise to Hungerford for raising those concerns?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, without being specific about the date, I can certainly confirm that I had a visit from 2 persons representing the association to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred. They expressed concern to me that Hungerford Refrigeration had a reputation in Brisbane as a slow payer of bills. They were concerned about the company coming to the Territory and doing business here. They went further than that and said that they would be recommending to members of their association that they be very cautious, or words to that effect, about providing Hungerford Refrigeration with credit.

I recall being somewhat critical of the stance adopted by those 2 people. I did not believe that they were giving Hungerford Refrigeration a fair go at all. The company had been brought to the Northern Territory from Queensland and restructured to some extent. I felt that they were doing a great disservice to a company that was trying to get on its feet in the Northern Territory and also doing a disservice to Northern Territory industry by forcing the company, contrary to government policy, to deal with interstate suppliers. I am sure that they left the meeting feeling quite unhappy because I thought that they were doing a great disservice to the Northern Territory. Subsequent information which I have received, more by rumour than anything else, has led me to be very suspicious of the motives of this organisation.

Mr Smith: Good old character assassination stuff.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would certainly know all about character assassination. He is an expert.

In regard to the second meeting referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, I do not recall having any knowledge that the representatives of this organisation met with other parties. They may well have done so. I certainly had no role at such a meeting, nor do I know what transpired there.

Impact of Brisbane Expo on Northern Territory Tourism

Mr REED to MINISTER for TOURISM

Does the Tourist Commission consider that the Brisbane Expo will impact on the tourism industry in the Northern Territory this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is quite apparent that the Brisbane Expo will impact on Northern Territory tourism. The degree of that impact has not yet been fully assessed. We believe that it will have a negative impact on tourism in the Top End and a positive impact for the Centre and the Tennant Creek area. Bookings held by government tourist bureaus throughout Australia have increased on those held at this time last year. The percentage increase ranges from about 14% to nearly 39% in some of the bigger bureaus and the volume of business that has been written is well above budget expectations. It is a fact, though, that April and May have been quieter months than expected. Obviously, we have a problem in that many people will travel up through the Northern Territory, but will turn off at Tennant Creek and then proceed to Brisbane. The Tourist Commission has spent considerable sums of money to address that problem and will continue to do so. The aim is to promote more extensively the areas north of Three Ways, including Katherine, the Top End generally and Darwin as a dormitory.

I have asked the commission to provide me with information on current sales on a weekly basis to determine whether the drop in tourism in Darwin is likely to be a major problem or not. It does not indicate, at this time, that it will be, but certainly the Brisbane Expo will have some economic effect on the Top End. We have had discussions with a number of the major tour operators to ensure that their packages offering Brisbane Expo visitation extend their tours from Brisbane, up through Mt Isa and into the Northern Territory. I believe some of those packages are selling quite well at this time.

In answer to the honourable member's question, yes, there will be an impact. It is a positive impact in the southern part of the Territory but, to a certain extent, there could be negative effect in the Top End.

Chairmanship of Rural Land Use Advisory Committee

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Given the public rancour attached to Mr Grant Heaslip's dramatic and sudden departure from his position within the CLP, is the Chief Minister confident that Mr Heaslip should remain as Chairman of the Rural Land Use Advisory Committee?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no problem at all with Mr Heaslip continuing in that role. He was carrying out that role long before he became President of the Country Liberal Party. He was carrying out that function as a representative of the cattle industry along with many other representatives of various groups who comprise the Rural Land Use Advisory Committee. That has nothing to do with his participation in the Country Liberal Party. In respect of the suggestion about rancour, I would place on public record that certainly I have no reason to question the integrity of Mr Heaslip in any way.

Mr Bell: Tell John Hare that.

Mr HATTON: I see no reason whatsoever that anything that may be occurring within my party should affect any government work. We have always disputed the false allegations made by those opposite concerning appointments of persons who happen to hold positions within our political party. The same thing applies in reverse.

Leasing of Vehicles

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT AND WORKS

Recently, he announced that the Northern Territory government would undertake a pilot scheme for the leasing of vehicles. What are the likely advantages that may flow from such a pilot scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the tenders that were assessed and the contract that will be signed shortly indicate that the obvious advantages are immediate savings on the costs of operating part of our vehicle fleet. The system that is being adopted is a full-maintenance leasing system. It is used elsewhere in Australia by major companies. Of course, the member for Casuarina would be well aware of the potential value there and the existence of those schemes. In fact, he initiated the early moves towards assessing the feasibility of such a scheme.

The government has adopted a cautious approach. We are looking to running a 120-vehicle pilot program to assess the overall feasibility and merits of such a scheme compared to our traditional system of purchasing vehicles and maintaining them either through our own resources or, as happens for half the vehicle fleet, through the private market. This 120-vehicle scheme should save us approximately \$85 000 directly and there would be other, more subtle, potential long-term savings if the scheme were to proceed into a broader field but those savings would relate to the need for government to provide maintenance facilities etc. There will always be some remaining requirement that government have plant maintenance facilities for its heavy equipment and for essential vehicles that are kept by government. In line with our reduction in manpower, we would look for any savings in manpower through natural attrition.

There were 14 tenders in all, and they revealed some very interesting facts. We gave people the option of 2-year or 3-year lease periods and one might have thought initially that the 3-year period would have led to cheaper rates but, in fact, consistently throughout all the tenders quite the opposite applied. In almost all cases, a 2-year lease period rate was lower than a 3-year. That demonstrates quite clearly something that we have believed in the Department of Transport and Works for some time which is that, in the second and third years of the life of a vehicle, maintenance costs very quickly overtake any benefits in cost savings on the capital investment. The variation in the range of figures quoted by the companies was almost eightfold from the lowest to the highest. I wonder whether the companies that submitted the higher tenders were suggesting Mercedes Benz vehicles for our public service! The rates at the bottom end of the tender were very competitive. I am hopeful that, when we monitor the system in 12 months time, we will see some merit in the system and some direct and indirect savings for the government.

Sponsorship of Commercial Television Program

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

During the promos run on the commercial television station last night advertising the late night football game, the subtitles on the screen indicated that the program was brought to viewers with the compliments of Steve Hatton, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. I raise this because I had a phone call from an interested viewer. Did the Chief Minister pay for this out of his own kick or did Territory taxpayers contribute to it? If the taxpayers contributed to the cost of the transmission, what was that cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was advised yesterday afternoon that, because the mini-series 'Vietnam' commenced last night, Channel 8 was unable to broadcast the program. It hoped to broadcast it later that evening but it needed some financial support. It approached me, as the Chief Minister, and asked whether we would be prepared to provide some assistance. It was interesting - and I am sure, Mr Speaker, you would appreciate the irony - that, for once, people outside the Darwin area had access to the live broadcast of the game via Imparja Television ...

Mr Tuxworth: Not all of them.

Mr HATTON: Those who had access to Imparja Television had access to the broadcast of the game and the people of Darwin did not. I took the decision that we would provide some financial support and that was provided by way of government funds. I am sure the member for Barkly would be well-experienced and briefed in such practices. It is a practice that the government has engaged in for many years and I certainly do not apologise for it. I know there was very strong interest in the north Darwin community in that game. Because of the hour, the cost was not excessive. In fact, for a cost of \$500, it was able to be telecast.

Television for Remote Communities

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, I support what the Chief Minister has done because I had occasion to do it from time to time myself. I think I did it in relation to cricket as a result of your representations.

Given the fact that many communities are still not receiving television from the satellite, do not have access to commercial signals and require government assistance to receive television, will the government review its policy in relation to providing assistance for groundstations for remote communities such as Pine Creek, Elliott, Borroloola, Hooker Creek and others, which currently do not have the resources themselves to obtain a groundstation to take Imparja Television in order to view what everybody in Darwin had last night for \$500?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the honourable member rightly indicated, it is not the policy of the government to provide groundstations for the reception of such services. It would be a very expensive exercise. I would have to receive advice, however, on the obligations of Imparja itself as the licence holder.

Certainly, the government has taken a decision not to become involved in that area. I will have a look at the matter and determine exactly what it would cost if such action were taken.

Mr Tuxworth: Not a lot of money.

Mr PERRON: I am told that it would cost heaps.

NT Women's Scholarship Award

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

Could he provide details regarding the recently-announced NT Women's Scholarship Award?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I was pleased to announce this fellowship at a function to celebrate International Women's Day held on 8 March this year.

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr HATTON: It is very sad to hear such comments from the only woman member of the Legislative Assembly. It is sad that the member for Koolpinyah missed that function because she would have found it very instructive and informative.

This announcement puts yet another election promise into action. Even more importantly, it is another concrete example of this government's steadfast commitment to advance the status of women in the Northern Territory. The NT Women's Fellowship Award is worth \$15 000 and will be awarded annually. Each year, it will enable an applicant to travel interstate or overseas to undertake a course of study or training, a research project or practical work experience. The applicants must have been resident in the Territory for at least 3 years and will be expected to show that the work will benefit the Territory and Territory women.

The amount being made available for this fellowship is relative to the present value of a postgraduate award for study at an Australian university or college of advanced education with the additional cost of an economy overseas return air fare if necessary. Having said that, I must point out, however, that the main purpose of the award is not to enable applicants to obtain higher academic or formal qualifications. Nor is it to be used in other cases where alternative funding is readily available or where the purpose of the application can be fulfilled in the Northern Territory. Quite simply, this fellowship is geared to cater for the real needs and aspirations of a wide range of Territory women. Far from being an ivory-tower award, the basis for selection is that applicants can show that the knowledge and skills obtained will be of direct and continuing benefit to the community. The award will be advertised soon in the press and on radio. Applications will close on 29 July 1988 and detailed information is available from the Office of Women's Affairs.

Mr Speaker, it occurred to me while I was in Newcastle Waters to launch the last great cattle drive that the women of the Territory are our quiet achievers. As Henry Lawson asked in one of his classic poems, where would the drover be without his wife?

Mr Bell: Author, author!

Mr HATTON: You would have heard me give the author's name if you had been listening.

Mr Bell: No, the author for your answer.

Mr HATTON: As I thought to myself while at the colonial ball in Elliott, who would organise such important and inspiring community events were it not for women like Margaret MacLean of Elliott? Women in the Territory today, just as much as were their forebears, are unsung heroines. All too often their achievements are overlooked.

Since I became Chief Minister 2 years ago, my government has been listening to women as they voice their needs and concerns. We have been sensitive to their interests. The results can be seen in our actions on issues such as domestic violence and child abuse. The only time that members opposite concern themselves with the needs of women is when they want to score a few cheap political points. It is not surprising that they have not had much to say on the subject since they have no record to speak of. All they have done is undermine our initiatives. We have been busy building a secure future for the men and women of the Territory. This government has been a quiet achiever in its own right. Mr Speaker, you will recall that last year I tabled a report on women living in remote areas. This study examined the diverse experiences of Aboriginal women, women on pastoral properties and women in tourist and mining communities. It looked at their concerns, their aspirations and the barriers they faced.

When I announce the recipient of the inaugural NT Women's Fellowship Award in October, this government will have broken down one of the last barriers and will have widened the choices available to Territory women, wherever they live and whatever their backgrounds. I am confident that, in time, this scheme will produce a group of NT women fellows who are leaders in their fields and whose work will enhance the lives of other Territorians. It is a small but important step towards ensuring that the talents and achievements of women in the Territory are no longer overlooked but are recognised and rewarded.

Radiographer for Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is the government still trying to obtain the services of a radiographer for Alice Springs or does it intend to keep sending x-ray photographs to Darwin for expert interpretation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of course we are trying to obtain a radiographer for Alice Springs. That goes without saying. I have received expressions of interest from at least 2 private companies that wish to provide radiography services and I will be calling for expressions of interest in the provision of private radiology services for the Alice Springs area. In addition, we are advertising and even looking overseas for an appropriate person to be employed in the Alice Springs area.

Duplication of Vanderlin Drive

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In relation to the future duplication of Vanderlin Drive from Patterson Street to the McMillans Road roundabout, will he or his department consider the construction of noise abatement devices between the roadway and residences directly abutting the road?

Mr Bell: This is the third time you have asked this.

Mr PALMER: No it's not. I asked him to move the road last time.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can give an undertaking to the member for Karama - subject, of course, to his acceptance of my advice - that, in association with the Minister for Conservation, I will examine appropriate means of noise abatement for people living on the part of Vanderlin Drive that is to be duplicated.

Freeholding of Special Purposes Leases

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to the continuing saga of CLP land deals. It concerns the vexed question of the conversion of special purposes leases and I am sure the minister will have the answer on the tip of his tongue. Will Radio 8HA be forced to pay market value to convert its special purposes lease from leasehold to freehold, as the minister said publicly, or will it be allowed to convert its special purposes lease at no cost, as his department has advised?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is an example of Mr Bell's approach to his role as the opposition's ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will refer to the member by his correct title.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I apologise. The member for MacDonnell's approach to his role in this Assembly and his role as an elected member does no credit to him or his colleagues. As the member for MacDonnell has pointed out, I have said on a number of occasions that there will not be any conversion of special purposes leases without payment. Such a payment, if not made at the time when the lease was obtained, would be made - at market value - at the time of converting the lease.

The member for MacDonnell has claimed untruthfully on a number of occasions that conversions have been made without payment.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I would ask that, if he is unable to produce an answer that he understands himself, the Minister for Lands and Housing at least ensures that his answer does not offend against standing orders. I request that he withdraw the word 'untruthfully'.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. I would ask the minister to withdraw that reference.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I believe that, in order for me to withdraw that remark, it must be established that my comments were untrue.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! You have requested that the Minister for Lands and Housing withdraw the word 'untruthfully'. Either he should do so in an unqualified fashion ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I thought that I could speak to the point of order. However, if you rule that I cannot, I shall not.

Mr SPEAKER: No, I am sorry. I have ruled.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the remark but, again, I point out that the member for MacDonnell has made certain statements which have no basis in fact. I have challenged him publicly on occasions regarding those statements and have asked him to withdraw them or to produce some facts to support them, and he has been unable to do so.

As I said at the beginning, I shall say exactly what the member for MacDonnell has said regarding special purposes leases. Actually, the honourable member obviously is not satisfied with doing things in a sensible and honest fashion and I shall go into some detail regarding this matter.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister has just referred directly to the integrity of an honourable member of this Assembly. In fact, he used the word 'dishonest' in association with the member and, for the sake of this House, Mr Speaker, he must withdraw that reference.

Mr BELL: By way of clarification, may I speak to the point of order, Mr Speaker? I do not mind being referred to as 'insensible'. I do object to being referred to as 'dishonest'.

Mr SPEAKER: Will the honourable minister relate to me what he said that has led to the point of order being called by the member for Nhulunbuy?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I said that the honourable member did not proceed in an honest fashion.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, if I might speak to the point of order, I ...

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! You were deliberating, I believe.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Have you a further argument?

Mr BELL: Yes, Mr Speaker. I believe that reference to Hansard will confirm that the adjectival phrase used by the Minister for Lands and Housing was 'sensible and honest', suggesting that that was not the case with respect to my dealings in this matter. As I said before, I will allow my electorate to judge whether I am insensible. However, I do object to the reflection that I am dishonest.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the inference that the honourable member was sensible and honest.

Mr Bell: Thank you!

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, on 13 March an article entitled, 'Pay Ups by Leaseholders Are Scandalous - Bell', appeared in the Sunday Territorian. The article contained allegations made by the member for MacDonnell that he had uncovered a scandal in the Department of Lands and Housing over the conversion of commercial special purposes leases to freehold title. The honourable member cited the example of Mr George Brown of Alice Springs who, in 1984, paid \$35 000 to have his special purposes lease converted to freehold. He then said, and I quote:

'But a secret Cabinet decision in 1986 allowed the conversion without any charges', Mr Bell said. 'This means Mr Brown and others like him may have been made to pay many thousands of dollars for something that only 2 years later would have cost them nothing. How many are in the same position? This is absolutely outrageous and a major scandal. Governments elsewhere would be forced to resign'.

The article also said:

'The NT government is facing dozens, possibly hundreds of court actions from people who paid to have their special purposes leases converted to freehold previous to 1986', Mr Bell said.

And further on:

Mr Bell said he had received legal advice that people who had paid to convert their leases into freehold 'certainly appear to have the right to have that redressed'.

On 14 March, a media release was issued stating that the honourable member had shown his ignorance of land matters in the Territory. The release stated that there was a simple equation for people converting their special purposes leases to freehold. If they had paid when taking out the lease, conversion would be at nil cost. If they had not paid when taking out the lease, they must pay before converting to freehold.

The issue became complicated when it was discovered the next day that an officer in Alice Springs had sent out letters to 60 holders of special purposes leases offering them free conversion. Actually, the letters were not offering free conversion; they offered the ability to request the minister to offer a free conversion. As a result, I issued another release on 14 March reaffirming my position and stating that the officer had made an error because he had assumed that all 60 had paid when taking up their leases whereas, in fact, 10 had not.

However, I also pointed out that final approval rested with me and, in fact, none of the 10 who had not paid had converted their special purposes leases to freehold without cost. I pointed out also that no secret Cabinet decision had been made in 1986 to allow free conversion of commercial special purposes leases to freehold. The only decision had been made by the then Minister for Lands, now the Chief Minister, and that was to expand the categories of special purposes leases which could be converted to freehold.

The issue became further confused 2 days later on 17 March when a memorandum signed by the Chief Minister on 29 March 1986 was leaked to the media. One of the recommendations approved by the Chief Minister in the ministerial was: 'approve the conversion of remaining special purposes leases to more appropriate forms of tenure, and establish the general conversion purpose policies outlined below'. That was: 'Commercial - conversion to fee

simple at no cost where covenants have been complied with'. This was generally taken at face value by the media as supporting the member for MacDonnell. The Chief Minister was set up by a particular reporter on a morning show for a debate with the member for MacDonnell and he did not know ...

Mr Ede: Didn't know what he was on about.

Mr MANZIE: Well, it was put together in such a way that it was very hard to make sense of what was occurring because, again, the member for MacDonnell was throwing in matters which were not based on fact.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I will emphasise for the Minister for Lands and Housing that my question was very specific. It related to the freeholding of the Radio 8HA lease. The honourable minister is reading at length a prepared answer from his department on this matter. He has been on his feet for some 10 minutes now and he has failed to mention the Radio 8HA lease.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Does the honourable minister wish to speak to the point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Yes, Mr Speaker. The honourable member is now trying to get out of a situation that he has been playing around with for a long time. He has made accusations against me and he has made statements which were not based on fact. It all hinges around a special purposes lease and Radio 8HA. I am not going to let him get away with it. If he wants to make accusations, he will hear the answers. I will ensure that the community is fully aware of the way this member goes about his role and the untruths and the aspersions he casts on members of this community. It is something that he has to live with.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I am not going to sit here and tolerate being referred to as casting untruths here or elsewhere.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Does the honourable member wish to make a point of order or not.

Mr BELL: Yes I do, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I suggest you make it in a more gentlemanly manner.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I ask you once again to request the Minister for Lands and Housing to refrain from using terms like 'untruths'. I may occasionally have to tolerate that in ABC interviews with the minister, but I do not have to put up with it in this House. I ask you to direct the Minister for Lands and Housing to withdraw the word 'untruths' forthwith.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order. I ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark. The minister will relate his remarks to the question.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw, but I reiterate that the honourable member is quite keen on making statements which are not based on any facts or which are unsubstantiated. I certainly intend to make the community aware of the situation so that people can make a judgment which is based on facts.

The government's position has been consistent throughout this whole debate and the bottom line is that leaseholders must pay at some stage before

converting their commercial special purposes leases to freehold. The people who obtained conversion at nil cost were those who paid when taking up a special purposes lease, paid rent over the years which covered the unimproved capital value of the lease at the time when it was taken up, or who had paid a combination of up-front payments and rental which covered the unimproved capital value of the block at the time it was taken up.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I believe that the minister is deliberately showing contempt for the Chair. You asked him to confine his remarks to the question. He is not confining his remarks to the question. It is my belief that he is showing contempt for the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I ask the minister to relate his comments to the question.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, obviously, an answer regarding special purposes leases, claims of conversion at no cost and special deals deserves a complete answer regarding government policy and it requires information to counteract the baseless accusations which have been made by the member for MacDonnell. It is obvious that he does not like the facts being made available to him and he does not like the community to understand the way he carries out his job. He has this particular mental block regarding how business is carried out. The reason is that he bases his ideas on normal ALP actions. When you look at what occurs with the ALP in areas right around Australia and the sort of problems ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! There is no possibility, under any interpretation of any speech made in the history of the Westminster system, that the particular drivel that just came out of the minister's mouth could be considered relevant to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order, and again I remind the minister to relate his comments to the question.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I have made it perfectly clear that those who have not paid will do so before their leases are converted to freehold. Throughout this whole farcical debate, the opposition and the member for MacDonnell have been unable to give a single example of such a conversion taking place, and that includes Radio 8HA. There is no scandal and there was no scandal. There have been no secret Cabinet decision and there will be no court actions.

The member for MacDonnell has made much of a ministerial document which he says supports his claim. It is unfortunate that he has been unable to read the document in its entirety because, if he did so, he would find that it negates his arguments. In fact, the background for the recommendations for freehold conversion of commercial special purposes leases argues that lessees of commercial special purposes leases would have paid whatever was required by the legislation at the time of issue of the SPL. This has been consistently interpreted by the department and successive ministers to mean that conversion to freehold will be given only to those people who have paid for their leases. Whether they have done so through an up-front payment or accrued rental payment at conversion, or a combination of these, is entirely irrelevant. Again, that goes for Radio 8HA. If the member for MacDonnell has one example where such an action - which he claims has occurred hundreds of times - has occurred, I challenge him to produce it. Otherwise, he should do the right thing and admit he made a mistake, and apologise publicly for some of the things that he has said.

Northern Territory Traders Association

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Does he recognise the fact that the Northern Territory Traders Association represents 70 established and reputable Territory companies? Secondly, did he state yesterday in this House that he had suspicions about the association's motives in giving him early warning about Hungerford Refrigeration's creditworthiness? Thirdly, will he now advance that smear with supporting information or will he retract it completely and apologise to the association?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot remember the exact words I used yesterday but no doubt they are recorded in Hansard, as that is what Hansard is there for. I now table a letter which I wrote to the organisation following my meeting with its representatives last year. The Leader of the Opposition may find that letter of some interest.

Mr Smith: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr PERRON: That is all I have to say about it.

Closure of Rolls for Municipal Elections

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the impending municipal elections and the usual criticism from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in relation to the issue of rolls, can the he advise this Assembly on procedure and publicity for the closure of rolls for the forthcoming municipal elections?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as usual, the member for Stuart has made remarks about the closure of electoral rolls. It seems that every time there is an election the first thing we can look forward to is a complaint from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about early closure of the rolls. True to form this year, he jumped on the same tired old bandwagon over the local government elections and put out his normal line. Unfortunately, on this occasion, he not only displayed his usual, naked political adventurism but, worse, he demonstrated his total ignorance of the appropriate legislative requirements in respect of local government elections. I am more than happy to take this opportunity to dispel the gobbledegook of the member for Stuart.

On Territory Extra on 16 March, he complained about the procedures, criticised me as the minister responsible and even lambasted the Electoral Office. He said: 'There has been no advertising put around the place to tell people we are going to close the rolls. You could draw a sinister conclusion that that is basically to keep the newcomers off the roll'. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition then went on to inform listeners that he was writing to me as minister responsible to tell me, and I quote, 'I really think he has gone overboard on this one'.

As I pointed out in my reply to the member for Stuart, the dates for local government elections are determined by the Local Government Act and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations. Section 45 of the act stipulates that an election for each council is to be held on the last Saturday in May of each

leap year. Section 51 says: 'Nomination day is the last Friday which is not a public holiday in April of the leap year in which the election is to be held'. Regulation 10 states: 'Close of roll is at 6 o'clock in the afternoon of the last Friday in March each leap year'. Therefore, relevant dates for the 1988 elections were: closure of rolls, Friday 25 March; nomination date, Friday 29 April; and polling day, Saturday 28 May.

As I further explained to the member for Stuart, the practice of fixing election dates by enactment eliminates uncertainty regarding when rolls are next due. When electors fulfil their responsibilities by enrolling for Commonwealth and Territory elections, they are enrolled automatically for local government elections, provided that they reside within a municipal area. The closure of rolls was advertised on public and commercial radio and in the press in the weeks leading up to the closing date. The closure advertisement was translated into 4 Aboriginal languages and broadcast by CAAMA. Information concerning the closure of rolls was also distributed to town camps and Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, confronted with the facts, the wild allegations of the member for Stuart collapsed like a pack of cards. Contrary to his assertions on Territory Extra apparently, the closure of rolls was advertised properly and adequately. The only sinister conclusion any sane person could come to is that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition must have been suffering from another of his well-known paranoid hallucinations.

Northern Territory Traders Association

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Yesterday he said, in answer to a question: 'Subsequent information which I have received, more by rumour than anything, has led me to be very suspicious of the motives of this organisation'. He was referring to the Northern Territory Traders Association. Will he provide this House with information to support that smear or will he withdraw the smear?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am glad the Leader of the Opposition is taking an interest in what he sees as an unwarranted smear. He might refer to the comments that one of his colleagues made openly just a couple of days ago in this Assembly about a Mr Koh and his involvement in the Northern Territory. I guess that really he should have a look at that and see if some internal discipline might be warranted.

As the Leader of the Opposition just quoted, I said that information that I had received had led me to be very suspicious of the motives of this organisation, and I stand by that. It is an expression of opinion, and that is my opinion which I gave to this House yesterday. I need do no more than reiterate that that is my opinion.

Women's Advisory Council

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

It was reported recently in the press that a new convenor and new members had been appointed to the Women's Advisory Council. What is the role and the new composition of the council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as honourable members would be aware, the Women's Advisory Council was formed in 1983. It was intended to provide a mechanism for communication between government and the women of the Territory. Over the last 5 years, the council has proven to be highly effective in this capacity. It has allowed the government to test ideas and has kept us up to date on issues of concern to women. I can assure this Assembly that the Women's Advisory Council is no paper tiger. At times, it has offered hard-hitting advice on the effect of government policies on women and, on other occasions, it has been persistent in advocating action for change.

The Women's Advisory Council can be proud of its legacy. The remote areas report, the drug and alcohol services survey, the sexual assault referral service in Alice Springs, measures to prevent domestic violence - these and other initiatives have been made possible through the work of the Women's Advisory Council. In its 5 years of operation, the Women's Advisory Council has established itself as a means of genuine consultation between the government and the community. I would particularly like to pay tribute today to Mrs June Tuzewski, under whose able convenorship the council has flourished, and those women who have served on the council as members. Their dedication has earned the respect of communities throughout the Northern Territory.

I confidently predict that the new convenor and the members of the Women's Advisory Council will carry on this fine tradition. Ms Schmolke, the new convenor, is a public relations executive who has lived in the Northern Territory for 20 years. She is a Justice of the Peace and has a background of wide involvement with community organisations, including Red Cross and the Penguin Club. Having lived in Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Darwin, Ms Schmolke will bring to the council an understanding of the Territory's diverse communities and an appreciation of their diverse needs.

Eight new members have been appointed to the Women's Advisory Council increasing its membership to 14. It was decided to widen the scope of the WAC by including representation from Yulara and Borroloola for the first time since the council was established by the CLP government 5 years ago. The new members of the council are: Annette Milikins and Beryl Mulder from Darwin; Josephine Stone from Alice Springs; Kathrina Bryen from Yulara; Nerolie Golder from Nhulunbuy; Heather Galvin from Billengarrah Station via Borroloola; and Mary Yarmirr from Croker Island. Katherine's representative, Stephanie Hill, will continue on the council for a further year.

Ms Beryl Mulder has been actively involved in many ethnic community organisations since she came to the Territory. She is now working in the new regional office of the Office of Multicultural Affairs in Darwin and therefore is well placed to voice the needs and concerns of women from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Ms Mary Yarmirr is a respected elder of the Minjilang community on Croker Island. She is a trained teacher and has been vice-chairwoman of the Minjilang Council for 8 years. Ms Kathrina Bryen is a coordinator of the Yulara Child-care Centre and an elected member of the Yulara Town Advisory Board. Nhulunbuy's representative, Ms Nerolie Golder, works for Nabalco and is responsible for the development and implementation of the Nabalco equal employment opportunity program. She has had wide experience of the industrial aspects of women's employment issues.

Ms Heather Galvin from Billengarrah Station via Borroloola is active in many community organisations in the Gulf region including the Isolated

Children's and Parents Association. Ms Annette Milikins is well known for her work in the welfare field. She has lived in many remote centres throughout the Territory and is currently developing a protective behaviour program in cooperation with schools and community organisations. In addition, she is a board member of the YWCA. The Alice Springs representative, Ms Josephine Stone, is a member of the legal profession and is President of the Zonta Club in that region.

It is obvious that the new convenor and the representatives are extremely well qualified for their appointments. They bring to the council a wealth of experience and a diversity of views. I have no doubt they will ensure the council remains a genuine forum through which the women of the Territory can voice their opinions and aspirations and that the Women's Advisory Council will continue to play its part in ensuring that our government is responsive to the needs of the entire Territory community.

Mr Speaker, I noted some comments made during the adjournment debate last night by the member for Koolpinyah who seems to be under some misapprehension as to our government's role in consulting on and addressing the genuine concerns of women from a wide range of backgrounds throughout the Northern Territory. It is a shame she is not in the Chamber this morning. As it happens, I am hosting a luncheon today for the members of the Women's Advisory Council. I would like to invite the member for Koolpinyah to come along there and express her views on women's matters to the Women's Advisory Council. If she thinks it is a paper tiger, I wish her luck.

Angiography Procedures at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware that angiography is a highly-intrusive radiographic procedure where patient risk increases with any delay in the process? Is he aware that, for the past year, patients undergoing angiography at the Royal Darwin Hospital have had a 1-in-2 chance of the procedure being disrupted by equipment failure, and that delays have now become so common and so intolerable that the unit has had to be shut down?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it would have been beneficial if the member for MacDonnell had given me some notice of a question which relates to so much technical detail.

Mr Smith: Technical detail?

Mr DALE: He has asked me a question about whether or not the equipment is working properly. I would be quite happy to take some advice as to whether or not that is the case. The angiographic unit in Room 4 at the Royal Darwin Hospital was acquired in 1979-80. A new table was acquired in 1986. Its condition is not very good at the moment and the proposed replacement date is in the coming year. We are aware that the unit has probably seen out its useful life but that is what happens with highly-technical and very expensive equipment. Let me say that the cost of that piece of equipment will be some \$900 000. We have a full program for replacement of all equipment in the radiology section at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

It has been interesting recently to see how the Leader of the Opposition's denigration of Hungerford Refrigeration virtually put it out of business. He was spokesman for health for a short time whilst the member for MacDonnell was

apparently away in the scrub somewhere. He beat up an incredible story. He used a young boy from Darwin to create the impression in the minds of that child's parents that things were not working as well as they should be in the radiology section of the Royal Darwin Hospital. He caused those parents so much trauma that, while he was running around town trying to get all facets of the media to cover the story ...

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister has deliberately moved from answering the question to telling us a story about something completely unrelated. Under standing orders, he has to relate his answer to the question.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I would urge you to dismiss that point of order on the simple grounds that the minister has the right to present an answer as fully as he believes is appropriate. The question concerned radiological matters at Royal Darwin Hospital. The incident to which the minister is referring arose in the radiology unit at the hospital and is perfectly relevant to the question. If members opposite do not like what they are hearing, that is their problem for asking the question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The information being given by the minister is directly related to the question.

Mr DALE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. When the parents of that child discovered that they had been misled about the services available at the Royal Darwin Hospital, naturally they started to make public statements expressing their concern about what they had been led to believe. The effect of that flowed through to the general public. The Minister for Transport and Works explained yesterday that the most important thing in business is confidence. There is nothing more important than confidence in the provision of radiology services and health services generally. Once again, members opposite see their role in the Northern Territory as running around the place, not only denigrating industry and causing a lack of confidence in industry, but also using 11-year-olds and the parents of those children to denigrate the health services of the Northern Territory without any good reason whatsoever.

I gave the member for MacDonnell the opportunity to inspect the premises at the hospital. By the way, that was at the same time that the honourable member was interfering politically in the employment of a former employee of his within my department. That is the time that the appointment was cancelled so that the member for MacDonnell could accompany the secretary of the department on an inspection of the equipment in the radiology section. There is equipment at the Royal Darwin Hospital that is approaching the end of its worthwhile life. That is a fact of life. One cannot simply throw out a \$1m piece of equipment when it is halfway through its useful life just to satisfy all of the carryings-on of the members opposite.

I am quite happy to advise the member for MacDonnell if he did not take advantage of his inspection of the radiology section at the Royal Darwin Hospital on Monday of this week. I will give him further details of the program. The advice that I have has been compiled on the advice of Dr Sutton, Mr Phil Thornburn, who is medical engineer, and also the person who is in charge at the radiology section at the moment.

File on Radiography Equipment at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. Will he confirm that the file on radiography equipment in the administrative section in the Royal Darwin Hospital is missing? What action has he or his department taken to locate that file? Can I assist by providing him with this schedule - which I trust would be part of a file - which indicates that the previous answer given by the minister this morning is quite wrong. The replacement dates of 4 out of the 10 pieces of equipment have been passed long ago.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not regard that as being a supplementary question. I regard it as seeking additional information on a wider topic. I would advise all honourable members that I have been fairly lenient with supplementary questions. If the procedure is to continue in respect of supplementary questions, I would remind honourable members to adhere strictly to the rules.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must admit that I am a little stunned. A moment ago, I talked about interference in the public service by the Leader of the Opposition. We have him on the record of this House saying that, if he were a public servant, he would take information out of files within the public service. In fact, he encourages it.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing orders provide that, if the minister wishes to reflect on the behaviour of a member of this Assembly, as he is doing by suggesting that I have been thieving public documents or whatever, he must do so by way of a substantive motion.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I did not mention the member for MacDonnell. My comments have all been about the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr DALE: Perhaps I can create a point of order now, Mr Speaker. It would appear that the member for MacDonnell supports the Leader of the Opposition in that. I suppose I am to believe that, if there is a file missing from my department and then it is handed across the floor of this House to me, I can take it that the member for MacDonnell found it, and I thank him.

Freeholding of Special Purposes Leases

Mr REED to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

During the adjournment debate last night, the member for MacDonnell claimed that the 8HA radio station in Alice Springs had been able to convert its special purposes lease to freehold title for the sum of \$85. This was in contrast to Mr George Brown who paid \$35 000 to obtain freehold title for his special purposes lease. Can the minister inform me if this is the case and, if not, what are the facts?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell certainly is a man of great limitations and, last night, I think he nearly reached them. I must admit that I was astonished at what the member for MacDonnell said last night. I honestly did not believe that he would be foolish enough to continue his farcical and unjustified attacks on conversions of special purpose leases to freehold title. I find it absolutely astonishing that a man, who claims to be so aggrieved when it is suggested that he may not be telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, should have the gall to try to mislead the House in the manner that he did last night. Last night, the member for MacDonnell continued his campaign of innuendo against the lands portfolio. He claimed that Mr George Brown had suffered a great injustice.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member cannot imply that any honourable member has tried to mislead the House. I ask him to withdraw that remark.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the remark.

Mr Bell: It is about the tenth such one you have made this week too.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, last night the member for MacDonnell claimed that Mr Brown had suffered a great injustice at the hands of the government because he had been forced to pay market value for his block of land when he converted it to freehold title. The honourable member's evidence for this alleged injustice was that 8HA had been given freehold title to its lease for a sum of \$85.

I have news for the member for MacDonnell. He is wrong yet again. I am getting sick and tired of his countless allegations which, time and time again, have been proved to have no foundation in reality. Surely his leadership ambitions must stop somewhere, Mr Speaker? The fact of the matter is that 8HA has not - I repeat, has not - been given freehold title to its special purposes lease. I made that perfectly clear when the matter was first raised and I made it clear that, if 8HA wanted freehold title, it would have to effect that within the confines of government policy and it would have to pay market value for that land. That is what would happen. I made that clear in my answer to a question yesterday morning. Mr Brown has not suffered from discrimination at the hands of the government. His case falls within the simple guidelines ...

Mr Ede: Is that right?

Mr MANZIE: Too right. I heard that interjection. His case falls within the simple guidelines set down by successive ministers for the conversion of commercial SPLs to freehold title. Quite simply, Mr Brown had not paid for his SPL before conversion and, therefore, he paid for it when it was converted. It was very simple.

The member for MacDonnell tabled a number of letters during his adjournment debate speech last night which, he said, backed up his case. One of those was a letter to Mr Brown from the then Minister for Lands and Housing, the member for Flynn. This letter was sent in response to a query from Mr Brown about why he had been required to pay for his SPL while a Mr and Mrs Smith, who held SPL No 315 in Alice Springs, were not required to pay at

conversion. I intend to inspect the letter tabled by the member for MacDonnell because it does not appear to read in quite the same way as the copy that I have been supplied with by my department. The member for MacDonnell read the following passage from the letter:

In 1986, however, the policy was expanded to allow for a greater number of categories of special purposes leases to be converted to freehold. Part of this policy allowed for conversion at no cost.

My copy of the letter does say that, but the second sentence is considerably longer than the one quoted by the member for MacDonnell. In my copy the paragraph reads:

In 1986, however, the policy was expanded to allow for a greater number of categories of special purposes leases to be converted to freehold. Part of this policy allowed for the conversion at no cost in those instances where the lessee paid a market value premium at the time of securing their lease. This occurred in Mr and Mrs Smith's case.

Mr Speaker, I think that that makes the matter very clear. I table a copy of that letter.

As I said, I will inspect the letter that was tabled by the member for MacDonnell last night and, if the 2 copies tally, and I expect they will although perhaps they will not, then I will be forced to ask why the member for MacDonnell quoted only part of the relevant sentence from it. I would like to know also why he saw fit to claim in this House repeatedly that 8HA had been granted freehold title for its special purposes lease at a cost of \$85 when, in fact, the title had not been converted at all - and he knows that.

This behaviour from a man who claims to be squeaky clean, eek-eek, and who becomes so upset when his word is questioned, is absolutely outrageous. I find it disgusting that he has the nerve to mislead this House in such a manner and, at the same time, to subject me to allegations of improper behaviour. This is intolerable conduct from the member for MacDonnell. He has shown a lack of intellectual capacity: he cannot understand a simple explanation.

In the beginning I thought that the member for MacDonnell was a reasonable fellow who had a problem with understanding the facts. I thought that, if I explained them very slowly and carefully and perhaps wrote them in big capital letters, he might understand. However, when I heard his performance in relation to the letter, I realised that the facts had no connection with this matter and that he was not interested in them. The only conclusion I can come to is that he is so preoccupied with becoming the Leader of the Opposition that he will say or do anything to get a run in the media and to make himself look good in this Assembly. I am afraid that the only thing he succeeded in doing on this occasion was to tarnish his image even further.

He referred to my answer in question time yesterday as 'calumny'. I will just quote the definition of calumny given by the Australian edition of the Collins Concise English Dictionary. It is: 'The malicious utterance of false charges or misrepresentation'. The definition of 'malicious' is: 'Motivated by wrongful, vicious or mischievous purposes'. Mr Speaker, it is very plain that the member for MacDonnell is guilty of a malicious utterance and utterance of false charges or misrepresentations and that he is motivated by wrongful, vicious and mischievous purposes.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! You have already ruled against the use of such terms as those used in the minister's answer to this question. You also ruled against it several times yesterday. The minister is persisting and I request you to do something a little sterner than ruling him out of order. My point of order is that, if the minister wants to make those accusations about me, he must do so by way of substantive motion.

Mr SPEAKER: I am advised that there is a point of order. Whilst May has allowed the use of the word 'calumny' in the House of Commons, I must ask the minister to withdraw the words he has used.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the quote from the Collins dictionary defining the word 'calumny'.

Mr Bell: That is not good enough, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I asked the minister to withdraw and he did so.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What action, if any, is the government taking in relation to removing sand from the bed of the Todd River in the town section to deepen the river and thus reduce the potential for flooding in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Sadadeen for his question. To give credit where it is due, I must say that, 2 years ago, he mentioned the possibility of the mining or removal of sand from the bed of the Todd as a flood mitigation measure. As a result of his inquiries, a great deal of work has been carried out on investigating the feasibility of mining sand from the river. However, I would like to discuss that proposal together with a range of other options that are being considered in relation to flood mitigation.

At this stage, I cannot tell the member for Sadadeen exactly what action will be taken. He will appreciate that the flood mitigation studies are continuing and that further talks may be desirable with a range of people and organisations. It cannot be questioned that the need for specific flood mitigation measures is somewhat urgent. The Alice Springs flood in late March peaked at a level of 3.97 m on the Todd River gauge upstream of Wills Terrace, above the previous highest measured level of 3.46 m in March 1983. Overall damage was not as severe as in 1983, but the cost will still be several million dollars in damage to private residences, commercial property and government and council departments.

Flood mitigation measures carried out or in progress before the March flood included the provision of floodplain maps to show the effects of flooding in various degrees, adoption of a land use policy to minimise future flood damage, the establishment of a flood warning system, the setting up of a counter disaster plan to cope with flood emergencies, an assessment of potential flood damage which included identification of flood-prone buildings, and the production and distribution of flood information pamphlets throughout areas likely to be flooded. Measures initiated since the flood include: the reappraisal of the Telegraph Station site for a flood mitigation dam, surveying and mapping by the Department of Lands and Housing of the extent of the flooding, surveying of the Todd River bed to assess silting and scouring,

the authorisation of removal of excess sand from the river bed by private contractors and the engagement of the Centre of Resources and Environmental Studies of the Australian National University to carry out a flood damage study.

Of course, the most important measure is the construction of the flood mitigation dam. Honourable members would be aware, because it was publicly announced well in advance, that the government is carrying out hydrological and geo-technical testing of the spillway area of the Telegraph Station site. A trench has been dug and experts will assess the suitability of the area for construction of a dam wall and report to the Power and Water Authority. After that report is received, the government will be in a position to examine the flood mitigation options available to it.

I stress that the government has gone to great lengths to avoid becoming involved in emotional side issues about the Telegraph Station site, despite provocation. It is our intention to gather the necessary scientific information and assess it thoroughly before any further steps can be taken. I reject completely the spurious claims about lack of warning of moves to conduct these tests at the Telegraph Station site. We could not have been more public in our announcement at a well-attended media conference, and full details were then put to an Alice Springs public meeting by an officer of the Power and Water Authority and the Minister for Lands and Housing.

I would like to pay particular tribute to John Van Hoven, the officer in the Water Directorate, for the work that he has carried out on this particular project. He has dedicated himself to the project, and I would like to express my personal appreciation of the work that he has done.

I was disappointed to hear comments from the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority which implied there had been a lack of consultation, particularly when he knows full well that he was invited to the minister's office to be briefed on the government's intention before the public announcement was made. I was disappointed also by criticism of the fact that I met informally with Aboriginal people in Alice Springs to talk about flood mitigation problems. I was asked by those who attended that meeting not to talk publicly about the detail of what was discussed, and I have honoured that agreement despite desperate provocation from members opposite. I will not be speaking about the details discussed at that meeting and the actions that have taken place. I intend to maintain the confidence that I have established with those people and I will not be speaking about that publicly. It is time that this was taken ...

Mr Ede: You haven't been asked to.

Mr COULTER: I have been, Mr Speaker. I have been asked on numerous occasions and I will supply him with details of what information was requested.

This will not be an issue that will be reported on the front page of the Centralian Advocate. I will deal with this in the proper manner and resolve this problem. I commit myself to resolving the flood problems in Alice Springs but it will not be done to the accompaniment of reports on the front page of any newspaper.

It should be clearly stated that the government has a very firm intention to institute adequate and reliable flood mitigation measures for Alice Springs. We will not be distracted by debilitating tangential debates about

recreation facilities, alternatives that are not really alternatives, ridiculous claims about Bond Springs Station or any other nonsense that might be dragged across our path. The issues of the actual removal of the sand and the causeway are being actioned at the moment, and I have spoken with a group of potential contractors. It will make quite a substantial difference to the cost of sand in Alice Springs, despite the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's claim that it is 'dirty' sand. I guess there is 'dirty' dirt too, in his definition.

We believe that the price of sand in Alice Springs will be reduced dramatically as a result of this action. There are several actions that must occur before we get into the actual removal of sand. Because the member for Sadadeen brought this to my attention, I will keep him fully informed of the results of those discussions.

Northern Territory Indonesia Joint Trade Working Party

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Could he confirm the establishment of the Northern Territory Indonesia Joint Trade Working Party and, if so, what progress has been made to date towards achieving its objectives?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly I can confirm that a Northern Territory Indonesia joint working party on trade has recently been reactivated. By way of some history for honourable members, the working party was first convened in 1981 and included representatives from the Northern Territory and Indonesia. The group met in Surabaya in January 1982 and again in August 1983 but, unfortunately, the meetings of the group lapsed subsequently.

Earlier this year, the Department of Industries and Development was instrumental in reforming the working party. The Northern Territory representatives include the Department of Industries and Development, including Nortrade. The member for Jingili is on the working party, as are a number of Darwin businessmen with an interest in trading with Indonesia. In addition, the Indonesian Consul to the Northern Territory, Dr Joseph Halim has been invited to attend meetings of the group. The working party met on 2 occasions recently and a further meeting is scheduled for the end of the coming week.

The working party has been established to facilitate trade and other commercial activity between Indonesia and the Northern Territory. Its terms of reference are: to identify reciprocal trade opportunities; to encourage communication and transport facilities between Indonesia and the Northern Territory; to provide introductory and information services for businessmen or government officials; to improve the efficiency of administration and regulatory procedures affecting trade; to improve cooperation between similar interests in particular industries with a view to promoting joint ventures; and to explore opportunities for bilateral trade in commodities where the same means of transportation can be used in either direction.

During a recent visit to the Northern Territory, the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Ambassador Roesman, expressed support for these initiatives and undertook to promote the working party through appropriate Indonesian officials and with business groups in Indonesia and government leaders. To date, the group has spent some time in identifying factors

conducive to an increase in commercial activity between Indonesia and the Northern Territory, and in identifying impediments to such increased activity. Contacts have also been made with Indonesian trade officials in Sydney and Canberra and arrangements are in place for members of the working party to meet with a high-level Indonesian trade delegation that is to visit Australia in July.

The establishment of the working party is tangible evidence of the government's desire to improve trade relationships with its South-east Asian neighbours. To further this aim, subject to negotiation with my Indonesian counterpart, I propose to lead a trade delegation to Indonesia later this year. During this mission, on which I will be accompanied by members of the working party, we would hope to identify opportunities for trade between Indonesia and the Northern Territory and to establish the contacts necessary to further this objective.

Members of the working party are working enthusiastically in an endeavour to improve commercial activities between the 2 countries. For their part, Indonesian representatives, in particular Dr Halim and Ambassador Roesman, have been very supportive of these initiatives, and I look forward to some success from these efforts in the future.

Tiger Brennan Drive

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, my question is in 2 parts. First, will he accept personal responsibility for the traffic bottleneck which has arisen as a result of the opening of the latter section of Tiger Brennan Drive and, secondly, what does he propose to do about it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately I am not able to take all of the credit for what is the consequence of a very positive development of our road system - the recent opening of stages 1, 2 and 3 of Tiger Brennan Drive. Certainly, a bottleneck is occurring at the intersection of Frances Bay Road and Woolner Road. What is happening is that traffic from the industrial areas on the Stuart Highway, Palmerston etc are taking advantage of that diversion through Hook Road and travelling along that new section of high-quality road into the city. Of course, that is taking pressure off the Stuart Highway itself. As a consequence of what is happening now, the department is looking at some minor modifications that may need to be made in the interim at that intersection and on Hook Road. These are very minor. In the long term, we will see a great advantage from that section of the road. The next development will be the entry to the CBD that is proposed for 1989-90. That will go on the drawing board next year and bring traffic to McMinn Street. That will provide better access for the ever-growing flow of traffic from Palmerston and the rural area.

The project was completed over a couple of years and we need to acknowledge that about half of the money came from the Australian Bicentennial Roads Development Program. Hopefully, we will have the connection to the city. I say 'hopefully' because it appears there may be some reduction, nationally, in total road funding. It is reported in this morning's Sydney Morning Herald that alarm has been raised by the automobile associations that the Cabinet Expenditure Review Committee apparently has proposed a cut of \$50m in the roads program which would mean about a 10% cut in next year's program. That would be quite disastrous.

The article by the Australian Automobile Association indicated that the importance of roads does not lie simply with traffic comfort and expedient entry to and from cities etc. More importantly, there is a direct relationship between road standards and road accidents and fatalities. The association estimates that some 75 additional fatalities and some 2500 additional accidents may result from further reductions in road funding. That was acknowledged recently by the Minister for Transport and Communications, Mr Morris, when he gave some examples of reductions in accidents and fatalities. An example was the Wyong bypass in NSW. The number of accidents fell to 28 per annum on the new road from 38 per annum on the old road. Similar examples would verify the very clear relationship between road standards and accident and fatality levels.

Perhaps I should call, once again, on the dubious influence that the members of the opposition have with the federal government. I urge them to press for a reasonable attitude towards road funding for the Northern Territory and other remote areas. It is understood that the emphasis next year will be on providing higher standard arterial roads to and from ports because they have some alleged economic value. We all might question what additional value there is in saving 5 or 10 minutes in traffic time to and from ports that take 6 or 8 weeks to clear their containers. There is no increase in the number of containers going across those roads. What we need is a fair distribution of funds to the remote, developing areas of Australia in order to provide better and safer facilities.

Mr Ede: The Tanami Highway.

Mr FINCH: Including, as the honourable member for Stuart says, the Tanami Highway. It will be roads within the Northern Territory that will suffer as a result of a 10% cut and a shift towards higher standard roads in major metropolitan areas in the south-eastern bloc which will have a very dubious additional value to the national economy.

Radiology Services at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Has he now established a review team to evaluate radiology services at the Royal Darwin Hospital? Who selected the team and why has the minister decided against appointing an independent peer group review as the opposition suggested?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, one of the healthiest things the government can do in the Northern Territory is not take on board recommendations of the opposition. That is a fundamental health issue. I am very pleased to be advised that, in fact, there is a file missing from my department. I am advised that it was an inactive file. It was a general file about capital equipment 1985-86 and not specific to the radiology section. It reminds me of my period as a policeman. If I was wandering down the street and I saw somebody being ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister has been asked a specific question concerning a supposed review that has been established.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have advised honourable members on previous occasions that this part of the parliamentary sittings is broadcast on FM radio. Whilst members of the public have difficulty in hearing clearly when members are interjecting, I also have difficulty hearing points of order when cross-Chamber chatter continues.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, the minister was asked a specific question concerning the setting up of a review into radiology services at the Royal Darwin Hospital. The minister was starting to meander, to use a polite word, into his experience as a policeman. I do not see the relevance of that.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister will relate his remarks to the question.

Mr DALE: In replying directly to the question that the honourable member has asked me, I would also like to make some remarks in respect of a previous question which was asked of me in this Assembly this morning. It concerned the tabling of some documents. I am informed that a file is missing from the section. In the past, if I was wandering down the street and saw somebody with stolen property in his possession, I could charge him with being unlawfully in possession of that property. If the opposition is to retain any credibility whatsoever, it ought to justify how it came to be in possession of apparently stolen goods.

In response to the honourable member's question about a review of radiology services in the Royal Darwin Hospital, that is nothing new. I said in this House some 12 months ago that I would be reviewing all sections of the new Department of Health and Community Services in order to create efficiencies and thereby save funds. Members will recall that I had to find some \$5m in savings in the new department. I am pleased to say that, despite the fact that it was an arduous task, I am able to compliment the staff of my department because we have been able to provide effective health services throughout the Northern Territory and to come in on budget for the year.

I have been conducting investigations into the efficiency of all sections of the Royal Darwin Hospital and the radiology section is no exception. I hope the member for MacDonnell has not confused that with an inquiry I initiated recently as a result of the Leader of the Opposition's efforts to use the media to convey an impression to the people of the Northern Territory and the parents of the young child concerned that he was not given appropriate treatment at the Royal Darwin Hospital. The purpose of that inquiry is to determine whether that child was given the best possible treatment available at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to draw your attention to my previous ruling. Whilst May states at page 433 that the word 'calumny' has generally been held to be in order, I have given further consideration to the matter. I believe that the word 'calumny' and its derivatives, when applied to members' statements, are as unparliamentary, if not more so, as the word 'lie', when similarly used. Under these circumstances, in future I will not permit its use in reference to members' statements.

Merger of DIT and
University College of the Northern Territory

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Over the last few days, there has been considerable media speculation regarding the merger between Darwin Institute of Technology and the University College of the Northern Territory. Could he give us a position statement?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I must admit that I was most concerned that the type of questioning being put forward through the media in relation to the University College had won out in this whole exercise. It is a complete nonsense. It is important for us to remember that we are committed to arriving at a negotiated agreement as far as the merger is concerned. There is a danger that, if the questioning in the media continues to take its present line, people in the community will start to become frightened about what is to happen. I acknowledge the work that is being done by the student and academic unions to try to keep the matters that are being discussed within the right forum. As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, working parties have been established to discuss the issues of how we are to proceed to a merger.

The comments made by Dr Carmel Gaffney from FAUSA and Janie Mason from the UACA this morning spelt out my desire that they approach the merger in a responsible manner and do not become involved in a slinging match in the community. There will be no winners or losers. We are aiming at providing a university for the people of the Northern Territory that our students will be proud of and the people who are part of that university will be proud of. We are aiming at bringing the institutions together in a new format. The government intends to ensure that courses not only have, but are seen to have, high standing throughout the world. The government's concern with the standing of courses is what led it to involve the University of Queensland in the University College. This is not to say that the courses at the DIT are of poor standing. Their standing cannot be questioned because they are nationally accredited, and the community needs to be made aware of that.

We are now in the process of trying to bring together the groups involved, including the academic and student unions. We have working parties addressing the merger issue and the members of the various groups will need to work together to arrive at a satisfactory proposal. That is under way, and I would urge people not to listen to any nonsense that is published in the media. We are moving in a responsible manner to build a sound future for Territorians. We believe that will be the result of the entire exercise.

I indicate to honourable members that it is my intention to make a statement on this matter during the course of the August sittings. I am unable to do so at this time because the Higher Education Planning Group has only just put the working parties in place. They will be reporting to me in mid-July prior to my statement in this House.

Radiography Equipment at Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware of an engineer's report compiled this year into the status and reliability of radiography equipment at Royal Darwin Hospital? Does that

report identify 9 major units as being out of action, beneath diagnostic standard or unreliable, and will he explain how he expects the medical staff to treat patients at the hospital using equipment which has been left to deteriorate to this extent?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it amazes me that the opposition appears to have a program aimed at destroying the credibility of various services in the Northern Territory. Health services are obviously at the top of the opposition's agenda. Hungerford Refrigeration was one of its former projects. I have called for an evaluation report on all aspects of the Royal Darwin Hospital and that started as soon as I became minister some 12 months ago. Honourable members do not seem to be complaining about the cleaning at the Royal Darwin Hospital. We were able to assess that function and, if my memory serves me correctly, we were able to make savings of about 20% in respect of the work force there. I was moving towards the privatisation of that section. We were able to negotiate with the union and the people involved and a satisfactory result has been achieved.

That is an example of what I have been doing right throughout the hospital. The Royal Darwin Hospital has 47 separate departments. The radiology section is a very important and integral part of the operation of that hospital. I will be making a ministerial statement on the Royal Darwin Hospital later today. I have made that available to members of the opposition to read overnight and I take it that they will have some positive and worthwhile criticisms to make and will not simply adopt the negative attitude that we have had from them as a result of stolen files and the like.

I pointed out to honourable members last week that I have a list covering the status of the equipment in the radiology section at the Royal Darwin Hospital. I told honourable members at the time that the list and the program that we have under way have been brought together by the now ex-director of the radiology section, the engineer that I have no doubt the honourable member opposite is alluding to, and one of the people from the radiology section at the Royal Darwin Hospital. It is a comprehensive report.

Mr Smith: What are you doing about it?

Mr DALE: It is programmed. The members opposite are saying that one can walk into a radiology section and say that various items will be replaced. Some of the equipment is worth in excess of \$1m. There is a regular program in place. In 1985, an expert was called in to assess the situation at that time. Since that assessment was made, we have purchased 5 pieces of new equipment. The expert radiologist at the time reported that, in fact, the equipment in the radiology section at the Royal Darwin Hospital was satisfactory and working well. We have an expert maintenance engineering section at the Royal Darwin Hospital. By the way, that is another area that I will be looking at closely in the near future to ensure that it is achieving the aims that the Royal Darwin Hospital requires.

It is wrong of the opposition to maintain its scaremongering campaign which is sapping the confidence of the people of the Northern Territory and damaging the morale of the 1400 staff at the Royal Darwin Hospital who treat some 100 000 to 120 000 patients per year. The sooner this impotent opposition puts its mind to some of the positive aspects of what is occurring in the Territory, instead of simply being negative for the sake of negativism, the sooner we might get somewhere in terms of maintaining the confidence of the very dedicated staff at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Constitutional Referendum

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, there is what I believe to be a most alarming provision in the Constitutional Alteration (Rights and Freedoms) Bill currently before the Commonwealth Parliament relating to just terms. Would he advise the House on the provision which, I understand, blatantly discriminates against Northern Territorians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I agree completely that the provision relating to 'just terms' in the referendum bill is both alarming and most discriminatory. Basically, it proposes that the Commonwealth, states and territories will be able to acquire property only on just terms anywhere in Australia with one exception - the Northern Territory. In other words, the Commonwealth will be able to acquire from a Territory body politic without just terms, and it cannot do this anywhere in the states. The referendum proposal, as it is drafted, discriminates against Northern Territory Crown property in a most savage and unfair way.

I ask, Mr Speaker, how you can justify a basic guarantee of human rights such as the guarantee of 'just terms' entrenched permanently in the Australian Constitution when it provides for an exclusion to suit the convenience of the Commonwealth? Either it should apply to everyone or not at all. The expressed justification for the exclusion, as derived from the reasoning of the Constitutional Commission, cannot be substantiated. What it is really saying is that, once the Commonwealth sets up a new Territory government and transfers property to it, it should be able to take any Territory property it likes from that government at any later time as the Commonwealth sees fit and without payment. Such a view calls into question the bona fides of a Commonwealth government in granting self-government. What is good enough for every other government or person in Australia is not good enough for the Territory apparently.

It ignores the fact that the assets of the Territory government belong to the Territory community as a whole and are not just the product of Commonwealth transfers. Territorians are entitled to constitutional guarantees just as much as everyone else in this country. For too long, Territorians have been discriminated against constitutionally and it is about time that ended. If the referendum goes through in this form, it will constitute a permanent threat to the self-governing Northern Territory and its property.

On Friday of last week, I telexed various members of the federal parliament regarding this matter, including Senator Fred Chaney, Senator Bob Collins, Senator Grant Tambling, Hon John Howard, Rt Hon Bob Hawke, Rt Hon Ian Sinclair and Mr Snowdon. I would like to read to honourable members the text of that telex:

I must express to you my extreme alarm and concern at one proposal contained in the proposed package of constitutional referenda which would appear to discriminate against the Northern Territory in a totally unjustified manner.

Clause 3 of the Constitutional Alteration (Rights and Freedoms) Bill 1988 would constitutionally guarantee to everyone in Australia

protection against acquisition of their property by the Commonwealth, by the states or by Territorians without compensation except, and I repeat except, the property of a self-governing body politic such as the Northern Territory.

There can be no basis for the Northern Territory government to be singled out in this discriminatory way. This is contrary to every concept of equal treatment and fair play. What is constitutionally good enough for every other person, body or government in Australia must surely be good enough for the Northern Territory.

Mr Leo: We are a territory, not a state.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the text of my telex continues:

I certainly do not accept that this provision can be justified by the reasons given by the Constitutional Commission first report April 1988, volume 2, pages 616 and 617, as adopted by the explanatory memorandum of the referendum bill, page 6. These just do not stand up to scrutiny against the need for equal and fair treatment under the constitution. If the Commonwealth wants to transfer property to a new self-governing Territory, it can decide in advance what property it wishes to retain. It does not need an express exception in a constitutional guarantee of just terms of general application to any property in the Territory operating for an unlimited period of time to do this.

In the case of the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth had 1 year to acquire property back from the Territory after the grant of self-government. This period has expired. There is no need to continue an exception as to the requirement of just terms in the case of the Northern Territory for this purpose. If the reason for the exception is to avoid the need for the Commonwealth to pay just terms to the Territory for any Territory land granted by the Commonwealth as Aboriginal land, then the question must be asked: why shouldn't the Commonwealth be liable for compensation in the same way as it would in the states? Apart from Aboriginal land, there would be nothing to stop the Commonwealth at any time in the future acquiring back any Territory government property for any purpose without compensation. If this referendum bill is passed in its present form, it would have the potential to destroy the Territory as a self-governing entity to the detriment of all Territorians and their public assets.

The referendum bill should not proceed in its present form unless this discriminatory constitutional provision, aimed specifically at the Northern Territory government and no one else in Australia, is removed.

Mr Speaker, to comment on the member for MacDonnell's interjection ...

Mr Leo: Nhulunbuy.

Mr HATTON: My apologies, it was the member for Nhulunbuy. I am glad he clarified that. It is exactly because we are a territory that this federal government, in this particular referendum, wants to demonstrate to the whole of Australia and to every Territorian that, as far as it is concerned, we are still a Canberra territory. We are not prepared to accept that on behalf of

the Northern Territory people. It is about time the Commonwealth and the people of Australia recognised that Territorians are Australians too, and are entitled to the same rights as other Australians and this, as much as anything else, gives an impetus to the demand for us to move towards statehood as soon as possible.

Constitutional Referendum

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Is it the Northern Territory government's intention to support the Commonwealth government's proposed amendments to the Australian Constitution in the areas of one vote one value, constitutional recognition of trial by jury, constitutional recognition of the role of local government and, indeed, a change to the Constitution which would allow the Houses to sit for 4 years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that matter is being examined in detail by our government before we adopt a specific position on it. We shall not respond on a gut reaction. I have made a specific comment today in respect of an aspect of the constitution which is of particular urgency to the Northern Territory. However, we will not adopt a firm position on the constitutional issues until such time as the matters have been thoroughly examined. I can assure the honourable member that, at that time, every person in the Northern Territory will be informed about the position of this government in respect of any constitutional amendments.

Under-age Drinking

Mr REED to MINISTER for TOURISM

Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Tourism in relation to his responsibility for the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission.

Parents, the general public, the police and the licensees of liquor outlets are genuinely concerned about what appears to be the increasing incidence of under-age drinking. If under-age drinking is a problem within our community, what are we doing about it? As it appears that the problem is difficult to address under existing legislation, what changes in legislation are proposed and what progress has been made towards effecting those changes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, under-age drinking has long been recognised as a problem in the Territory by public health and community organisations, licensees, parents and others. The Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission has received a stream of correspondence requesting amendments to the legislation to deal with the problem. Members of the Australian Hotels Association have informed the commission that they support more stringent controls. In this context, I have directed the commission, in conjunction with the Northern Territory Police Force, to work towards providing legislation to make it an offence for any person to supply liquor to a person under the age of 18 years on licensed premises or in a public place unless the person receiving the liquor is in the company of his parent, guardian or spouse who is over the age of 18 years. I might add that such an amendment to the Liquor Act has the unqualified support of the police.

This amendment would deal only with a hiatus in the existing law. At present, it is an offence for a licensee or his employee to sell or supply alcohol to a person under the age of 18 years in licensed premises. It is therefore impossible at present to stop another person over the age of 18 years supplying alcohol to a minor, although it is an offence for that minor to consume the alcohol.

A further amendment is also foreshadowed to provide that persons under the age of 18 years will be prohibited from entry to licensed premises except licensed restaurants, dining areas of hotels and taverns, licensed clubs and roadhouses or other areas the commission may exempt from time to time. Such an amendment will allow licensees to refuse entry to their premises to persons whom they suspect to be under age. This practice has already been undertaken by many licensees. It will exclude persons under the age of 18 from environments such as hotels and discotheques which are mainly geared to drinking alcohol. Under-age persons are usually present on such premises at a time when they should be in the care of their families.

In regard to premises which serve food, it is considered that the existing policy should be continued. If an under-age person is with his legal guardian or spouse over the age of 18 years, there should be sufficient supervision and it will be the responsibility of the person in loco parentis to determine whether the charge can drink or not. This policy is consistent with the Territory lifestyle of families attending clubs, restaurants and dining areas at hotels for meals. I trust the member for Katherine's question has been answered to his satisfaction.

Letter Circulated by Acting President of CLP

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to a letter circulated to Country Liberal Party members by the Acting President of the Country Liberal Party which says in part: 'There are too many party members pushing their own vested interests'. In that context, can he confirm that senior and influential party members, Helen Galton and Graeme Lewis, recently joined the Darwin public relations firm run by John Hare, the Secretary of the Country Liberal Party? Will he also confirm that, shortly after they joined the firm, the government awarded a major ...

Mr COULTER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Under standing order 109, this question clearly falls outside the standing orders and I ask that it be disallowed.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, standing order 109 states: 'Questions may be put to a minister relating to public affairs, to proceedings pending in the Assembly, or to any matter of administration for which he is responsible'. The matter that the Leader of the Opposition is about to raise is one for which the Chief Minister is clearly responsible and the Leader of Government Business should have waited until the Leader of the Opposition had finished the question and then he would have understood what it was about.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order at this stage. I would like to hear the whole of the question before I make a ruling.

Mr SMITH: Your wisdom is infinite, Mr Speaker.

Can the Chief Minister confirm that, shortly after Mrs Galton and Mr Lewis joined that firm, the government awarded a major contract for that firm to

promote 10 years of self-government? Can he confirm that that contract was not put out to tender, and can he tell the Assembly how much that contract was worth?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the link that the Leader of the Opposition is seeking to make is both mischievous and irrelevant to the issue.

Mr Smith: Tell the people out there. Tell Shane Stone that.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is quoting from a letter. I assume he has a copy of the letter because I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I have not seen that letter.

Mr Smith: That does not surprise me at all.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, given the Leader of the Opposition's penchant for selective quotation, I would not be prepared to accept that as a total statement of what is in a letter that allegedly has been circulated by Mr Stone. I can confirm that I will seek information to confirm details of contracts that have been let in respect of self-government celebrations. I can confirm that a contract has been let. The principal contract as I understand it - and I stand to be corrected - was with a local company called Barr Woollard Cawse. It may have engaged the public relations firm with which Mr Hare is associated. I will try to have that confirmed and I will seek the details associated with the self-government celebrations.

While I am on my feet, I will take the opportunity to advise the Assembly that we certainly intend to ensure that we celebrate 10 years of successful self-government in the Territory. We will be taking the time to recount the dramatic improvements in the lifestyle and circumstances of people right throughout the Northern Territory that have resulted from self-government. The Northern Territory community as a whole will have a good opportunity to celebrate this most significant occasion in the Northern Territory's history. I am sure that all Territorians will be delighted with the celebrations. It will be a good chance for Territorians to reflect on life before self-government in the days of full colonial rule by Canberra and the frustrations that Territorians lived with in those times, and contrast that with the dramatic improvements in the quality of life, services and facilities and the growth and security that have flowed over those 10 years to all Territorians.

Extensive work has been done to overcome 70 years of Commonwealth neglect, particularly the Commonwealth neglect of the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory. As a government, we inherited circumstances amongst the Aboriginal communities of absolute destitution and total absence of community services and facilities right throughout the Northern Territory. There is a long way still to go but we have had only 10 years in which to overcome 70 years of neglect of the Aboriginal people and other people throughout the Territory. All Territorians can take the opportunity to reflect back on what it was like before 1978 and on the significant improvements in our lifestyle and the benefits that have flowed to Territorians from having a government that they have elected to make decisions on their behalf.

Landscaping Along Rapid Creek

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Some time ago, I wrote to the minister and requested the upgrading and landscaping of the narrow area of vacant Crown land between the Jingili Water Gardens and McMillans Road along the eastern bank of Rapid Creek. Could he advise what progress has been made on consideration of my request?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I confirm that the honourable member made representations regarding the equestrian access to that area. I have been informed that representatives of the Conservation Commission, the Department of Lands and Housing, the Darwin City Council and the equestrian community have met to consider the establishment of a bridle trail along the eastern bank of Rapid Creek. I have been informed that there is insufficient room to establish a trail between the rear of the blocks and the eastern bank of the creek, although I understand that there is a similar but lesser problem on the western side where there is currently a route along the clear survey line at the rear of property boundaries. The Department of Lands and Housing and the Conservation Commission are evaluating the cost of and justification for a permanent bridle trail and no further upgrading will take place until that evaluation is completed. At that stage, we will be in a position to assess what action is appropriate.

Anderson Proposal

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he advise whether negotiations with Warren Anderson for the development of this precinct have been concluded and, if not, what stage have they reached? Can he give an indication as to whether citizens will have an opportunity to peruse and comment on the development proposal? Finally, can he give an undertaking that the financial arrangements relating to the precinct redevelopment will be put to this House before they are concluded and signed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can advise honourable members that negotiations are proceeding. They certainly have not yet been concluded. As honourable members know, the proposal is for the redevelopment of this government precinct, particularly the construction of a new parliament house and a supreme court. An interdepartmental negotiating team has been formed, headed by the Secretary of the Department of the Chief Minister.

Some rough concept designs have been developed and I would anticipate that, within the next week or so, they will be ready for consideration. I can advise honourable members that, quite naturally and properly, we will refer consideration of the design and structure of the new parliament house to the New Parliament House Committee of this Assembly. That committee will be very actively involved in the processes of approval for what will eventually become the new parliament house for the Northern Territory. Equally, the proposal for a new Supreme Court building will be discussed closely with those who will operate in it, the people who have to physically make the court work. It is intended that, when the concept designs and layouts are finalised, they will

be made available for public comment. We see the development as a very significant community asset. Obviously, the community needs to have an input and to accept that this is an appropriate direction to move in.

I am not prepared to give any undertaking in relation to the question about financial arrangements. There are 2 reasons for that. Firstly, we certainly have not concluded the financial arrangements. Secondly, as I have advised publicly, there will be no commitment from government until financial arrangements have been finalised and accepted by Cabinet. The concept, design, layout and the whole financial package must be approved by Cabinet before any commitments are made. Timing is vital if we are to achieve one of the principal objectives of the project which is to create a fiscal stimulant for the economy now rather than 3 or 5 years in the future.

As honourable members would be aware, if construction could commence this year, it would have a significant stimulative effect on the economy this year. To achieve that, decisions would need to be made during the year. Obviously, our government would be responsible for answering any questions and ensuring that people are fully informed of the circumstances. Really, it would depend very much on what the timings were before I would be prepared to make a commitment one way or the other on advising this House in advance of the financial arrangements. However, I repeat that we will be working very closely with the New Parliament House Committee on the assessment of the new parliament house, and with the courts on the court structure. We will seek public comment on the displays and layouts of the proposed precinct.

Mining Conference and Trade Exposition

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What was the outcome of the recent Mining, Petroleum and Suppliers Conference and the attached Trade Exposition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can certainly advise the member for Karama about the Trade Exposition. There was much criticism about the Trade Exposition suggesting that it was not well-attended and that people did not become millionaires overnight as a result of the expo.

Mr Smith: And many of them would have been misled. Yes?

Mr COULTER: As the Leader of the Opposition says - and he happens to be an expert on the subject - people were misled. A number of contracts were written at the showgrounds that provided opportunity for great stimulus to the Northern Territory economy. I guess the largest would have been that arranged by a helicopter company from Western Australia which, as a result of the expo and the investigations its representative was able to carry out whilst he was here, will base its entire operation in the Northern Territory in future. That operation includes 9 helicopters that it will be operating from here.

That is simply one example of a whole range of contracts that were undertaken. In particular, one large loader was bought on site and the new owner insisted that he drive it home. It was a very large, 4-wheel-drive loader and the new owner of the machine had to be talked into leaving it on the stand. There were a number of other examples. We had people from London who have developed an all-terrain vehicle capable of traversing marshlands. In fact, it is seagoing. The representative flew from London to the mining

expo which enabled him to present his product in the Northern Territory. I understand he was very impressed by the amount of activity that is occurring in the Northern Territory.

Other people arrived from Sweden who were able to develop contacts here for the development of their company's product. The ISO assistance, which the Northern Territory government has now entered into to establish an officer within the Office of Industrial Supplies, will concentrate solely on the mining industry, and \$100 000 has been provided to the Office of Industrial Supplies to enable that officer to service the mining industry as a result of the activities following the mining expo. His job will be to ensure that local companies obtain a slice of the industry that is developing in the Northern Territory and which is a bright shining star, not only for the Territory, but for the nation as a whole.

Martin Committee Report on
Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Is it his intention to table, during these sittings, the report of the Martin Committee into the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority which has now been with the government since July 1987, and is it true that the Chief Minister has expressed his dissatisfaction with the report, due to the committee finding in favour of the authority and its policies and procedures, and has consequently ordered that the report be buried?

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! When a point of order is raised and I raise my voice, I would ask the honourable member for Stuart to accede to that request. What is the point of order?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, under standing order 112, questions should not be asked that relate to hypothetical matters or request an expression of opinion. The member for Stuart was promoting a hypothetical situation concerning the Chief Minister, and requested an opinion from me of what the Chief Minister thought about the matter.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not believe there is a point of order. Whilst the honourable member may have made some remarks which could be construed as hypothetical, his specific request or question was whether the report would be tabled.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, following your ruling, I will certainly address that part of the question, which I believe was in order. I have received the report and have requested that a Cabinet submission be prepared so that Cabinet can determine what action it will take. At this stage, I intend to recommend that the report be circulated in certain quarters before its release and tabling in this Assembly. That will allow me to receive comments which will enable me to make ...

Mr Ede: Is the Sacred Sites Protection Authority one of them?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I am endeavouring to answer a question, but if the member for Stuart wants to provide further information to the House regarding the matter, I am quite happy to sit down and let him do so. I thought that he wished to elicit some information about when the report would be tabled. If he would like to remain silent, I will provide that information. However, if he wants to provide his own information, I am quite happy for him to do so.

Mr Speaker, I intend to present Cabinet with some options regarding the tabling of the report. When Cabinet has made its decision, I will be able to proceed further.

National AIDS Forum

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recently the Federal AIDS Taskforce and the National Advisory Committee on AIDS were replaced by the National AIDS Forum. Is he able to advise the House whether the Northern Territory is represented on that National AIDS Forum?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am able to advise that a Darwin woman has been appointed to the National AIDS Forum. She is Miss Bernadette Hudson, the team leader in the AIDS education program for Aborigines in remote communities run by the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services. I have mentioned the tremendous success of that program in previous sittings of this Assembly.

Apart from being the only Northern Territory representative, Bernadette is the only Aboriginal person appointed to the forum, which comprises members of the National Council on AIDS. In my opinion, she is an excellent choice to represent the Northern Territory. She has worked in the area of Aboriginal health for several years and will be able to provide valuable advice from an Aboriginal point of view. Her appointment to this federal body is an indication of the high regard in which the Territory's Aboriginal AIDS Education Program is held in Australia and overseas. Bernadette was, in fact, one of the key people in establishing the program in remote communities. Development of this unique education program was a team effort under the capable guidance of Dr Shirley Hendy of the Royal Darwin Hospital's Communicable Diseases Centre. Bernadette will be working alongside people such as Professor Peter Karmel, Chairman of the Australian Institute of Health, providing advice to the federal government on AIDS issues. These include medical, legal and scientific aspects as well as education, research guidelines and policy matters. Bernadette will be able to contribute a great deal to the forum's work. She will continue to head teams visiting remote communities in the Territory program. I was concerned that her appointment might mean that she could not continue her work here. However, part of the value of her knowledge in the forum will be her feedback on the effectiveness of the program she is involved in here.

Earlier this year, at an international conference in Sydney, Bernadette presented a paper on AIDS in Aboriginal communities. She has been invited by the World Health Organisation to act as an AIDS consultant to the Pacific island nations. I am very pleased indeed with Bernadette's success in this

field. She, among others, is very dedicated to the task of educating Aboriginal people on the AIDS situation. It is tremendous to see the work of an esteemed Territorian being recognised at the national and international level.

Roadside Advertising Signs

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I would like him to assure me that, in the compilation of his department's report on roadside advertising, full consideration will be given to the concerns of small businesses in the Litchfield Shire and in country towns along the Stuart Highway for whom such signs are the most productive form of advertising.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is undoubtedly aware that the anticipated policy on roadside advertising has been proposed by a committee which has broad community representation. That policy has been circulated in the community for comment. Sadly, not much objective comment has come from the community. However, the Department of Transport and Works has summarised and assessed the comment which has been made and is preparing a submission for Cabinet to enable the formulation of a policy which will not only take into account the needs of the small businesses referred to by the honourable member but, just as importantly, address safety issues such as location and size of roadside signs. There are some difficulties in balancing all considerations but the matter will be before Cabinet before too much longer.

Screw-worm Fly

Mr REED to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Can he advise whether screw-worm monitoring procedures have resulted in the capture of any further flies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to be able to advise the House that monitoring to date has not produced any further evidence of screw-worm flies in this area. I will briefly outline for honourable members the monitoring program that is under way at present.

A grid of 26 traps has been set up over an area with a 50 km radius from the Port of Darwin. Whenever possible, these traps have been cleared daily, with flies being identified on the same day. Six sentinel animals, each of which has an incision on the rump, are located at Berrimah Agricultural Research Centre, the Angliss abattoir and the police stables. Stock inspectors have inspected domesticated animals in the Berrimah-Howard Springs area and will continue inspecting concentrations of stock. Local authorities, Emergency Services, the Conservation Commission, police and health officials have all been briefed on the subject. The Commonwealth and interstate authorities have been made aware of the situation and the actions that have been taken.

Discussions between the Department of Industries and Development and the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection Service have taken place to improve the disinfestation of stock and stock vessels arriving at the Port of Darwin.

Reconfirmation has been sought of the identification of the specimens that were sent to Canberra which first brought word back that they were indeed screw-worm flies. I point out to honourable members that the science of identification of insects is very complex. At times, there are incorrect identifications. Because this is such a serious matter, we will continue to have the insects studied by experts to ensure absolutely that they are the screw-worm fly. It would be a tragedy if they ever get a hold on mainland Australia. We are doing everything that can reasonably be expected. I am pleased to say that, to date, the results have proved completely negative.

TDZ Consultancy Payments

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Did the Trade Development Zone Authority pay nearly \$0.5m in consultancy fees in 1986-87 and was one of the chief recipients of those fees Mr K.K. Yeung who was paid a retainer to attract business to the Trade Development Zone plus fees for obtaining letters of intent, plus a success fee for business established at the zone, plus reimbursement of his costs incurred? Are those fees to Mr K.K. Yeung and other consultants approved by the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority and how many businesses have been established at the Trade Development Zone as a result of Mr Yeung's efforts.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the nature of the agreement with Asian consultants who promote the Trade Development Zone is well recorded in Hansard, as the Leader of the Opposition would well know. I recall rereading those questions and answers in Hansard not so long ago and most of the information that he seeks is there.

The fees are paid under contracts which are approved by the Trade Development Zone Authority. As for individual accounts submitted under those contracts, there would be a hierarchy of approval procedures in the Trade Development Zone administration such as accord with the usual audit and accounting requirements.

As for the people for whom K.K. Yeung could claim credit, there is a very long list of people whom we are dealing with continuously as prospective tenants of the zone. In addition, what we have always termed the flagship of the Trade Development Zone, Darwin International Textiles, is a Hong Kong company that operates also in China and Guam. It resulted from promotional activities in Hong Kong and K.K. Yeung is certainly very much to the fore in all of the trade zone's promotions and follow-up contact in that region. It would be unfair of the Leader of the Opposition even to hint that funds paid to this consultant to date as reflected in actual people in the zone to date is all that the Northern Territory has for its money. As I have pointed out in this House many times, as have previous ministers responsible for the zone, you cannot promote a trade development zone in a place like Asia overnight and expect to obtain instant results. The exercise is long and expensive and requires governments to have the courage to follow through. Every state in Australia has agency representation in Hong Kong trying to attract investors and offering incentives. We are not alone in this expensive exercise. We are trying to promote the Northern Territory in order to create employment and diversify our economy which is the very reason for the zone's existence.

Forfeiture of Vehicles under Liquor Act

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TOURISM

Instances have occurred where a vehicle owner has had no knowledge that his vehicle was being utilised for the carriage of liquor into a restricted area. On discovery, the vehicle has been forfeited although a person other than the owner has committed the offence. Does he intend taking any action in relation to the mandatory forfeiture of vehicles seized in connection with offences against the restricted areas provisions of the Liquor Act and why should the owner be unduly penalised by loss of the vehicle?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, late last year Cabinet noted the report by Dr d'Abbs on restricted areas and it directed that the relevant authorities and departments consider the recommendations and report back to Cabinet. The report judged the restricted areas provisions to be a qualified success but it suggested amendments to various provisions, particularly in respect of those dealing with forfeiture. A working party of the authorities and the departments has met and it considers that it is necessary that there be extensive consultation with the affected communities before any final report is made to Cabinet on the restricted areas provisions. However, I can foreshadow that the working group is to recommend the policy that the restricted areas provisions be amended to allow some mechanism so that forfeited goods - for example, vehicles - will be able to be returned in situations where the vehicle clearly does not belong to the offender or such a minimal amount of alcohol is involved as to make that forfeiture draconian. Obviously, there is majority support for forfeiture to remain for those offenders actually undertaking grog-running. I believe that this is a very commonsense approach to the problem in the communities, and the resolution of this problem will be to the satisfaction of the communities.

Martin Committee Report on
Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In answer to my previous question, he stated that he would circulate the report so that he could obtain comments on it. Will he undertake to this House to circulate the report to the authority itself so that the authority will be able to comment on it and make a submission before the matter goes to Cabinet?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart must have listened to some extent and picked up a portion of my answer. As a matter of fact, I intend to circulate the inquiry report to a number of areas, and I believe that it would be beneficial to ask the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority to comment on the recommendations of the report as I believe it would be appropriate also for certain Commonwealth agencies to comment on it. I shall be asking for those comments so that I may present them to my Cabinet colleagues when I present the entire report together with recommendations. I will advise the House that it may be appropriate, after those recommendations have been made and as a result of my Cabinet discussions, that some changes be made to the legislation. Who knows?

One of the groups to whom I will not be giving prior notice in this regard is the opposition because, unfortunately, members of the opposition have a habit of trying to engender conflict in respect of government and Aboriginal relations. Their prior record has been most unfortunate in this regard. This morning's question time and the nature of the questions about the Martin Inquiry are indicative of the attempts by the opposition to create such conflict. However, I will be asking for the report to be commented on by the appropriate people. I presume that the members of the opposition have a copy of the report and that it is a legal copy, because they are pretty good at obtaining and stealing information from reports and ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the remark, but I consider that there probably is a prior knowledge ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order, the honourable minister will withdraw without comment.

Mr MANZIE: I withdrew the remark about stolen documents.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister has withdrawn a remark regarding stolen documents. He made a specific assertion that we were stealing, and that is the remark that must be withdrawn and withdrawn unreservedly.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not believe there is a point of order. I think there was only one reference to 'steal' or 'stolen'.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I believe that there is a knowledge of the contents of the document amongst the members of the opposition, but I will not reflect on how that information has been obtained by them.

However, I intend to proceed with this matter in a steady way, to enable the appropriate people to give their comments regarding the matter. I wish to ensure that, at the end of the day, we have a system regarding the protection of sacred sites in the Territory that works effectively and without conflict, and that achieves the objective which is - and all members of this House would be in agreement with the objective - to ensure that sites of significance to Aboriginal people are protected. We want to end with a situation which does away with the conflict and the problems that the present act seems to present to government and to all Territorians. I hope that we can resolve the situation to the benefit of all Territorians.

Contract for Self-Government Promotion

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he confirm that the contract to promote the government's 10 years of self-congratulation - sorry - 10 years of self-government will cost taxpayers about \$300 000, and will he explain to the House how senior CLP figures Helen Galton and Graeme Lewis and CLP secretary John Hare are involved in that contract? Thirdly, how will he convince taxpayers that their funds will not be used to promote the Chief Minister and the Country Liberal Party in that exercise?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a question of almost identical format was asked yesterday and I advised the honourable member that, when I obtained the information, I would answer it. I will do so when I receive the information.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

Last December, he announced the introduction of a trial Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. What progress has so far been made towards the introduction of that scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, most elements of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme are already in place in the Northern Territory through the CLP government's community policing initiatives. The modified Neighbourhood Watch Scheme which I announced in the last sittings aims to deter crime, especially housebreaking and sexual assaults in homes, to improve community education on home security and crime prevention and to heighten community awareness of suspicious behaviour. Three areas in Darwin's northern suburbs have been identified for examination for possible inclusion in the Neighbourhood Watch pilot program. These areas are Nightcliff, Millner and the Leanyer-Woodleigh Gardens area. The actual trial will involve 2 of those areas.

I might say that, when I announced this pilot program, the Leader of the Opposition made a public statement to the effect that the profile of his own electorate had changed and that it was not an appropriate area for a trial because the kids had grown up and, as a result, crime rates would not be as bad as they might have been a few years ago. I urge the Leader of the Opposition to spend a bit more time in his electorate because I must advise him that it has the highest crime rate in Darwin.

Mr Smith: You are blaming me for that, are you?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I am certainly not blaming the Leader of the Opposition for the crime rate. I am just giving him a bit of electorate information to assist him in his job as the local member for Millner, and urging him to spend a bit more time in his electorate. If he believes in a low crime rate in Millner, obviously he is not spending much time in his own electorate. It is sad to say that Nightcliff has the second highest crime rate in Darwin. That has been a matter of some concern to me as the local member, as I am sure it is to the Leader of the Opposition who is one of my constituents.

In the development of this program, letterbox drops were made about 2 weeks ago explaining the basic elements of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Door-to-door interviews were to be conducted in those areas during the weekend of 21-22 May. By the end of this month, police expect to be able to choose 2 areas for the trial. That will be followed by public meetings in those areas to get the program under way. The proposal is for a starting date of 1 July. The introduction of the scheme has already attracted interest from insurance companies wishing to provide sponsorship.

Neighbourhood Watch relies for its success on support from the community, and that cannot be emphasised enough. I urge people to participate actively in this Neighbourhood Watch pilot program because it will only work if the police and the community work together. I can advise that, in my role as the member for Nightcliff, I will be encouraging the Nightcliff community to become actively involved in any trial program that may be conducted in my electorate. If the Millner area happens to be chosen, I am certain the Leader of the Opposition will provide similar support in that area. If it is in the Woodleigh Gardens area, the member for Leanyer would be only too pleased to actively encourage people. It will need promotion from within the community to get it off the ground. Unfortunately, previous trial programs such as that involving the engraving of valuable possessions with identifying numbers have received very limited community response. I note that the Leader of the Opposition is nodding his head. That trial was conducted in the Millner electorate and I think there were only 1 or 2 responses.

Mr Smith: No, there were more than that.

Mr HATTON: There were certainly no more than 5.

Mr Smith: There were 20.

Mr HATTON: The police gave me a number lower than that. In any case, the number was far too low to have been of any effective value.

As I said earlier, Neighbourhood Watch is one of a number of initiatives in our community policing program aimed at crime prevention. Those initiatives include the Cops on Campus program, the work of the Police and Citizens Youth Club and a range of other activities throughout the Territory. The overall aim is to involve the community in its own security and crime prevention rather than adopting what, unfortunately, has become a modern trend in which the community washes its hands of problems on the basis that they are matters for the police. The fact is that, if we want to have a safe society in which crime is avoided and minimised, every member of society needs to become actively involved and accept his or her responsibilities as a citizen in this area, as much as in any other area of society.

Letter Circulated by Acting President of CLP

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him once again to the now very public letter written by the Acting President of the Country Liberal Party. In point 11 of the letter, the acting president writes: 'I have had a gutful of the antics in this party, both organisational and parliamentary wing. If you want me to remain in the presidency, be prepared to buckle down and work towards good government'. Now that the acting president has joined the rest of the community in recognising this problem, will the government give a commitment to lift its game and start working towards good government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is so bereft of anything to say that he has to quote an internal letter of the CLP which discusses party matters which have absolutely no relevance to this House. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that we are continually working to provide good government for the Northern Territory and to improve the performance of government generally. We will continue to do that in the future. There is one thing that is absolutely certain: the community has absolutely no faith in the Leader of the Opposition or his cohorts who are regarded as a joke in this society.

Local Government Scheme

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In the early days of self-government, I was involved in the introduction of local government within Aboriginal communities. The minister has now reaffirmed a program to encourage Aboriginal communities to join the local government scheme. Can he advise how many Aboriginal communities have joined the scheme and are there many communities still giving consideration to the scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, local government is very much in the news in the Northern Territory this week with the local government elections coming up. Perhaps the Northern Territory is the only place where local government is really in a growth mode. 12 community government councils are now established in the Northern Territory and that is an increase of 4. A further 4 community government councils are to be established in the very near future as well. Progress is being made towards another 12 and those are spread right throughout the Northern Territory from Yuendumu, Ngukurr, Galiwinku, Gapuwiyak, Hermannsburg, Santa Teresa, Batchelor, Adelaide River, Daly River, Port Keats, Dagaragu and Kalkaringi to Yirrkala.

If the member for Arafura were here, he would be able to tell us how good community government is for communities in the Northern Territory. The people at Nguui adopted community government very recently and have gone ahead in leaps and bounds in that very short period of time. Indeed, the member for Arafura was the immediate past president of the Nguui Council.

There is no doubt at all that the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory are embracing local government with great anticipation of what it will bring them in the way of being able to cater to their own needs. The community government scheme in the Northern Territory is being looked at by all the states because it has so much to offer, and yet we find that those organisations that are established in the Northern Territory to cater for the needs of Aboriginal people living on Aboriginal land, the land councils, are working actively against community government in the Northern Territory.

Of recent times, we have been close to a community government scheme at Belyuen and at Ngukurr, yet the land councils have gone to those communities after representations from the Office of Local Government over a period of years to establish community government in those areas. The land councils have told blatant lies about the ability of community government to cater for the needs of the people in those areas. They have said that it does not give a community power to make by-laws for its community that have the strength of

the Territory law behind them. They have told them a range of things such as that and, in fact, they have frightened the people of Belyuen and Ngukurr and had them write letters under duress saying that they would not take up community government at this time. Within a couple of weeks, when they had had it explained to them, they wrote back indicating that they really want to embrace community government because it will give them the ability to look after their own needs.

I believe that the land councils should stay right out of what is not their business. They are responsible for land. We have seen an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander proposal that is fully supported by the land councils and is not based on boundaries worked out over time in consultation with the people. With community government, we have exactly that in place. It takes years of consultation to put a community government scheme in place because it deals with traditional boundaries. Then we find that body, which is supposedly established to look after the needs of Aboriginals, actively working against it. It is shameful. I do not believe it is reflecting the wishes of the Aboriginal people. I am sure that, if the member for Arafura were here, he would back me up on this. I know that it is his view and the view of many other people on the benches opposite but they do not have the guts to say so.

Mr Ede: Make a ministerial statement.

Mr McCARTHY: They do not have the guts to say that they support community government. It is supported around the country except by the land councils because they believe it will undermine their own position. I think it is shameful. I would ask the members opposite to get up and say that it is shameful because they know that it is. They know that the land councils are out to protect their own meagre interests. I believe that is disgraceful and I think that my statement on that should have the support of every member of this House. Community government in the Northern Territory will grow because it has the support of the Aboriginal people.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr McCARTHY: It may not have the support of the member for Nhulunbuy ...

Mr Leo: It certainly does have, but if you will not listen to the problems, there is no point in trying. You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr McCARTHY: Where are the problems?

Mr Speaker, the process of getting community government up and running in the Northern Territory will take time. It will take time to have it all in place, but let us not have this organisation set up to support Aboriginal people working against us.

Constitutional Referendum

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Noting the long and detailed answer he provided yesterday on the matter of land acquisition in the coming referendum on the Australian Constitution, I would like to ask a very straightforward question. Does he support the concept of one vote one value, will he support the proposed amendments to the Constitution which will enshrine in the Australian Constitution the concept of

one vote one value and, if he will not support that principle or, indeed, that referendum, why not?

Mr COULTER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Under standing order 114, a question fully answered cannot be renewed. That question repeats virtually verbatim one that has been answered fully.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, I would like to speak to the point of order. I recall quite clearly the question asked yesterday and the Hansard will bear me out, I am sure, with absolutely scrupulous clarity. In fact, I asked the Chief Minister what his government's position was. Now I am asking the Chief Minister what his position is.

Mr Hatton: You cannot ask for an opinion.

Mr LEO: I am not asking for an opinion; I am asking what his position is. Does he support the principle of one vote one value? It is very simple.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. There is a difference between yesterday's and today's questions.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question contains a number of potential conflicts. I am asked, firstly, whether I support the principle of one vote one value and, secondly, whether I support the referendum motion on one vote one value. Of course, that is working on the presumption that the referendum bill provides appropriately for the recognition of one vote one value. A very simple, almost simplistic argument, is put forward by members opposite when they say that one vote one value, in a democracy, means that every person is equal and therefore each vote that is cast should have exactly the same power as any other vote. The fundamental principle underlying that is that electorates should all be of the same size. As I understand it, what that proposal is all about is to go from a 20% tolerance to a 10% tolerance.

That is what the argument is about. It is also to enable the federal Constitution to impose conditions on the sovereign states of Australia. As do a multitude of these questions in the referendum, it raises a multitude of questions about where our federation rests today. Are we to accelerate the drift towards a centralist government in Australia or are we to support the principle of a federation of states in Australia? Those are very serious questions that need to be analysed properly and carefully, as do the issues. One of those issues ...

Members interjecting.

Mr Leo: You really are a wimp. You are a wimp.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nhulunbuy will withdraw that remark.

Mr Leo: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I would advise honourable members, and this is not the first time, that this part of the parliamentary day is broadcast and, despite the fact that some members might not want to hear either the question or the answer, I believe a fair number of Territorians in the community do, and I ask all members to maintain silence during both the question and the reply.

Mr HATTON: To the interjection from the member for Barkly, perhaps the town of Tennant Creek might be interested in hearing the answer if people there listen to their radios.

Mr Tuxworth: They wouldn't listen twice.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I thank you for those comments.

The member for Nhulunbuy, who is chuckling away in the corner over there, is quite obviously trying to put forward some simplistic question ...

Mr Leo: I just want to know what you are doing.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, if I am to answer the question comprehensively, I will deal with the issues that are involved in such apparently simple questions as, 'Do you support one vote one value?'. As I have said, my government has not yet fully considered the position of the balance. Australia has an imbalance with 80% of its population tucked into a 10% corner in the south east. If all electorates were the same size, power would flow increasingly to the major cities. The concentration of political power in the cities and inevitably the concentration of political attention on the cities and away from the country are serious matters that need to be considered. I know the Labor Party has no interest in this question because it sees its power base as being in the cities.

I am not prepared to make a clear and unequivocal statement because it is essential that the people in the rural areas of Australia, who earn most of the wealth for Australia, should have a reasonable, political voice in the national, state and Territory parliaments. If that means stepping away from the pure concept of one vote one value, so be it. To answer quite simply, I am not prepared to say that I am for or against the referendum. In broad principle, I agree with one vote one value, but it must be balanced against ensuring that there is adequate political representation for the people in the more remote areas of this country. I am not prepared to make an unequivocal statement until I and my government have properly analysed that question.

May Day Celebrations

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

During his address to a May Day gathering in Darwin on Monday 2 May, author Frank Hardy stated: 'The Northern Territory should be proud that it is the only state in Australia that has a public holiday and calls it May Day'. Could the minister confirm if Mr Hardy's statement is accurate and advise in what manner the other states of the Commonwealth celebrate the day that we in the Northern Territory refer to as May Day?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am led to believe that the May Day celebrations were originally a harvest celebration in Merry Old England. Later, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics liberated May Day to celebrate its successful October revolution.

Mr Smith: That is nonsense.

Mr Bell: It was in the 1880s.

Mr McCARTHY: You better consult your encyclopaedia. The disparity between October and May results from the western world's Gregorian calendar which is out of step with the one used by the Soviets.

In the later 1940s, we in Australia appear to have done our own holiday duffing when the 40-hour week was introduced. Typically, we could not agree when to celebrate this momentous occasion. This year, Western Australia and Tasmania have a holiday on 7 March, Victoria on 14 March, Queensland and the Northern Territory on 2 May, New South Wales and the ACT on 3 October and South Australia on 10 October. In all but the Northern Territory, it is known as Labour Day. The 10 October holiday in South Australia is getting a little bit closer to the actual revolution. While we did not have rocket launchers parading through the civic square, workers did manage to burn a few effigies this year. I do not believe the date should be cause for concern however ...

Mr Setter: Subversion.

Mr McCARTHY: ... in the hotbed of Jingili. I can assure the honourable member that the Territory is not the only place to celebrate this holiday, nor is it a sign of impending revolution.

National Wage Increase

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Given that the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission awarded a \$6 wage increase to all wage earners on 2 February this year, that the draft orders were ratified in the Territory on 3 March and that the private sector paid the increase to all its workers within 2 weeks of receiving advice from the commission, why has the government still not paid the wage increase to its own workers over 3½ months later?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware that we have not paid it to all workers. In fact, we have paid it to some. As far as I am aware, those few that are still outstanding are refusing, for whatever reason, to take it. I will have that checked. These workers have ongoing disputes over conditions and, for that reason, have refused to accept any of the other benefits that have been granted to them. I will have the matter checked and come back to the honourable member.

Kormilda College

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Over the past few days, there has been considerable media speculation about education. Statements have been made on the airwaves that Kormilda College is to be handed over to private interests. Will he comment on that statement?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. There has indeed been some misinformation circulating about Kormilda College. The current position is that Kormilda College is in a transition phase from a

government school to a private school. The next step towards privatisation has been agreed to by the Northern Territory government. I am sure that honourable members would be aware of the concerns that government had in relation to the cost of students at that particular college and the need for it to provide access for traditional Aboriginals. The college will be handed over to an interim board and that board is in place - Kormilda College Incorporated. That will occur on 1 July.

As the minister, I will still have control in respect of the activities of Kormilda College. However, the direction that we are moving in is to have Kormilda College completely privatised by the beginning of next year. There is some concern about how that is to occur and I will be paying particular attention to that in the near future. The agreement that has been reached will allow the school to expand its efforts to attract enrolments, particularly from traditional Aboriginal areas. I would say again that it is unfortunate that there has been a great deal of misinformation. The Teachers Federation has made comments to the effect that Kormilda is operating well short of its capacity. Even the member for Stuart has commented in relation to the capacity at Kormilda College, mentioning a figure of 450 vacancies.

Mr Ede: I said it needs another 450 students to be viable.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, far from having difficulty in filling places, Kormilda has a waiting list. It is limited in the sense that it does not have sufficient classroom space to take in a full complement of boarding students at present.

The government is giving Kormilda the opportunity to obtain funds from the private sector. The school will also have the normal assistance from government by means of the 10% interest subsidy and 5% capital repayments. The school intends to have classrooms built for the senior secondary area, Years 11 and 12, by the start of next year. As we have been saying for some time, schools like this give people a greater range of educational choices and take a load off the government system.

I congratulate all those involved in the Kormilda exercise. It is not an easy task. We have to ensure that the needs of traditional Aboriginals are met. The government has paid particular attention to that and will continue to do so. FEPPi has been closely involved and there has been a great deal of consultation in the communities about the direction Kormilda is moving in. FEPPi's members are to be congratulated for the way they have been involved in that consultation process. I believe that Peter Harris is the person who will bring the Kormilda project together and I wish him every success, together with the college staff.

I have said that I see Kormilda as complementary to and not opposing the Darwin International Grammar School. It is important that both facilities exist. The Darwin International Grammar School is also looking at attracting Aboriginal students but the situation at Kormilda ...

Mr Ede: There are not enough kids to go around.

Mr HARRIS: That is nonsense! The member for Stuart should curl up in a corner following his remarks about the Darwin International Grammar School the other night. I ask honourable members to read what he had to say and to look at my response. Unlike members of the opposition, we are interested in students in the Northern Territory. We want them to pursue their education in the Northern Territory and we will be continuing to follow that objective. We

will provide opportunities, whether the member for Stuart likes it or not, for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to have access to education in the Northern Territory. This government fully supports developments at Kormilda. We also want to make it very clear that we will ensure that Kormilda looks after the interests of the traditional Aboriginal people.

Royal Darwin Hospital - Loss of Accreditation

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

If he has read the 1987 Annual Report of the Royal Darwin Hospital Management Board, he will have encountered the following statement: 'There is a loss of accreditation of the Royal Darwin Hospital, due principally to a shortfall in quality insurance programs and the failure of the previous board to examine the perceived full extent of its power under the Hospital Management Boards Act'. What does he intend to do about this?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of that situation. It is a matter which has been discussed previously in this House. I suppose the best way of describing the accreditation process is as one of peer assessment. We are certainly keen to gain that accreditation again and the Chief Medical Officer is working steadfastly towards that goal. Let me say, however, that it has absolutely nothing to do with the actual provision of services to the public at the Royal Darwin Hospital. It is an issue of peer assessment and accreditation will not be given until the professionals go through the process. It must also be noted that a great number of major hospitals throughout Australia do not have this accreditation either.

Katherine Water Supply

Mr REED to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

An article in last night's NT News suggested that the Katherine water supply was contaminated. What action has been taken by the Water Directorate of the Power and Water Authority to ensure that the water supply in Katherine is not contaminated, and can he assure the people of Katherine that their water supply does not pose a health risk?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the NT News of 24 May 1988 indeed carried an article under the heading 'Diarrhoea Incidence Raises Fear'. At first, I was not sure whether it was referring to the performance of the opposition in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, but I read further and discovered that it referred to the Katherine water supply. The Power and Water Authority has denied the press report that pollution in the Katherine water supply is causing residents to suffer from diarrhoea. Katherine's water supply is sterilised and filtered, and is considered to be one of the cleanest in the Territory. Samples taken yesterday at 9 different locations and incubated last night indicated that the supply was clean of organisms. As the dry season approached, Katherine's water supply was blended with more bore water and some residents might have noticed mild effects as a result of that. This was done to ensure there would be no danger of the supply running short during the dry season. Katherine's water supply has been tested and the level of chlorine throughout the system was found to be sufficient to ensure disinfection.

Officers of the Power and Water Authority have liaised with health authorities on the matter. They have been advised that 8 cases of diarrhoea have been treated at the local health centre and all these involved travellers. I understand that the pharmacist who advised the NT News is personally afflicted with giardia and automatically blamed the water supply without having the facts checked. The Minister for Health and Community Services may wish to elaborate further on the matter.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In November 1986 the then Minister for Industries and Development, the member for Flynn, stated that 12 firms had signed letters of intent to enter the Trade Development Zone as the result of work done by the authority's sub-consultants. Can the minister confirm that, 18 months later, only 2 of the 12 companies have commenced operations in the zone? Secondly, does he accept that a failure rate of 10 out of 12 is commercial nonsense, and whom does he hold responsible? Thirdly, can he confirm that the sub-consultants were paid fees for getting those letters of intent signed and that those fees total approximately \$90 000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, clearly I cannot provide all that information off the cuff. It is probably correct that 2 companies of the 12 which signed letters of intent have commenced operations in the zone. I do not think that it is true to say that 10 of the 12 have failed. The Trade Development Zone Authority is working constantly on the people who have been to the Northern Territory to examine what the zone has to offer for them, and various negotiations have been occurring continuously with those people, even with people who came down in the first group back in 1986. Negotiations are taking place with these people. There is a range of reasons why the negotiations are sometimes very slow and why sometimes people who are brought fairly well up to the wire, as it were, with letters of intent, subsequently do not proceed. I believe it would be untrue to say, without close examination, that 10 of the 12 have walked away never to return.

In fact, we are now dealing with 1 particular applicant who had reached the stage of a B and P application which was rejected in Hong Kong, we believe, without good grounds. A subsequent appeal has indicated that the gentleman can reapply and possibly be accepted. Thus, there is a possibility that even those who seem to have fallen away completely may come back into the system again. It is very difficult to say exactly who has fallen out of the system totally.

As to the honourable member's question about the amount of money that has been paid to consultants as a result of the issue of letters of intent by those people, I cannot give him that information off the cuff.

Public Service Unattached List

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

How many public servants remain on the so-called unattached list and what action is the Public Service Commissioner's office taking to place those public servants in full-time, permanent and productive positions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the last figures that I have been given on those people who are excess or potentially excess is 60 or thereabouts. I do not have up-to-date figures in my hand, but there were approximately 60 people on that list. The Department of Labour and Administrative Services, through the Public Service Commissioner, has responsibility for attempting to place those people in positions as they become available within the public service. Unfortunately, a number of the people who appear on the excess list are people with professional qualifications and it is very difficult to place them within the public service. There is a procedure that has to be undertaken with people who cannot be placed, but it is the government's intention to place as many as possible. That is an ongoing process. We have brought that number down from about 150 some 3 months ago and therefore there is progress in that regard.

Task Force Report on Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Has he received the task force report completed in February 1987 recommending a career structure for Aboriginal health workers in the Department of Health and Community Services? If he has, when does he intend to make a decision on it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly I have. It will come before Cabinet at its next meeting, on 7 June.

Crop Production 1988

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Given the wide variation this year in the wet season, what are the latest estimates on crop production in the Northern Territory and the effect this will have on Top End users?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, early season conditions in our cropping areas were generally favourable and we were expecting a very good cropping season this year. Dry conditions late in December and January reduced the establishment of later planted crops. However, the prolonged wet conditions delayed rice establishment in the Adelaide River area. Just under 9000 ha of crops was established with the majority of this area being grain, sorghum and maize. All districts - the Douglas Daly area, the Katherine area and the Adelaide River area - experienced a short dry spell in January and a prolonged dry spell from late February through March. Although total seasonal rainfall was 95% of average in Katherine and 65% of average in the Douglas Daly, the dry spell particularly late in the season generally reduced the performance of most crops.

As usual, there is considerable variation in crop performance depending on local, seasonal and management factors. Harvesting of crops has commenced and final yields will be known when harvesting is completed in the next 4 to 6 weeks. Maize and soya bean crops were severely affected by the dry spells. Maize particularly is flowering, and soya bean suffered seedling mortality after successfully establishing.

Sorghum and mung bean crops in both the Katherine and the Douglas Daly districts are variable. Some crops sown earlier have yielded or are expected to yield well with slightly over 5 t per hectare being harvested from one paddock of sorghum in the Douglas Daly. Reduced or severely reduced yields are expected in the Katherine district, particularly from crops sown late or in areas that experienced poorer rainfall. A similar situation exists for sesame with a few better crops and many poorer crops.

The only commercial peanut crop grown this year has performed excellently and has a yield slightly over 3 t per hectare from the area harvested to date. This top quality crop has attracted a premium price from the Queensland Peanut Marketing Board and part of it may be retained as seed for sowing in the Northern Territory and in Queensland next year.

Grain head moulds developed on grain sorghum crops in the Douglas Daly district when humid and wet conditions coincided with crop maturation. Such moulds occur fairly frequently in the tropics and have the effect of reducing the palatability and quality of the grain which is important for our product as it is used for animal feedstock. Mould can also produce mycotoxins which can be poisonous to animals. Unfortunately, farmers in the Top End have suffered adverse growing conditions for the third year in a row, resulting in reduced yield and a total crop well below expectations of the area planted. Plantings which were expected to yield in the order of 11 000 t of sorghum and maize are now expected to produce less than 6000 t. The requirements of Top End users of these types of grain are for approximately 10 000 t, thus a significant shortfall exists between the anticipated harvest and the end user requirements.

Replacement of Ambulance at Yulara

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

He will be relieved to know that my question is not about radiology equipment. It is in relation to an equally embarrassing problem for the minister and the government. I refer to the government's election promise to replace the Yulara ambulance. I preface my question by reminding the honourable minister of my comments in last night's adjournment debate when I commented that a potentially fatal situation had developed with respect to the petrol fumes and oxygen mixture in the back of the cabin of the ambulance and that the ambulance itself has stripped a distributor shaft.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! What is the question?

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I simply want to ensure that the minister is in full possession of the facts. When will the government honour its election promise to replace the Yulara ambulance?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the honourable member raised this issue. It is interesting to note that he has run out of all information relative to the radiology section of the Royal Darwin Hospital. Last Friday night, at about 8.30 pm, the ambulance was required to do a halfway meet on the Docker River road to collect a patient who apparently had been bitten by a snake. It was a 240 km drive out there so the ambulance did not do too badly.

During the exchange of the patient from one vehicle to another, apparently they needed to stabilise him and ensure that he was fit enough to continue.

For some reason, I am told that the ambulance motor was left running. If you leave the engine running, fumes enter the vehicle itself. On the drive back, the patient was fairly fit but the doctor became sick. He was a little uncomfortable on the way back because fumes had not cleared from the ambulance.

The technical services manager at Yulara investigated the report that there might have been some problem with the fuel system in the vehicle. He took the vehicle out the next morning to test it. He did everything to try to recreate the situation as it had existed on the 280 km journey. He put it through some rigorous tests and, in the process, did some damage to the gears. The vehicle is broken down at the moment and our technical services people are working on it. I am informed that there is a standby unit there.

As I have said many times in this House, I have had conflicting information from Yulara from all sorts of people. The advice has been from some that they need an ambulance and from others that they do not. I can only take my advice from professional people and, as I told this House a little while ago, I went out to Yulara myself after all sorts of people including the secretary of the department, the regional director and the assistant regional director had been there to negotiate health services in the area. I went there with a deal to put in a new ambulance and I was advised by the doctor that that service was not required, and that it would be a waste of taxpayers' money. I have not had a submission put to me since that time indicating why we would need to replace the ambulance at Yulara.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
National Wage Increase

Mr McCARTHY (Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government): Mr Speaker, to clarify an answer that I gave previously to the member for Stuart on a delay in payment of the wage increase, orders to vary awards had to be raised and signed by the unions and processed through the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. There was some delay in that regard. It takes up to 4 weeks to reprogram the computer to change approximately 14 000 public servants' pay entitlements. This has been done for most of the groups, and the increase will be paid to those public servants on the next pay day.

Negative Special Grants

Mr SETTER to TREASURER

The federal Treasurer will be bringing down an economic statement this evening. As a result of the Premiers Conference which the honourable Treasurer attended recently, is he optimistic that the Territory will no longer have to face the quaintly-titled negative special grants that have characterised reports of the Grants Commission in the past 2 years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all Territorians and, indeed, all Australians will be anxious this evening to hear the economic statement that will be delivered by the federal Treasurer. I am pleased to say that the one-off negative special grant in 1987-88 will not be repeated in 1988-89. There were some positive sides to the Premiers Conference and the amount of money that was received by the Northern Territory, and that included a useful increase in hospital grants. Although the financial assistance grants for 1988-89 have been offset correspondingly, there will be a marginal benefit to the Territory through

indexation in the future. There was a higher grant component of the Loans Council capital program, meaning that the Northern Territory will save approximately \$1m per year in debt-servicing charges and, most importantly, a very substantial one-off special revenue grant of \$57.5m which effectively offsets the Grants Commission recommendations for this year.

With regard to tonight's statements, of course, we have now seen that the Prime Minister is a man of his word and he will not implement a gold tax during the life of this parliament ...

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: We have one of the best and most appropriate forms of mineral royalty payments in Australia, as the member for Stuart has just mentioned. I wonder if his colleagues in Western Australia and Victoria would be pleased to hear of the gold tax and I wonder about the future political careers of the members for Bendigo and Kalgoorlie and a number of other people. We will see what the federal government's reaction to this particular tax will be. Of course, another interesting point that has been leaked, mostly to the newspapers, concerns financial assistance to private schools which has been foreshadowed in tonight's statement. All in all, it will be interesting television tonight, Mr Speaker. We will wait and see what emerges from it.

Policy on M-rated Videos in Schools

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Does his department have a policy on the showing of M-rated videos within schools and, if so, what is it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the answer to that question at the moment. I will provide the honourable member with an answer at a later hour.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Television for Remote Communities

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, I wish to answer a question asked of me earlier in these sittings by the member for Barkly. The member for Barkly asked whether the government's policy towards the matter of financial assistance to remote communities which wish to broadcast Imparja Television will be reviewed.

Firstly, I would like to give members some brief background information on this issue. I understand that there is some confusion in the community regarding the Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Community Scheme, called BRACS, and Imparja's quite separate obligation to provide 8 transmitters for its service in the Territory and South Australia. On 15 September 1987, the federal government announced that BRACS would be implemented to provide remote Aboriginal communities with satellite receive-and-transmit facilities for the provision of ABC radio and television. This financial year, the federal government has allocated \$505 000 which will provide services for up to 14 Aboriginal communities. Eventually, 74 communities across Australia are expected to be serviced by BRACS, 28 of them in the Northern Territory. BRACS will not, and has never been intended to, provide communities with the capacity to receive and transmit commercial television. I think that that is a bit of a shame. I understood that people who had facilities to receive ABC

satellite television faced a lesser cost to convert to be able to receive Imparja services also, but it seems that the Commonwealth scheme to enable many Aboriginal communities to receive the ABC, in a sense is not designed to help them receive Imparja as well.

As a condition of the central zone RCTS licence, Imparja is under an obligation to provide receive-and-transmit facilities in only 4 Territory communities. Those communities are Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Nguiu. Imparja is also required to provide 4 such sites in South Australia. Imparja is under no obligation to provide those facilities at any other location. Furthermore, I am advised that it does not plan to install such facilities in any other community within the foreseeable future. I hope this has cleared up any confusion that honourable members may have experienced.

Turning to the government's policy on financial assistance to remote communities, neither the federal nor the Northern Territory governments have any form of financial assistance available to remote communities for the transmission of the Imparja service. The federal government will help remote communities on licensing and technical matters but I am advised that this assistance is of a superficial nature. For the present, the Northern Territory government does not intend to provide direct funding to remote communities to enable them to transmit the Imparja or ABC service, as each community would require a transmitter costing approximately \$10 000 to \$30 000. I understand that the exact price depends on the size of the transmitter required to service the community involved. With conceivably over 100 communities wishing to transmit Imparja in the Territory, the financial scope of such a task would be possibly in the order of \$3m. That is certainly beyond the Territory government in today's climate of fiscal restraint.

I am advised, though, that experience in Canada and Alaska has shown that, where a community forms an association to purchase and maintain a television transmitter on a cooperative basis, this has been proven to be the most effective way of providing a satellite television service. Communities which wish to broadcast Imparja or the ABC may wish to take this option which could possibly be pursued through the avenue of the community's local council. I am also advised that individuals can obtain receiving dishes for between \$4000 and \$8000. A number of houses can then be connected by cable rather than requiring rebroadcast facilities once the signal is received on the ground.

Contract for Self-Government Promotion

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I remind the Chief Minister that it is now more than 48 hours since I first asked him to provide some simple answers to some simple questions relating to the celebrations of 10 years of self-government. Will he now inform the House whether senior CLP members, John Hare, Graeme Lewis and Helen Galton are involved in the contract to provide public relations for those celebrations through Neilson McCarthy Hare? Is the total promotion contract worth about \$300 000? Was the contract awarded through the normal tendering process and, if not, why not? Is this another example of cronyism between the government and its friends in the CLP?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, since the Leader of the Opposition, in the years he has been in parliament, has been unable to identify any examples of cronyism, it is impossible for him to ask whether this is another example. I will confirm that this also is not an example of cronyism. I have undertaken to give the answer. Towards the end of question time today, I will give a comprehensive answer on the arrangements for the public relations and marketing campaign for statehood.

The Leader of the Opposition has been trying to beat up a storm over nothing. He is trying desperately to recover from a disastrous 2 weeks in the Assembly. I can assure him that he has got it wrong again. I will give a complete breakdown on how the contracts were arrived at and how we have worked to ensure that the work goes to local businesses and not interstate businesses.

Road Funding Scheme

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is the likely impact on the Territory of the new road funding scheme outlined in last night's economic statement by the federal Treasurer?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not able to advise in specific terms the outcome of last night's mini-budget statement pertaining to roads. However, a preliminary assessment is that the federal government has pegged back its commitment to roads in 1988-89 from the current \$1250m to \$1215m and, whilst that is a cut in actual dollars of \$35m, in real terms it would represent about \$100m. That is a real concern. We are all realists and recognise that there has been a need to curtail overall spending by the federal government. It is unfortunate, however, that a consequence will be that the Northern Territory, which is still developing its road infrastructure, is to be cut short again. Honourable members would be well aware that, following last year's cutbacks, we had a very limited expenditure on new capital works in the roads program and it is quite possible that next year will be tighter still.

Another aspect of the federal Treasurer's announcement was that the previous bicentenary road development fund and the Australian land transport program fund are to be consolidated into a single new fund called the Australian Centennial Roads Development Program. I wonder if that means that the federal government is putting back the road funding system by 100 years!

Mr Bell: It means that Labor will be in government federally for another 100 years.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I would assume that the member for MacDonnell would be most interested in some of the other features of this new, you-beaut program. Although we do not yet have specific details, we know that there is to be a new category of funding for roads defined as having national significance and high economic benefits.

Mr Bell: The Olgas Road?

Mr FINCH: Unfortunately, it does not include the Olgas Road. It does not include all those roads to the honourable member's remote communities. As far as we can determine, it does not include roads that represent economic development in respect of tourism such as the Kakadu Highway and so on. Hopefully, with a little pressure from our honourable colleagues opposite, and lobbying by all honourable members who have remote electorates, we may be able to have included in this new, you-beaut classification roads that bring significant economic benefits to the Territory. Of course, the preliminary description includes roads, which have high traffic frequency, to ports. As I mentioned the other day, the justification for this is that it will cut the time taken to transport containers to the cities by about 10 minutes, even though it may take 6 weeks to have them cleared from the terminal. I am sure that will give a great boost to the national economy. What it is doing, as far as I can see, and as we feared last year, is pushing the emphasis onto Sydney and Melbourne, providing arterial roads to and from ports and airports for the convenience of those more densely-populated areas. Certainly, this may cut travelling time by about 10 minutes but, at the same time, roads in the electorates of MacDonnell, Stuart, Arnhem, Nhulunbuy and maybe even Barkly, will be put on the back burner. As far as we can ascertain, they do not have priority in the eyes of the federal government.

What we need is a concerted effort by all honourable members to ensure that the federal government is aware of the potential for development in remote areas, and for the need to provide safe and reasonable all-weather access to all communities in the Northern Territory. Hopefully, our honourable colleagues will give some thought to this matter which is critical to the development of our road infrastructure.

Needle Exchange Program to Combat AIDS

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I remind him of the needle exchange program which is part of the public campaign to prevent the spread of AIDS. My question is in 2 parts. Is he aware that the aiding and abetting provisions of the Criminal Code are an obstruction to this legal exchange program? Secondly, how does he plan to amend legislation to enable the needle exchange program to continue to supply needles without that supply being treated as an offence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in these 2 weeks of sittings, I think this is the first time that the opposition has been anything like up to the mark. After question time, I will be tabling a bill to amend the Poisons and Dangerous Drug Act. I am sure that all the points that the honourable member has asked about will be covered by that. He will have opportunity to make some input.

I am very much aware of all the impediments to trying to handle the various issues relating to the AIDS or HIV problem in Australia and, for that matter, throughout the world. This government is trying to address all of those problems in a responsible way. We are very much aware of the problems with AIDS and of the need to arm the police with sufficient legislation to enable them to combat the illegal use of drugs. As I say, I will be tabling a bill after question time.

Federal Lands Acquisition Bill

Mr HANRAHAN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I note that the federal Minister for Administrative Services, Hon Stewart West, has introduced a Lands Acquisition Bill into the federal parliament and that the legislation would have the effect of allowing the Commonwealth to set up a federal mining regime for the first time. Does he see this action as an intrusion into the rights of the states and the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a timely question indeed. I have with me the speech which was delivered last night by Hon Stewart West on this particular issue. It is frightening as a matter that affects state rights and the rights of people in the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth government was established to look after a couple of things. Our founding fathers decided that we could trust it with the post office, the army, customs and immigration. Today, it is responsible for 177 different organisations and departments. It has an education department - with no students. It has a very large bureaucracy involved in health matters - and no patients. It would appear, from this legislation which is before the federal parliament, that it will be involved in mining.

There are some very frightening aspects of this policy, including compulsory acquisition. Clause 41 of the legislation that was tabled last evening states that compulsory acquisitions are to be authorised by the minister rather than by the Governor-General as is the current requirement. Not only can it become involved in mining, it can rip off any bit of land it wants anywhere in Australia to establish a mine. Not that it will, Mr Speaker. What we are concerned about is that it will take over all the heavily mineralised zones in Australia and stop anybody from mining them. We do not have a progressive federal government at the moment. We have a government that is out to retard mining and it has demonstrated that time and time again. Take the example of the so-called conservation zone at Kakadu on which nothing has happened. We still do not know its boundaries and Coronation Hill is still in limbo. We have had no decision on whether that mine will be allowed to proceed even though there are \$1250m worth of minerals out there, including platinum.

The minister said last night that he believed that 'the process will enable non-controversial acquisition by the Commonwealth of land in public parks to be achieved expeditiously whilst, at the same time, providing sufficient safeguards to ensure that the acquisition powers are not abused'. The Governor-General is removed from the process and the power is placed in the hands of the minister. The process is to provide protection of the states' rights and ensure that environmental and heritage issues are adequately addressed. I would like to see that happen when this Commonwealth mining legislation comes into effect.

Clause 24 relates to exploration and mining on Commonwealth land. In his speech, the minister said:

The government's policy for access to Commonwealth land for exploration and mining does not apply to national parks and Antarctica. The existing Lands Acquisition Act allows for mining and exploration on Commonwealth land. The government has accepted a set of policy principles which it believes should apply in order that a multiple land use policy may be facilitated. Mineral exploration and development on Commonwealth land will be allowed to proceed where these activities do not preclude the purpose for which the land is designated and where they comply with all relevant Commonwealth, state and territory laws and policies. The Commonwealth will acquire mineral rights only where the principal purpose for acquisition precludes mineral development.

Our founding fathers would turn in their graves today if they could see some of the powers which the Commonwealth government has decided to take on. It was set up to run the post office, defence, customs and immigration and is now involved in 177 different departments and organisations. I will be very interested tomorrow, at the Mining Ministers Conference in Adelaide, to ask Mr Kerin just how far the Commonwealth sees itself intruding on this states' rights issue. It does not have a mining act and it does not have a conservation act pertaining to the states. I believe it is an unnecessary intrusion by the Commonwealth into an area which should be dealt with solely by the states.

Manganese Poisoning on Groote Eylandt - Research

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I remind him that BHP announced recently that it will carry out research in relation to manganese poisoning on Groote Eylandt. Will the Northern Territory government contribute anything towards that research?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would have to seek advice on the precise details of assistance other than the services of Professor John Matthews of the Menzies School of Health Research who has been investigating the syndrome for quite some time. If the member is talking about direct financial input into it, I would need to take advice on that. I will provide the information later.

Cullen Bay Marina

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

This morning, I heard an announcement that the Cullen Bay Marina proposal will proceed. Is he able to give the House details about the commencement of that particular project, the proposed ferry terminal and associated developments such as housing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. He himself was involved in working towards the development of Darwin's first marina which is awaited with great excitement by the majority of Darwin's population. A development agreement, which is virtually a contract with the developer

detailing conditions and entitlements etc, will be signed today by the government and the developer.

The marina was conceived in 1981. A number of potential sites were examined and, in 1983, Cullen Bay was identified as a most suitable site. I suppose the decision was also taken in relation to the potential development of Myilly Point. In 1985, the partners involved in the development applied to the government for land in the area. There was a necessity for rezoning under the Town Planning Act and the project was explained to the public through displays and models etc. The town planning processes of public exhibition and comment were completed in April 1986. A full environmental impact study was completed in July 1987. There was a very rigorous process of assessing the impact on the foreshores of the harbour itself and on the environment generally.

The agreement that is to be signed today outlines the responsibilities of the government. These are limited to the funding of the public facilities such as a ferry terminal and charter boat facilities. The ferry terminal was originally proposed as a stand-alone project to be located at Parliament Park but, following an approach from the developer, the government saw merit in combining it with the marina. This will also give the developer some flexibility in consolidating those water-related activities.

The government's contribution is to be \$6m in 1988 values and, for the facilities that are to be provided, we see that as excellent value. That figure is in accord with the proposal for the Parliament Park project some 3 years ago. The facilities will include a terminal building, toilets and a kiosk as well as the pontoons and wharfs etc associated with water recreation and charter boat activities. That infrastructure will be much welcomed by the people who operate ferries on Darwin harbour. At the moment, they have to contend with facilities in the harbour that are not really appropriate to their needs. Their vessels are knocked around during storms and high winds and, of course, facilities for the public are totally inadequate there at the moment. We are therefore looking forward to the next 12 months.

With a positive agreement in place, the developer will now have the opportunity to sell his proposal to potential investors and financiers and to complete the technical requirements under the contract. These include a full technical appraisal which needs to be approved by the various government authorities.

We look forward to seeing this much-needed, tourism-related facility. It could be compared with an investment like Yulara in terms of providing diversity for tourists. We have airline systems coming into place and, hopefully, a new airport terminal. We have modern hotels. As well as the obvious natural attractions of Kakadu and Litchfield parks, we need to provide other options, and we see water-based activities and fishing becoming very attractive to our overseas tourists.

Moneys Owed by Burgundy Royale

Mr TUXWORTH to TREASURER

Can he confirm whether the moneys owed to the Northern Territory government for water, power and sewerage services, and payroll and liquor taxes by Burgundy Royale or the operators of the Beaufort Hotel have been paid in full by the liquidator? If they have not, could he specify those moneys which have yet to be paid?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will give the latest information I have which dates from last week. It is my understanding that no money has changed hands at all at this stage, even for the purchase of the development itself. That would include, of course, moneys owing to the Northern Territory government for power, water and sewerage charges. As I have informed honourable members on many occasions, the Northern Territory government is well protected under the scheme of arrangements that has been entered into with the liquidator. As of last week, I understand that the principal, Westpac, has not yet got its hands on a cheque either.

Mr Tuxworth: How much was outstanding, as of last week?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will get a meter reading on that figure and provide it to the honourable member.

Northern Territory Involvement in Nuclear Fuel Cycle

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he outline the damage likely to occur to the Northern Territory's economic prospects as a result of the campaign of lies and misinformation embarked on by the Leader of the Opposition ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw that reference to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr PALMER: I withdraw the reference which you found offensive, Mr Speaker.

Will he outline the damage likely to occur in view of the obvious campaign of misinformation embarked on by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the nuclear fuel cycle and the Northern Territory's further involvement in that cycle?

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Clearly, the question should be disallowed because it contains an opinion. The words 'obvious campaign of misinformation' clearly convey an opinion. Questions should be comprised of fact. I would ask that you seek some advice because, in my opinion, the question should be ruled out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is very easy to supply the answer to such a question, and I thank the member for Karama for asking it. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition and I will be debating the nuclear fuel cycle on talk-back radio next Monday. It will be interesting to have a forum where the people of the Northern Territory can obtain a full understanding of the Leader of the Opposition's in-depth knowledge of the nuclear fuel cycle. It is very easy to use scare tactics and phrases like 'nuclear garbage dump', as the Leader of the Opposition does from time to time.

Mr Speaker, it must be remembered that we are talking here about a proposal to create up to 15 000 jobs during construction, 5000 jobs during operation and a potential multiplier effect for 20 000 people. Then there is

this NIMBY philosophy that crops up. Of course, that stands for Not In My BackYard. Everybody says, 'What a great idea, but not in my backyard'.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Of course, it is difficult, but if we don't have the courage of our convictions and realise the opportunities in the Northern Territory to get that value-added downstream processing in place, we should not be in this Chamber. Let the people judge, but not by the tactics which are being used by the Leader of the Opposition. His use of expressions such as a 'nuclear garbage dump' does him no credit at all.

During the recent mining exposition, I was visited by Gustav Tham from Swede Power. It is interesting to note that Sweden has built its nuclear repository just offshore, underneath the sea, and on a fault line. Yet here, in one of the most geologically-stable parts of the world, we are worried. Did any buildings fall down in Tennant Creek? Was there much damage in that regard? We are talking about 5000 m down in the earth and we are worried about the artesian basin which goes down about 300 m or 400 m. That is nonsense. Let the people of the Northern Territory judge on talkback radio next Monday when the Leader of the Opposition will have the opportunity to expound his in-depth knowledge of my proposal.

The one country in the world that should be terrified of nuclear power is Japan. It suffered the horrific devastation of 2 nuclear explosions. It is the most densely-populated country in the world. There are more people there per square metre than anywhere else in the world, and it is the most geologically-unstable area in the world. It suffers earthquakes, typhoons and extremes of temperature. Nevertheless, the people in Hiroshima today enjoy electricity provided by nuclear power. Yet, in the Northern Territory, one-sixth of Australia, we are worried that we cannot find a small space on the top of the dirt to drill a hole to bury something.

Mr Speaker, that is the reason why Australia has gone backwards on world markets and why we were becoming one of the world's greatest potential banana republics: we refuse to have a go. It is easy for honourable members opposite to identify with that because, as I have said in this Chamber during debates in the last 2 weeks, they have never once created anything except trouble for the Northern Territory.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Last week, in his speech on Hungerford Refrigeration, the Treasurer stated that that company first became known as a TDZ prospect in September 1986. Was the government informed by the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority that Hungerford Refrigeration had lodged an annual return for the year ended 30 June 1986 with the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs in Queensland and that that annual return was available, as I understand it, from October 1986? Did the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority inform the government that the annual return indicated that the total liabilities of the company exceeded the assets of the company by \$185 000? How did this piece of information persuade the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority and the government to sink taxpayers' funds into the company?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, quite clearly, the question from the Leader of the Opposition is absurd as a question without notice. I suggest that he place the question on notice. However, I remind him of a fact that he well knows. Taxpayers' funds used to assist Hungerford Refrigeration by the TDZ are totally secure. He is aware of that but he has implied in his question that somehow taxpayers' funds are committed. The honourable member is so devoid of positive initiatives for the Northern Territory that, as the Minister for Mines and Energy said, all he wants to do is dance on the grave of Hungerford Refrigeration. However, the company is not finished yet despite the best efforts of the Leader of the Opposition to nail the coffin lid down. The company may be able to get up and bite him on the ankle sooner or later. I suggest the honourable member rationalise his question into either a letter to me or a question on notice.

Women's Issues at Yulara

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the Yulara Corporation responded to the issues relating to living conditions for women raised in the study of women living in remote areas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. When I raised matters relating to the Women's Advisory Council last week, I thought that the member for MacDonnell might raise this particular question because he professes a keen interest in the subject.

Mr Bell: Bring it on for debate. It is No 9 on the Notice Paper. What a wimp!

Mr DALE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member opposite should be asked to withdraw the comment he made referring to the Chief Minister.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, my defence is truth.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for MacDonnell will withdraw that remark.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I withdraw unreservedly and apologise to the Chief Minister.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I can assure the honourable member that his barbs are very blunt by the time they get across to this side of the room.

In February 1986, the Women's Advisory Council commissioned a study into the special needs of women living in remote areas of the Northern Territory, be they Aboriginal women, women living on pastoral properties, in mining towns or in tourism resorts. As part of that study, members of the Women's Advisory Council met with Yulara Corporation executives in December 1986 to discuss a range of issues relevant to women working at Yulara.

Members will recall that I tabled a remote areas report in October last year. Part of the report identified problems associated with the living conditions for some women at Yulara. These problems were associated with accommodation, the absence of child-care facilities, inadequate street

lighting and the lack of female representation on the Town Advisory Board. Recognising that adequate community services and satisfactory conditions are crucial if we are to develop a stable work force at Yulara, the NT government decided to act on the issues raised in the report.

The following measures are now in place. Improvements to staff accommodation have been made with the building of 120 one- and two-bedroom units with individual facilities and 56 of these units are now occupied. I can advise honourable members that it is the intention to go to a second stage of the development to complete the task of separating staff accommodation from the main commercial spine into what will essentially become a residential area at Yulara. The location of the residential subdivision away from the tourist thoroughfare will prevent unwelcome intrusions on staff privacy which have been an ongoing concern for staff at Yulara. A child-care facility, licensed at present to cater for 10 children, opened in November 1987. The unit employs a full-time coordinator and 2 part-time assistants. This facility will be expanded to cater for 20 children. Funds have been identified and work has commenced on the provision of underground powerlines to upgrade the street lighting. Women are participating in the decision-making processes in the Yulara community. Of the current membership of the Town Advisory Board, 2 out of 7 members are women, with 1 vacancy.

Mr Speaker, the speed with which the government has acted on these matters is indicative of our genuine concern for the needs of women, especially for those who work and live in remote areas and, obviously, that includes the important new area of Yulara.

Policy on M-rated Videos in Schools

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he in a position to reply to the question I put yesterday relating to the policy on M-rated videos in schools?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I had intended to answer that question if the honourable member had not raised it during the course of this question time. There is some concern in the community that the policy of the department is being abused. In 1986, a circular was distributed to all principals. I would like to go through it because I think it is important. The following guidelines were produced to assist in relation to the screening of films and videos for student viewing:

1. the screening of films and videos during normal classroom hours should be restricted to material which has clear relevance to the school's education program;
2. prior to the showing of any film or video material, teachers should ensure that they are familiar with the content and satisfied as to its suitability for the intended purpose and audience;
3. normally, only film or video material with censorship rating of G or C should be shown to students who have not attained the age of 12 years;

4. in any case where material rated PG or PGR is to be screened for an audience of students under the age of 12 years, the prior approval of the school principal must be obtained;
5. in any case where M-rated material is to be screened, the audience should be restricted to students who are 15 years of age or over and the approval of the school principal must be obtained beforehand.
- 6A. if a principal considers it desirable to seek parental permission prior to the screening of any film or video material, parents should be advised of the purpose, title and censorship classification of the material to be screened;
- 6B. where parental permission has been sought but not obtained, students should be excluded by teachers from the classroom or area in which the video or film material is to be shown;
7. in no circumstances should material with a rating of R, X or AO be screened for student viewing.

Mr Speaker, there are 3 other points. I will just read out the final one:

10. schools seeking permission to vary these guidelines in any specific instance should address such a request to the appropriate superintendent.

Mr Speaker, I was concerned when the member for Sadadeen raised this issue because I was aware that there were instances, as I mentioned at the start of my answer, in which that policy was being abused. I have asked the Secretary of the Department of Education to recirculate the policy to ensure that teachers and principals are aware of it and that it is enforced. The government does not accept that M-rated videos should be shown willy-nilly throughout the school system. The policy is very strict and the principals are responsible for ensuring that, if there is any abuse, it is stopped immediately.

Policy on M-rated Videos in Schools

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Will he also distribute those guidelines to school councils so that the parents may be aware of them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no problem in meeting that request.

Air-conditioning Equipment in Schools

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I am quite sure that he is aware that the resource centre library at Milingimbi and various offices and classrooms of a temporary nature in the education faculty at DJT are unusable because they happen to have installed Hungerford Refrigeration air-conditioning equipment which has broken down. Has his department been able to negotiate some arrangement for the repair of that air-conditioning equipment, which I believe was under warranty from

Hungerford, by some other body so that those areas can be made operational again, with the prospect of the costs being recouped from Hungerford at a later date?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly, I was aware of some minor problems with the completion of the air-conditioning system at Milingimbi. I believe that those minor difficulties can be addressed and possibly, even at this stage, have been addressed by the contractor.

Mr Ede: There has been a problem at Milingimbi for 8 months.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is exaggerating once again in an effort to emphasis a point and, once again, is denigrating this company.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will be allowed to answer the question without a running commentary.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the technical problems with the installation at Milingimbi were not insoluble. In fact, I understand that the contractor is moving expeditiously to have them dealt with. Similar problems arise in bringing new plant into operation under many contracts. The difficulties at Milingimbi were not insoluble. The basic system is quite sound; in a technical sense, it is a fine product. I emphasise that the problems were minor. If they have not already been attended to, they will be attended to in the very near future.

Supplementary Questions

Mr DONDAS to SPEAKER

In prefacing my question, Mr Speaker, I wonder whether you would give the House a ruling in relation to supplementary questions. Yesterday morning, I attempted to ask the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government a question in respect of local government within Aboriginal communities, and I clearly indicated the fact that I wanted to ask a supplementary question. I was denied that right. I intended to ask the question this morning. This morning, the member for Sadadeen was able to ask a supplementary question of the Minister for Education.

Yesterday, the minister had indicated that some resistance was being experienced from Aboriginal land councils to the setting up of local governments. My consequential question to the minister would have been: 'Is he experiencing any resistance from the federal Labor government in regard to the setting-up of local governments?' Yesterday, I considered that to be a very important supplementary question.

ANSWER

I advise honourable members that I will give the matter of supplementary questions some further consideration and advise the House at a later date. In fact, yesterday and on previous days, following some abuse of the system of using supplementary questions, I was ignoring additional questions.

Local Government Scheme

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This follows from the question I put yesterday about the success of local government within Aboriginal communities. He advised that there was some resistance from the Northern Land Council and other Aboriginal land councils. Is he aware of any resistance from the federal Labor government in regard to the Northern Territory's policy of trying to establish local government within as many Aboriginal communities as possible.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question because it is an interesting one. All honourable members would be aware that the federal government is calling on the states to establish local government for Aboriginal people and to support local government for Aboriginal people throughout the country. Yet, we find that it is not being supported necessarily by one federal minister who recently came out in support of a call from the Northern Land Council for a 5-year moratorium on community government in the Northern Territory. I find that rather amazing. I spoke to the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and queried that matter and asked him why the community government scheme currently in existence in the Northern Territory could not be the basis for his proposal for an Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Commission. The minister has since written back to me and indicated that the community government scheme would not be suitable for that purpose. I do not particularly see his reasoning for that.

I have written also to all state Ministers for Local Government and the federal Minister for Local Government indicating my concerns with regard to the attitude of the federal minister and the land councils to community government. I understand that, because of comments I made yesterday in this House, it is likely that today the Director of the Northern Land Council will call again for a moratorium on community government for Aboriginal people. I find that rather amazing considering that it is sought to put the ATSIC proposal in place within 6 months. Why would someone call for a moratorium of 5 years on community government for Aboriginal people when ATSIC is being thrust down the throats of Aboriginal people in less than a year? In fact, it was intended to occur within 6 months. Fortunately, that has been put back to a year. I find that absolutely outrageous.

It is obvious to me that some deal has been made between the land councils and the federal minister in this regard, and I would like to make it quite clear that the Northern Territory government will not allow for a moratorium of 5 years on community government. We are committed to local government for Aboriginal people and we are committed to the federal government's policy in this regard.

Pet Meaters and Buffalo Shoot-outs

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

If it is not appropriate for him to answer the question fully, perhaps the Minister for Lands and Housing can respond also.

Can he assure me that the interests of pet meaters will be taken into full consideration in any further shoot-outs of buffalo in the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign, and that these small businessmen will be

given first option to shoot out any area before the minister sends in his men to eradicate the species?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure the honourable member that it is my firm policy, which is well-known within my department, that every possible economic use of animals be exploited prior to what is termed shooting to waste. As honourable members are aware, BTEC means that a substantial number of animals in the Northern Territory must be destroyed over the next 2 to 3 years. I have directed that, wherever the government has an influence on this matter, after harvesting is done by ordinary mustering by the landowner, pet meaters are permitted to slaughter animals in the field. Also, there is an ability for landowners to negotiate with safari operators so that game hunting can take place as well on those properties where animals are to be destroyed.

The matter becomes complicated where different forms of ownership of land are involved. It is principally the private landowner who has control over animals on his land. When it comes to Crown land, the responsibility is divided between the Department of Lands and Housing, which administers all ordinary Crown land, and the Conservation Commission which administers large tracts of land that contain buffalo. Both the department and the commission have responsibility for eradicating disease from lands under their control and they primarily accept the rule. However, the Department of Industries and Development is responsible for the progress of BTEC and it liaises closely with the other authorities involved.

I can assure the honourable member that the subject of access by pet meaters to animals on Crown land has been raised with me within the last 48 hours. I have asked for a special liaison to be established between the Department of Lands and Housing, the Conservation Commission and my department in order to plan more carefully the access by various parties to Crown land to obtain benefit from these animals prior to shoot-outs being conducted. I am sure that the honourable member or the pet meaters concerned will be quick to bring to my attention any situation where they believe liaison has not taken place satisfactorily.

Federal Treasurer's Economic Statement

Mr FIRMIN to TREASURER

I refer to the answer given to my earlier question by the Minister for Transport and Works in which he highlighted the possible \$100m cutback for outback road funding in the Northern Territory. I presume the less populous states will suffer as much, if not more, than ourselves. Can the Treasurer advise me what restraint the Commonwealth government has shown in respect of its outlays in last night's economic statement?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware that a meeting of conservative premiers attended by the Chief Minister prior to the Premiers Conference produced some very startling information and statistical data which showed that, whilst the states had truly practised restraint, the federal government had not. Last night, we were told that the federal government was reducing its expenditure by 3%. We all know that the states suffered a cut of 4.2% at the Premiers Conference and that the Northern Territory, whose funding was reduced by 5.5%, suffered most of all. The truth is that, when we read

the fine print, we find that the Commonwealth is talking about a 3% reduction over 3 years.

Treasury officers have been working during the evening and early this morning to analyse the figures and I can inform honourable members that the Commonwealth performance in respect of its own expenditure cuts can only be described as irresponsible and totally inadequate. It has announced cuts of \$982m. However, it is clear that virtually all of these cuts can be attributed to the states and the Northern Territory. While the final numbers have not yet been clarified, it is possible that the Commonwealth has not decreased its own outlays at all. This is a disappointing result. The states and the Territory have all indicated that they are prepared to do their bit to exercise restraint for the good of the country. We had hoped and expected that the Commonwealth would do the same. It seems to me that it is 'do as I say' not 'do as I do'. That is a very disappointing result when one considers that the Commonwealth received an unexpected windfall of over \$1000m as a result of the fringe benefits tax. In terms of federal government restraint, the economic statement is very disappointing. Indeed, it is both irresponsible and totally inadequate.

Fire Services in Larrimah

Mr REED to CHIEF MINISTER

In April, I wrote to him on behalf of the residents of Larrimah advising that the township is without any fire protection equipment and requesting that consideration be given to providing some equipment to the town. Is he able to advise whether any equipment will be provided for use by resident volunteers in fighting fires?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Katherine has been doing a sterling job, not only in his own electorate but in the areas surrounding his electorate, particularly to the immediate south, where Larrimah is located. On 19 April this year, the member for Katherine wrote to me seeking the provision of some firefighting equipment for the Larrimah brigade. Unfortunately, the Fire Service was unable to provide any equipment directly to the Larrimah centre because it does not come within the fire control region of the Fire Service. However, I am pleased to say that the director of the Fire Service has been able to make some arrangements. Some equipment will be available to the brigade in Larrimah by July of this year. I thank the honourable member for bringing the matter to my attention.

Equipment for Courses at DIT

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Will he carry out an investigation into problems with the supply of equipment to some courses at the DIT? I cite specifically the journalism course where, after 18 months in the course, students still do not have such basic items as tape-recorders or facilities to undertake interviews. That is just one example. Will he investigate these problems?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will examine the matter and respond to the member for Stuart later. I might say that he has the opportunity to raise such matters during adjournment debates.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that all further questions be place on notice.

Mr Speaker, you would be aware that yesterday the House adopted the report of the Standing Orders Committee. I ask that you recognise the Minister for Health and Community Services who wishes to be the maiden speaker under the new standing order.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Manganese Poisoning on Groote Eylandt - Research

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Thank you, Mr Speaker. What an honour this is!

In response to the member for Arnhem's question regarding Northern Territory funding of research into manganese problems on Groote Eylandt, I advise that the government is not specifically funding that research. However, as I said earlier, we provide significant funding to the Menzies School of Health Research, which is involved in the research team and has had significant input. In June 1987, the department hosted a seminar in Darwin at which one of the major speakers was Professor John Court. There is another problem over on Groote Eylandt in that there are insufficient general practitioners. The people at Alyangula have a doctor available for 2½ days per week. He also services Umbakumba and Numbulwar. I have recently approved in principle, after negotiations with the Angurugu Council, the part funding of another doctor who will be spending a great deal of his time researching the manganese problem.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Contract for Self-Government Promotion

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition raised a question in respect of the 10-year self-government celebrations. He has exercised great impatience in seeking answers to that question, presumably because he is trying to beat up a storm. One of the reasons why I have taken some time to obtain the answers is the fact that I have not been directly involved in the determination of any of the contracts. I have had to seek the information from within my department.

I can advise that, several months ago, expressions of interest were called for commercial involvement in the ongoing campaign for statehood for the Northern Territory. The significance of 10 years of self-government was to be a lead into the campaign for administrative purposes. Following the consideration of various expressions of interest in respect of the statehood programs, 2 of the expressions of interest were finally selected: Mattingly Woollard Cawrse and Neilson McCarthy Hare. Those 2 organisations were requested to present a joint submission on an awareness, public relations and marketing campaign in respect of the statehood program. The government has paid them for the preparation of such a submission.

Mr Smith: How much?

Mr HATTON: I am not certain of the figure, Mr Speaker. I think it is something in the order of about \$2000, but I will not stand fixed on that figure. I have not been directly involved in the details of that particular contract and it was not related to the question asked by the the Leader of the Opposition. I have received that submission and it is being considered.

The contracts are being considered on the basis of Mattingly Woollard Cawrse performing advertising functions for the self-government celebrations. Those 2 organisations are working on the self-government celebrations whilst we are assessing their submissions in respect of the statehood program. The Protocol Unit of my department has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing the self-government celebrations as it has done in the past. I would stress that, because of the significance of attaining a decade of self-government, the 1988 celebrations will be a community program. In fact, all centres across the Northern Territory will be involved from 1 July in a wide range of events and activities. The program of promotion also involves many commercial operators, all of which are Territory based. These include Iloura Television Productions, Channel 8, Imparja Television, the NT News, community groups such as the Greek Community, sporting associations across the Northern Territory, presentations, public relations, Roka Graphics and many town and community groups. The Mattingly Woollard Cawrse and Neilson McCarthy Hare groups are also involved in the preparation of this program.

As well, several government departments have been involved in preparing information and material for the celebrations. The celebrations will involve flag-raising ceremonies, static and mobile displays in most centres, public events such as concerts, firework displays, sporting events, the planting of an avenue of trees to celebrate 10 years of self-government, a major Territory-wide schools competition - the 9 category winners of which will be attending the NT day at Expo 88 in Brisbane in October - and a number of events including a state dinner in Alice Springs on the night of 30 June and in Darwin on the evening of 1 July.

The purpose of celebrating 10 years of self-government cannot be underestimated. We need to remember the generations of Commonwealth neglect up until 1978. We need to reflect on the enormous development that has occurred in the Territory over the last decade in all aspects of Territory life and we need to look forward to a future based on the remarkable achievement of the last 10 years.

It has been 10 years of spectacular development and diversification in the Northern Territory and 10 years of work by the Territory people to build a future for themselves. During June and through to self-government day, I hope that all Territorians will stand back and reflect on the frustration, anger and feeling of impotence that we lived with when we were being governed totally by a public service in Canberra. We should remind ourselves of those frustrating years of impotence and look at what we have achieved as a community over the last 10 years. Whether people have liked some of the decisions that have been made or not, at least those decisions have been made by people elected by them and the people of the Territory have had the opportunity to make their decisions by means of a ballot box. After 10 years, it is time for us to make an effort to reflect so that we can build on that to look forward to the objective of statehood for the Northern Territory.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

20. Staffing of Giles House

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many staff are employed at Giles House.
2. In which categories are these staff employed.
3. How many people have held the position of Superintendent at Giles House during -
 - (a) 1984;
 - (b) 1985;
 - (c) 1986; and
 - (d) 1987.
4. Of the other staff employed at Giles House, how many changes have there been in each category of staff in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987.

23. Advertising - Channel Eight, Darwin

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How much did government departments and authorities spend on advertising on Channel 8, Darwin in 1987.
2. What was the breakdown of that amount by department and authority.

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

17 May 1988

42. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

43. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

44. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

45. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

46. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

47. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

48. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

49. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

53. Kormilda College - Expenditure

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What Territory government money has been spent at Kormilda College on -
 - (a) teacher housing;
 - (b) boarder accommodation;
 - (c) classrooms;
 - (d) landscaping; and
 - (e) other areas in Kormilda,since the take-over by the new Board of Management.
2. Are there any arrangements to recoup this money.
3. What ongoing commitment does the Northern Territory government have to provide money for Kormilda College.
4. What fee structures are proposed for Kormilda College students.
5. What arrangements have been made over the title of land at Kormilda College with the new Board of Management.

56. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

61. Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many letters of intent have been signed by firms indicating an intention to establish in the Trade Development Zone.
2. How many letters of intent have been translated into binding agreements to establish in the Trade Development Zone.
3. Of those binding agreements, how many have been implemented - i.e. how many firms have actually established in the zone.
4. Will the minister table the legal advice, which his predecessor indicated to the Legislative Assembly on 25 November 1986 had been sought on the question, as to whether letters of intent are legally binding documents.
5. What is the total amount of money paid to Mr K.K. Yeung as -
 - (a) retainer;
 - (b) contact fee at the letter of intent stage;
 - (c) start-up fee at establishment in zone; and
 - (d) reimbursement for expenses in promoting the zone since his engagement as the prime consultant.
6. When does Mr K.K. Yeung's current contract expire.
7. Will the contract be renewed.
8. What are the terms and conditions for its renewal.
9. How many days has the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority spent on TDZA business in 1986, 1987 and 1988 -
 - (a) interstate; and
 - (b) overseas.
10. For each of the overseas trips taken by Mr McHenry, what has been -
 - (a) the cost of accommodation;

- (b) the cost of travel; and
- (c) the cost of entertainment and other expenses.

62. Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Did the Territory Insurance Office pay outstanding tax bills incurred by Hungerford Refrigeration or Rupert Hungerford; if so -
 - (a) were the payments for company tax;
 - (b) group tax; or
 - (c) an individual's income tax.
2. Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration secured; if so -
 - (a) in what ways is it secured; and
 - (b) what assets is it secured against.
3. Who first identified Hungerford Refrigeration as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory.
4. Who made the first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer operations to the Trade Development Zone.
5. Why did the directors of Hungerford refuse to provide directors' guarantees to meet any debts incurred by the company.
6. What were the full terms agreed for the transfer of Hungerford Refrigeration to the Trade Development Zone.
7. What departmental evaluations were made of the Hungerford Refrigeration company; its prospects, its projects and its products.
8. What departmental evaluations were made of the reports prepared for the TIO and the TDZ on the prospects of Hungerford Refrigeration.
9. What is the full extent of public funding (including TIO involvement) in Hungerford Refrigeration.
10. Was a directive issued by the Hungerford Refrigeration Board for the company to pursue local orders rather than export orders; if so, why was this done.

16 August 1988

64. Tenth Anniversary of Self-Government

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister provide an itemised account of the expenditure on the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of self-government.

65. Darwin Private Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many private ward bed nights have been leased back to Royal Darwin Hospital during the last 6 months.
2. What have been the monthly occupancy rates for both the public wards and private wards during the last 6 months.
3. How much rent will Health and Life Care be paying the NT government for the land on which the new private hospital is being built.
4. How much money has the NT government contributed towards the establishment of the new private hospital.
5. If Health and Life Care sell their private hospital, will there be a breach of contract. If so, what conditions of the contract would have been contravened.
6. To what extent has the initial projected cost of the new private hospital been exceeded and supplemented by NT government expenditure.
7. What level of federal subsidy has been received during the last 6 months for the private wards.
8. What is the expected level of federal subsidy to be provided over a 12-month period for the new private hospital.
9. Will the private hospital be providing a rehabilitation service. If so -
 - (a) at what cost will it be provided to the NT government;
 - (b) how will it be made available to clients, who do not have private hospital cover; and
 - (b) how does the government intend to apply the Work Health Act provisions.
10. What arrangements have been made with doctors for -
 - (a) the provision of specialist services at the private hospital; and

- (b) remuneration of specialist doctors for their services.
11. What cost sharing arrangements have been entered into enabling economies of scale to occur between the Royal Darwin Hospital and the private hospital for -
- (a) ambulance services;
 - (b) pharmaceutical products;
 - (c) x-ray films and equipment; and
 - (d) laundry and catering.
12. What arrangements have been made to contract out pathology, radiology, catering and any other services to the private sector.

23 February 1988

15. School Cleaning and Maintenance

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What were the amounts paid out during 1987 for contracts to provide:

(a) ground maintenance; and

(b) cleaning

for each primary and secondary school in the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

The amounts paid out in 1987 for grounds maintenance and cleaning contracts for each Territory primary and secondary school is set out in the following tables.

NORTHERN REGION

	<u>CLEANING</u>	<u>GROUND MAINTENANCE</u>
	\$	\$
Alawa Primary	24 640 *	15 509
Alyangula Area School	49 358	26 938
Angurugu Primary	49 590	14 679
Anula Primary	29 280	10 940
Barunga Primary (Council Inc)	- **	12 350 *
Batchelor Area School	59 823 *	33 721 *
Berry Springs Primary	12 638	22 189
Casuarina Secondary College	79 301	30 337 *
Clyde Fenton Primary	38 252	31 864 *
Darwin High	85 298	18 365
Dripstone High	68 634 *	30 355 *
Driver High	67 779 *	7 222 *
Driver Primary	30 057	5 654 *
Gray Primary	33 859 *	10 297 *
Henbury Avenue Special	8 258	9 000
Howard Springs Primary	17 208	13 464
Humpty Doo Primary	31 370	27 926 *
Jabiru Area School	50 807	26 909
Jingili Primary	35 708 *	17 297 *
Karama Primary	33 175	13 783
Katherine High	49 461	9 480
Katherine South Primary	35 694 *	20 951 *
Kormilda College	27 224	17 800
Larrakeyah Primary	17 307	9 104
Leanyer Primary	32 865	11 330
Ludmilla Primary	43 855	20 050 *
Ludmilla Special	10 642	5 215
MacFarlane Primary	37 527 *	4 251 *
Malak Primary	33 660	15 541
Middle Point Primary	- **	7 267
Millner Primary	25 764	12 122
Moil Primary	22 630	10 306
Moulden Park Primary	34 245	9 000
Nakara Primary	25 791	3 193
Nightcliff High (Council Inc)	68 809	22 900
Nightcliff Primary	32 257 *	9 288
Nhulunbuy High	62 088	26 170 *
Nhulunbuy Primary	48 701 *	42 182 *
Oenpelli Community	12 583	- **
Parap Primary	28 051 *	11 490
Rapid Creek Primary (Council Inc)	29 140	8 825
Sanderson High	44 839	33 196 *
Sanderson Primary (Berrimah Pre included)	20 675	20 835
Stuart Park Primary	44 775	18 187
Taminmin High	53 141	34 250 *
Wagaman Primary	26 200	18 627
Wanguri Primary	18 172	14 693
Wulagi Primary	31 677	11 964 *
Yirrkala Primary	61 120	22 322
	<u>1 783 928</u>	<u>829 338</u>

* Contracts run by School Councils.

SOUTHERN REGION

	<u>CLEANING</u>	<u>GROUND MAINTENANCE</u>
	\$	\$
Yulara	14 407	- **
Kargaru	28 800	33 000
Elliott	19 100	- **
Rona Glynn	2 450	2 960
Ida Stanley	6 659	3 895
Teppa Hill	3 588	1 331
Tennant Creek Pre	2 900	- included with primary school
Traeger Park	33 994	8 617
Warrego	9 000	- **
Tennant Creek Primary	34 000	32 200
Tennant Creek High	33 749	31 000
Ross Park	30 804	9 461
Sadadeen	30 822	14 792
Ti Tree	42 000	- **
Sadadeen High	43 702	19 327
Alice Springs High	105 248	21 628
Bradshaw	50 391	13 010
Braitling	26 045	14 476
Anzac Hill	25 410	9 326
Borroloola	41 100	25 000
Kempe Street	4 183	- **
Ali Curung	27 730	20 230
Gillen	17 124	20 200
	<u>633 206</u>	<u>280 453</u>
	TOTAL:	\$913 659.00

TOTAL COST OF CLEANING AND GROUND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS
(NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN REGIONS) = \$3 514 476.00

NOTE: The above schools have contracts for either or both cleaning and ground maintenance. Schools not listed or those marked (**) have designated employees or staff to carry out the work.

19. Northern Territory Land Management

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many grants of land have been made to the Northern Territory Land Corporation (NTLC) since its inception in 1986.
2. How was each grant valued and what was the valuation in each case.
3. For what purpose was each grant of land.
4. Which parcels of land were so granted.
5. When was each grant made.
6. Was each decision to grant land discussed at Cabinet level. If not, which grants were not discussed.
7. How many grants of land were made to its predecessors, the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (NTDLC) and the Northern Territory Conservation Land Corporation (NTCLC).
8. How was each grant valued and what was the valuation in each case.
9. For what purpose was each grant of land.
10. Which parcels of land were so granted.
11. When was each grant made.
12. Was each decision to grant land discussed at Cabinet level. If not, which grants were not discussed.
13. Which parcels of land have been purchased by the NTLC, the NTDLC and NTCLC.
14. What was the purchase price of each such parcel.
15. For what purpose was each such parcel purchased.
16. When was each such purchase effected.
17. Was each decision to purchase land discussed at Cabinet level. If not, which purchases were not so discussed.
18. Of which parcels of land has the NTLC, the NTDLC or the NTCLC divested itself by way of sale, grant, gift, or any other process.
19. For what reasons were the transactions referred to in question 18 above carried out.
20. When was each transaction referred to in question 18 above carried out.

21. How was the value of each grant, sale gift or other divestment of land valued and what was the valuation in each case.
22. Was each transaction referred to in question 18 above discussed at Cabinet level. If not, which such transaction were not so discussed.

Reference: Notice of Determination in respect of Gregory National Park (Northern Territory Portion 3124) to the Northern Territory Land Corporation - Northern Territory Government Gazette No G32 of 12 August 1987, page 3.

ANSWER

Details of all grants of land by the Northern Territory to the NT Land Corporation are available on the public record through the publication of relevant notices under section 15(5) of the Crown Lands Act.

The NTLC, NTDLC and CLC are/were independent bodies corporate, not subject to ministerial control. Any questions regarding the disposal of their land holdings are not within the government's province to answer.

Details of any current land holdings of these organisations are available to the public through the Land Titles Office. The honourable member is free to conduct title searches if he so wishes.

Responses to questions regarding what may, or may not, have been discussed by Cabinet are bound by the convention of Cabinet confidentiality.

22. Macassan Prau Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. How much has the Macassan prau re-enactment cost the Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences.
2. What is the estimated cost of construction of a second prau.
3. What is the anticipated cost of getting a second prau to the Yirrkala museum.

ANSWER

Expenditure to April 1988:

1. \$163 780.
2. \$30 000.
3. Option 1: \$15 000 - Freight as deck cargo.
Option 2: \$8 000 - Sail prau by contractor.

17 May 1988

27. Primary and Secondary Education

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

During the period 1980 to 1987:

1. What was the rate of teacher turnover by -
 - (a) year of service;
 - (b) gender;
 - (c) location (whether it be rural, urban, secondary, primary); and
 - (d) size of school.
2. What was the average recruitment cost per teacher.
3. What was the turnover rate of teachers in secondary schools in the following subjects -
 - (a) Maths;
 - (b) Science; and
 - (c) English.

ANSWER

TEACHER TURNOVER RATES DURING 1980-87

No reliable data is available for 1980 or 1981 as the Northern Territory Teaching Service was only established in July 1981.

1.(a) MEAN YEARS OF SERVICE OF TEACHERS WHO RESIGNED.

1982*	1983*	1984*	1985	1986	1987
3.56	3.51	3.30	3.93	5.0	4.0

1.(b) GENDER OF TEACHERS RESIGNING.

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Males	41%	37%	35%	N.A.	37%	38%
Females	59%	63%	65%	N.A.	63%	62%

1.(c) RESIGNATION RATE BY LOCATION/SCHOOL TYPE.

	1982*	1983*	1984*	1985+	1986+	1987+
Secondary	11.7%	17.1%	19.4%	25%	25%	17.8%
Area	19.8%	14.5%	10.3%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Urban Primary	10.0%	9.9%	8.3%	13.8%	21.9%	14.0%
Aboriginal	18.0%	14.2%	15.4%	27.0%	28.8%	17.3%
Other	6.7%	4.7%	8.5%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

1.(d) The only data available is that shown in 1(c) above.

NOTES

* Extracted from a post graduate thesis presented by a former Department of Education employee.

+ 1985-87 figures obtained from the Department of Education's Computerised Records.

N.A. Not Available.

2. During the last financial year (1986-87) the estimated average recruitment cost per teacher was \$5000. The individual costs vary considerably depending on where the teacher was recruited from and whether or not he/she was single or married with a family.

3. Turnover rates of Secondary Teachers who taught Maths, Science and English.

The only figures available are those for 1986 and 1987.

	1986	1987
Maths	32	18
Science	25	14
English	40	17

32. Land Degradation on Cattle Stations

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. Who are the CSIRO officers who claimed land degradation was 'rife' on Territory cattle stations.

2. Where are these officers based.

3. Were these same officers the ones who wrote to you (as reported in the Legislative Assembly) saying that no base data is available on which to judge degradation and sought Territory money to establish this base data.

4. Has a decision been made by government in regard to the CSIRO request for funding to establish a land data base and, if so, what was that decision and, if no, when will the decision be made.

ANSWER

1. As far as I am aware, CSIRO officers have not claimed that land degradation was 'rife' on Territory cattle stations. This statement appears to be a misquote or misinterpretation from the recent CSIRO submission to the Rural Land Use Advisory Committee on Pastoral Freehold. The CSIRO stated, in part, that:

profound changes have occurred in the pastoral lands over the past 110 years, including:

- ° a progression from more palatable to less palatable forage plants.
- ° an increase in the density of trees and shrubs.
- ° accelerated soil erosion.

Although land 'condition' fluctuates with climate, there is nevertheless an overall downward trend in many areas.

Debate on such changes has tended to become polarised between the environmental lobby and the pastoral lobby with the facts as a casualty.

It appears likely that it is the above part of the CSIRO submission which has been misinterpreted and the question is based on a wrong premise.

2. The CSIRO Centre for Arid Zone Research located in Alice Springs.
3. A letter to me from the CSIRO stated that, 'it has not been technically possible to distinguish between natural and grazing-induced erosion'. This implies that until now arguments have been based on an inadequate factual base.

The letter further states that:

CSIRO has recently developed techniques using satellite data to measure the extent of erosion over large areas and to distinguish between that which results directly from grazing and that which is natural. There is also potential on a regional basis for separating recent erosion from that which occurred in the early stages of the grazing industry.

The proposal regarding Territory money was to employ this technology to provide objective information. The proposal was framed as follows:

If the Northern Territory government is willing to cover our costs, we shall be happy to put our technology, database and experience at your disposal so as to provide objective information on the land degradation issue. This might involve a satellite-based survey of the grazing lands of the arid zone. The form of this survey would, of course, be developed in collaboration with your own technical people.

4. The CSIRO proposal was unsolicited and the government at this stage has not determined the future of the proposal. However, the CSIRO has been asked to provide further details for review by officers of interested Northern Territory departments and authorities in the first instance. In addition, CSIRO have been asked to clarify the issue of funding since CSIRO have previously provided such services free of charge.

35. School Film Library Service

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What money does the Department of Education expect to save (going from past experience) from the decision to pass on transport costs of films to schools outside Darwin of films on loan from the Film Library Service to the schools.
2. Does the government intend to review the above decision and, if so, when.

ANSWER

1. The freight subsidy paid by the Department of Education on film and other library resources borrowed by NT schools was abolished on 12 February 1988 as a result of severe budgetary restraints imposed on the Library Services Branch. The savings resulting from the decision were estimated to be in the order of \$5000 per month.
2. Due to the hardship suffered by smaller remote schools which rely heavily on these resources, a decision was taken in late February 1988 to reinstate the subsidy. This has been done progressively, based on an individual school's needs. By the beginning of Term 2, all schools were once again eligible for the subsidy.

**36. University College of the Northern Territory
Enrolments**

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many students are doing full-time courses at the University College.

2. How many students at the University College have come from interstate.
3. How many students have come because their examination scores have precluded them from entry into interstate universities.
4. What advantage does the Territory government expect from paying the education costs of interstate students with Territory taxpayers' money.
5. What is the annual cost to the Territory taxpayer of the 'connection' between the University College and the University of Queensland.
6. What services are provided by the University of Queensland for the money provided by the Territory.

ANSWER

1. There are 194 full-time students and 261 part-time students.
2. Thirty (30) students have come from interstate.
3. The college does not have this information. It is not a requirement for enrolment.
4. (a) Some students will remain in the Territory after graduation thus adding to the Territory's more highly qualified work force.
(b) Those moving from Darwin will contribute to the number of people elsewhere who have an understanding of the nature of the Territory and will be conversant with Territory problems.
(c) They will demonstrate elsewhere the standards achieved at the University College.
5. The Territory pays a \$250 000 annual consultancy fee (1986 levels) to the University of Queensland.
6. (a) Management advice.
(b) Assistance in the selection of academic staff and senior administration staff.
(c) Monitoring the standards of teaching.
(d) Monitoring examination of students.
(e) Assisting UCNT proposals for new subjects.

38. 'Towards the 90s'

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. Is the Education Advisory Council considering a revised edition of the 'Towards the 90s' paper.
2. If so, when will -
 - (a) their Report be available;
 - (b) opportunities be made available for public response to the revised paper; and
 - (c) the Minister undertake to allow a debate in the public arena and in Parliament before a decision on implementation is taken.

ANSWER

1. Yes. The Education Advisory Council has considered a revised edition of the document 'Towards the 90s'. This document is now with the Minister and will be released for further public comment in the near future.
2. (a) As above.
 - (b) Yes.
 - (c) Yes.

39. School Council Regulations

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many full-page advertisements were placed in Territory newspapers recently, to explain the government's position on newly-introduced School Council Regulations.
2. Which newspapers were used.
3. What was the total cost of all such advertising.
4. What is the expected saving of passing the cost of freighting audio-visual material ex-Darwin.

ANSWER

1. Three (3) full page advertisements were lodged.
2. Newspapers used were:-

NT News
Sunday Territorian
Australian Advocate
Barkly Regional
Tennant & District Times

Katherine Times
Katherine Advertiser
Gove Gazette
Litchfield Times

3. Total cost of advertising was \$18 443.
4. Freight for film, video and curriculum support resources borrowed from Library Services Branch in Darwin was estimated to cost \$30 000 for the period 12 February to 30 June 1988. Of this \$9000 was spent on a twice weekly urban courier service to Darwin schools. The cut to centrally funded freight of films and library resources to Territory schools and colleges was a result of severe budgetary restraints imposed on the Department of Education Library Services Branch. With all Branch operational funds reduced, many services were cut for the remainder of the financial year.

Recent negotiations within the various Branches of the Department have allowed the reinstatement of a fully subsidised freight service for all Territory schools.

40. Truancy Officers

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Does the government intend to reinstate Truancy Officers with the Department of Education in 1988.

ANSWER

No provision has been made in the 1988-89 budget estimates to re-establish Truancy Officer positions.

However, the identification of other agencies and procedures to undertake the functions formerly performed by Truancy Officers is being considered by the government.

41. Preschool Vacancies in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many 4-year-old children, or children about to turn 4 in Alice Springs are not able to attend preschool on turning 4 because of staff or facility shortages.
2. What is the approximate waiting time for children over the age of 4 years to gain preschool entrance.

ANSWER

1. There are approximately 97 children who will attain the age of 4 years by 31 July 1988 and who are unlikely to be able to enrol until after the August primary intake.

There are no staff shortages as each preschool is staffed according to its entitlement. There is some pressure on facilities at the preschool and early childhood levels at the present time, but demographic projections indicate that this is a temporary phenomenon. A survey is currently being carried out to assess early childhood requirements likely to result from the residential development in the Larapinta area.

2. After a child attains the age of 4 years the average waiting time is approximately 3 months before being enrolled in a preschool.

**51. Northern Territory Land Corporation
Receipts**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

With reference to page 9 of the Northern Territory Gazette No. S56 of 7 August 1987 upon which appear receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory Land Corporation:

- (i) from which source or sources did the Northern Territory Land Corporation receive \$385 961 as indicated; and
- (ii) on which item or items was \$96 624 expended.

ANSWER

The receipts and expenditure statement published in the NT Government Gazette on 7 August 1987 relates to the 1986-87 financial year. As the NT Land Corporation was established on 24 December 1986, the statements in respect of the corporation relate to the period 24 December 1986 - 30 June 1987.

I have been advised that receipts for this period include payment for mustering, various lease rentals, deposits and revenue from several land sales in various locations, and operational advances from the Territory. Expenditure items included legal fees, salaries for support staff, administrative costs, and expenses associated with management of the corporation's landholdings.

52. Child Welfare - Custody

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. Currently how many children in the Northern Territory are living away from their natural parent/s as a result of actions taken by Community Welfare and Northern Territory courts.
2. How many of these children came from the northern region of the Territory.
3. How many of these children came from the southern region of the Territory.

4. How many of these children live in -
 - (a) foster homes (private families);
 - (b) government-run homes or institutions;
 - (c) private institutions; and
 - (d) other types of accommodation.

5. How many children were taken away from their parent/s on the grounds of -
 - (a) neglect;
 - (b) physical abuse;
 - (c) sexual abuse;
 - (d) parents incapable of looking after their children due to -
 - (i) alcoholism;
 - (ii) drug abuse;
 - (iii) mental state; and
 - (iv) immaturity;
 - (e) poverty; and
 - (f) other.

6. What is the average cost to the taxpayer for the weekly keep of children housed as under question 4.

7. How many hours of court time were taken up by these cases in 1987 in the Territory whether the children were taken away from their parent/s or not.

8. How many of the children currently taken away from their parent/s were interviewed by the Magistrate -
 - (a) alone;
 - (b) with the parent/s in attendance and Community Welfare Officers absent;
 - (c) with Community Welfare Officers and parent/s present; and
 - (d) with Community Welfare Officers present but parent/s absent.

9. How many children have attempted to return to their natural parent/s in 1987.

ANSWER

1. As of the end of April 1988 a total of 199 children were under the sole or joint guardianship of the Minister for Health and Community Services. Of these 52 were in the care of adopting parents and awaiting finalisation of adoption orders. This figure does not include children detained in Correctional Services institutions as a result of justice proceedings.
2. There were 65 children in substitute care in the Northern region i.e. Darwin, Katherine and East Arnhem regions, of whom 7 were placed with relatives.
3. There were 82 children in substitute care in the Southern region i.e. Alice Springs and Tennant Creek regions of whom 26 were placed with relatives
4. The care arrangements for these children were as follows:
 - (a) 73 children were in foster placements;
 - (b) 3 children were in government run institutions;
 - (c) 12 children were in private institutions;
 - (d) 59 children were placed in other forms of care. Of these 33 were placed within their families, 6 were living independently, 6 were in hospital.
- 5a. Welfare statistics do not correlate the numbers of children
- b. in substitute care with child abuse investigations. Such
- c. detail of a client's history is held in the casework files of the individual welfare workers handling the cases.

The reasons for children being found in need of care are usually a complex of factors which include the reason (or generally the group of reasons) for the breakdown in family care and also an account of the inapplicability or failure of the various preventive and supplementary measures applied by welfare workers to endeavour to keep the child within the home.

An incident of child abuse may not require a child's removal from his family, but conversely the child's removal may be necessary for reasons other than abuse.

The reasons for which a child may be taken into care by a welfare worker or a Holding Order granted by a Justice are recorded as follows:

- o Abandoned;
- o Unable or unwilling to maintain child;
- o Maltreatment;
- o No effective control;
- o Harmful to community.

Orders made by the Family Matters Court however, indicate only the section of the Community Welfare Act under which action is taken.

Child Protection figures are correlated with numbers of reports and of confirmed investigations.

In 1986-87 reports of child abuse were investigated in respect of 392 children. Of these cases 205 were confirmed as actual abuse. The distribution of predominant type of abuse in these confirmed cases was as follows:

° Physical abuse	85
° Sexual abuse	49
° Neglect	65
° Emotional abuse	6

- 5d. The reasons for parents being incapable of caring for children are not recorded other than on individual files. These factors listed in the question would be expected to lead to neglect.
- 5e. Poverty, as such, is never a reason for a child to be taken into care. Welfare Branch administers Family Support and Emergency Financial Assistance programs to alleviate poverty.
- 5f. A further category of children removed from their parents' care is that group subject to juvenile justice action. At the end of April 1988 there were 33 children in detention centres and 9 children on remand.
6. Families fostering children who are in the care of the Minister receive a payment of \$58 per week per child plus a sum of up to \$10 per week pocket money depending on the age of the child.

Children in non-government institutions are also subject to the same rates of support.

It must be noted that depending upon individual need, discretionary payments may be made to, or on behalf of children in care. These payments may be budgeted against any of a number of program areas depending on the reason for the payment.

Complete details of cost of all aspects of substitute care programs would require extensive detailed scrutiny of all client files.

Many non-government institutions, as well as receiving individual fostering payments for service, also receive grant funds through the departments Grants and Subsidies scheme.

The costing of government run institutions is difficult to break down to individual costs per client as the maintenance of the institutions draws on various budgeting categories and the age, length of stay and individual needs of children continually vary.

- 7&8. Application has been made to the Department of Law for information relevant to these questions but the compilation of the information would be most difficult as welfare client records and court costs would need to be correlated for each court sitting in the Northern Territory. It is moreover unlikely that the duration of individual court activities has been recorded.
9. No record apart from individual client files is kept of this matter. If a child should abscond from care it cannot always be clearly determined if he intended to return to his parents or was motivated by more complex desires.

54. School Councils Regulations Advertising

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What was the total cost of advertising -

- (a) explaining the changes to Schools Councils Regulations; and
 (b) encouraging parents to be involved in School Councils,
 from February 1988 to the present time.

ANSWER

There were 3 types of advertisements on this issue:-

(a) Minister's statement on School Councils	\$ 6 851
(b) Questions and answers about the regulations	\$ 5 091
(c) Things which School Councils are doing	\$ 6 501
Total	<u>\$18 443</u>

55. Territory Super Plastics

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. Has the Trade Development Zone taken away the licence to operate of Territory Super Plastics.
2. What was the nature of and cost of the incentive offered to Territory Super Plastics by the Trade Development Zone.
3. What action is the Trade Development Zone taking to recoup the money it put into Territory Super Plastics.

ANSWER

1. No. The Territory Superplastic factory is currently not operating because of a dispute between the 2 partners concerned. Partners have been notified that unless the dispute was resolved quickly and production commenced the licence would be revoked. Discussions between the partners

have failed to resolve the dispute and revocation of the licence will proceed as a matter of course.

2. In the agreement, incentives were offered to reimburse the company for freight costs incurred in relocating machinery, additional electrical wiring to accommodate the Territory Superplastic machinery in the factory on the zone, costs for training locally engaged staff, and export freight costs. No export freight costs were incurred. The cost of other incentives are confidential.
3. The Trade Development Zone is fully secured for recovery of all money paid to Territory Superplastic. A Receiver-Manager was appointed by the Trade Development Zone Authority on 3 March 1988 to take control of the company and its assets while the dispute between the 2 partners was resolved. The Receiver is charged with protecting the interests of the Trade Development Zone and other creditors of the company.

Should the company be wound up the Authority will recover its incentives outlays under its security.

**57. Advertising Campaign
'We're Building a Secure Future'**

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. What is the total cost of the current Northern Territory government advertising campaign on the theme 'We're Building a Secure Future'.
2. How much money is being spent on -
 - (i) television;
 - (ii) radio; and
 - (iii) newspaper advertising,for this campaign.
3. Of the money spent on television advertising, how much is being spent on Imparja.
4. How much money is being spent advertising in each of the newspapers in the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

1. \$27 725.41.
2. (i) \$21 718.64.
 - (ii) Nil
 - (iii) \$ 6 006.77.

3. \$ 8 520.94.
4. \$ 1 880.17 Sunday Territorian
 \$ 2 501.60 Centralian Advocate
\$ 1 375.00 NT News
- \$ 5 756.77 Total Northern Territory
\$ 250.00 Bulletin (Interstate)
- \$ 6 000.77 Total overall Newspaper Advertising

58. Illegal Grape Varieties Grown in the Territory

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. Is the Minister aware of recent discoveries in the Mildura and Menindee areas of illegal grape varieties that are claimed to endanger the Export Table Grape Market (currently worth some \$90m to Australia), which could have introduced new diseases into this country to the detriment of the Table Grape Industry.
2. Are any such illegal varieties being grown in the Territory.
3. Is the variety claimed by Territory Grape Farms to be Perlette, indeed that variety: in light of the fact that Territory Grape Farms Perlette comes in after its Flame Seedless, whereas Perlette from other Territory growers comes in ahead of Flame Seedless.

ANSWER

1. The department has been aware since March that some members of the viticulture industry in New South Wales and Victoria may have illegally imported grape varieties.

Commonwealth Quarantine authorities in cooperation with state Departments of Agriculture and CSIRO have conducted investigations into allegations from various sources that illegally imported table grape varieties are being grown in Australia. Following the detection of table grapes with false trade descriptions in Sydney, several properties in the Sunraysia area were searched over the periods 1-4 and 14-18 March.

As a result, 27 properties belonging to 6 growers or companies in the Mildura and Menindee areas were placed under quarantine. No vines or vegetative material may be removed from these properties.

However, movement of fruit is not being restricted as the disease risk is considered to be minimal.

Though exotic plant diseases were not obvious on inspection of the vineyards, grape cuttings from each property were taken and are being grown in quarantine in Victoria. This is for the purpose of virus indexing and for positive

identification of varieties. This process may take up to 2 years.

It appears from initial investigations that at least 6 varieties new to Australia are involved.

Where appropriate, prosecutions are being pursued under the Quarantine Act 1908 and under the Export Control Act 1982. However, these actions may not be finalised until the grape varieties are positively identified.

2. Commonwealth Quarantine authorities have advised that it is not possible to determine if these illegally imported varieties have been planted in the Northern Territory at this stage. This cannot be done until the vines are fruiting towards the end of this year.
3. An anomaly exists regarding the maturity times of the grape variety Perlette in the southern areas of the NT. Under normal circumstances Perlette matures earlier than the variety Flame Seedless. However, the reverse has occurred, that is Flame Seedless matured before Perlette. These maturity times will be confirmed during the 1988 growing season. Maturity time, though indicative of variety, is not a conclusive parameter. If doubt to the identity of the variety exists, Commonwealth Quarantine authorities will take cuttings and grow these in quarantine in Victoria. Confirmation of the identity of the variety may take 2 years.

59. Open Space Development Strategy

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Will the Northern Territory government carry out the development objectives outlined in the Open Space Development Strategy prepared by Land Systems Pty Limited, dated September 1986.

ANSWER

The strategy will be implemented by its utilisation as a planning guideline by open space managers as part of their normal operations following environmental assessment in accordance with procedures under the Environment Assessment Act.

60. Freeholding of Special Purpose Leases

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many Special Purpose Leases were there in the vicinity of -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Katherine;
 - (c) Tennant Creek;

- (d) Alice Springs; and
 - (e) elsewhere in the Northern Territory as at 1 July 1978.
2. For what purposes had these been granted.
 3. How many of these Special Purpose Leases had been granted at 1 July 1978 on -
 - (a) a rental basis;
 - (b) payment of current market value; or
 - (c) some other basis.
 4. If they were granted on some other basis [3(c)], what was that basis.
 5. How many holders of Special Purpose Leases, as of 1 July 1978 were offered freehold title to lots over which the Special Purpose Leases were held for each of the following periods -
 - (a) the financial year 1978-79;
 - (b) the financial year 1979-80;
 - (c) the financial year 1980-81;
 - (d) the financial year 1981-82;
 - (e) the financial year 1982-83;
 - (f) the financial year 1983-84;
 - (g) the financial year 1984-85;
 - (h) the financial year 1985-86;
 - (j) the financial year 1986-87; and
 - (k) the financial year 1987-88.
 6. On what terms were these Special Purpose Leases offered for the above financial years [5(a) to (k)].
 7. How many of these offers were accepted.
 8. How many Special Purpose Leases were granted in each of the following periods -
 - (a) the financial year 1978-79;
 - (b) the financial year 1979-80;
 - (c) the financial year 1980-81;
 - (d) the financial year 1981-82;

- (e) the financial year 1982-83;
 - (f) the financial year 1983-84;
 - (g) the financial year 1984-85;
 - (h) the financial year 1985-86;
 - (j) the financial year 1986-87; and
 - (k) the financial year 1987-88.
9. For what purposes were these Special Purpose Leases granted for the above financial years [8(a) to (k)]?
10. How many of these Special Purpose Leases had been granted in each of the financial years [8(a) to (k)] on -
- (a) a rental basis;
 - (b) the payment of current market value; or
 - (c) some other basis.
11. If they were granted on some other basis [10(c)], what is that basis.
12. How many of the holders of Special Purpose Leases referred to in Question 8 were offered freehold title to the lots over which the Special Purpose Leases were held for each of the following periods -
- (a) the financial year 1978-79;
 - (b) the financial year 1979-80;
 - (c) the financial year 1980-81;
 - (d) the financial year 1981-82;
 - (e) the financial year 1982-83;
 - (f) the financial year 1983-84;
 - (g) the financial year 1984-85;
 - (h) the financial year 1985-86;
 - (j) the financial year 1986-87; and
 - (k) the financial year 1987-88.
13. On what terms were these Special Purpose Leases offered for the above financial years [12(a) to (k)]?
14. How many of these Special Purpose Lease offers were accepted for the above financial years [12(a) to (k)]?

ANSWER

There have been 543 Special Purposes Leases issued for a wide variety of purposes since 1950. A large number of these have been either surrendered, forfeited or converted to an alternative form of tenure.

The detail sought by the honourable member is not readily available and would require a lengthy and expensive exercise to compile.

The government's current policies regarding Special Purposes Leases have been the subject of recent debate in the Assembly and are available by reference to Hansard.

Specific questions relating to any individual Special Purpose Lease the honourable member is concerned about will be addressed if requested.

16 August 1988

63. Home Loan Mortgage Transfers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the Minister to his press release of Monday, 6 June 1988 in which he said that there had been 457 transfers under the Home Purchase Assistance Scheme regulations promulgated on 31 August 1984.

1. How many of these transfers were within -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Katherine;
 - (c) Tennant Creek;
 - (d) Alice Springs; and
 - (e) elsewhere.
2. How many people made application for the transfer of their mortgage either verbally or in writing in each of the above centres.
3. What reasons were given for the rejection of applications.
4. How many of those applicants (in Question 2) were told, either verbally or in writing, that the regulations prevented the transfer of a mortgage within the town in which they lived.

ANSWER

1. (a) 402; (b) 7; (c) 2; (d) 46; (e) Nil.

2. Verbal applications are not accepted.

Applications in writing:	Darwin	489
	Alice Springs	53
	Katherine	12
	Tennant Creek	2

3. Most common reasons for rejections:

- Poor conduct of previous account;
- insufficient security offered; lack of equity;
- current ownership of houses other than those specified in transfer application.

4. None that I am aware of as the regulations do not prevent the transfer of mortgage within the same town.

Job Creation

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, to illustrate the importance of my question, I have a graph that shows the Country Liberal Party's promised job growth against the monthly average employment figures for the last 12 months. Mr Speaker, as you can see, but unfortunately our radio listeners cannot, the gap last month was 7000 jobs and it is widening. In the lead up to the 1987 election, the government stated that it had plans to create over 1000 jobs per annum. Where are those plans? Where are those jobs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has resorted to some interesting theatricals which we are not used to in the House.

Mr Ede: You do not understand the words.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In the past, I have advised honourable members about interjections during question time, particularly as question time is being broadcast. I ask the member for Stuart to listen in silence.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the honourable member has resorted to using graphs in the Assembly. Perhaps he should table it but, because it is as big as his desk ...

Mr Smith: I am happy to table a copy.

Mr PERRON: ... perhaps he can set it up outside where members may check its accuracy. Having regard to the accuracy of other statements made by the opposition, particularly in recent times, the public would have good reason to suspect its accuracy.

The government is developing the Northern Territory and I will be speaking more about this in the statement that I foreshadowed this morning. In that statement, the honourable member will be given an indication of the directions this government is taking. It is true that the population of the Northern Territory has been declining of late and this is unfortunate. However, honourable members should bear in mind that, in the period following self-government, the Territory experienced phenomenal growth rates - something like 4 or 5 times those for the rest of Australia - and it was inevitable that, sooner or later, the growth rate would flatten out. Unfortunately, it has done more than flatten out; it has declined.

We cannot ensure that the job-creation rate in the Northern Territory is steady throughout a term of the government's activities because, of course, there are many things which are beyond our control, particularly some of the treatment we receive from time to time at the hands of the federal government. It would not have been unreasonable for the Territory government ...

Mr Bell: It is always somebody else.

Mr PERRON: Not at all, Mr Speaker. Would it have been unreasonable for the Territory government to assume that the federal government might have fulfilled some of its promises over the past few years which would have helped Territory development? I cite the Darwin Airport as an example. No lesser man than the Prime Minister of this country turned the first sod on this

project and a vast sum of taxpayers' money was spent on it following that occasion which was, of course, very well publicised just prior to a federal election. Some \$18m or \$20m was spent on the site, after which the project was set aside. Territorians are supposed to wait for the airport the Prime Minister promised them. The Leader of the Opposition apparently does not think that the state of the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports is detrimental to the progress and development of the Northern Territory.

Mr Smith: When are you going to answer the question?

Mr PERRON: I suggest that he go out into the community and talk with some business people, some investors and some people in the tourist industry and learn the facts of life. I will not pursue this matter further now. The Leader of the Opposition will hear in my statement this morning of the directions of this government for growth and development in the Northern Territory.

Demolition of Marron's Newsagency in Alice Springs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Recent media attention has focused on the demolition of Marron's newsagency in the Todd Street Mall in Alice Springs. Originally it was advertised that the redevelopment of the site would utilise the facade of the original building and I ask him 2 questions. Firstly, why did this not happen? Secondly, what is being done to ensure that Alice Springs retains some of its older, important buildings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must admit that I was taken by surprise when I heard that the building had been totally demolished, and I believe that you experienced a similar feeling. This was because it had been publicly advertised that an application to the Planning Authority to redevelop the site included provision for the retention of the verandah and the facade of the original building.

Most people, myself included, fondly remember buying a newspaper or magazine at this rather distinctive newsagency. I believe that most of us also sensibly realised that the building, as it was, could not be expected to be retained forever. I think everyone was reasonably satisfied with the compromise that was proposed by the developer - that is, to retain the historic facade of the building for use in the proposed development. Even the Alice Springs Branch of the National Trust commented publicly that it was able to accept the proposed compromise as a sensible solution. I might add that I have been approached by a number of long-time Alice Springs residents since this unfortunate happening who have told me that the Marron's verandah that most of us knew was not the original. Apparently, the one that was there was a replacement after the original was destroyed by a somewhat careless motorist in the 1950s. It seems that, like the original axe with 2 new handles and a new blade, everyone accepted it as being one and the same.

The proposal was advertised publicly and the Planning Authority - and, as all members are aware, it has a majority of Alice Springs members on it - gave the go-ahead and everyone appeared to be happy. But, after that, problems arose. The architects and the engineers involved in the reconstruction found that the facade of the old newsagency was unable to cope structurally with its inclusion in the new building. The developer made an approach to the Planning Authority for its consent to make a change to the original approval. The

Planning Authority considered the matter and the change was granted. The original facade lacked structural integrity. Again, I believe the decision was justified under the circumstances. However, at the time, the general public - including myself and, I understand, yourself, Mr Speaker - were unable to understand what was occurring. This was because the original proposal was advertised to the public but the change consented to by the Planning Authority was not. Understandably, some people were totally disillusioned by what they perceived to be a deliberate act of bad faith.

In reality, what occurred highlighted an aspect of the planning process that needs attention. It is clear that any changes the authority proposes to make to a previously advertised course of action should themselves be advertised. Had such a course of action been followed in the case of Marron's newsagency, I believe that the end result would have been unchanged. However, I am sure that people in the community would have been far happier if the reasons for the changes to the development had been public information prior to those changes taking place.

I have commenced a process which is intended to look at the shortcomings in this area of the planning process and I intend to discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Planning Authority.

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I find it very difficult to continue whilst the member for MacDonnell persists with his inane interjections. They are, however, typical of him. He has a tendency to form fixed ideas which bear no relation to the facts and then to continue to open his mouth to regurgitate these crazy ideas. They bear no relation to fact. I am sure that a number of people in the community are concerned to find out what actually occurred. Obviously, the member for MacDonnell wishes to prevent people finding out the truth. That is not unusual for him. It fits in with his modus operandi.

Mr Speaker, I can assure you and I can assure members of the Territory community that I will continue to pursue this matter until I am sure that people understand the situation, regardless of the attempts by the member for MacDonnell to muzzle me. I have commenced a process of examination of the shortcomings in this area of the planning process and I intend to discuss the matter further with the Chairman of the Planning Authority. I would certainly like to reassure the House and the Territory community of this government's commitment to preserving our past. I believe that a balance must be struck between the legitimate aspirations and rights of owners and developers of private property and the needs of Territorians as a whole in terms of the preservation of their structural heritage.

Mr Speaker, our commitment in the Alice Springs area is very easily seen at the old jail and the old Telegraph Station. I ask you, Mr Speaker, where else in Australia would the original village of any city still remain intact? Alice Springs has its old courthouse, the Residency, the Hartley Street School, the old Alice Inn and the Ghan project, a project that I am sure you are fully aware of, Mr Speaker, and which represents a magnificent effort by the community of Alice Springs, assisted by the government, to preserve part of our heritage. Adelaide House and Les Hansen House are other examples. I personally handed the lease of Les Hansen House to the National Trust last Wednesday. That did not receive much attention in the local newspaper although I saw a headline relating to a claim that some other building was saved through a last minute flurry of action. I was not aware of that. However, I was certainly aware that the government handed over the lease of

Les Hansen House to the National Trust last Wednesday in line with its commitment to ensure that our heritage is preserved.

I have met with the Alice Springs Branch of the National Trust. It has undertaken to supply me with details and background information in relation to properties it is concerned about in Alice Springs. I have also asked the Conservation Commission to review and to report to me regarding heritage matters. However, I will certainly not be taking action spurred merely by political rhetoric. The government's record stands firm and I am sure that the utterances of the opposition regarding these matters will be taken in the context in which they are delivered, as an attempt to gain some cheap publicity for the purposes of the by-election.

Demolition of Marron's Newsagency in Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, together with yourself as member for Braitling, I was seriously concerned about the destruction of Marron's newsagency. On the basis of the minister's answer to the previous question, I have one short question. Can he confirm that the Chairman of the Planning Authority knew of the impending destruction of Marron's newsagency before the event?

ANSWER.

Mr Speaker, obviously the honourable member has a problem with his ears because I explained what occurred. I will, however, repeat it. Originally, an application was made to the Planning Authority for the demolition of Marron's newsagency but the development plans provided for the facade of Marron's - the verandah and the front wall - to be retained and incorporated into the new development. It is rather a simple procedure to understand and I hope the member for MacDonnell understands what that means. Secondly, I pointed out that that was advertised publicly. The community was aware of what was planned and agreed to it.

Mr Bell: The member for Braitling was not.

Mr MANZIE: The member for MacDonnell scoffs, Mr Speaker. I wish he would listen carefully and possibly talk to people in the National Trust who commented on the fact that the facade was to be retained. They thought that was a reasonable compromise in respect of the redevelopment of the Todd Street Mall.

The developer came back to the Planning Authority because of problems relating to the structural integrity of the facade. He applied to the Planning Authority for consent to replace the original facade with something which was similar in design, that retained the old feel of the building, but which was new and had structural integrity. Unfortunately, that application for a change was not publicly advertised. If it had been, I believe many of the problems relating to the destruction would not have occurred because people would have understood what was happening. Consent was given for the changes to be made and, as a result, the entire building was removed with the intention of replacing it with something of similar design.

I have expressed my concern and I have also commented on what I consider a deficiency in planning procedures which allow changes to be made to approved developments without those changes being advertised. I will be examining that matter to ensure that those sort of circumstances do not occur again. I hope

that the member for MacDonnell now understands the situation. This is the third time that I have explained it publicly and possibly he needs it explained 3 times before he understands. I am quite happy to give him a private briefing if he still has problems understanding the processes involved.

Northern Territory University

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

During the last sittings of the Assembly, I referred him to press reports relating to the amalgamation of the Darwin Institute of Technology and the University College of the Northern Territory. Last weekend's Sunday Territorian informed us that the amalgamation would involve not only the Darwin Institute of Technology and the University College of the Northern Territory, but also TAFE. What are the latest developments relating to that proposed amalgamation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The report in the Sunday Territorian was accurate to the extent that a decision has been taken to establish a Northern Territory university by bringing together the campuses of the University College of the Northern Territory and the Darwin Institute of Technology, including the TAFE sector. Legislation to implement this merger will be introduced at these sittings of the Legislative Assembly with a view to having it concluded in October. I need not remind honourable members that the bill to establish a Northern Territory university will be a milestone for higher education in the Territory. I will have more to say on that most important matter when I introduce the bill to the Assembly.

I might say that, throughout this whole exercise, there has been a tremendous amount of goodwill on the part of the people involved, particularly the staff and students at the University College and the Darwin Institute of Technology. I thank them for the way in which they have approached this matter. The report in the Sunday Territorian mentioned Queensland University accreditation. That comment related to the University of Queensland's courses; it did not relate to the other courses provided at the Darwin Institute of Technology.

I might take the opportunity to comment on the interim arrangements and the appointment of the vice-chancellor of the new Northern Territory university. The position of the permanent vice-chancellor will be advertised throughout Australia and overseas in a format that is common to advertising for such positions. The final decision on the permanent vice-chancellor will be taken by the university council when it is established.

As far as the appointment of an interim vice-chancellor or an interim chief executive officer is concerned, during the past few months there has been a great deal of speculation about this position. I must say that I have been very disappointed at some of the nasty remarks that have been made about the Warden of the University College and the Director of the Darwin Institute of Technology. Both these men have played a very important role in developing educational opportunities for Territorians, and I apologise to those 2 gentlemen for the treatment that they have received during this period.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that you would be aware that Professor Thomson has all the qualifications that a position as an interim vice-chancellor or an

interim chief executive officer would require. Before announcing who has been appointed to this position, I indicate to honourable members that, included on the selection panel were the vice-chancellor of the University of New England as well as the vice-chancellor of the Wollongong University, together with the acting vice-chancellor of the Curtin University of Technology and the Director of the Queensland Institute of Technology.

Mr Speaker, Emeritus Professor David Caro of Melbourne has been appointed the interim -chief executive officer of what will be our own NT university. Professor Caro is an eminent scholar and university administrator. He was formally the vice-chancellor of the University of Tasmania and, until his recent retirement, he was the vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne. Professor Caro has a distinguished employment history: he served in Darwin in 1942 with the RAAF; in 1952, he was a lecturer, University of Melbourne; in 1954, a senior lecturer at the University of Melbourne; in 1958, a reader at the University of Melbourne; in 1961-72, he was Professor of Experimental Physics, University of Melbourne; in 1972-77, he was the Deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne; in 1978-82, he was the vice-chancellor of the University of Tasmania; and, in 1982 until his recent retirement, he was the vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne. He was also a member of the Tertiary Education Commission of Tasmania, Chairman of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee and Chairman of the Antarctic Research Policy Advisory Committee.

Apart from being one of Australia's most distinguished academics and university administrators, Professor Caro has had recent experience in managing a merger during his service in Tasmania and we are indeed most fortunate, I believe, that a person of Professor Caro's standing has accepted the position of interim chief executive officer for the Northern Territory university. I am sure that his involvement during this interim period will assist us greatly during the development stage of our university.

The present University College Warden, Professor Jim Thomson, and the present Director of the Darwin Institute of Technology, Mr Kevin Davis, will continue the day-to-day administration of their respective institutions until the institutions merge to form the new Northern Territory university.

Mr Speaker, I am extremely pleased that a person of such national and international standing as Professor Caro has been found to serve as the interim chief executive officer and I hope that honourable members share my views. I believe that we have the opportunity to put together a university that will provide top class undergraduate and postgraduate courses to people in the Northern Territory and I look forward to honourable members taking part in the debate when I table the bill for the introduction of a Northern Territory university.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT Supplementary Questions

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have been giving the matter of supplementary questions consideration since the last sittings. Some members have asked a number of such questions which, in my view, were not truly supplementary. As members are aware, I make every effort to allocate questions equally between both sides of the Chamber. In the past, I have not counted supplementary questions as part of that process and thus some members, who consistently ask supplementary questions, receive an advantage. The House of Representative's practice is spelt out in Pettifer at page 497. In that Chamber, prior to 1950, questions based on answers to earlier questions at

question time, including an answer to the immediately preceding question, were not permitted. The introduction of supplementary questions by an amendment to standing orders permitted members to ask questions based on previous answers at question time. It did not, and still does not, permit immediate supplementary questions. The principle of alternating the call between the right and the left is strictly adhered to.

The practice has developed in the Legislative Assembly of permitting immediate supplementary questions requesting elucidation of an answer or part of an answer just given. I might add that this does not accord with the House of Representatives practice. I believe that, provided this system is not overworked, it has its advantages, especially in a small Chamber. The problem is for the Chair to ensure that this system is not used to the detriment of the rights of other members. I am therefore of the opinion that the matter is one which should be considered, firstly, by the Standing Orders Committee and then by this Chamber so that the wishes of honourable members may be taken fully into account when determining the future practice to be followed.

Demolition of Marron's Newsagency in Alice Springs

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can he confirm that he was not advised by the Chairman of the Planning Authority of the change in the Planning Authority attitude to the preservation of the facade of Marron's newsagency? Secondly, can he state why, if that is the case, he was not advised of that change in status, particularly in relation to section 32 of the Planning Act which quite clearly lays down the responsibility of the authority to submit to the minister proposals on development of land or planning matters? Thirdly, can he indicate whether he has a policy whereby the Planning Authority should advise him of any proposed changes to any classified building in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is pretty obvious that the answer to the first question is no. The answer to the second is that there is no need to advise the minister of extremely minor changes.

Mr Smith: Extremely minor!

Mr Ede: What!

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, this is ridiculous. The interjections indicate that there is absolutely no attempt by members opposite to try to understand what occurred. They are concerned merely with trying to gain cheap political advantage.

The original application by the developer related to a development on the Todd Street Mall which was to retain a facade, and the development was approved in accordance with the provision of the act. There was no change in the development and there was no change in what was occurring on the site. There was a slight change in a detail relating to the Planning Authority's approval which, when the development is completed, will make no difference to the visual aspect or the siting of the building. Let it sink into the minds of members opposite that the provision that the Leader of the Opposition spoke about was not necessary for that change to be made. I have started a process which will ensure certain things occur in the future. I am sure that it would not have changed the development but public advertising of that change would have made the community aware of what was occurring.

I will put it very simply: the building remains the same, the design remains the same and the appearance remains the same. A small aspect of the consent was changed and I will ensure that that does not happen again. That is very simple. I think that the Territory community should be made aware that the people opposite do not care about truth or answers. They continually interject. As is plain for anyone to hear, their manners in this House are abominable. I do not know what their parents taught them but it is not what my parents taught me and it is not how I taught my children to behave. They could do with some lessons in etiquette.

Draft Bills on Domestic Violence

Mr HATTON to CHIEF MINISTER

I remind the Chief Minister that, during the last sittings of this Assembly, draft bills in respect of domestic violence were tabled. Is it still the intention of the government to proceed with the introduction of domestic violence legislation and, if so, when?

Mr Ede interjecting.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it may be news for the member for Stuart to learn that there are people in the Northern Territory who are interested in the subject of domestic violence even if he is not. It is the government's intention to enact legislation on this very complex subject of domestic violence in our society today. The former Chief Minister tabled a legislative package on domestic violence during the last sittings in order to allow for public comment and debate over a reasonable period. The tabled legislation was circulated to 97 groups throughout the Northern Territory, including the legal profession, women's groups, other bodies and interested individuals.

Many of these groups have provided valuable comment and the feedback has been overwhelmingly supportive of the proposed course of action. However, a number of matters have been raised which warrant serious consideration and these aspects will require further input from magistrates, police etc to allow the government to finetune the legislation. The government is still awaiting comments from a number of organisations, including the Judges of the Supreme Court, the Family Law Court, the Northern Territory Women's Advisory Council, the Human Rights Commission, the Northern Territory Women Lawyers Association, the Northern Territory Law Society and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. These groups have requested more time to prepare their submissions. Accordingly, it is my intention to introduce the bills in the October sittings of the Legislative Assembly which will fulfil the government's commitment to have legislation in place by the end of this year. The new timetable will allow the proposed public awareness campaign to commence at the same time as the legislation. I anticipate that the scheme itself will commence operating on approximately 1 March 1989.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What progress has occurred towards flood mitigation in Alice Springs since the minister's report to the Assembly in June, particularly in relation to sand mining and the possible building of a dam wall?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the opportunity to indicate the correct position in relation to the Alice Springs flood mitigation proposals. Naturally, the government is taking very seriously its responsibilities for the Alice Springs community and the potential flood risk to that town. Casual observers in other parts of Australia find it hard to relate to the fact that Alice Springs is a major flood prone area but residents know full well the havoc that can occur. The flood in March this year presented serious problems.

The 400 km² catchment area up stream from Alice Springs has, by virtue of its steep and rocky nature, the potential to deliver floods of major proportions to the town. Heavy rain can result in large flash floods occurring with little warning, often at night. A recently-completed study has found that a 1-in-100-year flood in Alice Springs could cause damage costing \$60m. For the benefit of honourable members, I should explain that a 1-in-100-year flood means a 1% chance of such a flood occurring in any year. In such a flood, it is estimated that more than 2000 houses and units would be affected and more than 500 commercial premises. Admittedly, the risk is not large, but the potential remains and the government is implementing the necessary plans to minimise flood damage.

Many flood mitigation measures have already been put in place. These include the flood-proofing of buildings, zoning arrangements, building and development controls, flood insurance, public information and education, flood forecasting, warning and evacuation plans, levees such as those around the water-pumping station, retarding basins in the new urban areas and channel improvements in the Todd River. Surveys and maps which chart the extent and depth of previous floods have also been completed. Sand extraction from the Todd River, which the member for Sadadeen mentioned, is expected to start very shortly. Some 3 months ago, the Department of Mines and Energy called for expressions of interest in such a program and guidelines have been prepared in consultation with the Alice Springs Town Council. We are awaiting a response from the council, which we expect to receive within days, before we give the signal for sand extraction to start. The honourable member would be aware that a considerable amount of sand has already been removed from near the causeway and the process will continue as soon as we have the council go-ahead. Sand will be taken from areas in the river which regularly cause problems during high water flows and the program will be repeated annually for the next 5 years.

However, the removal of sand from the Todd is by no means a complete flood mitigation scheme. The construction of a flood mitigation dam is critical to the success of proper flood mitigation measures. A drilling rig is currently active at the Emily Creek site completing tests for a geotechnical and hydrological report being prepared for the government by Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey.

Mr Ede: It is not.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I hear an interjection from the member for Stuart which illustrates that he does not know what is going on in his own patch. In fact, the drilling rig has come from interstate. I can assure him that it is in the area and that it is about to proceed with drilling.

Mr Ede: It is certainly not drilling now.

Mr COULTER: You said it is not there. You do not even know what is going on in your own area.

Mr Ede: I said it is not drilling.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, when those tests are finished in the near future, the rig will move to the Telegraph Station site to complete a similar study at that location. To gather the necessary technical information, 4 holes will be drilled. Reports on the viability of the 2 sites will be with the government by the end of the year and a decision can then be quickly made about the site where construction of a flood mitigation dam can proceed.

I do not want to pre-empt the findings of those reports, Mr Speaker, but I have to say that previous studies have shown that the Emily Creek site would have limited value in terms of flood mitigation. It is somewhat ironic that the opposition and its hangers-on have sought to make mischief about the Telegraph Station site for their own political reasons. They have alleged that a recreation lake is the government's priority at the site. In fact, in all probability the studies will show that the Emily Creek site would be a far better option for a recreation dam whilst the Telegraph Station offers a superior alternative for flood mitigation purposes. I stress once again that the government is not progressing with any thought of constructing a recreational facility in Alice Springs. The motivation is to build a dam which will protect Alice Springs from flood disaster.

Less than 2 weeks ago, I had an opportunity to brief a group of Alice Springs residents about the flood mitigation dam proposal, including the CLP candidate for the Flynn by-election June Tuzewski. She is fully across the subject and is seeking to be kept fully informed as the results of the studies become available. I urge any Alice Springs resident who wants to discuss flood mitigation plans to consult her. I guarantee that she knows more about the subject than the 2 Alice Springs-based members sitting directly opposite.

Health Services at Ngukurr

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What is the current situation with respect to the health services at Ngukurr?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I asked him to wait until halfway through question time so that the shadow spokesman for health would have the opportunity to ask the question. Given that there has been a great deal of comment recently over a TB outbreak in the Katherine region and about health services being supplied at Ngukurr, the deafening silence on these issues from the shadow spokesman for health clearly indicates how little attention the opposition pays to areas such as Katherine. About the only parallel I can draw to the opposition's interest in the subject is the amount of attention the Leader of the Opposition pays ...

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will withdraw that remark.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I unreservedly withdraw the allegation that the Minister for Health and Community Services is a dill.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, the amount of attention that the shadow spokesman on health and community services pays to the Katherine region and the top end of Australia is matched only by the attention that the Leader of the Opposition gives to Alice Springs. I believe he has been there only once or twice in the last 12 months. I am sure that he will increase his strike rate over the next couple of weeks. The first thing he will have to do is introduce himself to the people of Alice Springs, but I am sure that that can only help our cause.

There has been a great deal of comment over the last few days about the health services in Ngukurr particularly in relation to a number of reports of TB in the Katherine region. The fact is that our policies for the delivery of health services to Aboriginal communities have the flexibility to encompass a number of options. These options have been discussed with the community council and other people in the Ngukurr area. First of all, there is the availability of DAA funding and some communities, particularly in central Australia, have availed themselves of that particular source. That support is provided by DAA from Canberra. The second option is for grant-in-aid funding from the Northern Territory government and this issue provides the council with the funds to operate health services at an agreed level. This support comes through the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services.

As I said, these options have been discussed with the community at Ngukurr and we are quite happy to negotiate with it for whatever standard of health service it might wish to establish there. We have had some problems in providing health services there. One of the major issues has been housing for the health workers at Ngukurr and, because there was a lack of suitable accommodation and, I stress, after a great deal of communication with the people at Ngukurr, the 2 sisters were removed from that area in April. They were replaced by a male sister, and I like the note that I have here. It says that he was accommodated in the police station. I do not think that means in the cells; I am sure that it means in the living quarters at the police station. He was there only until mid-July, and has now been replaced by another health sister who has been living in the clinic itself. Construction of the house will be completed shortly and will coincide with the arrival of 2 sisters who have been recruited to work at Ngukurr. Those negotiations are ongoing and I am sure that the people of Ngukurr will have an appropriate health service.

It is appropriate at this time that I give some details on the report of TB in the Katherine and Roper Valley regions over recent times. Up until 12 August 1988, 15 new cases and 2 reactivated cases of TB were diagnosed and notified over the past 12 months throughout the Katherine region. Of these, 14 came from the Barunga Roper Valley area, commonly known as the Roper mobile area. Notifications of TB occurred after a process of contact tracing, investigations and confirmation are therefore the end result of considerable time and effort.

The process of detecting TB in an individual involves firstly a Mantoux test. The skin will react to this injection if the individual is infected. Secondly, an x-ray is taken to confirm the results of the Mantoux test. The individual is then hospitalised for more specific tests - that is, sputum analysis - and is treated and notified on the basis of the overall results. Mantoux surveys of the Roper mobile area have been under way for some months and are still continuing throughout the Katherine region. It is important

that these surveys are conducted throughout the region because of the mobility of the Aboriginal population in that area.

Given the known movement patterns of these communities, it was decided by the professional people to screen people from Mataranka, Duck Creek, Hodgson Downs, Hodgson River, Nutwood Downs and Urapunga. These communities were advised of this early in July. The mobile x-ray survey of the Roper mobile area, involving 6 full-time members, commenced on 2 August 1988 and was expected to take 2 weeks to complete. Approximately 500 people will have been x-rayed.

At this point, it is necessary to understand the difference between screening and contact tracing. Screening requires x-raying the total community whereas contact tracing involves investigating those people identified as close associates of a patient. The process at Ngukurr was one of contact tracing. Approximately 70 close contacts of TB-infected patients were investigated by means of the skin test. Of these, only 5 to 10 required a follow up chest x-ray. These contacts were made outside of Ngukurr. Of the 17 TB cases positively diagnosed, 2 are now living at Ngukurr and current indications are that they acquired their illness outside of Ngukurr.

The final results of this TB screening exercise will not be known for at least another 2 weeks. I will give members a brief update in a moment. In the meantime, contingency plans are being developed should the survey produce an unexpectedly large number of individuals requiring further investigation or treatment.

Finally, I am advised that fit, healthy people who come in contact with an open case of TB are unlikely to catch the disease. Several weeks or months of close contact are required. There is an insignificant risk to visitors entering these communities for short periods of time. I am advised that one tourist from Mt Isa, who went through the Katherine region, bought herself a didgeridoo whilst she was there. She went back to Mt Isa, saw the national news coverage of the story from Ngukurr and rang our people to ask what she should do because she felt sure she must have contracted TB. That just shows what the media can do.

Results of the survey to date, and I am talking about advice I have received this very morning, show that 402 people have been x-rayed, 373 have had the Mantoux test and positive results to the Mantoux test were found in 38 people. I am advised that these figures are approximate only. A specialist chest physician from the Communicable Diseases Unit is in Katherine now to read all of the survey films. The specialist is expected to complete his task by the end of this week and I will be happy to report further to this Assembly when the findings of those surveys are known.

I cannot let go by this opportunity to compliment the work of people from the Communicable Diseases Unit in the Department of Health and Community Services and also the excellent contribution of our Aboriginal health workers in the region. Most honourable members will probably be aware that I have put a proposal for a new career structure for Aboriginal Health Workers which, at the moment, is being further negotiated with the unions. I am very hopeful that those negotiations can be brought to a very rapid conclusion so that those people have a professional career path which they can pursue.

I will give an illustration of the magnificent work being done by the Aboriginal health workers. An English woman tourist was injured in a serious road accident near Mandorah a year or so ago. The first person with any

qualifications whatsoever on the scene was an Aboriginal health worker called Harry Sing from Belyuen. This woman had a badly crushed arm. Mr Sing attended to her in the first instance and an operation on the woman's arm was carried out later by Dr John Hargreaves who is regarded as one of the leading people in the field of leprosy and microsurgery in Australia and, for that matter, throughout the world. After the initial treatment, the woman went back to England. She flew back to Darwin only last week to thank the people who had treated her, including Mr Sing. The woman's arm had been saved to just above the wrist. The specialists who undertook the follow-up treatment said that, if appropriate treatment had not been given to her at the scene of the accident, she would have lost the arm to the shoulder.

Mr Speaker, I think this speaks volumes about and is a classic illustration of the tremendous work that is being done by our Aboriginal health workers. They ought to be supported. I would certainly like the opposition spokesman on health to get himself across the subject.

Heritage Legislation

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to the destruction of Turner House on 25 May 1986. I have the newspaper reports of that incident with me and he may like to peruse them as he was not in charge of that portfolio at the time. I might remind him that, following that destruction, the opposition introduced legislation to safeguard places registered with the National Trust. In light of that destruction and further destruction ...

Mr COULTER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! This is not the adjournment debate. Standing Order 109 is quite specific in relation to questions to a minister. I will quote it for the benefit of the member for Stuart:

Questions may be put to a minister relating to public affairs, to proceedings pending in the Assembly or to any other matter of administration for which he is responsible.

Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart has been on his feet now for 5 minutes and has not asked a question.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member is allowed a reasonable preamble but I request that he ask his question. I advise all honourable members that, once I have made up my mind with or without debate on points of order, I will make a ruling. In some cases, I will allow comments and, in others, I do not require them.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, returning to Marron's newsagency which, as reported on the front page of the Centralian Advocate Newspaper, you yourself referred to as 'a bloody disgrace' ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Whilst I may have used those words outside the Chamber, I will not allow them inside. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw your remark.

Mr Speaker, the matter itself is far too serious for that sort of levity. In view of both those instances and the postmaster's residence ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will ask his question.

Mr EDE: Will the honourable minister indicate a date by which he will introduce decent heritage legislation which will stop this wholesale vandalism of the heritage of the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, following that beautiful lecture on the history of some of the events at Alice Springs in the past few years, I think that a simple yes or no answer might be too short. I will try to explain to members and to the general community what our attitude is towards heritage matters and, in doing so, contradict some of the assertions that have been made quite incorrectly by the member for Stuart.

I do remember Turner House, Mr Speaker. I found it to be an excellent venue and an excellent restaurant. In fact, in the very week of its unfortunate demise, I had an excellent meal there with a number of acquaintances. I must admit that there was a tug at my heart strings when I discovered the building had been demolished. However, we cannot stand still in time. There will always be occasions when progress and development overtake the past. We must ensure that we look after some of our history but this government cannot and will not preserve things simply for preservation's sake. We must ensure that we create a climate which allows sensible development to occur and which allows us to retain some of our history ...

Mr Smith: That's what we are after.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, we just had another interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. Brilliant stuff!

I will repeat what I said earlier. Our commitment to heritage matters in the Alice Springs area is very clear and it is very easily seen. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will visit Alice Springs during the next few weeks. If he had taken his duty seriously, he would have been to Alice Springs already and he would have seen the old jail - a great example of the heritage of Alice Springs. The old Telegraph Station is another example. It is the only place I can think of in Australia where the original village is still there. The old courthouse, the Residency, Les Hansen House, Hartley Street School, the old Alice Inn, the Ghan project - I insist that he take time out from his busy schedule to visit Alice Springs in the next few weeks and see what actions have been taken.

To come back to the Marron's newsagency example, no matter what sort of legislation was in place, we would not have been able to stop what occurred there nor what occurred with Turner House. Legislation is not the answer. I pointed out where a small change in the mechanism of the process of approvals would have prevented what occurred in respect of Marron's newsagency occurring without public notice. That is quite different from its not occurring at all. I will repeat it very slowly for the member of Stuart. It was intended to keep the facade of the building but the engineers pointed out that the structure was such that that was impossible. The architects came up with something sympathetic to the historical concept. The Leader of the Opposition says that I was not told. How ridiculous! Does he think that the Planning Authority has to come to me every time that it gives approval, for example, to change clay bricks for cement bricks or change approved plumbing fixtures to another wall? Of course that does not have to be referred to the minister. How ridiculous! What an assertion!

As I pointed out earlier, when the Planning Authority makes significant changes to a development proposal, I believe that those changes need to be advertised.

Mr Ede: And that is all. That is all.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There have been far too many interjections during the answer. There will be no more.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have pointed out quite clearly that I am going to change the mechanisms so that such incidents do not recur. Everyone can rest assured that the Planning Authority in Alice Springs includes 4 former members of the Alice Springs Town Council. I believe that we have to set up a situation which allows the community input through appropriate channels and, if there is a need to change mechanisms, as there appears to be in this case, that will be done. However, to propose that heritage legislation is the absolute answer and then to demand a commitment is simply naive. It is, however, typical of the opposition which would like to see history stand still. It does not want to see jobs provided. It does not want to see any development. It wants to see the Territory go backwards. We on this side of the House will not let that happen.

Northern Territory Loan Debt

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Yesterday, he confirmed that the Northern Territory loan debt was \$1300m which is over \$7000 per head of population in the Northern Territory. Would he confirm that this figure does not include statutory authority loan debts of approximately \$150m?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would have to check that for the honourable member before being able to confirm it. I am sure that I can do that during the course of today without any problem.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The Hansard of yesterday contained comments and interjections from the member for Stuart which indicated his belief that drilling work for flood mitigation tests at Emily Creek had not started because of objections by Aboriginal traditional owners. Can the minister give details of the situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, yesterday, the member for Stuart indicated, by way of interjection as usual, that drilling work at Emily Creek had not started because agreement had not been obtained from the Aboriginal traditional owners. In fact, it was rotten bad luck for him because, not only had it not started, as he had suggested, but it had finished. The member for Stuart is wrong again. His casual throwaway lines usually are wrong judging from my experience in this House. As I said, the drilling tests were completed 2 days ago.

In answer to the question on this matter yesterday, I mentioned that the CLP candidate for Flynn, June Tuzewski, had been fully briefed on the fundamentals of flood mitigation plans and that Alice Springs residents would be better served by consulting with her on any matter concerning this subject than with the members opposite. Within one day, that has proved to be sound advice. The member really does not know what is going on in his own patch, as I said yesterday. I am not referring to the honourable member for Sadadeen when I say 'members opposite', as he does happen to have some information about flood mitigation in the Northern Territory and certainly a lot more than the member for Stuart.

The drilling rig at Emily Creek is now in the process of moving to the Telegraph Station site to continue the geotechnical and hydrological studies on flood mitigation in that area. Four holes will be drilled to determine the scientific information needed and a report will be supplied to the government before the end of the year. A decision can then be made about construction of the flood mitigation dam.

Since the Alice Springs flood of March this year, there has been a constant campaign of misinformation about the government's flood mitigation plans. The member for Stuart does himself no credit at all as an active participant in that campaign. His statements on the issue should be treated with extreme caution by Alice Springs residents.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I refer to an answer he gave yesterday on the question of flood mitigation in Alice Springs: 'A drilling rig is currently active at the Emily Creek site completing tests for geotechnical and hydrological reports'. He continued: 'Mr Speaker, when those tests are finished in the near future, the rig will move to the Telegraph Station site'. In light of the information just given by the minister, will he apologise to the House for misleading it yesterday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, they just cannot help themselves. They have to feel the heat each time, don't they? They try to defend the inane interjections of the member for Stuart. Here is a man who has been to Alice Springs 2 or 3 times in the last year, and once within the last few days to do a few advertisements for the Flynn by-election. It is nice to have him trapeze in when you need him. Don't forget what happened to poor Maggie Hickey when she received support in Tennant Creek, when the member for Stuart tried to ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I asked a specific question. I asked the honourable minister to confirm that yesterday he gave an answer different to the one that he gave today and to apologise to the House for doing so.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I would ask the minister to relate his remarks more closely to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I feel sorry for poor Di Shanahan if the Leader of the Opposition intends to assist her in any way.

Mr Speaker, may I just check my answer from yesterday regarding flood mitigation to ensure that I am not being quoted incorrectly by the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, I said:

However, removal of sand from the Todd is by no means a complete flood mitigation scheme. The construction of a flood mitigation dam is critical to the success of proper flood mitigation measures. A drilling rig is currently active at the Emily Creek site ...

Mr Smith: No, it is not.

Mr COULTER: I said: '... currently active at the Emily Creek site'.

Mr Smith: It left 3 days ago.

Mr COULTER: Now, Mr Speaker, there we go again. I told the honourable Leader of the Opposition yesterday not to become involved in this because he would get his fingers burnt. By way of interjection, he tried to support the member for Stuart yesterday, and I warned him privately: 'Don't touch this with a barge pole; you will get hurt'.

Mr Speaker, I said that it was 'currently active'. The member for Stuart denied that and he went on to interject - and this is not recorded in Hansard - that we had not reached agreement with the traditional owners.

Mr Smith: He said that it was not drilling. That is right.

Mr COULTER: I said:

Mr Speaker, I hear an interjection from the member for Stuart which illustrates that he does not know what is going on in his own patch. In fact, the drilling rig has come from interstate. I can assure him that it is in the area and it is about to proceed with drilling.

And it is, Mr Speaker. It is certainly not drilling now. Yes, he is correct. However, the interjection that was not recorded in Hansard was that in fact we had not reached agreement with the traditional owners. All members would have heard that interjection, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: I don't see that Hansard heard it.

Mr COULTER: I said it is not in there. He does not even know what is going on in his own area. It is a fact that I said it was currently active in the Emily Creek area.

Mr Smith: It is not. It finished 2 days ago.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, today is Wednesday. The crew flew back to Brisbane yesterday and finished testing on Monday. If the Leader of the Opposition wants me to be pedantically correct, it completed its drilling on Monday evening. That is a far more accurate statement than that made by the member for Stuart who lives in the region and does not know that it has happened.

DNA Fingerprinting System

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

When will the police introduce a DNA fingerprinting system in the Northern Territory in view of the 100% accuracy of this system of identification which would be of inestimable value in criminal investigation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have specific information before me to answer the honourable member's question but I will obtain it. However, I can inform her that we are now connected to the national computerised fingerprint network. Honourable members may have noted an item for this in the last budget. The Commissioner of Police informs me that that in itself has proved of enormous benefit in the Northern Territory because the Northern Territory has many transient people. If they get in trouble with the law, their fingerprints can be fed into a computerised system and it can be determined quickly if they are required by any interstate police force. This is a quite revolutionary advance in terms of police methods and police cooperation. In the past, this would have been impossible and, over the years, no doubt people wanted interstate remained undetected by the Territory police because of the huge effort necessary to check manually information supplied from interstate. I will seek the specific information that the honourable member requires.

Home Detention Scheme

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In February 1988, this Assembly passed amendments to the Criminal Law (Conditional Release of Offenders) Act which provided courts with an

alternative sentencing option under the Home Detention Scheme. Recent media reports have questioned the suitability of this scheme for people who are before the court on drink-driving charges. Would he advise this Assembly whether or not the Home Detention Scheme is suitable for people who have been convicted of DUI offences?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, amendments to the Criminal Law (Conditional Release of Offenders) Act enabling a Home Detention Scheme to operate in the Northern Territory came into effect on 3 February this year. Section 19A provides the court with an expanded range of specific conditions available to it. It provides that, where an offender is convicted of an offence and sentenced to a form of imprisonment, the court may direct that the sentence be suspended or that the offender enter into a home detention order. It introduces residential conditions because this was previously not available.

Some magistrates indicated a reluctance to impose such conditions. The defined purpose of the Home Detention Scheme is to provide selected, suitable offenders, who would otherwise be imprisoned, with the opportunity to remain at restricted liberty in a stable environment, conditional upon them accepting and complying with random surveillance provisions. It involves residential restrictions and, where appropriate, participation in educative or rehabilitative programs suited to remedial treatment of causative factors in the offence. This means that an offender under a home detention order, in addition to residential restriction, may be required to participate in existing programs such as an alcohol course or other available educational or training schemes which may be of benefit in overcoming those factors which caused or contributed to the offending behaviour. This is an integral part of supervising home detention orders.

I have advice from the Department of Law that no conflict or anomaly exists in current Territory legislation which precludes the use of home detention as a viable sentencing option for offenders selected as suitable for the Home Detention Scheme and that selection is subject to many terms and conditions which are clearly defined. Territory courts can now suspend prison sentences. They impose and make home detention orders instead, thus avoiding the harmful effects of imprisonment, particularly first time imprisonment.

Home detention is gaining momentum in the Northern Territory since it was implemented just 5 months ago on 3 February. There have been 21 court requests for home detention assessment reports by the Director of Correctional Services. There are 12 offenders, 1 a woman, successfully undergoing home detention. Electronic techniques for keeping home detainees under surveillance are being investigated. The Territory is leading the way in Australia with a true home detention program. Home detention schemes elsewhere are really only early release schemes.

In 12 months in 1987-88, 20% of all sentenced prisoners had been convicted of DUI or drink-related offences. In a 1987-88 survey, 65% of all sentenced prisoners admitted being under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offence. This program is not retrospective. A conservative estimate for the next 12 months is that 200 people may be diverted from imprisonment in an institution. This program is not for diversion from incarceration but is diversion from incarceration in an institution. Offenders must consent, the family's view must be taken into account and, in fact, the family must consent. The program is designed to punish the offender - not to punish the family by loss of income etc - and to protect the community. The needs of the

community must be taken into account. The offender may be required to avail himself or herself of treatment to overcome problems which brought him or her into conflict with the law.

One of the main aspects is that it is extremely cost effective. I hope that all magistrates in the Northern Territory take into account what this Legislative Assembly believes is a need in the community. I hope that they take home detention into account when they are bringing down sentences for DUI.

Shared Equity Housing Scheme

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to his government's election promise to introduce a shared equity housing scheme which I point out was a pale imitation of the previously announced Labor policy on capital indexed loans. Why has this election commitment not been honoured?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I explained at the last sittings, the processes involved in introducing such a scheme are undergoing very close scrutiny. Some problems were found in the process. Obviously, we want to ensure that, when such a scheme is introduced, it meets the aims and the aspirations of ...

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: The member for MacDonnell asked me the question and, obviously, he wants to give me the answer.

Mr Bell: I was giving you the history, Daryl.

Mr MANZIE: I am quite happy to answer the question, Mr Speaker, but surely he is wasting the time of the House if he wants to both ask and answer the question himself.

We want to ensure that the intent of our shared equity scheme meets the aspirations of Territorians who, for various reasons, are unable to afford the cost of purchasing their first home. When the scheme is eventually introduced, hopefully it will enable those who are less unfortunate than others in terms of finance to be able to purchase a house. I would like to point out to the honourable member that schemes such as the shared equity scheme that was proposed have been tried in other parts of Australia and they have met with limited success. Obviously, we want it to work successfully.

Mr Smith: Why promise it then?

Mr Bell: It was your promise, not ours.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I hear honourable members asking why we promised it. I let members opposite know in no uncertain terms that we have not stepped back from introducing the shared equity scheme but we will ensure that such a scheme is workable.

Mr Bell: You have not stepped anywhere on it.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the manners of the member for MacDonnell are appalling but we have become used to them.

As I said, in other areas of Australia, there have been problems. For example, I think the scheme in South Australia had only 6 people avail themselves of it. We certainly want to ensure that ours encompasses more than that.

Mr Bell: It was a dud. Come on Daryl, just tell us it was a dud.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, again, the honourable member will be forced to eat his words, as he has had to on every occasion. I cannot think of an occasion when any accusation made by the member for MacDonnell has proven to be correct. This is another occasion on which he will be found to be wrong.

Public Bus Service for Alice Springs

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer him to the considerable debate over a long period of time in respect of requests for public bus services in Alice Springs. What steps are being taken in relation to this?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this has been a vexed question. Over the years, a number of trial services have been introduced to the cost of the Northern Territory government. Mr Speaker, as you would know, those trials revealed that a service did not appear to be viable at the time. The last trial was about 3 years ago and there certainly was insufficient patronage or potential use to warrant the introduction of a regular bus transport system.

However, special contract arrangements exist for schoolchildren. A number of suggestions have been put forward in recent times, including integration of the school system with the public transport system and the use of private contractors. There is potential for the utilisation of some of the smaller, Toyota-type buses which are already operated in the Alice Springs community by various interest groups and which quite often are not fully utilised.

The member for Araluen initiated a committee, including government and town council representatives, to investigate the feasibility of a bus service in Alice Springs. The committee considered that the best way to approach the task would be to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Alice Springs community, assessing its needs and assessing the viable components that might be included in a bus service. The government has committed a sum of \$30 000 and, of course, it is seeking input from the Alice Springs community and the Alice Springs Town Council, through its professional officers, to quickly come to a decision as to whether Alice Springs has reached the stage at which a bus service would be viable. We hope that the \$30 000 will enable a consultant's study to be completed within a couple of months and we will know then ...

Mr Smith: A consultant investigating a bus service for Alice Springs?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FINCH: The member for Millner continues to display his arrogance towards the Alice Springs community. He has no interest in it. His once-a-year visits are nowhere near enough for him to understand the aspirations of the Alice Springs community.

Mr Smith: I know they need a bus service, not an investigation into a bus service.

Mr Bell: How long since you left the wilds of Leanyer?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the chirpy member for MacDonnell, I probably spend more time in Alice Springs these days than himself. He need only look at the local newspaper to see how often I am in Alice Springs.

Mr Bell: What do your constituents in Leanyer say about that?

Mr FINCH: I have received direct feedback from people in the Alice Springs community. They are conscious of their need but there is no point in the government introducing a bus service which does not meet the needs of the people. That would be an entire waste of funds. Earlier surveys showed that it would actually be more economic to provide taxis to meet the needs of those people who wanted to use public transport. Mr Speaker, if this economic genius, the Leader of the Opposition, wishes to suggest that the government should spend money on a bus service without proper investigation, then so be it. The people of Alice Springs need to know what sort of hands the Territory would be in if - heaven forbid - there was ever a change of government.

Mr Speaker, we are taking a responsible approach, thanks to the member for Araluen, the members of the Alice Springs Town Council and the various people from the Alice Springs community who sat on the steering committee which resolved to go ahead with a fully detailed, up-to-date study. I expect the results within a couple of months, after which time we will know what service is appropriate.

Ministerial Discretion Under Liquor Act

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TOURISM

My question relates to the minister's responsibility for the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. I ask him to confirm a response he gave to an interviewer's question on ABC radio this morning. I will quote the response as I recorded it: 'Where cases of hardship have been brought to my attention, we are and have been addressing those particular cases. There is a ministerial discretion through an instruction to the Chairman of the Liquor Commission'. I took that to mean that, in the case of vehicles seized under sections 95 and 96 of the Liquor Act, the minister can exercise some ministerial discretion over whether or not those vehicles may be returned to their owners. Could he confirm that and could he also inform the House how a citizen should pursue the use of that ministerial discretion?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Nhulunbuy is well aware of the current status of the review of the Liquor Act with regard to the forfeiture of motor vehicles following discussions I have had with him during the last couple of days. The government hopes to introduce amendments to the Liquor Act in the October sittings but, of course, we are very conscious of the need to discuss

the proposed amendments with the Aboriginal communities. Whilst some discussions have taken place, those discussions will be completed after the current Legislative Assembly sittings, and I am very confident of giving the draftsman time to put those amendments into legislation for introduction at the October sittings.

With regard to my response on ABC radio this morning, I will certainly look at problem areas ...

Mr Leo: Can you exercise ministerial discretion?

Mr POOLE: No, I cannot exercise ministerial discretion. The act ties that responsibility to the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and existing legislation. We will certainly look at areas of hardship that have been created over the past couple of months since we have been talking about the proposed amendments and, hopefully, those will be rectified by the new legislation.

Darwin and Alice Springs Airports

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In relation to the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports, is he able to advise the House what we can expect in the federal budget to supplement the resources that he has had available to him from discussions with the federal Minister for Transport and Communications?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, I am not privy to the federal government's budget. It has been fairly obvious from comments made to the media by Senator Collins and the member for the Northern Territory that they have been advised that the long-awaited transfer of airports at Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin is about to be announced. Of course, the people of the Northern Territory have been waiting for quite some time to hear what moves will be made, particularly in relation to the Alice Springs and Darwin Airports. The prerogative lies entirely with the federal government which owns both of those airport facilities. I am confident that the 3½ years of suspended animation on construction at Darwin Airport will be resolved shortly. From the noises being made by the media, there is no doubt that the decision will be a positive one.

Regardless of guessing games, I have every confidence that we have waited long enough. I am quite sure that there is no logical or reasonable reason why the federal government should delay its decision any longer. In December last year, the then Minister for Transport, Peter Duncan, gave commitments that a decision would be forthcoming. He thought that would occur in January 1988 and believed the decision would be favourable to proceed on the north side, and to proceed as a matter of urgency. The saga of the Darwin Airport has continued over some 10 years since a commitment was made by the Fraser government in 1983 to proceed with what was then to be a \$95m development. That development included a number of additional items which created a strain on the federal Labor government which, quite correctly, sought to review the level of expenditure. That review was to take 6 months commencing in April 1985. The saga has taken a number of turns along the way, including suggestions of construction on the south side. Some \$41m was committed in about August 1986 towards such a scheme. Fortunately, that did not proceed.

The Territory government has constructively and continually promoted the project, not only as being of paramount importance to Territorians and paramount importance to the tourist industry, but also as one of the most symbolic projects to be constructed in the Northern Territory during the next decade. That might sound a little far-fetched to some but the business community and the investment community are all looking at a commencement of the Darwin Airport as a symbol that the Territory is progressing. We have had that dead albatross around our necks for far too long. The packages that were put forward by the Territory government included in the early days a suggestion of a minimum development project of some \$40m to bring the project back into a reasonable perspective. We then suggested that perhaps the Territory government would spend up to \$20m to help the project get going, provided that we could have some equity through private investment in the terminal building. That received some favour from the federal government, and quite rightly so.

In the meantime, the federal government introduced a Federal Airports Corporation late last year. The Federal Airports Corporation was not in the least interested in the Darwin terminal although, when it saw the growth figures for Alice Springs, it certainly was interested in owning Alice Springs Airport for sound commercial reasons. However, the Territory government had an overall interest in all airports in the Northern Territory - Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin - in relation to our overall tourism development plan and economic development of each of the regions.

The federal government committed itself to divesting itself of all airports throughout Australia over a 3-year period. The Federal Airports Corporation was asked to bid against the Territory government in relation to both the Alice Springs and the Darwin Airports. The package that was put forward by the Territory government included immediate commencement. We have already done considerable forward planning and work on conceptual design. We have called for registrations of interest from project managers and have gone quite a way down the track towards getting the project started.

Our package also included a level of development at Darwin of some \$65m of infrastructure. It included provision for commuter services as well as international and domestic services. It included provision in our planning for the appropriate level of freight handling. It required a rapid completion of construction because time is the most significant component of concern to Territorians. Our arrangements included provision for transfer of the general aviation area from the south side to the north side, enabling the RAAF to have total occupation of the southern portion of the airport. Included in that transfer were some relocation costs and some subsidies towards having the general aviation area transferred across to the north side expeditiously. It included provision for all of the current employees at the airport. It included a balanced approach to what the cost would be to airlines and to airport users. It is very important that head taxes do not become excessively high and detract from our tourism development. Naturally enough, our package included retention of funds in the Northern Territory to allow for future development.

In Alice Springs, we were looking at an immediate expansion of the terminal to double the floor space. We were looking at a 6-month study, including consideration of international capacity and taking into account the Alice Springs community's desires, parallel taxiways and other things that would take some time to put into perspective. We would then have entered a detailed design phase and would have committed something like \$25m towards a major terminal facility to commence as soon as that design phase was finished, with a construction period of 2 years.

I mention all of that because it has been put to me that Territorians might be disadvantaged if the FAC were to become the owner of each of those 4 facilities. I do not believe it would because I have heard clearly from the federal government that, naturally enough, the best bid will win. The details that I have given to members of the House represent the very minimum service, timing and level of expenditure that Territorians can expect regardless of who is to own those Territory airports - and I include all 4 - after Tuesday of next week. We wait with a great deal of anticipation and, I am sure, confidence that, after next Tuesday, we will see a rejuvenation of airport facilities and the general economy associated with them in the Northern Territory.

Gas-stripping Plant at Palmerston

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Last year, in the budget speech, the minister indicated that contracts would be signed within weeks for the establishment of a joint venture gas-stripping plant at Palmerston. I see no sign and have heard of no announcements by the minister that would indicate that that particular venture is being undertaken. I ask that he indicate what has happened.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nhulunbuy for the question because, in all sincerity, it is probably one of the most potentially successful ventures that the Northern Territory has ever embarked on. Following the budget last year, we asked for written expressions of interest. Some of the projects that people wrote back to us about are at the high end of the scale - projects costing in the vicinity of \$476m. I see the Leader of the Opposition shaking his head. It will be a pleasure to see him at the opening of this plant and I will remind him of the day that he sat in the Legislative Assembly and shook his head because he did not believe that it existed.

The member for Barkly laughs also, and I will remind him of that because I am confident that this project will proceed. The reason why I am so confident is very detailed, but I will try to keep it simple.

Mr Smith: Yes. Tell us.

Mr COULTER: You are about as much use to the Northern Territory as a wheel on a walking stick!

Mr Speaker, the facts are simple. The feed stocks that are required from the gas in some of the petrochemical industries is very complicated indeed, and it is very difficult to put projects of this magnitude together. We are talking of a project that is equal to the total value of the gas pipeline and the powerhouse combined. The member for Barkly would know just how difficult it was to put that deal together. If he has any doubt about the feasibility of this project, I will be happy to provide him with a briefing when we enter into detailed negotiations and heads of agreement on this project. I would like to see the look on his face at that time. I do not think I will see the smirk that he has on his face at the moment ...

Mr Tuxworth: I have never had any doubts about the project.

Mr COULTER: Very good. It is a smile of happiness now, Mr Speaker. I am happy that he has been able to clarify that.

Getting back to the head-shaking Leader of the Opposition, I would love to see him at the opening of this project. Detailed discussions took place in Alice Springs some 2 weeks ago with the operators and the joint venturers of the Palm Valley and the Amadeus Basin gasfields. The gas must be of a certain quality. Just 2 days ago, we spoke with the people from Aluswiss about the feasibility studies that they have embarked on in relation to the conversion of the Gove project to gas. They are back at the negotiating table. They have entered into a feasibility consultancy with a well-known English engineer ...

Mr Leo: They do not like their business being made public.

Mr COULTER: I am quite open about this. It is no secret that they have entered into this agreement to examine the feasibility of converting the power station at Nhulunbuy and the plant itself. Conversion of the plant itself would be a very complicated process.

At this stage, it would appear that, if only 2 of the 7 projects that we are currently analysing were to be successful, we would require \$250m of alterations to the gas pipeline because, apparently, it is not big enough to cater for these projects. That includes some \$60m for pumping stations and another line that would have to be built from Mataranka to Darwin. It would be necessary to loop the pipeline from Mataranka to Darwin. EEC, the proponents of that proposal, spoke to the previous Chief Minister on a number of occasions to push this particular project and to urge us to sign the agreement that I mentioned in the budget.

I do not want to pre-empt the Treasurer's budget speech, but I think there will be some mention of additional power stations. We have identified some 100 MW of electricity that could be produced from additional power stations to service the mining industry. It is a fact that the pipeline is proving to be too small and therefore we need to examine what will give the best advantage to the Northern Territory. We would like to undertake at least 2 of the big projects and, of course, this is the secret to bringing down electricity prices in the Northern Territory. For example, if we were to have the Gove project, we could reduce electricity from 12¢ a kilowatt hour, the dearest in Australia, to some 7¢ a kilowatt hour but, if we were to go ahead with some of the smaller projects, we would not have enough gas to undertake the bigger projects.

It is a matter of sitting down and seeing which will give the most benefit and the greatest commercial advantage to the Northern Territory. I therefore ask honourable members to be patient for the time being. The range of options that has been presented to us is being analysed in detail. There will be another meeting in Alice Springs in about 6 weeks time. In fact, the TMOC representative is in town for a meeting this evening. Things are really happening in the gas business which has the potential to be the greatest success story that the Northern Territory has ever witnessed. We will get there with a little bit of patience.

Housing Commission Accommodation at Palmerston

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In view of a statement made in the press last night that 500 houses in Palmerston are currently vacant, can he give a clear indication of what the situation is with Housing Commission accommodation at Palmerston?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, the member for Barkly made allegations on last night's 7.30 Report. He said: 'I think it was mentioned today that there are 500 empty houses at Palmerston. How much revenue do they bring the government? If that becomes 1000, it just gets worse and worse'. I was flabbergasted at the suggestion that there were 500 empty houses in Palmerston. I thought there might be some poetic licence involved and I immediately checked to find out what the facts were. The fact is that, of the 1508 Housing Commission dwellings in Palmerston, 61 dwellings were vacant as of last Friday. Those houses are not vacant because the Housing Commission does not have any tenants for them. They are vacant because their tenants have moved out, either because the house is undergoing maintenance work or because someone is about to move into it.

I would like all members to realise that there are waiting times for all classes of Housing Commission dwellings in Palmerston - that is, as soon as a dwelling becomes vacant, we have somebody ready to move in. People who have no knowledge of the actual situation perpetuate the myth that there are huge numbers of empty Housing Commission houses while people have to queue up to occupy them. The community needs to know that the member for Barkly's allegations on last night's 7.30 Report were totally incorrect. I do not think there would be 500 private residences in Palmerston, let alone 500 empty private residences.

Mr Coulter interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Palmerston could probably tell me how many private residences there are. I can certainly guarantee that there are not 500 empty private residences and there are certainly not 500 empty Housing Commission dwellings. We have waiting lists for every type of accommodation the commission operates in Palmerston. It is an example of the member for Barkly being so inaccurate that his statement bears no resemblance whatsoever to the facts.

Gas-stripping Plant

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Further to the the minister's answer regarding the gas pipeline and the gas-stripping plant, has he considered the possibility of locating the gas-stripping plant in Alice Springs, particularly in relation to the gas pipeline being now too small to cover all the projects which he has in mind?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that has certainly been an option. Another option is to locate it at Mataranka with a connection to Gove. Those options are being examined in conjunction with the Darwin proposal. As I said, it is a very technical matter. We are engaged in negotiations with pipeline operator CMPS Williams Brothers, Santos Magellan, TMOC, and AGL. All the players involved are working very hard to determine the best site. I might say, Mr Speaker, that the cost of \$250m for pipeline alterations is about the same as the cost of installing the pipeline in the first place. We are certainly doing all we can to minimise the cost of the modifications to the pipeline.

There are some strategic advantages in locating the gas-stripping plant in Darwin, in terms of the products which will be developed. For example, we are

looking at the production of ammonia for the Ranger Uranium Mine which uses about 13 000 t of ammonia per year.

Mr Collins: It could be transported to Darwin by tanker.

Mr COULTER: We could transport it on the train. That would be the answer. Perhaps some of these projects would make the railway more feasible. However, to answer the member for Sadadeen's question, all sites, including the Mataranka site, are being thoroughly investigated at the moment.

'Towards the 90s Volume 2'

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The Department of Education has recently released the discussion document 'Towards the 90s Volume 2'. What process of consultation led to the release of this document and will the community have an opportunity to comment on the suggestions it contains?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question in relation to a most important document for people in the Territory. There has been a lengthy process of consultation leading up to the presentation of this document to the community. I released it at the beginning of the second semester so that people would have plenty of opportunity to comment and we would not be accused of introducing the document into the school system just before the holiday period.

It is important to note that there has been a great deal of discussion in relation to the original document. The comments made by members of this Assembly and by members of the community have been taken into account in formulating Volume 2 of Towards the 90s. As a result, changes have been made, such as moving away from disincentives in relation to devolution, the suggestion that schools should pay for curriculum advisory services and the incentive funding by results. Those issues were raised by members of the Assembly and by members of the public as matters of concern. The government has taken account of those comments and has presented the 'Towards the 90s Volume 2' document that we have before us now. I will be tabling the document in the Assembly during the course of these sittings, together with the information papers that accompany it. I look forward to input from members. It is most important that they have input and any concerns that they raise in respect of any issue in that document will be welcomed. There are major issues which the public needs to be aware of and I would urge any member of the community who wishes to become involved in that discussion to obtain copies of the document 'Towards the 90s Volume 2'.

I understand that there is some concern by the Teachers Federation in relation to the matter of master teachers and also the concept of excellence in relation to external assessment. There is need for external validity and reliability of the results coming from our school system. I believe those issues can be debated and argued reasonably.

I hope that the Teachers Federation will take on board the way in which the Council of Government School Organisations is approaching this issue. It has set in place a plan which will enable parents from all of the schools which have councils to comment. There will be a timetable so that the full 8-week discussion and consultation period will be fully utilised. It is

important that plans are made to obtain the views of the membership of those particular groups, not simply a few in COGSO or a few in the Teachers Federation. We must have as much comment from the broad membership as possible.

Mr Speaker, I will be tabling the document. I look forward to comment. If members of the public wish to obtain copies, they should contact the Department of Education and copies will be made available. It is most important that people read the document and discuss it so that we know what people's views are when we come to determining government policy.

Project on Darwin Esplanade

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In his budget speech last year, he indicated that a \$25m twin-tower luxury accommodation and office block project on the Esplanade had been commenced and would be completed within 12 months. Can he confirm that one of the reasons why this project has not proceeded according to schedule is uncertainty over the impact of the Anderson proposal on the future of commercial development in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will investigate that matter and provide the Leader of the Opposition with an answer during the course of these sittings.

Detoxification Unit at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Will he give an undertaking not to relocate the detoxification unit at the Royal Darwin Hospital slap-bang in the middle of the staff accommodation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Royal Darwin Hospital costs the people of the Northern Territory and Australia \$1m per week to run. I have given undertakings to this Legislative Assembly that, over a period, I will conduct a total review of all aspects of the management and provision of services at the Royal Darwin Hospital so that we are clear about our aims, provide the best possible service to the people of the Northern Territory and ensure that appropriate resources and staff are in place. It is also necessary that, at the same time, we find efficiencies in that service so that \$1m of Northern Territory funds can be utilised in the best possible way.

I gave an undertaking also that the ADT Unit would not be moved if it would cause grave discomfort or concern to people who live on campus at the Royal Darwin Hospital. During one of his infrequent visits to Darwin and in relation to one of the very few areas of the health portfolio in which he takes an interest because he thinks he can cause some sort of industrial action, the honourable member opposite went to a public meeting. That was after I had attended a previous public meeting held by the same people. He suggested to them that they take up a petition and deliver it to the local member, which of course is myself, and that they demand that I bring that petition to this Assembly. That is the way that he goes about his business.

I have certainly made available to him many briefings on various aspects of what is occurring in the Department of Health and Community Services but, of course, he has been busy running around doing other things and looking after his portfolio responsibilities. In fact, I have offered him a briefing on the AIDS situation in a few days time and I am led to believe that he intends to avail himself of that offer.

There has been a great deal of consultation on the various evaluations that I have been talking about and the possible movement of the ADT Unit, not 'slap-bang in the middle of the staff accommodation' at the Royal Darwin Hospital, but in fact on the entrance road to where the people reside on campus at the Royal Darwin Hospital. I have consulted all the people affected. It must be remembered also that we have to take some action regarding ward 5, the psychiatric ward in the Royal Darwin Hospital, and that is part of it. Every person who lives in the units near the psychiatric unit has been consulted and we will be taking further action in due course. At this stage, there is a high probability that the ADT Unit will be moving to the area recommended to me. The interests of the people who live in the residential area will be taken into account. Their privacy will be retained and, given that the Leader of the Opposition does not continue to stir them up, I am sure all those people will be happy with the situation.

Tourism Infrastructure Support

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Unlike previous budgets, there was nothing in the budget papers this year which indicated the ongoing government commitment in this financial year to support for Yulara and the Alice Springs and Darwin Sheratons. What amount of money has been set aside by the government this year for support of those projects?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did not realise that the new format would cause the trouble for the opposition that it has. I noted that the Leader of the Opposition made great play in the media about the Northern Territory government supposedly hiding millions of dollars which were indicated in last year's budget papers but do not appear in this year's budget papers in relation to infrastructure support for Yulara and the 2 Sheratons. Rather than checking with Treasury and finding out the facts before going to the press, he shot his mouth off and caused a great deal of concern because, unfortunately, a few people do listen to him.

I refer him to detailed budget estimates. At page 79 of Budget Paper No 4 there is a figure of \$19.2m for tourism infrastructure support. At page 82, the description indicates that the sum is for tourism infrastructure developments at Yulara, Alice Springs and Darwin.

Mr Smith: I am asking for the breakdown.

Mr PERRON: Oh, the honourable member is now talking about a breakdown whereas, in last night's newspaper article, he alleged that the figures were hidden somewhere in the budget or presumably rubbed out so no one could ever find them. The figure for the total tourism infrastructure is there quite clearly. If the honourable member wants further details, he can ask for them. He does not have to ask for them through the front page of the newspaper, even though that is his option of course.

Trade Development Zone

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Following his assumption of responsibility for the Trade Development Zone, can he indicate whether he has examined the operations of the zone and the activities of its consultants with particular reference to Mr K.K. Yeung?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I can advise the House that I have examined the wealth of documentation relating to the activities of the Trade Development Zone and its consultants. I have examined extensive and detailed accounts of the time and expenditure incurred by consultants in the zone, in particular those of Mr K.K. Yeung. I am totally satisfied that the amounts paid in that regard are quite modest, and that the Territory has received excellent value from the performance of its consultants and of Mr K.K. Yeung in particular. In fact, from the accounts that I have examined, it is quite evident that Mr Yeung's commitment to his duties is such that he has incurred substantial time-and-cost losses through his activities on our behalf which have not been charged to the Territory government.

Mr Speaker, others in Australia and overseas obviously do not share the cynicism of the Leader of Opposition about the abilities and the value of Mr Yeung. Honourable members will be interested to learn that the governments of Queensland and Western Australia have sought the services and advice of Mr Yeung in their quest for Asian investment. I have with me a pamphlet which has been issued by the Technology, Industries and Development Authority of Western Australia. That government has asked Mr Yeung to circulate that document and to develop the Western Australian attitude towards business in the Asian region. That is a far cry from the approach of the Leader of the Opposition who has sought to downgrade and denigrate the status of Mr Yeung in Asia. That is a letter from the Western Australian government asking for Mr Yeung's support in the development of Western Australia's interests in Asia. That document is available to all honourable members if they wish to read it.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, it is like the drilling rig at Emily Creek. This fellow cannot help himself. He keeps on saying: 'Hit me in the face. Hit me in the face'.

Mr Ede: You got the wrong creek.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will answer the honourable member for Stuart. His statement that the Aboriginal custodians had not given permission to drill Emily Creek was not recorded in Hansard because I chose to ignore him. I will acknowledge every interjection that he makes in order to ensure that it appears in Hansard so that historians can realise the stupidity of his interjections.

As recently as July this year, the Technology and Industry Development Authority of Western Australia wrote to Mr Yeung seeking his assistance in distributing and promoting a portfolio investment opportunity in Western Australian industry. It is obvious that the Leader of the Opposition does not share this understanding of Mr Yeung's worth. Only yesterday, I responded to yet another barrage of questions from him relating to the operation of the Trade Development Zone and Mr Yeung.

It was necessary for me also to write to the Leader of the Opposition on that matter. No doubt, he will not be pleased with the contents of the letter. In effect, I told him that I could not trust him with the information about the Trade Development Zone which was a commercially sensitive matter. I also told him that I was prepared to respond only to that part of his series of questions which I considered to be of a factual and non-subjective nature. I think it is necessary that I read the contents of that letter into Hansard:.

Dear Terry,

I refer to your written question No 61 and to the necessarily brief response on my part to several comments thereof. I must say that, if I had more faith in your ability to handle sensitive information, I may have been more cooperative and helpful in my response to the above-mentioned. It is quite evident, however, that the purpose of your questions goes beyond any constructive or genuine interest in the operation of the Trade Development Zone. On your track record to date, I am confident that you would be willing to prejudice sensitive commercial arrangements for short-term political gain and point-scoring.

The Trade Development Zone continues to have significant potential for the development of the Territory. An essential component of realising this potential is entering into commercial arrangements with participant companies. I will not jeopardise these arrangements by allowing each of our negotiating points to be turned into political footballs whose sole purpose is the political point-scoring of the opposition. The Territory simply cannot afford the luxury of indulging you in such matters.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Mines and Energy is impugning the good name of the Leader of the Opposition. As he well knows, answers to question on notice are published and, therefore, there can be no question about the confidentiality or otherwise of any answers to any questions on notice.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will continue:

When and if it becomes evident that the opposition is seeking to offer constructive criticism on the actions of the government, and able to understand the difference between sensitive and confidential information and public information, my position may be reviewed.

Unfortunately, this course of action is necessary given the dreadful track record of the Leader of the Opposition in matters relating to the Trade Development Zone. He has sought at every opportunity to sabotage the activities of the zone and to disrupt its orderly development. Honourable members will recall his disgraceful attacks on a fledgling Territory company and the role he played in creating difficult financial circumstances for that company. I regret that it has been necessary to treat with extreme distrust this approach from him for information on TDZ activities. However, he has nobody to blame but himself. I take this opportunity to inform honourable members that I have commissioned an independent study to review the marketing and promotional activities of the ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Unless I have read the minister's response incorrectly, he has informed the House that he will abuse question time in that he does not intend to answer pertinent questions asked by the opposition. I am prepared to be corrected. If the minister cares to respond to my point of order, that is fine. I hope he does. However, my understanding of his answer so far is that, as he has said to this House, he intends to abuse question time in the future when he considers that matters relating to financial arrangements in the Territory have been raised inappropriately and therefore should not be answered. I hope that he will respond to my point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. In fact, the minister is not required to supply an answer. However, I would ask the minister to relate his reply directly to the question.

Mr COULTER: Certainly, Mr Speaker. I was asked what arrangements I had entered into to review the incentives available from the Trade Development Zone. The purpose of this review is to ensure and reaffirm that the strategies and directions of the zone's marketing activities continue to provide maximum benefit for the Territory. This study will draw on our own experiences to date and those of similar authorities in states elsewhere.

The competition for Asian investment in Australia is fierce and it is growing with the establishment of new zones in Australia and overseas. The Territory started first and this study will ensure that we stay in front of the pack. I stress that the government will maintain a strong commitment to the Trade Development Zone. We are in it for the long haul and we will continue to support its progress as it moves towards its long-term goals. There have been some setbacks thus far and no doubt there will be more during the zone's development phase, but that will not deter us from our course.

Mr Speaker, can I draw honourable members attention to the Max Gillies style economist who appeared on the ABC 7.30 Report last night, Dr Nadarajah, a former economic adviser to Jon Isaacs, who canned ...

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I hear an interjection and I will have this on the public record. The Leader of the Opposition said that my statement that Dr Nadarajah was an adviser to a former Leader of the Opposition, Jon Isaacs, is rubbish. Let him stand up and deny that in this House.

Mr Bell: Why don't you talk about it instead of screaming?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I have examined extensive and detailed accounts of time and expenditure from K.K. Yeung. Last night, we had a barrage of Max Gillies economics from a lecturer at the Darwin Institute of Technology. It is unfortunate that he chooses to put himself in that position because he does himself no good and, of course, he reflects on the institute that he represents.

Mr Ede: This is typical. You denigrate anybody who disagrees with you.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, a former adviser to Jon Isaacs has to be held in some esteem even by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He was an economic adviser to your party. I had grave fears when the Treasurer brought down the budget yesterday. I thought the headlines would be: 'Water up 2¢ per kilolitre'. My fears were realised in the Max Gillies interpretation ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister was asked a question about the Trade Development Zone. He has ranged very broadly across the issue of the Trade Development Zone but he is now talking about and disparaging an academic at the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Mr Coulter: A former adviser to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: Sit down and shut up for a while.

Mr Coulter: I am sitting down.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, he is also talking about water charges. Neither of those subjects have a direct relationship to the matter at hand.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. I ask the minister again to relate his reply directly to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition shook his head about the petrochemical industry in the Northern Territory and the development that will occur there. He shook his head and said it would not happen. Mr Speaker, I will take him out to the Trade Development Zone in March next year and he can tell his story. He has only been there once and I think he was in the boot of a car at the time. I will take him out there in March next year and introduce him to the employees of the Trade Development Zone. He will have the opportunity to tell those 200 or 300 people why he thinks they should not be there.

Rebate for Off-Peak Electricity Use

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In view of the minister's expressed wish for an increase in the consumption of electricity throughout the community so that the general rates can be decreased in the future as promised repeatedly, would he consider increasing the rebate of 10% for off-peak use of electricity?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will consider it but I believe, as I stated in the House yesterday, that the real answer to the problem of electricity charges in the Northern Territory is gas flowing through the pipelines. That is the course that we have entered into and that we will embark on to reduce electricity charges in the Northern Territory. We need major utilisation of gas at the end of the pipeline.

Last evening, I met with representatives of AGL and TMOC, the operators of the Amadeus Basin field, and we discussed in detail the ways and means of doing that. We should not be penny-pinching in our approach; we really need the big projects. It is those projects that this government has embarked on, and we will put all our efforts into reducing electricity costs. I will be speaking more about that in my address to the Appropriation Bill today. The real answer is to attract the big utilisers in order to reduce electricity costs, and that is what this government is about.

Employment Statistics

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On Tuesday, the Leader of the Opposition displayed a big sign relating to labor statistics on employment. Can the minister provide information confirming or denying the position outlined by the Leader of the Opposition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to answer some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. There it is over there and it is taken from the ABS statistics. There has been a great deal of talk about supposedly dwindling employment and population in the Northern Territory. The justification for all of the doom and gloom that has been spread about, mainly by the Leader of the Opposition and others on the opposition benches, is the figures that have come from the ABS. I am sick to death of the selective use of ABS figures, figures that indicate that there is something wrong, without reference to the very positive figures that are there as well. It is very selective and very misleading, and one of the major causes why those few people who are leaving the Territory are leaving, Mr Speaker.

The ABS is a very hard working group of people who produce some very handy statistics but the very small sampling makes it very difficult to arrive at reasonable population figures. Statistics for motor vehicle registrations and power connections etc are very clear but, when it comes to population and work force figures, it is very hard from a small sampling base to arrive at reasonable figures. From March 1987 to March 1988, the number of employed fell by 9600 according to the figures. Unemployment rose by 3200, leaving 6400 people in limbo or having departed. The ABS figures show that the population rose by 3200 in the same period, Mr Speaker. The population figure actually rose in that period yet other figures would tend to deny that. Assuming half of the additional 3200 people were over the age of 15, the rise in unemployment should have been those who lost their jobs - 9600 plus 1600 or 11 200 in total. In the same period, the number in receipt of social security benefits dropped by 1015.

The reverse applied in May and June 1988 where employment figures made a staggering recovery with an extra 4800 jobs since April according to the bureau's figures. We saw a similar rise last year between August and September from something like 7% to 13%. It stayed around 12% or 13% for a period and then dropped back down to 7.4%. It is around that figure now. That is a clear indication that that is a sampling problem. 3000 people have come from the unemployed numbers, leaving 1700 workers coming from out of limbo or from interstate. However, the figures show a decrease in the population over the age of 15 from 106 900 to 105 800. The ABS says the wage and salary earners figure differs from the number employed because they exclude self-employed and a number of other categories in the break down to individual industries. Again, the more the figures are analysed, the harder it is to believe them.

As we know, the construction industry has had its troubles but, according to the figures, it has supposedly gained 1400 people in 12 months. Between December 1987 and January 1988, the wettest and slowest months, the industry went from 3100 to 4600 workers. Manufacturing has picked up 600 jobs and that is probably believable. Finance and property, which members opposite tell us are in a trough, picked up 100 people in the 12 months to March 1988 according to the ABS figures. The big losers are shown as community services which affects both the private and public sectors. These services are down by 4500 jobs and the wholesale and retail trade is down 2500. A closer look at the bureau's breakdown shows that all jobs lost in the community services were in the welfare and miscellaneous services area. 6100 of the 10 500 positions filled in March 1987 have gone in 12 months. The 4500 figure comes after gains in other areas. Quite clearly, that is unrealistic. Because this sort of drop would have a traumatic impact in any community, let alone one as small as the Territory, the ABS admits there must be some doubt about them.

Similarly, the ABS figures show that the wholesale and retail trade lost 2100 positions in a single month, from December 1987 to January 1988. While there is a bit of a fall-off in trade after Christmas, 2100 workers represents 20% of the industry. What is clear is that, as the huge government input in the early years of self-government winds back, we are getting more realistic levels. Population growth has slowed down accordingly. Some people are leaving, as they have always done. At various times of the year, we have lost people from the Territory. Despite the ABS figures, the MBA claims there have been more departures in the construction industry than is usual. But the ABS figures say we are up. This is more than balanced by new arrivals.

There are a number of vacant, established houses in Darwin, and we are all aware of them. We know that the RAAF, for instance, has 400 houses in Darwin.

Most of its people have gone and not necessarily to Katherine. They have gone interstate, and new people have come into Katherine. Those personnel have been replaced in Katherine. The honourable member should look at the new houses occupied on the airforce base and around Katherine East. Those houses have been vacated in Darwin, and I am a victim of that, and they have been taken up in Katherine.

I can prove this because, looking at the ABS figures, the number of domestic power connections has increased by 8% in 12 months. Where a house is unoccupied and power is disconnected, that counts as minus one. However, after taking into account the disconnections, connections have increased by 8%. Private telephone connections increased by 198, minus 0.69% between June and December. These have increased by 535 between December 1987 and June 1988. Business telephones increased by 1120 and 784 in the same periods. Unless people are obtaining 2 or more power connections to their homes, how should we account for that? Unless they are getting multiple telephone connections, how do we account for that? If the figures are wrong, so are the theories.

It is quite clear that, by selectively taking figures out of the ABS reports, we end up with the doom and gloom that the members opposite try to spread around the Territory in an endeavour to cause trouble for this government. That is all they are doing. I cannot fix the difficulties that the ABS has with its figures. It uses a very small sampling base in a very small population. The government does have positive plans for improving employment opportunities which I will be indicating today in my response to the Treasurer's second-reading speech on the budget.

Doctor in Groote Eylandt Region

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware that the Groote Eylandt region has only 1 doctor to service a population of some 3000 people and that a patient may have to wait for up to 2 weeks before being seen by a doctor? What is he doing to eliminate this problem?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. To put it into perspective, there are 60 000 people in New South Wales and 40 000 people in Victoria who have to wait up to 3 years for services in the health area. It is a fact that there is only 1 departmental doctor at Alyangula. I believe there is room for another doctor in the area to service Alyangula, Angurugu, Umbakumba and Numbulwar as well. As I have said before, the best option is to get general practitioners interested in taking up these services throughout the Territory because the Northern Territory government cannot possibly continue to provide doctors on wages to provide health services throughout the Northern Territory. If that is the case, of course, the magical Medicare provisions are not available to us and the Northern Territory taxpayer has to pay directly for what should be paid for through the national Medicare system.

Some 2700 people live at Groote Eylandt, according to the 1986 census. Emergencies are dealt with immediately. There is no doubt about that, and I have had no criticism in relation to that. These are handled by the doctor or the patient is immediately flown to Nhulunbuy. The waiting time on non-urgent matters is about 1 week to 10 days. A proposal has been made to the Angurugu Community Government Council for joint funding of a doctor. In fact, I

offered some \$30 000 to share the burden of providing a doctor at Angurugu. To date, its response has not arrived at my desk.

I also expect that Gemco should pay something towards the provision of an extra doctor there. Those negotiations are proceeding. However, I must say sadly that it does not seem to be showing a great deal of enthusiasm. We will continue to provide the existing service and we will be doing everything possible to encourage a general practitioner to go to that community.

Tourist Numbers

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TOURISM

I remind him of allegations in the media over some 2 or 3 months about a significant downturn in respect of tourist numbers in the Northern Territory and I refer him to pages 19-22 of Budget Paper No 6 which seem to contradict this. Would he advise on the current state of the tourism industry in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nightcliff for his question. It is gratifying to have the opportunity to talk about the current state of the tourist industry, particularly in light of the Leader of the Opposition's claim on the radio the other day about doom and gloom and a press release issued last July by the member for Stuart relating to problems in the Northern Territory tourist industry. If my memory is correct, when an unusually inquisitive journalist asked the member for Stuart where he got his facts, he said something to the effect that he had been walking around the streets of Alice Springs and there did not seem to be as many tourists around. It was almost embarrassing.

Mr Ede: I got 20 phone calls afterwards from businessmen telling me that I was exactly right.

Mr POOLE: Oh, yes. Unlike the Deputy Leader for the Opposition, who seems to take great joy in scaring people in industry, we took the trouble of recording many comments from almost everybody in major segments of the tourist industry in the Northern Territory. Almost every operator reported that his figures are as good as last year, if not slightly better. All people in the tourist industry acknowledged that there was a slow start to the season. However, they are quite confident that we will finish with the 10% to 15% increase that we have had for a number of years. It is a fact that the morale of staff in the government tourist bureaus interstate is affected when leading figures in the opposition claim that things are not going well.

I will remember the days in the government tourist bureaus in 1982 and 1983. When a bureau achieved \$1m worth of sales, the staff wanted to go out and have a party. Those sorts of figures are now the norm. This financial year, the bureaus wrote 23% more business than they wrote last year. The Adelaide bureau, for example, wrote \$2.67m in sales. In the early 1980s, the Alice Springs bureau and the Darwin bureau were lucky if they wrote over \$200 000-worth of sales a year. This year, the Alice Springs bureau wrote \$1.8m worth of business and Darwin wrote \$2.3m. The Brisbane bureau, one of the smallest bureaus in our network, wrote \$1.3m worth of business. The Perth bureau, one of our newer bureaus, nearly achieved its first \$1m - \$980 000-worth of business. The Sydney bureau wrote just under \$2m worth of business. Those people should be congratulated, not denigrated for their performance.

There have been accusations for months about directionless, leaderless government. That is quite interesting because private enterprise certainly does not think that if you look at the number of tour operators who have commenced operation: 57 new companies and tours have commenced operation since 1987. Look at the additional accommodation stock that exists in the Northern Territory. Since January 1987, there are 16% more hotels, motels, guest houses and holiday apartment rooms in Darwin alone and a 15% increase in the Darwin area in caravan park sites. In Katherine, in hotels and motels and holiday apartment rooms, there is an 11% increase and a 26% increase in caravan sites. In Tennant Creek, in hotels, motels and guest houses and holiday apartment rooms, there is an increase of 15% and an increase of 29% in caravan park sites. In Alice Springs, for hotels, motels, guest houses and holiday apartment rooms, there is an increase of 7% and 10% increase in caravan sites. In Yulara, for hotel, motel, guest house and holiday apartment rooms, there is an increase of 18%. In Kakadu, for hotel, motel, guest house and holiday apartment rooms, there is an increase of 45% and 118% for caravan park sites. That is not bad for an industry that is suffering a downturn, according to the opposition.

Even when looking at the ABS figures, which opposition members take great delight in flinging about, they miss the key to the whole matter. When talking about the March quarter for 1988, which is probably the worst quarter of any year for the tourist industry in the Northern Territory ...

Mr Smith: I was comparing March against March, Eric.

Mr POOLE: That is right, and the number of available rooms had increased by 11.8%. Guest arrivals were down by 2.3%. What a huge problem, Mr Speaker! The takings from accommodation, which did not receive a mention, were up by 14.3% and, more importantly, room nights, the key to the industry, were up by 4.5%. Thus, the 2.3% decrease over the March quarter was negligible.

We all acknowledge the difficulties that Expo has caused, but it certainly is not having a long-term effect for the industry in the Territory. Caravan park site occupancy for the March quarter was 17.4% compared with 23.2% in the 1987 quarter. They represent the very people whom the tourist industry believes would immediately be attracted to Expo. But the total caravan park capacity increased by 12.1% during this period, and I think that, when the figures are released at the end of the year for the 1988 tourist season, we will have some very good news indeed.

In a casual, throwaway fashion, the opposition has talked about airline capacity and flights to and from the Northern Territory. Domestic capacity has increased by 5% into Darwin since January 1987. It has increased by 15% into Alice Springs and by 30% into Yulara. It is a real worry for the airline industry. Airlines are trying to find enough planes to offer the seats, and believe you me, Mr Speaker, despite what the gentlemen opposite think, airlines do not put aircraft on and fly them around with empty seats. International capacity into the Northern Territory has increased by 24% since January 1987, and it is expected - these are not my figures, but the industry's figures - to increase by a further 17% between November and April.

Mr Ede: What was the 23rd fact? I have just forgotten it.

Mr POOLE: It is quite unbelievable, Mr Speaker. Basically, all I am saying is that opposition members do not know what they are talking about when they talk about the tourist industry. If opposition members, apart from the Leader of the Opposition, had attended the Brojga Awards the other night, they

would have seen the confidence of the industry. They do themselves a great disservice because, in effect, they basically downplay the industry and, by preaching doom and gloom, they destroy the morale of the people involved in that industry. Of course, morale is one of the key ingredients to successful selling. I am very confident that the industry will continue, as always, to ignore the members opposite.

Berry Springs Zoo

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING and CONSERVATION

In the budget speech last year, and again yesterday, the Treasurer, to be consistent, indicated that the Berry Springs zoo would be open in December this year. Would the honourable minister confirm that the Berry Springs zoo will open for only 2 weeks in December this year, to ensure that it qualifies for a bicentennial grant, but that it will not open permanently until May 1989 and that a major reason for this delay has been the appointment of additional staff to the zoo?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, hopefully the zoo can open in December and stay open but that depends on the ability of the development to be concluded in time. Obviously, we will not open the zoo prematurely because we want to ensure that it is opened in the best way possible. I think we should be looking at what a marvellous piece of work it is. Over the last few years, a dedicated team of people has developed one of the best zoos in the world. It has been done by people who have had their heads down and their tails up and they have worked non-stop. They have been innovative and have spent a very small amount of money to create something that is worth 4 or 5 times that expenditure. That has been done with sweat and with honest toil. Hopefully, we can have the place open by December but, if it is not finished then, we will have to wait a little longer, perhaps until March or April.

Most certainly, as we did on one occasion previously, we would like to open the premises and let the community see the sort of work that is occurring there. I am extremely disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to attack the government in some way with regard to the magnificent work that has been carried out on a development which will be recognised throughout the country as being one of the greatest zoos, not only in this country, but in this region and possibly in the world. I cannot speak too highly of what is occurring at Berry Springs. I am sure that, when the community has the opportunity to see what is being created there, they will realise that the nitpicking, ridiculous accusations the Leader of the Opposition is trying to make today flow from a figment of his imagination.

Again, he is trying to undermine the confidence, not only of the people involved in building the zoo - and again I cannot speak too highly of their efforts - but he is trying to undermine confidence in our community as to what is occurring at Berry Springs which is designed to attract visitors to this area of the Territory. Those visitors will need accommodation. They will need to spend money for food and for entertainment and that will create jobs for our children and for other people who want to come to the Territory because it is a great place to live. It is typical of the negative attitude of members opposite. The sooner the community realises that everything that opposition members say about any sort of development in the Territory is negative and unproductive and, most of the time, totally untrue, the better off we will be.

Mr Smith: If you had provided proper funds for it, you would not have a problem now.

Mr MANZIE: Yes, Mr Speaker. We hope to open the zoo in December. If that is not possible because of construction problems that arise from time to time, we will open it for a short time to allow people to see what is occurring. We will have the official opening when the project is fully completed. An abominable attitude is shown by the members opposite to development in the Territory.

Air-conditioning of Preschools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, I noticed in reading the budget papers tabled yesterday, under the heading of 'Education Funding, New Capital Works', that an amount of \$1.295m was allocated for the installation of air-conditioning in primary schools. In view of the numerous requests received from preschool parent associations for the air-conditioning of their preschools, can the minister advise if these funds will be used to satisfy their well-founded requests?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I know how the member for Jingili feels in relation to the preschool air-conditioning situation. The government has not changed its stand in relation to its air-conditioning policy. The amount included in the budget specifically refers to the need to air-condition primary schools. It is a matter of determining the priorities. We are committed to air-conditioning primary schools. I have also made it very clear, in responding to a question from the member for Jingili that, where there is an identified need to look at the conditions in the general learning area of preschools, the government will do so. If it is determined that air-conditioning is required, provision has been made in the budget for that to occur.

I make it very clear to honourable members, however, that government policy is not changing. We have made it clear that, in new preschools, we will air-condition withdrawal areas. That is very important. I have also made it clear that there are queries about the health aspect of air-conditioning preschools, mainly because of the age of the children and their movement to and from classroom and outside areas which could create health problems.

It will be necessary to set guidelines for the assessment of preschool air-conditioning requirements. I would also like to make it very clear to the honourable member that, as he mentioned in yesterday's radio program, some parents do not see air-conditioning as a requirement in preschools. Those parents and their concerns have to be recognised. When guidelines are set, we will definitely be ensuring that consideration is given to the views of parents who do not feel that preschools should be air-conditioned. I have asked the department, in line with the standing policy, to investigate all Northern Territory schools with non-airconditioned classroom areas. The department will identify those with design difficulties which aggravate problems of heat build-up. These will be ranked according to the degree of the problems involved and their case for air-conditioning will be assessed by myself according to the policy and available funds. There is money in the budget to address the matter if the need is demonstrated, and I guess we will hear more from the member for Jingili as time goes by.

Sentences in Alice Springs Court

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

When can I expect an answer to a question I have had on notice since March relating to the sentencing by the Alice Springs Supreme Court of people convicted in slaying cases since the introduction of the Criminal Code? For the Attorney-General's information, the matters on which I requested information concerned the nature of the convictions, length of sentences and the actual time served in jail by persons convicted.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the question is on notice, obviously a reply is being prepared and will be forwarded. However, I would like to make one comment. The member for Sadadeen has made some rather strong and stupid accusations and allegations about the operation of the courts. I find it disappointing that attacks on judges and members of our judiciary and court systems are being made by uninformed members.

Mr Collins: I tried to get information but you will not give it to me.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, he does not understand the court system. He does not understand that the courts are not an arm of government. The judiciary is totally independent of government and any suggestion that the government should have any influence on the judiciary or the decisions that it makes is abhorrent. If they have a problem with the way the courts operate, I would urge honourable members not to attack the judiciary as the judiciary are not in a position to defend themselves, nor should they be.

I will certainly find out why it has taken so long to provide the information to the honourable member. I will ensure that the information is provided to him in writing. If he wants to ask me some specific questions, I could probably provide certain figures in relation to sentencing for murders or the numbers of people who have gone to trial in both Alice Springs and Darwin.

Funding for Private Schools

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Yesterday, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition inferred that the government was unwilling to offer assistance to St Phillip's College whilst at the same time being generous in its assistance to the proposed Darwin International Grammar School. Can the minister clarify the position in relation to government funding of both schools and can he further clarify the future of the proposed DIGS?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I was expecting a question from the member for Stuart as opposition spokesman on education because he indicated yesterday that he had some questions that he wanted to ask in relation to the Darwin International Grammar School and he made some outlandish remarks about our lack of assistance to St Phillip's College.

The government is very disappointed that the Darwin International Grammar School is facing difficulties. There is no question about that and there are many Territorians who are disappointed that the project is in difficulty. Tremendous benefits would flow from it, not only for people in the immediate area of the school, but right throughout the Territory. In addition, it is a \$30m construction project. It will offer a choice in educational opportunities. One of the first concerns of people who are considering moving to a place is the education that will be offered to their children. DIGS is a very important part of that and it is about time the opposition started to acknowledge that the non-government sector has a very important role to play in education. About 18% of our education facilities in the Territory are non-government as compared to 25% in the other states.

The member for Stuart knocked the Kormilda proposal - a proposal which will provide opportunities for Aboriginal children, overseas children and local children, and give people in the bush an opportunity to obtain their education in the Northern Territory. All we have from members of the opposition is a completely negative attitude and they should be condemned for it. We are looking ...

Mr Ede: Overseas students at Kormilda?

Mr Dondas: Wankers.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Casuarina will withdraw that remark.

Mr DONDAS: I withdraw it unreservedly, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would suggest that the member for MacDonnell, if he wishes to pay attention to the answer being given by the minister, should dispose of his newspaper and cease his interjections.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the government is interested in providing educational opportunities for all Northern Territory students and they should be able to receive their education in the Northern Territory. It was interesting last night that the member for Stuart complained about our jumping in and helping DIGS whilst, on the other hand, he complained that we had been tardy in our response in respect of St Phillip's College. What a load of nonsense that is! We have been helping the non-government schools for years - St Phillip's College, the Marrara Christian School, the Catholic education system.

St Phillip's College received the normal support that we give to others in respect of interest subsidy, capital repayments and per capita funding. In fact, I wrote to Jan Heaslip, the Chairman of St Phillip's College, on 12 May saying that we would be giving them 10% on the college's loan of \$1.25m over 10 years as well as a 50% capital repayment for the \$853 400 costs of the boarding facilities that they were building. We will continue to support St Phillip's College. We have also given a special boarding subsidy. The opposition spokesman on education should know these things. I query whether he has done his research on this matter. We have also given a number of one-off special grants in relation to outstanding repairs and maintenance. We are looking at other ways in which we can help St Phillip's College play a very important role in our education system. To say that we are not supporting it is absolute nonsense. We will continue to support the Isolated Children and Parents Association.

There are so many benefits that can result from DIGS going ahead. It is disappointing that, at this stage, difficulties are being experienced. The government does not, however, in any way step back from its commitment to assist the Darwin International Grammar School. I recall the nonsense and the lies which were aired in relation to the government's decision to assist the school. We were supposed to be taking money out of the education budget and disadvantaging public education. What a load of nonsense! We were taking steps to advantage the education system, to save money in the long term and to give people opportunities. The opposition education spokesman divided the total cost of the project by the number of students to be enrolled and came up with a ridiculous figure of a government subsidy of \$22 000 a head. What a load of nonsense!

I hope that the people who are endeavouring to bring the project together are successful. A number of options are being looked at. There is a meeting tonight of which honourable members would be aware, in relation to a particular proposal which is being put forward. I reiterate the government's line. We will continue to support the Darwin International Grammar School. I make it very clear that no government money has gone into the Darwin International Grammar School. Despite the efforts of the opposition to infer otherwise, we have maintained all along that, until the Darwin International Grammar School opens its doors, the government is not guaranteeing it in any way. It is not offering letters of comfort and no government money will be spent on it until the school is up and running. The offer, however, is still there.

We cannot afford to knock projects such as this. Such projects are very important to the whole education system in the Territory and it is about time the opposition spokesman on education looked at the positive aspects of such projects in providing opportunities for children in the Northern Territory. He should not simply knock it and say it will not work before it even gets off the ground. Let us try to get it off the ground! I wish the people involved in the project well. It will offer tremendous benefits to the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper. In doing so, Mr Speaker, can I remind honourable members of the sessional order adopted by the House that questions asked during question time or during the adjournment debate can be answered by the responsible minister during the period immediately following question time.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Government Debt

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I wish to respond to a couple of questions asked of me by the Leader of the Opposition. My response may help him in his contribution to debate this morning.

Yesterday, he asked me if the figure of \$1300m that I had used as total government loan debt included an amount of \$150m in statutory authority loan debts. The figure I used does not include that amount and neither it should. The Leader of the Opposition has made a mistake in his calculation of the Northern Territory debt. The figure he eventually reached was about \$2400m which included a figure of \$251m as semi-government loans on-lent to authorities. The fact is you cannot count those loans twice. The only debt is to the source from which the money was borrowed. The Northern Territory government borrows money and on-lends it to authorities like the Power and Water Authority and the Port Authority. They repay Treasury from their

revenue and Treasury then repays the bank which lent the funds or the group who invested in government bonds. It therefore cannot be counted twice as a Northern Territory debt. The Leader of the Opposition should be careful about such double-counting.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Capital Works Expenditure

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, another question raised by the Leader of the Opposition, probably with Treasury officers, related to the fact that capital works expenditure appeared to have been reduced from \$202m to \$177m. Those figures appear on table 5 at page 12 of Budget Paper No 3. The way to look at the global capital works program ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The information is obviously important and quite significant, but it is not being given in response to a question that I have asked, either in question time or the adjournment debate. Unfortunately, I think the Chief Minister will have to find some other way of delivering his information.

Mr PERRON: That is not a problem, Mr Speaker. I could have provided him with the information but, if he wants to pull a technicality on me, I will cease to answer his query.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
DNA Fingerprinting System

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah asked yesterday whether the Northern Territory Police Force proposed to introduce a DNA fingerprinting system in the Northern Territory. I am advised by the police that DNA-profiling technology, which I guess is what the member is referring to, is presently unavailable in Australia. Forensic DNA-profiling is used for identification or elimination of suspects by examination of genetic material from blood or semen. The technology has been used on one occasion by the Northern Territory Police Force, via a laboratory in the United States. Three Australian states are preparing for the training of personnel and the establishment of specialised laboratory facilities. The technology is considered to be a major breakthrough in crime investigation and its introduction to the Northern Territory is presently being considered.

Moneys Owed for Services to Beaufort Hotel

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

On a number of occasions, the previous Treasurer stated that it would be a condition of sale of the Beaufort Hotel that moneys outstanding to the Northern Territory government would be paid. In fact, on 2 June last year, the previous Treasurer stated that the government would not reconnect services to the new owner until the debt to the Northern Territory was paid in full. The debt at that stage was over \$1m for electricity, \$76 000 for water and sewerage charges and \$250 000 in payroll tax. Now that the sale has been completed, has the Northern Territory government recovered the moneys owed to it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have the specific information before me. However, I understand that the settlement in relation to the sale of the Beaufort Hotel has not yet been finalised and that the amounts are still outstanding.

Capital Works Expenditure in Alice Springs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer to a report in the Centralian Advocate last Friday. It quoted budget figures supplied by the opposition claiming that capital works spending in Alice Springs had been slashed by \$11.5m to \$20.7m this year. As the minister's department is responsible for overseeing the expenditure of a large proportion of the capital works budget, could he please advise the House on the level of capital works to be carried out in the Alice Springs area this financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would certainly be delighted to provide for members of this House, for the public generally and for those people who take a particular interest in question time, information concerning the realities of the capital works program in Alice Springs. Once again, it is unfortunate that there are not only people who deliberately misrepresent or misinterpret the facts but people who either are not able to add up themselves or misinterpret people who misinterpret people who misinterpret. Obviously, the Labor candidate for the electorate of Flynn in Alice Springs thought she could make some gains out of using the ALP's distortionate figures in regard to capital works ...

Mr Bell: There is no such word as 'distortionate', Fred.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell may like to take note of the details of the program for Alice Springs, which may be of benefit to some of his constituents.

As the member for Ludmilla stated, the capital works program is largely the responsibility of the Department of Transport and Works. In terms of the department's capital works program, it will inject a cash value of \$17.3m into the Alice Springs economy this year, a considerable increase on last year's figure of \$14.3m. That is what counts for businesses in Alice Springs - the cash flow into the local economy through construction projects and supplies for them.

Last year, despite cuts in the roads program across the board, roads expenditure in Alice Springs was maintained. In fact, Alice Springs has received favoured treatment from the CLP government, in contrast to the outrageous claims of the Labor candidate for Flynn that it has suffered because of what she calls the 'Berrimah-line syndrome'. Mr Speaker, this government has no concept of a Berrimah line. It has the interests of all Territorians at heart and is extremely fair and reasonable in the allocation of funds to all areas of the Northern Territory.

The Alice Springs region benefits from expenditure in a number of areas. \$4.3m has been allocated to power programs, including Aboriginal essential services, \$3m to the water program, \$6.8m to housing and at least \$0.6m to works being carried out by the Conservation Commission. The total of all the allocations that I have mentioned is \$32m.

Mr Ede: Not in Alice Springs.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the insanity of the members opposite! Who will build those projects out in the bush in the Alice Springs region? Predominantly, it will be Alice Springs people who are used to the conditions down there.

Next Monday night, when I am in Alice Springs and I have the opportunity to talk to people who are capable of rational and analytical assessment of what this program is all about, they will have the opportunity to hear what this government is doing for their region. They will appreciate that, in effect, our program has increased, not decreased. The Labor candidate for Flynn is claiming - and I use quotations attributed to her and I guess they have originated from the Leader of the Opposition who has difficulty with simple arithmetic - 2 years ago, \$56.7m was the total allocation for capital works in the Alice Springs area. In fact, it was less than that, Mr Speaker, but that is a deliberate misuse or total lack of understanding of what the figures mean. It is claimed that, in 1987-88, the figure was \$32.3m. That at least is in the right ball park but it is claimed that the figure this year will be \$20.7m. As I have just outlined, Transport and Works alone accounts for \$17m. The total of the few items that I mentioned - and that is not a comprehensive list - is \$30m. Proportionately, that represents a fairer share, if you like, of the capital works program for Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, because you are from the region, I am sure that you appreciate that this government's commitment to road programs in that area, to facilities in Aboriginal communities and to the construction of public buildings, has been more than reasonable over the years, and I think that is appropriate. The region down there is developing. I mentioned some of those figures to highlight the total incompetence of the members opposite in simple arithmetic. I despair. I did suggest, perhaps a little tongue in cheek, that the Minister for Education ought to introduce additional adult education classes on simple arithmetic and I would be pleased to help sponsor some students from the opposite side of the House.

In addition to that capital works program, it is important to look at effectiveness. The program last year was in the order of what it is this year, in total terms. Certainly, there has not been a dramatic chop from \$30m-odd to \$20m as has been alleged.

Mr Smith: Why are you hiding these things?

Mr FINCH: I am not hiding anything. What it did include was \$9m for equipment for the power station at Alice Springs - a fine project. But, whilst it did illustrate a commitment to Alice Springs, its effect on the local community is obviously minimal. The effect of this year's budget is far superior to what the figures show.

In addition, the repairs and maintenance program for Alice Springs through the Department of Transport and Works is worth some \$8.1m. I am not sure what the repair and maintenance programs of other authorities are worth. I mention that specifically because it is what those small businesses - the electricians, the 2 or 3-man-band people - survive on. That is their bread and butter, and I have mentioned it particularly because Alice Springs' share of the repairs and maintenance program is \$8.1m out of \$32.6m which is not at all an unfair proportion. I will leave it for the next half hour for the member for Stuart to work out what percentage that is, but undoubtedly he will come up with a figure ...

Mr Ede: Percentage run down.

Mr FINCH: Just to demonstrate his ignorance there, he would be well aware that the total repairs and maintenance program has increased by some \$2m-odd to \$32.6m total. Alice Spring's share went from \$7.2m to \$8.1m, \$0.9m out of \$2.3m or whatever the exact figure was. Certainly, a greater increase, by proportion, than for the rest of the Territory.

That is a clear demonstration of the commitment of the Northern Territory government, the CLP government, and one would hope that we will continue with CLP representation rather than have people in this House who cannot add up. That way, we will be able to get on with the development of this Territory in a fair and equitable way. We have no concept of a Berrimah line, and I despise people who are counterproductive and negative in their input to this debate.

Moneys Owed for Services to Beaufort Hotel

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Is it still the intention of the Northern Territory government, as announced by the Treasurer last year, to reclaim the moneys owing to it by the people, who I think are the previous operators of the Beaufort Hotel, in respect of electricity, water and sewerage charges and payroll tax, and is it the intention to reclaim that money before the final approval is put in place for the new owners to take over?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm to the Leader of the Opposition that it is still the government's firm intention to recover moneys outstanding for charges and taxes owing to the Northern Territory government as a result of the past financial difficulties of the Beaufort Hotel. The understanding is a very clear one between ourselves and the current owners of the hotel. I can inform the Leader of the Opposition that the electricity accounts are being paid now from time to time. There is an outstanding amount up to a certain period. I do not know what the figure is, but the payments have been resumed ...

Mr Smith: But \$1m is still owing.

Mr PERRON: Are you asking me or telling me?

Mr Smith: Both.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, it seems that the honourable member has the information he requires on this matter. I do not know why he has asked me the question. However, at no stage has the Territory government moved from its position that debts outstanding to the Territory will be recovered on change of ownership of the hotel.

Review of Regulations for School Councils

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

He has been engaged in a review of the amended regulations governing the operation of school councils in the Northern Territory. Can he indicate what progress has been made, whether changes are likely and, if so, when those changes will be implemented?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. When I initiated the review of school council regulations, I did not realise the extent of the task that I had taken on board. To date, I have spoken with the majority of school councils' representatives. I have spoken with 50 school council representatives and principals. There remain 5 councils that I have to speak with and it is my intention to ensure that I speak with those people prior to making any final decision in relation to the school council regulations.

Before deciding to take that course of action, I checked to make sure that no schools were experiencing hardship at present. No Annual General Meetings were due to take place and no penalties or disadvantages have been imposed on schools at this time. I wanted to make sure that I spoke with all the council representatives face to face. It has been an interesting exercise and some changes will be made. I want to ensure that the regulations will be made and put in place in a responsible manner and, as soon as I have spoken with those remaining councils, I will be making a decision on this issue.

I reiterate that the government was not seeking to deprive parents of the opportunity to attend school council meetings. Indeed, the previous Minister for Education made the following statement: 'I want parents, and the broader community, to be representatives on school councils, and that needs to happen if school councils are going to enter into the process of full devolution'. It appears that the issue of the devolution of powers created the problems that we have today. That matter is being addressed and I will be speaking to the remaining 5 councils in the very near future during the course of my trips throughout the Territory because some of those areas are away from the main centres. The Borrooloola School Council, for example, is one that I have not yet spoken with. Following discussion with those 5 councils, I will be making a decision.

Psychiatric Services in Central Australia

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

This is a further question in respect of the litany of the government's broken election promises from last year. In its lead up to the 1987 Northern Territory elections, the honourable minister will recall his government's promise, inter alia, that it would 'set up an assessment team in Alice Springs

to assess the psychiatrically-ill and intellectually-disabled persons who were behaviourally disturbed'. The team was to comprise 'a psychiatrist, a psychologist, social workers and support staff and it would help set up community-based psychiatric services in central Australia'. Can he explain to this House why his government has failed to deliver?

ANSWER

Dear oh dear, it looks as though I have stirred him into a bit of action.

Mr BELL: It is of concern to the people of Alice Springs and the voters in Flynn.

Mr DALE: Last week, Mr Speaker, I clearly indicated the lack of attention of the honourable member to his shadow portfolio responsibilities and urged the Leader of the Opposition to do something about it by giving the very important shadow responsibility for health and community services to the member for Arnhem who was doing a fantastic job in that particular area previously. There is no doubt that the shadow spokesman could be termed only as lazy in relation to his responsibilities. He spends most of his time ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Health and Community Services has ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: ... become fairly broad in his answer to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Order! When I call the honourable member to order, I expect him to resume his seat. There is a point of order. Honourable members must not cast aspersions on other members and I ask the minister to withdraw that comment.

Mr DALE: I withdraw unreservedly, Mr Speaker.

I certainly did call on the honourable member to put a little more endeavour into his portfolio responsibilities in that I had to ask some backbenchers to put questions to me in relation to my portfolio. I am still waiting for him to ask me one on the problem with meningococcal meningitis in central Australia. I have an answer here that I am really keen to give but, unfortunately, the honourable member has not got across the situation yet. He has been busy trying to stir up industrial disputation at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

All of the promises made in respect of my area of responsibility at this time last year have been fulfilled. Indeed, they have been fulfilled on budget. I am very proud of the efforts of the people within my department. I will be making my statement in relation to the Appropriation Bill today. I am sure that the honourable member opposite, all the people of Alice Springs and, for that matter, all the people throughout the Northern Territory will understand that this Northern Territory government cares for each and every person in the Northern Territory.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing orders demand that an answer be relevant to the question. Not once in that answer did we get from the honourable minister any reference to his election promise in relation to assessment teams or facilities or psychiatric services. It was outrageous.

Mr DALE: In speaking to the point of order, it is fairly obvious that the honourable member does not even recall what he asked. He was referring specifically to the breaking of promises by, in particular myself, during the past 12 months. My answer was absolutely relevant.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Date Industry in Central Australia

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

What plans, if any, does the government have to help further develop the fledgling date industry in central Australia?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for some time now my department has been undertaking a good deal of work in relation to the fledgling date industry. Indeed, when I was in Alice Springs a few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of visiting some date growers to see the work that is being undertaken and to meet with various people who have an interest in the industry. Some varieties of dates have been shown to have potential for commercial development in central Australia and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has identified an area at Deep Well, south of Alice Springs, which is believed to be suitable for commercial date production. Soil and water investigations in the area indicate that commercial date production might well be viable there. Some tissue-culture plantlets have been imported into the Northern Territory and the department's input into the industry is assisting it to develop.

It is worth noting that an officer of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has recently won a Churchill scholarship - I believe it is the only such scholarship awarded in the Northern Territory this year - to enable him to travel overseas to undertake research in relation to the propagation of dates in the Northern Territory. I am sure that the efforts of that officer will provide a great deal of background information which will be of great interest and value to this fledgling industry.

The department recently imported 10 Zahadi, 10 Khadrany and 30 other tissue-cultured palms from France. These are in quarantine in Darwin. Arrangements are also being made through Dr Carpenter to import 40 offshoots of known commercial date varieties from California during 1988 and a further 60 offshoots during 1989-90 as they become available. These offshoots are for the establishment of a germ-plasm collection/multiplication block at the Arid Zone Research Institute in Alice Springs. Negotiations are being conducted with the Australian Quarantine Service to use a site, possibly near Katherine, as an open quarantine area for the importation of approximately 1000 date offshoots. The reason for choosing Katherine as a possible site for such a quarantine service is to ensure that any diseases that may be introduced in the plants are not transmitted and that other date species are not in close proximity. This would minimise the spread of any disease.

I can assure the member for Sadadeen that the department has a great interest in the possibilities of the date industry. I certainly share that interest, having seen the work undertaken so far in Alice Springs. I will be pleased to keep him informed as further developments occur.

Traffic Problems in Nightcliff

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer him to the Nightcliff traffic planning study conducted in 1984 and 1985 and subsequent extensive community consultation over a period of some 2 years, particularly in relation to Progress Drive and the Nightcliff shopping centre area, and the method now supported by the community, the government and the Darwin City Council to solve traffic problems in the area. What action is now being taken to implement solutions to overcome the long-standing, unsatisfactory and unsafe traffic situation in that area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, clearly the member for Nightcliff's interest in this subject dates back to his early days in this House. Obviously, he has participated in the appropriate planning studies undertaken over the last 4 years. The traffic congestion that prevails in the Nightcliff shopping centre area, particularly along Progress Drive and at the intersection of Dick Ward Drive, is quite obvious, both during working hours and on weekends.

In addition to the traffic study undertaken by the Department of Transport and Works in 1984, a number of inputs have come from the community generally and from the Darwin City Council. In fact, the member for Nightcliff called a series of public meetings earlier this year to ensure that the public were satisfied with the proposals that were being put forward. These include a roundabout at the intersection of Dick Ward Drive and Progress Drive, and a number of other appropriate measures in the vicinity of the shopping centre itself.

The Northern Territory government is contributing \$150 000 to these works. I understand that it was transferred to the Darwin City Council in late July and I have been advised that the council's target date for tenders is September this year. I would assume, therefore, that works will be completed by the end of the year and, one would hope, by the time school holidays commence.

Another important part of the study related to what is referred to as the Nightcliff bypass road, now included in the budget. The purpose of that road is to eliminate through-traffic from the area of the Nightcliff shopping centre. The intention is to reroute commuter traffic and not to detract in any way from the commercial viability of the shopping centre. That \$1.2m project is planned for this current year. There are a number of difficulties in relation to the finalisation of the route, but it will be somewhere behind the site of the old Nightcliff drive-in. A number of sacred sites have been identified in the area and we are working with the Kulaluk people to ensure that the route that is selected finally is appropriate and will be acceptable to them.

We would expect that, having resolved all of those matters, survey and design will commence with a target for tenders being let in December, construction to commence in February and completion, we would assume, in about June or July next year. An allocation of some \$0.6m has been provided in this budget and, all going well, the project ought to be completed early in the next financial year. The member for Nightcliff's contribution in bringing the community and the technocrats together to find the most appropriate resolution is to be applauded.

Sacred Sites at Mount Samuel

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Has he received representations from the mining industry in relation to purported Aboriginal sacred sites at Mount Samuel near Tennant Creek and, if so, what is the nature of the concerns expressed by the industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. Indeed, some newspaper stories have been published regarding Mount Samuel and some industry response has been forthcoming in recent times. I can inform honourable members that, in recent weeks, my office has been deluged - as has the office of the Minister for Lands and Housing - with verbal and written comments about a proposal by the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority to register a 16 km² site in the Mount Samuel region.

A considerable body of documentation has already built up about this issue, and I must say that valid reasons for concern apparently do exist. The Mount Samuel issue is looking remarkably similar to an earlier controversy about claims of a sacred site at Coronation Hill. Indeed, the Coronation Hill issue has just been brought up to date by the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority itself, with the production of a video called, 'Bulajang Sickness Country'. I watched that video last week and, apart from the professional quality of the narration supplied by the ABC's Tony Walker, I noted its strong anti-mining and anti-development message. I presume the production of the film was requested by members of the Jawoyn community and I would certainly not presume that it was put together as some sort of good idea by the authority itself.

In effect, the video is a sequel to another produced by the authority a couple of years ago which purported to show that the Aboriginal people did not want mining at Coronation Hill, and that Coronation Hill itself was a sacred site of immense importance, even though all the available evidence placed the site somewhat distant from Coronation Hill. I have asked the Minister for Lands, Housing and Conservation, as the minister responsible for the authority, to seek necessary information about the video, and he has put this request to the authority. The information sought concerns the number of copies produced, the distribution list and the cost involved. It is also important to learn from the authority whether or not its board gave approval for the production of the video and whether the responsible minister was consulted before it was decided to proceed with the production.

The Mount Samuel issue raises concerns of similar magnitude to those which troubled this government at Coronation Hill. Without apparent warning, and despite every earlier indication that mining operations and potential projects did not contravene any sites of significance, the authority has announced that it intends registering a site known as the Marla Marla Kanitaji Site Complex, covering the Mount Samuel-Skipper Hill line of outcrop for a distance of approximately 8 km by 2 km. This area is highly prospective for gold, and at least 1 company working within the boundaries of the claimed site has been told by the authority to stop work immediately. Another company has had a granted mining tenement inside the claimed site since 1965.

The Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority has indicated its willingness to work with the companies on what it calls 'site clearance exercises'. It will do that for a fee, and quite a fat fee at that. In

correspondence to mining companies, the authority quotes the following schedule: anthropologist's fees at \$256 a day and Aboriginal custodian fees of \$75 a day, plus travel expenses at 55¢ per kilometre, plus incidentals including food. In all, the quote for the particular site clearance job has a bottom line of just under \$3500. That might give a clue to my curiosity about how the production of anti-mining videos is funded.

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, you are wondering why this site claim has emerged only now in one of the Territory's oldest mining regions. It seems that, in this case, there may be a demarcation dispute. Questions about possible sacred sites were first raised, not by the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority, but by a Tennant Creek-based project officer for the Central Land Council. In March this year, the officer wrote a none-too-subtle letter to a mining company active in the region warning that sacred sites might be standing in the way of the company's development plans. He went on to say that the company would be well advised to deal directly with the Central Land Council or else face considerable costs and delays. The officer pointed out that the Central Land Council was empowered to enter into a sacred sites protection agreement.

The company sent the letter to the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority in May and he replied on the same day strongly cautioning against entering into any agreement with the Central Land Council. The director said that the power to identify sacred sites resided only with the authority and that Central Land Council staff would be technically committing an offence if they entered a sacred site. In short, the director noted any such agreement would be in conflict with the provisions of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act. The authority made it clear to the mining company that it objected strenuously to the Central Land Council muscling in on its territory. The authority has announced its intention to register some 16 km² of the region as a sacred site. Meanwhile, orderly mining development has been disrupted and development plans thrown into confusion.

I have also received some preliminary advice on sites of Aboriginal significance in the Mount Samuel region which appears to be somewhat in conflict with the advice from the authority. All in all, it is a disturbing situation and I believe the mining industry has just about run out of its store of patience in relation to matters concerning Aboriginal sacred sites in the Northern Territory. It may well be that the Territory government's tolerance is likewise being strained and it is my firm view that legislation governing the activities of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority deserves examination.

Development at Manton Dam

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Having read conflicting reports in the newspapers about the nature and extent of the government's proposed development at Manton Dam, whilst I would not dream of suggesting there was any argument between the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Minister for Tourism on this matter, could he indicate exactly what is planned for the development of the Manton Dam area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am speaking in my role as the minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority. As the honourable member would know, Manton Dam has been drained. The contractors are removing trees within the dam and the

dam is being cleared to provide a venue for power boating. A road will be made into Manton Dam, a car park will be provided and an area will be cleared of trees.

May I say there have been some tremendous stories about Manton Dam and what is in it. The number of bullets that have been collected in Manton Dam - I will not say, 'would fill a 44-gallon drum' because that got me into trouble once before in this Assembly - is considerable. We have been told that there are Spitfires in there. We were also told that, before the establishment of the crocodile farm, all problem crocodiles were put into Manton Dam. The people clearing the trees are in waders up to their waists and a person is standing by with a shotgun. In fact, one of the operators of a chain saw was concerned for his personal safety the other day because the man supposedly standing guard was more concerned about picking up bullets. He threatened the man's person with the chain saw if he did not keep his eye on potential crocodiles that might come in between the gumboots which he was wearing.

Our intention is quite simple: to provide a venue for power boating in the Northern Territory. However, in doing this, a number of other options have been put to the government. Some people have approached myself and the Minister for Tourism with proposals to open up the area as a tourist resort. These proposals are at a very preliminary stage but some people have realised the potential opportunities that could exist in that region. That is all I would like to say on that. There are no firm proposals before the government to build 5-star motels on the escarpment or indeed 3-star motels on the foreshore of the dam but people certainly have an interest in the area. There is another proposal to lift the wall of the dam by 1.5 m to try to provide a much bigger expanse of water in that region and then to interconnect Manton Dam to Darwin River Dam by way of a pipeline. That is also at a very preliminary stage.

Thus, we have 3 options. The first is to provide a venue for power boating. That is being carried out. The road is being built, trees are being removed, car parks are being built and a beached area will be created at the Batchelor end of the dam. Several people have approached the government indicating that they would like to build in that region. That is all that has happened at this stage. The other proposal is to lift the dam wall by 1.5 m and put a interconnecting pipeline across to Darwin River Dam. The only thing that I am praying for is an early and good wet season to ensure that Manton Dam fills. If you fly over it, you realise how much water has been drained out of Manton Dam. I am hoping for good rains to fill it and allow the people to enjoy speed boating which has been denied to them since the closure of Lake Bennett to such activities.

Water and Sewerage Services in Nightcliff

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In his capacity as minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority, I refer him to extensive representations that I have been making over some considerable time on behalf of the constituents of Nightcliff and Millner in respect of the need for upgrading of the water and sewerage services in that area as a consequence of substantial increases in population density over the last decade or more. Could he advise what progress has been made to provide a modern standard of water and sewerage services to those areas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nightcliff for his question. He is only matched by the member for Ludmilla in terms of his enthusiasm to have such issues resolved. I have outlined in the Assembly, on several occasions, the works that are currently proceeding in the Rapid Creek, Nightcliff and Fannie Bay areas at a cost of some \$1.65m: the reveal-and-seal technique employed to stop water ingress into sewerage lines. Indeed, there are many problems in those areas and work is proceeding.

There has been an ongoing program to upgrade the sewerage reticulation throughout Darwin. Contracts are currently progressing for stages 4, 5 and 6 in the Rapid Creek, Nightcliff and Fannie Bay areas. As I said, the cost is \$1.65m. Excellent results are being obtained from the reveal-and-seal method which uses a closed circuit television camera to reveal faults. Specially developed inflatable packers, in combination with a special liquid grout, then repair the sewer with minimum disturbance to customers. This method also reveals that a high proportion of house drains are faulty and replacement or repairs are carried out as work proceeds. The authority is now confident in this method of sewer main rehabilitation due to the success rate and it will continue to be used for the remainder of the program.

If I could be more specific in terms of contracts and their current status, the Darwin Rapid Creek sewer rehabilitation, stage 4A, is being carried out. It had an extended completion date at the time of this briefing to 7 July 1988. The work being carried out in that area was at a cost of \$210 797. The contract was awarded on 10 March 1988 and was running behind program because of the unexpected necessity to replace a larger number of sewer sections than was anticipated. The sewer rehabilitation, stage 6, in the Nightcliff area is at a cost of some \$502 000. The work on that is nearing completion. The contractor is currently running over time but he has claimed an extension of time which is being assessed. The new technology is picking up many faults of which we were not aware. I understand that many of the pipes had to be dug up because they were unable to be repaired by the new method.

Stage 5 of the rehabilitation work is at a cost of \$742 000. The major work is completed and it is awaiting arrival of special fittings in order to complete minor work outstanding. That has either been completed or will be very shortly. As the Chief Minister mentioned in his speech to the Appropriation Bill, a considerable amount of work is being carried out in that area. Indeed, I understand that the problems will be rectified before this wet season. I anticipate that the people of Rapid Creek, Nightcliff and Fannie Bay will be much happier with the results from the particular method that we are using.

Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I remind him that, during the last sittings, he advised the House that a review was to be conducted of the operation of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority but that it was delayed because the government departments were to be given an opportunity to comment. Has he received those comments from the departments and when will the report be tabled in this parliament?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I advised the House at the last sittings that I would table the report at these sittings. I have no reason to change my advice to the House.

Warumungu Land Claim

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the current position in relation to the Warumungu Land Claim and does he intend to discuss the issues with the Tennant Creek Town Council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government has a duty and a responsibility to ensure that the legitimate interests of all its citizens are taken into account in inquiries by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner into Aboriginal land claims. The commissioner's recommendations in regard to the Warumungu Land Claim are now before the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Territory government has a further duty to ensure that issues of detriment arising from the commissioner's recommendations are properly addressed.

The impact of the recommendations on the economic and social development of Tennant Creek, together with the aspirations of the Warumungu people, are recognised in the Northern Territory government's attitude towards these matters. The Warumungu Land Claim was first lodged in November 1978. The inquiry involved 6450 pages of transcript, 313 exhibits and 142 witnesses, and culminated in a 430-page report. Officials of various departments of the Territory government are examining the commissioner's report to determine the appropriate course of action to resolve the matters of detriment. Northern Territory officials have met with the Tennant Creek Town Council and will meet with the town council together with the Central Land Council on about 20 September.

Mr Speaker, the list of matters to be resolved is a lengthy one. However, the principal items are these: to ensure that there is an adequate supply of water to Tennant Creek, both for the present and the future; to protect individual landholders from detriment that would flow from a grant of land; to ensure that there will be ongoing opportunities for employment in mining; to protect the pastoral industry by maintaining fencing in disease control areas; and to ensure that land around Tennant Creek will be available for future urban growth and for the recreation of the community.

The Department of Lands and Housing is well advanced with a structure plan for Tennant Creek, a planning document to which the Julalikari Council has made a major contribution. There is much unreasonable and ill-informed criticism of the Territory government's role in putting its submissions to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner. This criticism comes from those who would have us sit back and do nothing about the matters of detriment which I have outlined. The government has a duty to ensure that these essential public services are maintained and that all Territorians are treated fairly. At the end of the day, these matters will be decided on by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. It is to be hoped that the federal government will play a more constructive role in the resolution of issues arising out of the inquiry than it played in the inquiry itself.

Honourable members would no doubt have been quite alarmed at the recent news of a letter which was inadvertently delivered to my office. It was under the official letterhead of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and was signed by a private secretary to that minister. It was addressed to a senior private secretary of the federal Minister for Local Government in Parliament House. In that letter, one private secretary suggested to the other that it 'would be desirable to keep the Northern Territory government out of these negotiations ...'. The letter refers to the Warumungu Land Claim and to impending negotiations between the CLC and the Tennant Creek Town Council. The relevant paragraph reads:

It would be desirable to keep the Northern Territory government out of these negotiations as its intention appears to be to prolong any resolution and to seek to gain electoral benefits from racial division. The provision of assistance by the federal government to the town council would prevent the town council from having to look to the Northern Territory government for that assistance.

The letter indicates an appalling attitude on the part of some officers in federal ministerial offices towards the Northern Territory government which is totally unfounded and very wrong. For that reason, I wrote to the Prime Minister as soon as I received advice of this letter, seeking his assurance that its contents did not reflect the federal government's attitude towards the Northern Territory government in these matters and that the letter was prepared without his or his minister's knowledge or concurrence. I further sought his rejection of its contents because it is a fact that the Northern Territory government has a role and a responsibility to place before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner all matters of fact on which he might seek detail in order to test the claimants' case. Nobody else will go before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner to test the strength of claimants' cases and commissioners have on many occasions accepted the views put by counsel for the Northern Territory government in relation to alternative courses of action available to them in respect of land claims.

After the Aboriginal Land Commissioner makes a recommendation to the federal minister, we have a role in pointing out the ramifications of matters of detriment which might arise as a result of his granting land as recommended by the commissioner. As honourable members should be aware, the commissioner merely reports on matters of detriment. He makes no recommendations to the federal minister suggesting that portions of the claim not be granted because of matters of detriment. That is entirely a matter for the federal minister who rightly seeks the views of the Northern Territory government on these matters before determining them.

It should be of great concern to all honourable members that there are those in the federal government who would have the Northern Territory locked out of such negotiations on the basis that we are somehow interfering in these affairs - the affairs of the citizens of the Northern Territory, black and white. In trying to plan for the future of the Northern Territory in towns such as Tennant Creek and trying to ensure that there will be sufficient water supplies, land and opportunities for employment in that region, we are simply fulfilling our responsibilities to those citizens.

Airport Funding

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Is he aware that his statement this morning on Darwin Airport funding has made him a laughing-stock in Canberra as possibly Australia's only Treasurer who cannot read a budget and who expects to find a statutory authority's financial allocation contained in the Treasurer's budget statement? Secondly, is he also aware that, on the Darwin Airport redevelopment, he has been dubbed a sore winner?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is interesting that the honourable member has raised this question because perhaps he can enlighten the House a little further on it. This morning, in commenting on the federal budget, I expressed some concern about an item of great interest to Territorians - the future of airport terminals in Darwin and Alice Springs. Last night, during a budget briefing, I eagerly sought information on how much would be spent on the Darwin Airport this financial year and when it might be commenced. A week or so ago, we were advised that the federal government had decided to transfer both terminals to the Federal Airports Commission in preference to handing both across to the Northern Territory government, which we sought. Honourable members will be aware from statements previously made by the Minister for Transport and Works in the Territory that we were prepared to get on with the construction of the facilities almost immediately upon arrangements with the federal government being completed. We felt that we had the funding capacity in terms of loans to start immediately.

The information that I was able to gather last night was a confirmation that the FAC did see an airport terminal progressing in Darwin at a cost of \$65m. However, it did not say very much more than that about allocations as far as this financial year was concerned. My concern has been heightened in reading the answer to a question that was asked yesterday in the Senate by Senator Collins of Senator Evans about the airport project and when it might proceed. I will read a part of the answer that Senator Evans gave to Senator Collins. This is information given as late as yesterday:

The government has taken a decision, in principle, that the facilities should transfer to the FAC. Detailed arrangements for the transfer are currently being negotiated. It is expected that the transfer will take place by the end of October this year. The FAC has indicated that, upon the finalisation of mutually satisfactory financial arrangements which clearly are not in place for that transfer, it will immediately commence the planning of the redevelopment of civil aviation facilities in Darwin, including a new terminal.

Mr Speaker, I think that should be of grave concern to Territorians because we have been led to believe, because of the information given out over the last week or 2, that much-needed work on Northern Territory terminals would begin almost immediately. When an airport terminal has been designed and has had \$15m or \$18m spent on it, why is there any necessity to undertake some sort of re-evaluation of the proposal?

Mr Smith: Because the original proposal cost \$100m.

Mr Bell: How many budget proposals do you knock back, Marshall?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Why is it unreasonable for Territorians to ask, in relation to such an important matter, when construction will be commenced and how much has been allocated in this financial year? All we are being told is that the matter is being put off and put off and that, in October or thereabouts, the FAC will begin planning for these facilities. We are talking about a very large facility and therefore, if funds are to be spent on it in this financial year, one would imagine that things will have to move pretty fast because half the financial year will be over in another couple of months while it is still undertaking planning.

This is a matter of great concern and interest to Territorians. We welcomed the news that the terminal was to be built. We did not say that the FAC would not receive our full cooperation in building the terminal facilities although it was obviously our preference that the Territory should build and run the facilities. All we are requesting is that reasonable information be given to Territorians and the construction industry in the Northern Territory so that we can prepare for this major project. The opposition tells us regularly that detailed budgetary information is very important to the community. People have a right to know what the government intends to do. It appears that we are being denied information about the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports because the information just is not there. The issue is the intention to commence construction during this financial year. If the Leader of the Opposition can point to a place in the budget where the figure is highlighted, I would be delighted to acknowledge it.

Mr Smith: It is not supposed to be in the budget.

Funding for Northern Territory University

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The Chief Minister expressed some concern on ABC radio this morning in relation to funding for the Northern Territory university. Is the Minister for Education able to advise the House whether he has any information regarding the funding levels that can be expected for the Northern Territory university next financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the situation of our university differs from that of other universities because ours is new. We are certainly looking very closely at the funding aspects of the Northern Territory university. Most members would be aware that, at this stage, no university in Australia actually knows exactly what it will receive. The budget figures are broad figures which relate to moneys which will be provided for higher education generally. The detail on what we will receive will be included in a schedule to the States Grants Act which will go before the federal parliament in October. Debate will be concluded on that in November. We will be looking very carefully at that and I hope all members take a great deal of interest in that schedule.

The situation at present is that we have established a formula with the federal minister in relation to the establishment of our university. We calculate that the bottom line - and I emphasise that it is a bottom line - is \$4m on the basis of students enrolled at present. However, there are many more aspects that need to be considered. It is a new university. There are establishment costs and those matters still have to be negotiated with the

federal minister. We will continue to push for full funding. We believe it is our right and I believe that members of the opposition will assist us in that regard. At some stage, we will receive full funding which is our right.

As far as the honourable member's question is concerned, the detail will be known in October when the schedule to the States Grants Act comes before parliament, and we will be commenting further at that time. We emphasise that the formula has been struck. We expect to receive \$4m on the basis of that formula but we also expect additional funding in relation to establishment costs and some other matters.

Warumungu Land Claim

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

He would probably be aware that, in handing down his report on the Warumungu Land Claim, Justice Maurice noted that he regarded the Central Land Council as a 'hidebound bureaucracy whose lack of sensitivity in matters dealing with land in the Tennant Creek area was of great concern'. The commissioner recommended that a separate land council be formed for the administration of the Warumungu land. Does the Chief Minister support the establishment of a separate land council for the administration of the Warumungu land now that it has been granted?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to correct the last statement of the honourable member, the land has not actually been granted yet. However, it has been recommended by the commissioner to the federal minister that a land grant be made and I am sure that will occur in due course.

To answer the substance of his question, in this case the Northern Territory government believes that, in accordance with the commissioner's recommendations, an additional land council could be established to administer affairs on behalf of Aboriginals in the Tennant Creek region. Honourable members would be aware that the formation of the Tiwi Land Council has been a great success. It is a land council which administers a much smaller group of Aboriginals. No doubt such Aboriginals have much more common interests in an area than the Aboriginals who comprise the Northern Land Council and the Central Land Council. There has been considerable discussion over the years that Aboriginal groups in the Northern Territory should have bodies representing them that are far closer to them and represent their individual needs better. I am sure the land councils are aware of criticism that has been levelled at them from time to time in that regard. I am pleased to see the commissioner's recommendation that an additional land council should be established to look after this area and I think it is a principle which could be followed through in a number of other areas because other groups of Aboriginals in the Territory have sought from the federal minister that land councils be established to represent them in their areas.

Review of Darwin Town Plan

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to the current review of the Darwin Town Plan and to the Nightcliff/Rapid Creek study that was carried out in 1985 and 1986 and the wide-ranging community consultation that followed the release of the draft structure plan. Will he ensure that the views expressed by the Nightcliff and

Rapid Creek communities will be taken into account and that the recommendations of the community are taken into account and built into the new Darwin Town Plan?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as pointed out by the member for Nightcliff, the Darwin structure plan is presently on display. We are in the process of receiving final public submissions or expressions of interest regarding the directions and details of that plan. The member for Nightcliff also pointed out that there is a plan which specifically relates to the Nightcliff Rapid Creek area. The honourable member quite properly brought this plan to the attention of constituents in his electorate by displaying it publicly in Nightcliff. It attracted a great deal of community interest and, thanks to his efforts, a large number of residents of the Nightcliff and Rapid Creek area participated in the planning process regarding the future of their community. I believe that is indicative of the efforts of the government to ensure that the community is involved in all aspects of planning and all directions of government which affect their lives and their futures.

I can assure the member for Nightcliff that the views of residents of his electorate will most definitely be taken into account in respect of the final Darwin structure plan as it relates to his electorate. I again congratulate him and point out to other honourable members that planning matters do affect their constituents and, if they can bring such matters to the attention of their local communities and encourage input, the result will be urban planning which reflects the wishes and aspirations of Territorians.

Batchelor College

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, I have worked with the minister to make Batchelor College an institution which will provide advanced education and university courses for Aboriginal people not only from the Territory but also from nearby states. Can he advise the House on any progress he has made in getting the college established as an autonomous college of advanced education so that it can receive full funding from the federal government and continue the development courses which are supported by all members of this House?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. There has been a move to establish Batchelor College as an Aboriginal tertiary education centre and, whilst the government does not have any general concern in relation to that, there are some major worries about Batchelor College losing its identity as a college which assists in the education of traditional Aboriginals and Aboriginals from remote areas. Batchelor College has performed a wonderful service for the Territory in that respect over a number of years and the Northern Territory government will ensure that it continues to look after the interests of traditional Aboriginals and Aboriginals from isolated communities. That is why I am presently assessing the situation.

Mr Ede: Is it going to be a rainbow philosophy?

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, here we go again! I have indicated the government's concern to the honourable member, who should also be concerned. If urban Aboriginals start attending Batchelor College, the whole situation can change. It is sensitive and it must be looked at in a correct manner.

Mr Speaker, Batchelor College has provided a very positive program for traditional Aboriginals. That must be maintained and that is what we are trying to do. I am surprised at the way in which the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education, continually knocks programs which help Aboriginal people.

Mr Ede: I am not doing that. Don't be ridiculous!

Mr HARRIS: I have no problem with traditional Aboriginals from outside our borders studying at Batchelor College.

The government is considering the issues at present. I am also pleased to note that, at long last, the federal government has recognised the fact that a great deal of good comes out of Batchelor College. I refer to the White Paper on higher education. I will quote from that:

One institution with an impressive record in tertiary education for Aboriginals is Batchelor College in the Northern Territory. This college has specialised in meeting the needs of traditional Aboriginals from remote areas and has attracted widespread support for its programs, particularly in teacher education. To date, however, development of higher education courses at the college has been constrained by the need to rely on annual funding allocations. The government will therefore move to place its funding on a more secure basis for the 1989-91 triennium.

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to see that, at long last, the Associate Diploma of Teaching at Batchelor College is to be fully funded by the Commonwealth government. We have been fighting for 5 years to have that recognised and for funding to come from the federal government, and we are very pleased to see that this is happening. We are looking at expanding the courses that are available at Batchelor College in relation to health worker training, police aide training and Conservation Commission training. There are a number of other areas, and the Commonwealth government is also looking at funding associate diplomas in relation to some of those areas.

I emphasise again that the government has to look very carefully at protecting the integrity of Batchelor College. It is something precious to us in the Northern Territory, and we will not let it be ruined or destroyed by people coming in with ideas from outside. We are looking for ideas and views from FEPPI, from the Batchelor College Council and from members of the opposition. I am happy to hear the ideas and views of opposition members. I ask members of the opposition to give their views and we will take them on board.

Mr Ede: I have done that. I have been going to the federal government about funding.

Mr HARRIS: You have not done that at all.

It is very important, and I cannot emphasise it enough, that Batchelor College should continue to look after the interests of traditional Aboriginals and Aboriginals from remote areas. We will be pursuing that, and I will be talking further with people who have a direct interest in Batchelor College. We want to work together to ensure that it is able to provide the necessary teaching opportunities for Aboriginal people. I am pursuing that matter and will be making a statement about Batchelor College in due course.

Municipal Services in Alice Springs and Katherine

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What action has been taken to ensure that services to residents included in the expanded Alice Springs and Katherine town boundaries reflect the level of rates that are paid?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a good question. As honourable members would know, the boundaries of both Alice Springs and Katherine have been extended during this year. Considerable concern has been expressed by rural residents with regard to the potential for fairly hefty rates to be imposed. Those of us who live in rural areas know that, generally, we do not require the level of services that are provided in suburbia. Prior to moving to have the boundaries of the Alice Springs and Katherine Town Councils extended, I sought from those councils their assurance that they would establish advisory committees in order to obtain the views of the people in those extended areas and to ensure that these were taken into account when rates were set. That course of action was agreed to, the advisory committees were established and, in fact, had very substantial input to the councils' thinking on rating for those extended areas.

I have foreshadowed the introduction of a bill to amend the Local Government Act during the course of these sittings. As a part of the amendments, we will seek to provide once again the flat rating option. That was one of the requirements of the rural residents. Certainly, the councils also sought to have that option made available to them again. When we amended the act in 1986, we thought that the flat rating option was still there but a recent court case in NSW indicates that it is not available to councils. We will seek to amend that. Negotiations are continuing with provider departments such as Transport and Works with regard to funding that they would normally have made available in those extended areas. The idea is to have those funds made available to councils so that they can carry out the work that would normally have been done by the government.

There was a fair amount of trauma in establishing the extent of the boundaries of both those towns, and I can understand that. Nobody likes to think that his way of life will be disrupted in any way and that he might have to pay for something that he did not have to pay for before. After speaking to councils and people in rural areas, it was quite obvious that nobody really minded paying if he received the service. The actions that we have taken to ensure that the rate will reflect the level of service will prove to be satisfactory to those people.

Letter to Editor of Panorama Magazine

Mr BELL to Mr SPEAKER

Mr Speaker, I gave notice to you earlier today that I had intended to ask you the following question. I refer you to your letter to the editor of Panorama magazine in relation to the article 'Sea of Stone' written but not edited by Penny Van Oosterzee that I discussed in last night's adjournment debate. How can you justify having written that letter as Speaker of this Assembly and not as the member for Braitling?

ANSWER

Honourable members, I do not believe that the question which has just been asked by the member for MacDonnell is an appropriate one to be asked of the Speaker during question time. I believe that I should reply from the Chair at question time only to questions which relate to my administrative responsibilities as Speaker. However, I have taken note of the question asked by the honourable member and will reply to him in writing as soon as possible.

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, in view of the heated public debate following recent search and rescue operations following maritime disasters such as those experienced by the cargo vessel Singa Sea and the yachts in the Bicentennial Round Australia Race, could he outline the Territory government's attitude to the carriage of EPIRBs, the emergency position indicating beacons by pleasure craft and commercial vessels?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, matters relating to sea rescue are often brought to our attention by the media. They seem to be headline grabbing and usually are associated not only with loss of life and trauma but are also often extremely expensive operations. What has been of concern to the federal government, and quite correctly so, is the high cost of mounting rescue and search operations. Sometimes the search to find lost boats has a very heavy impact on the public purse. State and territory governments are often involved in such exercises, and at great expense to their budgets.

At a recent Transport Ministers Conference, there was a proposal for an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon system - EPIRB. That system would involve the fitting of a small radio beacon to all vessels that go outside sheltered waters, whether they be fishing boats, commercial craft or pleasure craft. The projected cost of a beacon is \$150. Against the potential cost to the public purse and even the capital costs of a small boat owner, \$150 is a very small price to pay to ensure that, if there is an emergency, the boat can be located quickly, minimising the cost of the search and rescue and giving a greater chance of preventing loss of life.

The system would operate from a central locating terminal which, at this stage, is proposed for Alice Springs. That would provide some additional capital injection into the Alice Springs area and a few extra jobs. The capacity of the system extends some 600 km offshore. It would offer not only the opportunity to locate quickly and recover vessels offshore, whether they be fishing boats or large ocean-going vessels, but would have application on land. The member for Sadadeen is saying that we must not forget the Todd River. The Todd River might not be an appropriate case but people who venture by vehicle into the remote outback could carry one of these beacons. That could help to save the lives of stationhands or adventurous tourists. The beacon could be either rented or purchased for a total cost of \$150. This is a most innovative and imaginative rescue system. It certainly has the support of this government and, I am sure, of all boat owners and users who travel into sometimes very dangerous waters off the north shore of Australia.

Excise on Beer

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TOURISM

My question relates to his responsibilities as the minister responsible for the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. In the interest of lowering the rate of consumption of alcohol and of the CPI in the Northern Territory, will he be instructing the commission to take such steps as are necessary to ensure that licensed retailers pass on the recently-announced reduction in beer excises, particularly those excises which relate to low alcohol beverages?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there was discussion with the Australian Hotels Association a couple of months ago as to why the retail price of beer did not reflect the differential in impost duties in relation to low alcohol and normal strength beer. The answer from the industry at that time was simply that the difference in tax was not substantial enough to warrant a difference in the retail price. It was only a few cents on a case of beer. I will be talking to the industry about the new excise duties and I will advise the member in due course.

Mount Samuel Mining Tenements

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Yesterday, I asked him about mining industry concerns with sacred sites at Mount Samuel. Since that time, the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority has intimated in the press that the mining industry should have been aware of those sites. Can he further clarify the history of the Mount Samuel mining tenements especially in relation to the so-called sacred sites?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I do not think we have heard the last of Mount Samuel. I believe that it will be a name that will be as well known as Coronation Hill because, as each day passes, the similarities become more striking. For the benefit of honourable members, the mining industry has been active in this region since the 1930s. The member for Barkly might like to correct me, but I see that he is nodding his head in agreement. Certainly, it has been highly active there in the last 25 years. All this activity has occurred without mention of the existence of sacred sites. Nobody said: 'Do not dig any holes here because this is a sacred site'.

Given that history, it was certainly a reasonable expectation of the mining industry that such impediments did not exist in the region. I understand - and the member for Barkly may be able to give some local knowledge - that some of the exploration licences held and some of the activity carried out in that area was by Aboriginal people. I see the honourable member nodding in agreement on that, and that is a message that has been given to me as well.

Mr Bell: Why don't you introduce a statement so that we can all discuss it instead of asking these repeated questions?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, that is why they were surprised when, 3 or 4 months ago, they were told that the whole of the Mount Samuel area was a 16 km² sacred site complex, and that all mining activity should stop. It is all very well to say that sites of significance were mentioned at an inquiry or at this or that hearing, and that any such reference constituted a world-wide broadcast of the facts of the matter. Quite clearly, we cannot expect the mining industry to be intimately acquainted with such fine detail. It is up to organisations such as the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority to identify areas of significance to the industry. That is one of the major industry concerns about the activities of the authority. In most cases, the authority only makes its concerns known after exploration has occurred, development plans are prepared and considerable cost has been incurred. Mr Speaker, I can tell you when this really came into headlines, if you want a precise date. It was the day that Australian Petroleum, I think it was, announced that it had hit an intersection of 100 g over 2 m. That was the day when the concerns started.

Let me reinforce to the honourable member for MacDonnell ...

Mr Bell: Why don't you do your homework, you mug.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. The honourable member will withdraw that remark.

Mr BELL: I unreservedly withdraw any reference to the capacity of the minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw the remark without comment.

Mr BELL: I withdraw the remark without comment.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, in most cases, the authority only makes its concern known after exploration has occurred. The point that I am making is that, the day that the 100 g intersection was announced, it became a sacred site. I have said many times in this Assembly that it is always the spouting whale that is harpooned. Mining companies would be well advised, in this instance, to keep quiet when they find something. I do not help them in that regard because it is usually fairly exciting information, but we are starting to have detailed analysis of just what happens and just when sacred sites become of significance. That was certainly the day, the very minute, when that company announced that intersection.

It may be surprising news to the authority that the world is not populated solely by lawyers and anthropologists - at least not yet. The authority seems to conduct its affairs in a reactive manner. In other words, you announce what you intend to do and it tells you why you cannot do it. This way of doing business causes great frustration and cynicism and, if the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority has a poor reputation in the mining and development industries, it has only itself to blame. The authority and its adherents have a particular way of dealing with cynicism. Anybody who speaks out against their actions is branded as anti-Aboriginal and therefore a racist, and that is the ultimate cynicism.

As the minister responsible for orderly mining development in the Territory, it is my duty to see that a proper balance is achieved between development and the legitimate interests of Territorians, including Aboriginal people. That is what this government attempts to achieve and that is what we

will achieve in this particular case. As I said, we have not heard the end of the Mount Samuel episode; it has only just begun. As we have already established today, mining activity in the area began at least as far back as the 1930s, and it should continue.

Undoolya Road

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he aware of claims that the dirt section of the Undoolya Road, east of the town from the jump-up out to the quarry, is in a very dangerous state, that bulldust abounds and there are great boulders, and that it is claimed that a grader is not sufficient to restore the road to a safe condition? Would he undertake to check with his department the accuracy of those claims and, if they are found to be true, urgently restore that road to a safe condition so that the huge contract for moving 20 000 t of rock out there at the moment can continue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to answer the question of whether I am familiar with the actual complaints, I am not. I certainly am aware, however, of the problems with roads, such as the Undoolya Road, which receive fairly heavy and continuous use by large trucks which do not exactly dawdle along. The drivers are out to earn a quid and they want to move as quickly as possible. Other roads in the region, such as the Tanami Road, suffer from similar pressures from heavy vehicles. It is very difficult to keep up with the maintenance of those roads.

An additional problem for officers of the Department of Transport and Works in the Alice Springs region in recent times has been repairing the extensive damage inflicted by the flood. Between \$1m and \$2m-worth of damage has had to be repaired in the post-flood period. That has tied up the local construction industry's plant and equipment and there has been considerable pressure to finish the job. Honourable members will be well aware that the first priority of the Department of Transport and Works was to open those roads again and re-establish access to communities. That being said, I am sure that the department will address the specific case mentioned by the member for Sadadeen as quickly as possible.

The long-term solution for Undoolya Road and the Tanami Road lies in the actual construction of the roads. The gravel which is used at present is not appropriate for heavy traffic because it is lacking in binding material. Water is also a problem, especially with the Tanami Road. We have to be innovative in overcoming the serious problems of providing long-term access to communities, particularly those in areas that can be of commercial value to the Territory.

Upgrading of Moil Primary School

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

He would be aware that, during the past few years, the Moil Primary School Council has made various submissions, fully supported by myself, requesting the allocation of funds for upgrading of the school. Indeed, recently he met with representatives of the school council and the acting principal to discuss this matter. Has the school council's submission been considered and, if so, what is the outcome likely to be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for a moment I thought the member intended to ask me about preschool air-conditioning. I visited Moil Primary School recently, as the member indicated, and I am concerned that some aspects of maintenance of the school need to be examined in more detail. Officers of the Department of Education will be visiting Moil shortly to assess the situation. They will identify essential maintenance items and items with high educational priority. The council's submission will be fully considered by the department in the context of the total operation of the school. It is highly likely, as I indicated to the people whom I met, that the department will undertake essential services at the school and will then negotiate with the school council in relation to the other items raised in the submission. I can assure the honourable member that the submission will receive full attention. Whether certain requests are carried out will depend on the funds available as well as the expertise that is available to the school council to ensure that, if it is given responsibility for particular activities, those can be carried out effectively.

Firefighting Services in Aboriginal Communities

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

What action is the government taking to establish volunteer firefighting services in Aboriginal communities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot answer the honourable member's question immediately. I will seek some advice on whether the government has any program under way or planned and will advise him on the next sitting day.

ANPWS Charges for Entry to Kakadu National Park

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TOURISM

The National Parks and Wildlife Service announced yesterday that it would be introducing charges for entry into Kakadu National Park. What effect will those charges have on tourism and on ordinary Territorians who, in going about their usual business, are required to enter into and stay at the park?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. Of course, the announcement made by ANPWS yesterday came as a complete surprise to everyone.

Mr Smith: Rubbish! Come on, you have known that for months.

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, it certainly did come as a complete surprise because there had been no discussions with the Northern Territory government or the tourist industry with regard to levels of charges in national parks that are operated by the ANPWS in the Northern Territory.

With regard to the industry, of course, tours have already been sold at rates which do not take these charges into account. The information that we have at the moment from the Director of the ANPWS indicates that park fees will be staged in at Kakadu and that fees already imposed for visitors to

Uluru are to be revised. Basically, there will be a fee of \$10 for each adult visiting Kakadu from 1 January next year. There will be no charge for children under 16. The fee will cover entry to the park and to the audiovisual display at park headquarters at Kakadu, for which a separate charge is made at present, and recreational fishing, remote-area camping and things such as guided tours.

At this point, I should indicate that we have no disagreement with the ANPWS in relation to the charging of fees for entry into parks on the basis that we believe that, in the national parks, and probably in Territory parks in the future, the user will pay. Considerable amounts of money are collected and spent by governments on maintaining facilities. On the basis of some rough calculations, it is interesting to note that, in Kakadu alone, the federal government will collect in the vicinity of \$2.5m per annum. I note in the budget this year that some \$3m is to be spent on Kakadu. Of course, that is still a long way from the \$70m that was promised many years ago.

I am told that there will be camping fees at developed campgrounds at the East Alligator, Jim Jim and also at the campground at Waterfall Creek when it is completed. These fees will be \$5 per night per caravan, \$2 per night per tent, and overnight charges of \$2 per person per night. In Uluru National Park, a park-use fee, which will be valid for 2 weeks, will be applied from 1 October this year. It will be \$5 for an adult. Again, there will be no charge for children under 16. I am pleased to say that an annual park-use fee will be available for regular visitors and local residents, but we have no information as to what that fee will be.

Mr Smith: \$20.

Mr POOLE: Fortunately, there will not be any charge for persons engaged on legitimate business or traffic passing through, but therein lies another tale. It is very interesting to note that, despite representations that have been made over many years by the industry and the Northern Territory government - and even, I believe, by members opposite - again this year there is no financial provision to seal the road from Ayers Rock to the Olgas. That is a national disgrace. The damage that is done to vehicles using that road and the accidents that are caused are a matter of great concern to this government. The project first appeared on the design list some 7 years ago, and still nothing has been done. This year, it has been scrubbed off completely.

At both Kakadu and Uluru, charges for commercial filming and still photography were introduced from the first of this month. There will be charges for other commercial activities carried out under permit at both parks from 1 January next year. A proportion of the fees raised will be retained by the ANPWS and applied to park management and park development. However, there seems to be no provision for recompensing the Northern Territory government for the tens of millions of dollars that it has spent to upgrade and maintain roads and to build new roads. The Northern Territory government should have been involved in all talks leading up to this announcement and it is a matter of great concern that our interests have been ignored once again.

The principle of entry fees for national parks and other such facilities is well established. It is a commonplace occurrence for people down south and it is a legitimate means of obtaining funds needed to maintain and further develop visitor attractions. However, we believe that any such fees should be the subject of discussion with all interested parties, including the Northern Territory government and certainly the tourist industry which, after all,

provides the transportation to bring the majority of people to visit these attractions. Certainly, sufficient notice should have been given prior to the introduction of charges so that adjustments could be made to tour program costings.

The facilities that exist in the Northern Territory, both at the national park level and in the Conservation Commission park areas, are becoming better and better. In principle, I guess the time has come when the user should have to pay to go into these areas. However, I cannot make the point strongly enough that it is time that the ANPWS actually sat down and talked to the government and the industry prior to doing things such as this which will vitally affect the tourist industry in the Northern Territory.

Upgrading of Gravel Road to East Alligator River

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Does the government intend to upgrade the gravel road between the Jabiru end of the Mudginberri turnoff to the East Alligator and, if so, will that benefit tourism in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I recall some questions from the Leader of the Opposition either late last year or early this year regarding the Oenpelli Road and other roads in the Kakadu area. He was laying the blame for the lack of upgrading at the feet of the Territory government. The situation needs to be explained, particularly in regard to the Oenpelli Road, for honourable members to understand fully the complexities of ownership and responsibility. These are shared over 3 different sections. One section is entirely the responsibility of the federal government through the ANPWS, another section is clearly a Territory road and another section has some relationship with a mining company.

The immediate plan is to upgrade the section from Cahills Crossing to almost halfway back to the highway. That section has already been designed and has been included in the program on a joint funding basis with the ANPWS. We have not heard yet whether it has specific funds for that purpose although it was quite confident that it would obtain its share of the costs of the first section. The next section will be a matter for further negotiation with the mining company concerning the route and its contribution to the cost. The original proposal for an upgraded road in that area was to avoid all of the major creeks by routing it through a section of land that is currently held under lease by Ranger. That involves negotiation. That is the preferred option because it would give far better wet weather access. The other option is to upgrade the existing section of the road. Whilst it would provide improved access for tourists and for people in the Oenpelli area, it would not be quite as good as the other solution. We must await the details of the ANPWS roads budget for this year. However, we are hopeful that it will find funds to accept its fair share of responsibility in providing a safe and reasonable access road into that region.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Tourist Commission Involvement with the Wynn's Safari

Mr POOLE (Tourism): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to answer a question that was raised in the adjournment debate last night by the member for Stuart in relation to the Tourist Commission's involvement with the

Wynn's Safari. The member suggested that perhaps the Tourist Commission had not assisted the Wynn's Safari to the extent that it should have. I would like to lay that matter to rest.

The Tourist Commission has been involved in the organisation of the Wynn's Safari for many years. In my former capacity as Chairman of the Tourist Commission, I was instrumental in assisting Hans Thorstrup put together the package that originally started the Wynn's Safari in the Northern Territory. This year, on receiving advice from the Wynn's Safari organiser that the safari would start from Alice Springs and proceed via Darwin to finish in Sydney, the Tourist Commission immediately seized that opportunity of getting what could be termed 2 bites at the cherry and offered total support to ensure the success of the venture. To ensure that we achieved a level of spectator participation, a prologue competition was designed to attract average family travellers and non-competitor travellers to converge on Alice Springs from every capital city. This was strictly a fun competition but we decided to obtain 10 000 Wynn's Safari brochures and distribute them in Australia and overseas through our international network of commission offices. We also provided some medallions, which were quite expensive to produce, and organised media launches for the event in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. We will be participating in the hosting of a breakfast for finishers of the safari in Sydney.

The event was of great economic significance to the people of Alice Springs. Only last Friday, a local business supplier told me that, in 1 day in that week, he sold \$23 000-worth of goods to 1 of the team participants in the safari. It is probably timely to comment quickly on the attitude of some of our local businesses in that regard. I am aware that the operator of one of our roadhouses was approached to provide a refuelling stop for competitors and was offered the assistance of a tanker of gas and a number of people to help pump the fuel into the vehicles to enable them to continue on their way. That would have had a total bill of about \$36 000 for 2 hours work. He actually knocked this back on the basis that he had been operating there for 20 years and did not want anyone else to touch his petrol pumps.

There was a total of 210 entries consisting of motorcycles, 4-wheel-drive and 2-wheel-drive vehicles of all descriptions. There were some 93 overseas entries. The support equipment consisted of 6 coaches, 7 trucks, 20 official vehicles, helicopters and light aircraft. There were 12 media vehicles. The international media coverage that will result is tremendous. I would hate to have to put a financial figure on the exposure that the Northern Territory will receive because I understand that regular television segments are carried in the UK, Japan, Germany and North America. It is invaluable exposure.

I am happy to say that the Tourist Commission contributed over \$10 000 in cash and at least the equivalent of that amount in time spent in organising media launches, the participation of the interstate bureaux and the provision of maps and all kinds of bits and pieces through the bureaux in the respective capital cities and our overseas offices.

Budget Allocation to Education

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The Northern Territory Teachers Federation, the Leader of the Opposition and the President of the Council of Government School Organisations, Richard Creswick, have all claimed the allocation to education in the 1988 budget has been cut in real terms by \$3.5m. Is this true? If so, what ramifications are there for education?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the allegation that the budget allocation for education has been reduced in real terms is unfounded. The allocation has been increased by nearly 6%. Treasury accepts that the inflation rate is about 5.6% and therefore this is a small increase of 0.21%. However, it is an increase and it is not a cut as such to the education budget. If we include the allocations for the Darwin Institute of Technology and the University College of the Northern Territory, we can say that we have increased our allocation by 1.06% in real terms. Alternatively, if the effects of the recent national wage case are included, we can say the real increase in Northern Territory education spending will be more than 2%.

Unfortunately, the time available at these sittings may preclude further debate in relation to the budget for my portfolio. I hope to be able to pursue that later on today but I ask members to read the detailed information and take part in the debate as it progresses. A circular will be sent to schools shortly indicating that it is nonsense to say that there has been a cut to the education budget. Overall expenditure on education will rise by almost 6% over the amount allocated in 1986-87.

There is a strengthened commitment to Aboriginal education, to isolated students and to the special needs of particular schools throughout the Northern Territory. An additional \$1.35m has been allocated to the development of community education centres in 8 Aboriginal communities. Members opposite have been pursuing those projects and we are ensuring that they go ahead this year. Increased allocations have been made to improve the provision of vehicles to schools in remote communities, a very important part of providing education in those isolated areas. Above-formula staff have been allocated to 11 Aboriginal community schools and, in addition, above-formula staff are also being allocated to schools in large, isolated centres and in urban areas. I will be elaborating on that subject in my contribution to the budget debate.

To assist isolated students, the government has allocated \$186 000 to the home loan video scheme so that students in isolated areas are not disadvantaged by the Commonwealth decision to withdraw funding support for the scheme. I think all members will support that inclusion. The level of per capita funding based on the number of students enrolled in schools has been maintained. For post-primary students in Aboriginal communities, the level of per capita funding has been increased from \$90 to \$120 per student. There have been increases in a whole range of areas across the education budget, there has been a considerable increase in the allocation for repairs and maintenance and for minor new works.

Before opposition members or members of various organisations comment publicly on so-called cuts to education, they should look at the papers and check their facts because, in this case, they are totally incorrect.

Education has fared very well this year and we will ensure that we continue to provide a very good education system to Territorians.

Failure of Tourist Commission Officer to Acquit Amex Card Expenses

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he confirm that, during the period 1984-86, a senior officer of the Tourist Commission failed to acquit - that is, to properly account for - his American Express card expenses on a monthly basis as required by the commission, and that an amount of \$50 355 had been spent on American Express without being properly accounted for by that senior officer?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm that. The figures involved are totally strange to me. I will seek information and provide it to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SMITH: I have a supplementary question, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: As I advised the House last week, the matter of supplementary questions has been referred to the Standing Orders Committee.

Greenhouse Effect

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the government taken any action to monitor the Greenhouse Effect and its ramifications for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some action is being taken. During the last few years, increasing attention has been focused in the scientific community on what is termed the Greenhouse Effect. Indeed, I raised this matter in the adjournment debate on 24 February this year. Officers of the Northern Territory government have now attended 2 interstate conferences on the Greenhouse Effect and its implications across the world. More interstate conferences are scheduled and we will be attending those.

For those honourable members who are not conversant with the Greenhouse Effect, it is a build-up of major gases in the atmosphere. These gases include carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and methane. The ceiling of pollutants is causing the earth's atmosphere to become warmer by preventing the escape of heat. In a recent article in the Sunday Territorian, the Director of the CSIRO in Darwin said that the Greenhouse Effect would produce some fairly significant changes in the Northern Territory environment and that we needed to be aware of probable trends. These changes include higher rainfall, a shorter dry season, more cyclones and more intense cyclones, and increased climatic extremes. Also, Alice Springs will receive more summer rain.

Climatic change is not new in the earth's geological history. What is particularly significant in this case, however, is the rate of change. We are not talking about evolutionary change over thousands of years. We are facing the prospect of significant climatic change within the lifetime of people born now. As a consequence of the alteration in weather patterns brought about by

the Greenhouse Effect, we can also expect some significant changes to the Territory's land mass. Kakadu, or at least the lowlands of Kakadu, will revert to the mangrove swamp that it was some 6000 years ago. The growth of rainforest in the Top End will increase dramatically and the sea level will rise significantly, thus affecting all freshwater floodplains.

I would invite honourable members to read last Tuesday's NT News which contained an article outlining the alterations to the Darwin coastline which will be brought about by the Greenhouse Effect. The issues are potentially enormous. An increasing number of articles about the Greenhouse Effect are appearing in magazines and I urge all honourable members to follow events in this regard.

The scientific evidence and research available thus far would indicate that the results of the Greenhouse Effect in the Territory will not be as adverse as they will be in other areas of Australia. In some of the southern states, planning has already begun for what will occur when the Greenhouse Effect becomes apparent. Honourable members may be aware that, in South Australia, planning legislation is being reviewed so that damage from the effect may be minimised.

While current scientific research would indicate that the Greenhouse Effect will be less adverse in the Territory than elsewhere, we must monitor the situation very closely and take whatever action is necessary. With this in mind, I wish to advise honourable members that I will be asking a number of relevant organisations located in the Territory to form an advisory committee to the Northern Territory government. In the coming week, I will be approaching the CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology, the University College, the Darwin Institute of Technology, the North Australian Research Unit, the Conservation Commission, the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and the Department of Lands and Housing to seek their cooperation in relation to the membership of this advisory committee. I envisage the committee being in place within a matter of weeks. It will monitor the scientific research being undertaken in relation to the Greenhouse Effect and resultant climatic changes. It will cooperate with other relevant organisations, both inside and outside Australia, and it will advise the Territory government on any appropriate action that may need to be taken.

Mr Speaker, while it would clearly be wrong to be alarmist, the Greenhouse Effect raises issues of great community concern. It is therefore incumbent on the government to take a responsible approach. We will do this through the establishment of this government advisory committee.

Failure of Minister for Tourism to Acquit Amex Card Expenses

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he confirm that, at the date he resigned as Chairman of the Tourist Commission to contest the Araluen by-election for the CLP, he had not given an explanation for an amount of \$50 355 of Tourist Commission and taxpayers' money which he had spent against American Express credit cards?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm that I had addressed those matters and had acquitted various amounts of travel expenditure. I am not sure what the final figure was, but all those amounts were audited by the Auditor-General and any balances that were outstanding were paid by myself.

Darwin and Alice Springs Airports

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has he had discussions with the FAC to ensure an immediate start for both Darwin and Alice Springs Airports? Is he able to advise whether the FAC will take over the existing Darwin Airport operation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, yesterday, the Chief Minister expressed some concern, and quite correctly so, that there was inadequate information contained in the announcements by either the federal government or, at the time, by the FAC as to what their specific proposals were for the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports. The only announcement that we had had from our federal representatives was that the projects would be completed within 3 years. Obviously, that is unacceptable to Territorians. No detail was given. There are constraints such as no passenger head charging and no imposts on the federal budget. This government had done its sums and we knew what the whole financial operation of the airports would be. We were confused by what the figures meant and I am sure there is still much to be revealed about how the FAC will finalise its financial packages. However, that is a concern for them, not for us.

What is important to Territorians is when the airports will be commenced and when they will be finished. It is as simple as that. Previously, I had had amicable discussions with the FAC. Since the federal government budget, I have spoken with senior executives of the FAC. I have had assurances from both Mr Bill Swingler and Mr John Spencer, the Executive Officer and the General Manager, that the FAC will commence construction on Darwin immediately following resolution of its financial position and lease arrangements for the Darwin Airport. That is a little vague because, whilst it had been indicated by the federal members that transfer would occur in October, unfortunately there were also some statements indicating that planning would commence after October. Obviously, that is wasting another 2 to 3 months.

The Territory government has put much in place already in the way of planning, conceptual design and the bringing together of project management submissions, and the FAC has assured us that it would more than welcome any support that we can provide. I am pleased to announce that the head of the Department of Transport and Works will be meeting with the FAC next Monday in Sydney to run through all of our information. We will provide every possible support. In the meantime, what is required is for the federal government to expedite the resolution of the financial arrangements. These will be a little bit difficult for it to swallow because, quite logically, the whole project has to stand alone in a commercial sense.

Our figures were verified by the federal Department of Transport and Communications. If our proposals relied on \$30m approximately of grant and still required something like a \$6 passenger head tax, then something has to be resolved to ensure that the FAC is able to meet the commitments that have been made on its behalf by the federal government. Some would say that this is great for the federal government because it avoids a direct injection of funds. We had believed all along that the federal government had a responsibility. Previously, it had committed \$95m in 1983 terms, probably \$130m in today's terms. We thought \$30m was reasonable and we bent over backwards to make sure the project came together.

Mr Speaker, there have been very positive assurances from the FAC officials. They are extremely confident people and I have a great deal of respect for their commercial ability. They know what the business is all about, they have agreed to cooperate to the fullest extent and I am very confident that we will get construction started by the end of this calendar year, as we proposed in our submission. If they utilise our programming and our support, then I am sure that we can have construction completed by our originally-stated objective of May 1990.

That is what this whole debate is about. That was what the Chief Minister was concerned about yesterday. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition, who has not really shown the slightest interest in this whole matter during the last 3½ years, is not helping things now. His attitude is counterproductive. He is trying to bag a genuine concern the Chief Minister is expressing on behalf of all Territorians. The Territory government is more than happy to provide all of its technical, financial and construction team information. Through the Treasurer, we have agreed also to transfer back the \$10m loans entitlement to the federal government for allocation to the FAC so that it can get some cash to commence immediately. The Territory government has done everything possible and will continue to do everything possible to see that this project is completed quickly. Territorians can rest assured that I will maintain a very positive interest in this project, and in Alice Springs Airport, until such time as we see aircraft pulling up at that new terminal.

In relation to the Alice Springs Airport, we will be providing to the federal government our impression of how things ought to be going. On behalf of Alice Springs residents, we will ask that they receive a fair hearing in respect of the forward planning. We have had assurances that the doubling of the existing facility will proceed immediately, and that is fine. But the long-term planning needs to be balanced and needs to take into account the interests of Alice Springs people and, indeed, all Territorians. We will be using our best endeavours, in a constructive manner, to ensure that that occurs.

In regard to the specific question by the previous Minister for Transport and Works, this is a team and there is no doubt that this is a team. The previous Minister for Transport and Works did as much as anybody else to get us to this point, and I acclaim his efforts. He asked about the utilisation of the existing terminal. I understand that that is not contemplated and, in the meantime, some tenders have been let for some concessional arrangements at the existing terminal. I am pleased to note that they are only for a 2-year period. That is a positive indication by the federal government that that old hangar is seeing the last of its days.

Failure of Minister for Tourism to Acquit Amex Card Expenses

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he confirm that, on 7 May 1986, 1 month after he had been elected to this parliament, he still had not explained the \$50 000 in American Express credit card expenses that he had incurred in the Tourist Commission and that the Auditor-General was forced to write to the Tourist Commission giving it a deadline of 2 weeks to produce that information that he had failed to supply, as he had been required to do, on a monthly basis, over the previous 2 years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, again, without looking at the dates, the times and the amounts, I cannot confirm that.

Mr Smith: \$50 000.

Mr POOLE: I would certainly dispute the amount of \$50 000. Really, off the top of my head, I cannot remember the figures. All the amounts that were owed to the commission, on a Tourist Commission credit card for which the account was paid by the Tourist Commission, were acquitted by myself to the satisfaction of the Auditor-General and members of the Tourist Commission.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent me from moving a motion of want of confidence in the Minister for Tourism and Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Central Australian Affairs.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Want of Confidence in Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly has no confidence in the Minister for Tourism and the Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Central Australian Affairs as his conduct, when Chairman of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, evidenced that Mr Poole is not a fit and proper person to hold the responsible position of minister in that, when Chairman of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission: (a) over a period of 2 years, he failed to acquit his American Express Card expenses of \$50 000 in a manner determined by the commission; and (b) despite requests from the Auditor-General, he had not acquitted these expenses prior to his resignation from the position of Chairman of the Tourist Commission.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, pursuant to standing order 95, I accept the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition as a want of confidence motion and ask that any further questions be placed on notice.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

20. Staffing of Giles House

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many staff are employed at Giles House.
2. In which categories are these staff employed.
3. How many people have held the position of Superintendent at Giles House during -
 - (a) 1984;
 - (b) 1985;
 - (c) 1986; and
 - (d) 1987.
4. Of the other staff employed at Giles House, how many changes have there been in each category of staff in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987.

23. Advertising - Channel Eight, Darwin

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How much did government departments and authorities spend on advertising on Channel 8, Darwin in 1987.
2. What was the breakdown of that amount by department and authority.

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

17 May 1988

42. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

43. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

44. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

45. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

46. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

47. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

48. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

49. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

56. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

62. Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Did the Territory Insurance Office pay outstanding tax bills incurred by Hungerford Refrigeration or Rupert Hungerford; if so -
 - (a) were the payments for company tax;
 - (b) group tax; or
 - (c) an individual's income tax.
2. Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration secured; if so -
 - (a) in what ways is it secured; and
 - (b) what assets is it secured against.
3. Who first identified Hungerford Refrigeration as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory.

4. Who made the first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer operations to the Trade Development Zone.
5. Why did the directors of Hungerford refuse to provide directors' guarantees to meet any debts incurred by the company.
6. What were the full terms agreed for the transfer of Hungerford Refrigeration to the Trade Development Zone.
7. What departmental evaluations were made of the Hungerford Refrigeration company; its prospects, its projects and its products.
8. What departmental evaluations were made of the reports prepared for the TIO and the TDZ on the prospects of Hungerford Refrigeration.
9. What is the full extent of public funding (including TIO involvement) in Hungerford Refrigeration.
10. Was a directive issued by the Hungerford Refrigeration Board for the company to pursue local orders rather than export orders; if so, why was this done.

16 August 1988

64. Tenth Anniversary of Self-Government

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister provide an itemised account of the expenditure on the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of self-government.

65. Darwin Private Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many private ward bed nights have been leased back to Royal Darwin Hospital during the last 6 months.
2. What have been the monthly occupancy rates for both the public wards and private wards during the last 6 months.
3. How much rent will Health and Life Care be paying the NT government for the land on which the new private hospital is being built.
4. How much money has the NT government contributed towards the establishment of the new private hospital.
5. If Health and Life Care sell their private hospital, will there be a breach of contract. If so, what conditions of the contract would have been contravened.

6. To what extent has the initial projected cost of the new private hospital been exceeded and supplemented by NT government expenditure.
7. What level of federal subsidy has been received during the last 6 months for the private wards.
8. What is the expected level of federal subsidy to be provided over a 12-month period for the new private hospital.
9. Will the private hospital be providing a rehabilitation service; if so -
 - (a) at what cost will it be provided to the NT government;
 - (b) how will it be made available to clients, who do not have private hospital cover; and
 - (c) how does the government intend to apply the Work Health Act provisions.
10. What arrangements have been made with doctors for -
 - (a) the provision of specialist services at the private hospital; and
 - (b) remuneration of specialist doctors for their services.
11. What cost sharing arrangements have been entered into enabling economies of scale to occur between the Royal Darwin Hospital and the private hospital for -
 - (a) ambulance services;
 - (b) pharmaceutical products;
 - (c) x-ray films and equipment; and
 - (d) laundry and catering.
12. What arrangements have been made to contract out pathology, radiology, catering and any other services to the private sector.

4 October 1988

66. Sentencing under Criminal Code

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In court cases relating to slayings as heard by the Alice Springs Court since the introduction of the Criminal Code 1 January 1983 -

1. How many people have been charged with a slaying offence.
2. How many people have been convicted of -

- (a) murder;
 - (b) manslaughter;
 - (c) committing a dangerous act; and
 - (d) other.
3. What is the average head sentence imposed by the judge on the above convicted persons.
 4. What is the average actual sentence served by the above convicted persons.

67. Treatment of Ear Infections in Schools

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What are the number and percentages of school-age children, by rural school in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine areas, that have:
 - (a) glue ear;
 - (b) perforated ear drums; and
 - (c) educationally significant hearing impairment.
2. How many of the schools mentioned in question 1 above have Health Workers involved in full time campaigns at the school to treat the conditions.

68. Leased Premises

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How much space being leased by the NT government as at 1 October 1988 -
 - (a) was occupied; and
 - (b) was unoccupied.
2. What are the locations/addresses of the above leased areas.
3. In each case, what is the length of the lease.
4. What is the monthly cost of leasing those areas not occupied.
5. Are there cleaning contracts for the unoccupied leased areas; if so, what is the monthly cost of the cleaning contracts.

17 May 1988

53. **Kormilda College - Expenditure**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What Territory government money has been spent at Kormilda College on -
 - (a) teacher housing;
 - (b) boarder accommodation;
 - (c) classrooms;
 - (d) landscaping; and
 - (e) other areas in Kormilda,
 since the take-over by the new Board of Management.
2. Are there any arrangements to recoup this money.
3. What ongoing commitment does the Northern Territory government have to provide money for Kormilda College.
4. What fee structures are proposed for Kormilda College students.
5. What arrangements have been made over the title of land at Kormilda College with the new Board of Management.

ANSWER

1. Following an estimate by the Department of Transport and Works in mid-1986, which recommended that restoration would cost \$2.1m, the following refurbishing and upgrading work was carried out at Kormilda College -

(a) teacher housing	\$ 218 000
(b) boarder accommodation	\$ 610 000
(c) classrooms	\$ 200 000
(d) landscaping	\$ 13 000
(e) other areas, including kitchen, administration, services, recreation	\$ 462 000
(f) swimming pool	\$ 73 000
	\$1 576 000

2. There are no direct arrangements to recoup moneys spent on upgrading the facilities at Kormilda. However, with an expected enrolment of 500 students by 1994, the government can reasonably expect substantial savings in the amount of per capita expenditure paid to students at Kormilda once it becomes a non-government school.
3. Provision will be made within the Department of Education's estimates for:
 - ° payment, from 1 July 1989, of recurrent per capita grants and isolated student allowances in respect of students at current rates; and for
 - ° subvention grants in 1988-89 at a similar level to 1987-88 and reducing grants from 1989-90 phasing out at the end of 1993-94 financial year. The level will be set in the 1988-89 budget.
4. The Interim Board of Governors has advised that the fee structure will be variable according to the following parameters:
 - ° the age of the student
 - ° the student's degree of isolation
 - ° whether the student is entitled to an Aboriginal Secondary Education (ABSEC) Grant or Assistance for Isolated Children (the AIC Scheme).

The Commonwealth's student assistance schemes are designed around these above criteria. The NT assistance schemes take into account the student's degree of isolation, handicap and family income.

The base level of fees for both tuition and boarding is \$6000 per annum in total, and discounts are offered so as to minimise family contribution and maximise Commonwealth and NT student assistance schemes.

5. The government has recently agreed to grant to the Interim Board of Governors a Crown lease in perpetuity over the land in question.

61. Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many letters of intent have been signed by firms indicating an intention to establish in the Trade Development Zone.
2. How many letters of intent have been translated into binding agreements to establish in the Trade Development Zone.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

3. Of those binding agreements, how many have been implemented - i.e. how many firms have actually established in the zone.
4. Will the minister table the legal advice, which his predecessor indicated to the Legislative Assembly on 25 November 1986 had been sought on the question, as to whether letters of intent are legally binding documents.
5. What is the total amount of money paid to Mr K.K. Yeung as -
 - (a) retainer;
 - (b) contact fee at the letter of intent stage;
 - (c) start-up fee at establishment in zone; and
 - (d) reimbursement for expenses in promoting the zone since his engagement as the prime consultant.
6. When does Mr K.K. Yeung's current contract expire.
7. Will the contract be renewed.
8. What are the terms and conditions for its renewal.
9. How many days has the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority spent on TDZA business in 1986, 1987 and 1988 -
 - (a) interstate; and
 - (b) overseas.
10. For each of the overseas trips taken by Mr McHenry, what has been -
 - (a) the cost of accommodation;
 - (b) the cost of travel; and
 - (c) the cost of entertainment and other expenses.

ANSWER

1. 21 companies have signed Letters of Intent.
2. 6 companies have signed Primary Agreements following a Letter of Intent, with an additional company (Railex Fadelli) signing an Agreement without a Letter of Intent. Total 7 Primary Agreements.
3. Of the 7 agreements signed, 5 companies have established in the zone. In addition to these 5 companies, 1 other company is currently finalising start-up arrangements. The other is still negotiating on BMP arrangements prior to confirming start-up intentions.

4. A legal opinion from Morris Fletcher & Cross on whether or not the agreements are legally binding on the parties has been sought and obtained. In short, the opinion is that the agreements are legally binding but, for obvious commercial in-confidence reasons, I do not propose to table that response.
5. Moneys paid to Mr K.K. Yeung since 1985 in conjunction with his activities on behalf of the TDZA total \$624 127. The specific components of this amount are not appropriate for release as public information and are a matter between K.K. Yeung and the TDZA.
6. As per question 5.
7. As above.
8. As above.
9. Over the period 1986 to 30 June 1988, Mr McHenry has spent 183 days overseas and 45 days interstate.
10. In respect of Mr McHenry's overseas travel over the above period, the total cost thereof amounted to \$105 596. It is not proposed to provide a break-up of cost in respect of each trip.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, my question relates to the state of the Trade Development Zone and its management. Was it this year or last year that Mr Col Fuller, the former head of the department and a member of the Board of the Trade Development Zone Authority, informed him of his concerns about payments to Mr K.K. Yeung and, secondly, what action did he take as a result of the concerns raised by Mr Fuller?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in this Assembly, matters relating to the Trade Development Zone are carried by the minister responsible for the Trade Development Zone. Questions from the honourable member in relation to the Trade Development Zone generally should be directed to the appropriate minister.

Registration of Vehicles from Interstate

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer to a recent television advertising campaign pointing out the need for interstate drivers to register their vehicles after living in the Territory for 3 months or longer. Could he inform the House of the success or otherwise of this campaign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can advise the member for Ludmilla that the campaign to encourage interstate transferees to re-register within the Northern Territory has been most successful. That campaign was based on some requirements of the Motor Vehicles Act that were implemented last year requiring that people who moved to the Northern Territory transfer, within a period of 3 months, not only their motor vehicle registrations but also their licences unless there is some good reason for the registrar to grant them a dispensation. The reason for this requirement is quite obvious. Territory roads are very expensive to maintain and there needs to be equity in regard to the third party insurance provisions in that the Territory pool of funds ought to reflect the total use of Territory roads by its citizens.

This has been a problem for some time, particularly in Alice Springs, as you know only too well, Mr Speaker. In fact, some time ago, you drew to my attention various practices of individuals and companies who were bringing fleets of vehicles to the Territory and maintaining their interstate registration for long periods. The Territory's annual registration inspection is most important, particularly in regions where vehicles are used on gravel roads which can lead to a rapid deterioration in the condition and safety of vehicles.

The television campaign has led to a substantial increase in vehicle registrations in the Territory. In the period from 1 July to 12 September, there were just over 3000 registrations in 1987 compared with 3422 this year. August is normally a very heavy registration period and there have been some 400 more registrations this August than last August. I believe these increased registrations are directly attributable to the campaign. It has been extremely successful and the Territory coffers are being appropriately filled. Territorians will no longer have to bear the burden on behalf of

companies or individuals from interstate who fail to transfer their vehicle registrations to the Territory.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister was the minister responsible for the Trade Development Zone during the period to which this question relates. Was it this year or last year that Mr Col Fuller, the former head of the Department of Industries and Development and a member of the Board of the Trade Development Zone Authority, informed him of his concerns about payments to Mr K.K. Yeung, and what action did the minister take as a result of the concerns raised by Mr Fuller?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I rise to make this simple point. Discussions between ministers and their departmental heads or between ministers and board members of authorities which are responsible to them are obviously matters between those parties. There is no possibility of maintaining a working relationship with the public service or board members if the Leader of the Opposition is able validly to rise in this Assembly and ask whether this or that conversation occurred last week, last year or whenever.

Mr Smith: I asked when it took place. I know that it took place.

Mr PERRON: If he has some evidence that he would like to put forward, let him do so. Instead of making snide insinuations that a certain conversation took place, let him put some evidence before us. But, to expect a minister to try to maintain any sort of relationship whatsoever with the public service whilst the Leader of the Opposition has his tape-recorder in the room, which obviously is what he would like to have, is clearly nonsensical.

School Council Regulations

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Some time ago, he undertook to review the school council regulations as they apply to the makeup of those school councils. Has that review taken place and, if it is complete, what revisions will he be making to those regulations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Indeed, I have completed the review of the school council regulations. It has been a lengthy exercise. I have spoken to representatives of all school councils and the principals or acting principals of schools. I have spoken also to the Council of Government School Organisations and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation in relation to that review. All points put forward during the course of those discussions and the comments made by members of this Assembly have been taken on board during the formulation of my views. The regulations will be adjusted in due course.

It is interesting to note that, during the course of the review and the discussions, a number of points have been raised that we have been unable to

address as yet. In some Aboriginal communities, for example, there were some situations where the councils did not relate to the natural parents. They wanted huge councils. Two such places were Yirara College and Yirrkala. At Ludmilla Special School, there was concern also because there were insufficient parents actively involved who would be able to make up the mix required in the regulations passed in February.

One point that we will have to address at a later stage is in relation to schools which have a large enrolment of Aboriginal students. This was raised during the course of discussions with various school councils. The representation on the school councils did not reflect the large enrolment of Aboriginal students. I have left the matter with the councils at this time. I hope that, where there is a large component of Aboriginal students at a particular school, it will ask FEPI to examine the matter and look after the interests of the Aboriginal students at that school. We will be monitoring that aspect as time goes by.

The changes are as follows. Firstly, the regulations provided that the secretary, with the Minister for Education's approval, could nominate a non-voting person to advise and assist the council. The presence of an advisory secretary's nominee on a school council is regarded as superfluous. The principal has power to discharge any role of council which may have been contemplated for the secretary's representative. I have moved therefore to abolish the position on school councils of the secretary's representatives.

The new role for the principal will be spelled out clearly in an amended regulation. The regulation establishing the position of departmental representative will be repealed. The subregulation making a head teacher an ex-officio member of council will be expanded to require him also to inform the council on education matters. I have looked also to strengthening the role of the school's principal in council affairs to ensure that the principal, when directed by the secretary, informs and advises his council of departmental policy.

The regulations also provided that representatives of certain classes of persons could be coopted on to councils. The term 'coopt' has negative connotations and, in the context of school council rules, is inappropriate. The term 'coopt' was also unclear to those who would use the regulation most. To clarify that position, the word 'invite' is to be used.

There will be changes to provisions for MLAs to be elected to councils. The MLA's term may not exceed 2 years. In the past, a fixed 2-year term was set. The new, flexible term allows the council more discretion when it extends an invitation to the MLA in the first instance.

In the past, the regulation provided for the chairpersons of school councils to be members who were (a) parents of children at that school or (b) parents of children at the school and also government school teachers or government school principals elsewhere. All of those could have been chairpersons of a particular council. The head teacher of a government school, for which the council is established, will not now chair a school council meeting other than for the purposes of electing office bearers. Head teachers who are acting head teachers from any government school will be restricted from being appointed as chairpersons of councils.

Finally, the regulations provided that a school council would not have more than one-third of its total elected membership comprised of Northern Territory Teaching Service officers, Department of Education public servants

or full-time employees of government schools. Generally, I found that there is no proven need to limit the numbers of any class of government employee on school councils, other than teachers in a school where a school council is elected. Any ceiling on membership of school councils by other government employees will now be removed, except in exceptional circumstances. Those exceptional circumstances arise when a school council proposes to undertake special functions under section 71C(1)(m) of the Education Act. Such functions relate to a school council selecting staff to perform teaching duties and, in such a case, the one-third ceiling would be extended to limit the number of teachers on the council, both teachers from the school concerned and from other schools.

In the case of the vast majority of councils, those not taking the responsibility for employing teaching staff, the following condition will apply. Of the school council membership, the number who are teachers from within that school will be limited to one-third of the total. That is the situation in most school councils. Where school councils become involved in employing staff to perform teaching duties, the government will limit the number of teaching service members on the council to not more than one-third of the total council membership. I emphasise that it will be entirely up to councils whether or not they become involved in staff selection and, indeed, a number of people to whom I have spoken during the course of this review have expressed reluctance to be involved in that area. I make it clear, however, that the decision on whether or not to be involved will be left to each school council. The government will require school councils which are not involved in that process to limit the number of members who are officers within the meaning of the Teaching Service Act employed at that school to one-third of total council membership. In many cases, councils currently make that provision. Finally, the government will remove any ceiling on the numbers of non-teaching Department of Education employees able to be elected to school councils.

The regulations are being drafted and they will be processed in the normal manner. They will be in place in ample time for the Annual General Meetings of school councils. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those people who have been involved in the review exercise. It has been a lengthy process. When I stated that I would be speaking to representatives of all school councils, I did not realise just how time-consuming that would be. It has been worth while. Many issues have come to light, issues that still have to be addressed by government. I believe the exercise has indicated the government's willingness to look at issues responsibly and take note of the concerns of the public. I hope that school councils will continue to contact me about their concerns and I will ensure that any such concerns are examined in a responsible manner.

Alice Springs Sewage Treatment Works

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is it a fact that a Cabinet discussion paper, dated March 1986, recommended immediate action to rectify health problems created by the Alice Springs sewage treatment works? Secondly, is it a fact that his own department warned, in a confidential Cabinet submission, that the treatment works posed 'a very real risk of an outbreak of mosquito-borne diseases such as epidemic polyarthrititis and Australian encephalitis'? Thirdly, is it a fact that, until recently, the minister has been unable to persuade Cabinet to recognise the risks and to consider courses of action to protect the health and economic well-being of the people of Alice Springs? Finally, in view of

his performance in this matter, how does the minister justify his continued retention of the Health and Community Services portfolio?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the obvious response to the final question is that the party of the member opposite is incapable of winning government and, therefore, he has no hope of ever taking over the portfolio.

The decision on whether the sewage ponds in Alice Springs should be relocated or remain where they are is not in my area of responsibility. Matters relating to that lie with the Deputy Chief Minister. If the honourable member opposite has any questions on that subject, he might like to direct them to that minister.

My department does ensure the monitoring of mosquito numbers and oversights appropriate action in various areas throughout the Northern Territory, and Alice Springs is no exception. The Alice Springs Town Council was advised to treat the swamp area following land and air surveys recently, and aerial spraying was scheduled for Monday 26 September 1988. My department continues to monitor the area and I have no reason for concern at this stage.

Political Advertising on Darwin Bus Service Buses

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is it true that certain federal politicians have sought to use Darwin Bus Service buses as vehicles for political advertising?

Mr Smith: What a good idea.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I hear the suggestion from the Leader of the Opposition that it is a good idea, and perhaps we can come to that point shortly. The Darwin Bus Service receives a number of representations in relation to different forms of advertising and what should or should not be displayed on our public buses. The bus service has laid down certain criteria to be followed by its advertising agent. We gave the advertising agent as much freedom as was appropriate to seek and place advertisements on the service's buses. As members would be aware, a great variety of those advertising campaigns have helped, in some ways, to brighten the appearance of buses. I refer, for example, to advertisements for Territory Tidy Towns etc.

I was a little surprised to hear that the federal member, Warren Snowdon, and his colleague in the federal parliament, Senator Bob Collins, recently approached the bus service to have some political-type advertising placed on bus service property. One of the very few preclusions that the bus service placed on advertising was in regard to religious and political matter. As the member for Sadadeen indicated, we had no problem even with condom advertising in connection with the AIDS campaign as long as it was presented appropriately. Honourable members would be aware that a most balanced approach was taken by the bus service in that regard. However, some of the suggestions that were put forward by the federal ALP representatives included slogans such as 'Labor at Work'. Can honourable members imagine a slogan 'Labor at Work' and alongside it a coloured condom advertisement relating to the AIDS program? It would be most inappropriate, Mr Speaker.

It is incongruous to suggest for a moment that bus travellers would be encouraged to use bus services by the figure of Hon Warren Snowdon smiling down at them from under his straw hat. We have some difficulty when it comes to encouraging people to use bus services in certain regions and I doubt that the faces of politicians would enhance our prospects, and I say that in a totally bipartisan manner. For example, Mr Speaker, can you imagine standing at the bus stop in Tiwi at 7.30 am looking at a photo of the member for Wanguri smiling in his usual fashion or, in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition, the passengers regarding the ever-sombre face of their local representative or his form stretched out, reclining, on a bendy-bus. What a way to start the day!

There are good reasons for precluding political and religious advertisements and these exist where there is a chance that sections of the community might be offended by such advertising. Aside from the patronage question, there is the question of vandalism which is of concern to all public transport systems. What is the name of the graffiti outfit? I think it is called 'Bugger Up'. Mr Speaker, imagine that group at work taking on the ALP's other suggested slogan of 'The Winning Team', very shortly to become 'The Whining Team'. Very obviously, that would attract the attention of 'Bugger Up'.

This does not involve only the bus service in Darwin. As the member for Araluen would know, as a result of pressure from him, we have been looking at introducing a viable bus service in Alice Springs. The last time we tried to introduce a bus system in Alice Springs, about 3 years ago, there was very little usage of the service. I would imagine that, with a photograph of the face of the member for MacDonnell on the front or the back of a bus, patronage would deteriorate even further. I think the bus service demonstrated very good taste in declining the offer by the ALP to advertise the faces of its representatives, accompanied by slogans, and I think that it ought to be commended for having such good sense.

Identification Parades in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Would he, as a matter of urgency, undertake to have installed in the Alice Springs court system a 1-way viewing screen so that victims of crime can identify their assailants from a line-up without being seen themselves?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, procedures are set down regarding identification processes using line-ups and other methods which relate to the laws and rules of evidence. Those procedures are such that they cannot be legislated for. The courtrooms are not places that are used for the investigation of crime and the identification of criminals. The procedures are well documented in respect of how evidence obtained by means of a line-up can be admissible in court cases. I can assure the honourable member that the evidentiary requirements can be carried out at all centres in the Territory. This allows a line-up, under proper circumstances, to be utilised for the purposes of obtaining and presenting evidence.

National Parks Fees

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TOURISM

As there have been conflicting reports regarding park fees to be implemented by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service for Kakadu and Uluru, is he able to clarify the current position?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. There certainly has been some conflict. Last Thursday, while I was attending the Australian Travel Industry Conference, I sought and gained a meeting with the federal Tourism Minister, Senator Graham Richardson. That meeting took place in his room at 11 o'clock on Thursday morning. I was accompanied by my ministerial officer, Alan French. During the course of that meeting, I suggested that 1 of the many problems with park fees at both Uluru and Kakadu National Parks was the way the fees were structured.

It was all very well for the federal minister to say that industry had been advised. I guess industry had been advised because I am informed by Hon Clyde Holding that he wrote a letter in April or May 1987 and meetings were held between representatives of the ANPWS and the tourist industry in relation to the introduction of fees of ANPWS parks in the Northern Territory. I assure members of the House that the industry thought that, if fees were to be introduced, they would be along the lines of the fee already in use at Uluru National Park - the sum of \$1.50.

During the course of the discussion, which obviously centred around the \$10 fee that is proposed for Kakadu National Park, I explained the difficulties that were experienced by coach operators, in particular when they attend the ANPWS headquarters in Kakadu and take a coach load of tourists into the audio-visual centre. The component of the \$10 for the audio-visual is \$2.50. I explained to the minister that the room apparently seats only 30 people. What would happen when 3 or 4 coaches arrived at the same time? Other members of the public who wanted to see this audio-visual would have to sit for an hour and a half before 3 or 4 coaches could be processed through the park headquarters.

I pointed out to the minister that it was quite apparent that a very small percentage of the total visitors to Kakadu National Park wanted to see the audio-visual display. The reason is that the majority of tourists who visit Kakadu are on day trips and, out of an 8- or a 10-hour driving day, they experience only 3 or 4 hours in the park itself. During that short time, they want to see the various delights of the park, not sit down to watch the audio-visual display.

I believe Senator Richardson accepted my comments. Certainly, at that time, he agreed that my argument was quite realistic and that that portion of the fee at least should be dropped. He gave a commitment that, when he returned to Canberra, he would discuss it with his colleagues. He also indicated that he would discuss with his colleagues the problem relating to the introduction dates of the new fees. The Northern Territory government believes that the fees are far too high and that steps must be taken to alleviate problems caused for the tourist industry. Anybody in the tourist industry knows that brochures have already been printed and programs formulated. To change a pricing structure in the international marketplace requires at least 15 months.

Mr Tuxworth: That is the same lead time as the bed tax got.

Mr POOLE: That is right, but the bed tax did get the lead time eventually.

Mr Tuxworth: Tell that to the industry.

Mr POOLE: From an industry point of view, the \$10 fee cannot be absorbed. There are various consumer protection laws, particularly in places such as North America, and in central European countries, such as Germany and France, that prohibit Australian tour operators from changing their pricing structure after people have signed for tours. I think everybody in this House would accept that most overseas visitors to Australia do not simply decide to jump on a plane and come. They purchase their tours well in advance - in some cases, probably 6 to 8 months in advance of the actual trip - and work out exactly what they want to do so that they can achieve maximum value for their dollars. There is no way that a Northern Territory operator, with a coach full of people going into Kakadu National Park after 1 January 1989, when the proposed fee is due to be introduced, could absorb the \$400 or \$500 involved, and that is what it amounts to. To go into the park will cost a coach operator \$400 or \$500, depending on the number of people he has on his coach.

I and my ministerial assistant certainly received the impression that the \$2.50 would be dropped immediately and that the minister would try to talk to his colleagues, review the actual scale of fees and, hopefully, arrange a later introduction date. I was staggered to see an article in the Saturday edition of the NT News which said, basically, that Senator Richardson's office had flatly denied that and described my statement as scurrilous and absolutely wrong. I have written to Senator Richardson asking him to explain the contents of the meeting because I have sat down and discussed everything that was talked about with my ministerial officer and we both agree that the press release that I issued reflected accurately what was said at that meeting.

There are numerous arguments, and I guess I should clear the air because there seems to be some confusion in the minds of the general public as to my attitude and the government's attitude in relation to park fees. I do not think anybody on this side of the House wants to see fees introduced into parks. We believe that parks are for the enjoyment of all people. We do not argue with the imposition of fees at the level of \$1.50. We certainly will argue and will continue to argue about fees of \$10.

It is a fact of life that almost everybody in the Northern Territory, and most certainly the good people of Alice Springs and Darwin, spend a lot of time and trouble visiting those park areas almost every time a relative, a friend or an acquaintance comes to the Northern Territory. They act as unofficial tourist ambassadors for the good of the Territory. It is a very expensive exercise even to drive to Kakadu and Uluru National Parks because of the distances involved. I can imagine the reaction of locals if they have to pay \$10 every time somebody visits and indicates that he would like to see the parks. It will do untold damage to the fishermen who regularly fish in the Kakadu National Park and to the lifestyle of Territorians who use the parks as the recreational facilities that they are. I think it is most unjust.

This government will continue to oppose the introduction of the \$10 fee. I intend to try to pin down Senator Graham Richardson in order to obtain some support. He has been lobbied already by the Australian travel industry and the Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs Regional Tourist Associations. I understand some of the commercial groups, the tour operators themselves, have

written to him. The Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister. I have written numerous letters and I am sorry to say that, yesterday, I received a copy of a letter from the Hon Clyde Holding that said basically that he is not prepared to review the fee. The only thing he may be prepared to do is look at the introduction date.

I put it to honourable members that, if there is to be any good news in relation to the fees, it will emanate from the federal Territory ALP representatives, because we clearly got that message from Canberra yesterday. They are simply playing politics. Graham Richardson and his colleagues in Canberra are embarrassed by the stupidity of the situation. They will turn around and give us some good news, but there is no way that they will allow this side of the House to advise Territory residents that there is a piece of good news around the corner. It will emanate from our own ALP Senator, our own ALP member of the House of Representatives or from some honourable member on the other side. I think it is disgraceful.

Television Segment on Member for Braitling

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

I preface my question by informing the minister that, at a recent meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, this parliament and its members became the butt of a series of deeply embarrassing comments. The comments arose as a result of the appearance on national television of the member for Braitling. I ask the minister what action he will take to counter the unfortunate perception left by the member for Braitling that the members of this parliament are overpaid and underworked, and whether he has counselled the honourable member in relation to any future contact with the national media?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not think that I need to counsel the member for Braitling about being cautious when agreeing to take part in programs with the national media. Indeed, the problem has not rested solely with the member for Braitling of course. There is a message there for all politicians. In watching the program, I was interested to note the tactic adopted by the presenters and producer. It was not the traditional one of interviewing one politician about his affairs and then asking another politician, usually from the opposition ranks, for the counter story. That would not have worked in this case because an opposition member would have had to answer the questions about whether he is overworked and underpaid, whether the travel to and from Darwin is a valid expenditure by the taxpayer, whether his electorate comprises too few constituents and whether a Legislative Assembly of 25 members is far too big for the Northern Territory. Very cunningly, the producer decided not to go to an opposition politician because he might have had some substantiation for some of the argument. What he did was go to the Trades and Labor Council. When one considers that the ploy from the producer's point of view was to inflict maximum damage and make those fellows in the Territory look a bit silly, it was probably a good tactic. I did not think that the person interviewed on behalf of the Trades and Labor Council really did himself or the Territory very much justice either. I felt that he might have had his wits about him a little more.

Those types of activities of national current affairs programs are probably well known to us all. They paint a very distorted picture. From experience, I know that they can sit down with you for hours, in some cases.

They can follow politicians around for days. The upper hand lies with the producer. He can prune out all the reasons, examples and arguments that he wishes and, obviously, present the clips that he wishes. Certainly, it has happened to me, as it has happened to other honourable members. Indeed, at times, they go as far as re-asking a question on tape and then putting the answer in behind.

As politicians, we need to be ever more mindful of the intentions of most of those people who come to the Territory to make programs. In this case, I understand that the segment was supposedly on the Ghan Railway project. Most members in this Assembly and most Territorians who have seen the Ghan Preservation project admire it enormously and believe that the member for Braitling has done an incredible job on behalf of the Northern Territory. In heritage terms, that job will be hailed when it has been completed. It has been hailed already and it has done us a very great service. If the producer had stuck to his undertaking that that was what it was all about - the member for Braitling's role in getting this magnificent project off the ground - I guess it would have come out better than it did.

Road Sign for Drovers' Memorial

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

On this morning's ABC radio news, the member for Barkly was quoted as saying that he had written to the minister asking that a road sign be placed on the Stuart Highway near Newcastle Waters to inform motorists of the Drovers' Memorial. I had the privilege to be down in Newcastle Waters for the beginning of the Last Great Cattle Drive and in Longreach for its completion. I must say that I totally agree that Newcastle Waters is an appropriate site at which to develop ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable member ask the question?

Mr SETTER: Mr Speaker, what I was leading to is that I would be interested to know what action is being taken to erect such a sign post as the honourable member for Barkly has suggested.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was delighted to receive a very constructive letter from the member for Barkly and I thank him for drawing that specific project to the department's attention. The Department of Transport and Works is delighted to assist in promoting tourism spots and has done so in the past. Only recently, I drove down the highway and visited many of the spots of interest along the way. I was most impressed with the usefulness of the signs to the great majority of our tourism spots. The signposting of the memorial at Newcastle Waters will be attended to. I am not sure whether it will become as famous as the dog on the tucker box at Gundagai. Only time will tell.

Mr Speaker, I commend the member for Barkly for his constructive approach to the matter and I can assure him that I will continue to respond to such approaches in an appropriate manner. The Pine Creek community has made similar constructive approaches which have resulted in the provision of additional signage to mark local historical sites.

Electorate Office of the Member for Flynn

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I draw the minister's attention to statements in Saturday's NT News by the new member for Flynn regarding his plan to set up an electorate office. With respect, Mr Speaker, I ask him to relate his response to recent court action in New South Wales which led to a sitting member being forced to vacate his seat and recontest his election. Is it proper for a member of this parliament to canvass his electorate for capital and to offer capital gain as an inducement, and will the minister undertake to investigate the statements and activities of the member for Flynn in this matter? Finally, will the minister inform the member and this House of the outcome of that investigation as soon as is practicable?

Mr SPEAKER: I believe that the question relates to an electorate matter and might more properly be directed to myself or the Chief Minister. If the member for Stuart wishes to direct his question to me, I request that he place it on notice.

Mr TUXWORTH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member for Stuart has raised some important matters in his question and, in fact, those matters have already been referred to you, Sir. As the question relates to the accommodation of a member of this House, it should properly be addressed to you so that you can refer to it. As you have already considered those matters, Mr Speaker, it should not be too difficult for you to give us an appropriate reply.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, it is not a simple matter of the accommodation of an honourable member. The problem relates to the offer of shares, with the expectation of capital gain to the people who buy those shares as well as the expectation, through rent proceeds, of profit to electors within the electorate of Flynn. The Criminal Code contains provisions concerning the offering of inducements to electors by members of the Legislative Assembly. A member who breaches those provisions is required to vacate his seat and recontest his election, as happened recently in New South Wales. I believe that this is properly a matter for the Attorney-General who has responsibility for the Criminal Code of the Northern Territory.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, if the Attorney-General wishes to respond on the legal aspects of the question, I am prepared to give him the call.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Attorney-General cannot be asked to give a legal opinion in response to a question in this House.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Attorney-General has made it clear that he wants to answer this question if only you would give him an opportunity.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Does the Attorney-General wish to respond?

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, the question does indeed raise matters of grave concern. I will certainly undertake to investigate the

issues and supply information to this House. In terms of answering the question, it is also relevant to mention that the matters raised come within the ambit of the Corporate Affairs Office which is 1 of my portfolio responsibilities.

Under the scheme proposed by the member for Flynn, people in his electorate could buy shares in a property which would be rented to the Territory government at a guaranteed rate without the issue of a prospectus. The honourable member claims that this is too costly and complicated and that his intentions are honourable, and asks why he cannot proceed to do what he wants to do. I make no comment about the fact that the new member for Flynn has become involved in a scheme designed to milk the public purse, the morality of which is a matter for him and his party. However, I can imagine what the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee would say about it. The legal situation certainly requires investigation. It is a classic case of the details not stacking up, particularly given that the honourable member has asked why a prospectus is necessary for such a scheme.

I certainly think that it is proper for me to examine all the details of this matter and to inform the House regarding the legal situation. In general terms, the provisions of the National Companies and Securities Commission concerning the prospectus issue in relation to public schemes are designed specifically to protect members of the community against schemes which appear to be very inviting but, when put into practice, lose money. Over the years, there have been many instances in which old-age pensioners and hard-working people have invested their meagre savings in schemes - which have been promoted by public figures and which have looked good on the surface - and, at the end of the day, through no fault of their own, those people have lost their money.

The particular scheme that the honourable member has promoted looks good. But what happens in terms of the scheme? You would want to know the cost of the building and projected costs such as repairs and maintenance, water and electricity charges etc. What about the scheme as a guaranteed investment? It would not be true to say that, given our volatile electorates, the boundaries of the Flynn division would remain exactly the same for ever and a day. Every time there is an election, members of this Assembly put their jobs on the line. I appreciate that the member for Flynn, at this stage, probably does not think that he has a hope of losing the next election. We would all like to think that, but the distinct possibility exists. What happens in a couple of years if the member finds that he is no longer the member or that the site of the electorate office is not suited to his needs because it is no longer in his electorate? The government may need to find alternative accommodation for the office of the member.

What happens to the people who put their money in the scheme? They would have to find a new tenant or they would have to sell the property and neither of those courses could possibly guarantee a profit for the investors or even that they would break even. There are no guarantees about real estate prices these days. There is a distinct possibility that those people would suffer a loss. It cannot be forgotten that, while these people are struggling to obtain a return on their original investment, the present member for Flynn might possibly be right out of the equation. He would not be liable for anything. That is one of the main reasons why a prospectus is necessary for a scheme such as that proposed by the member for Flynn. It is not a matter of too much red tape; it is a matter of protecting the public.

There are a few other points that I should make in relation to this issue. Firstly, although shares in such a scheme will be sold to people in the electorate of Flynn, there will be nothing to stop them from moving interstate or overseas or selling their shares to someone else. The original concept of having members of the electorate involved in the scheme could quite quickly fall apart. The cost of setting up the scheme would be thousands of dollars. Given the honourable member's background in small business and accountancy, I am absolutely astonished that he is not aware of the professional fees and costs involved in such a scheme. It is part and parcel of his role as an accountant to be aware of the National Companies and Securities Act and to advise his clients on the accounting practices and standards required under the act and the directions that people need to take when engaging in such schemes. That is the man's professional position. As I say, I was astounded.

I can assure the honourable member that the total cost of setting up such a scheme is certainly a far cry from a takeover bid for BHP, as he erroneously claimed in his newspaper article. I certainly believe that that would cost him well over \$100 000. But, if his ambitions lie in that direction, he is welcome to have a go.

Finally, the member for Flynn's statements regarding the matter seem to indicate that he believes that he should receive special treatment. He says that, because his intentions are honourable, the Corporate Affairs Commissioner 'should waive the rules'. This government believes very strongly that all people should be equal before the law and that applies especially to members of this Assembly who would be proud to set an example to the general public. There is not too much red tape involved in a matter like this. The rules have been laid down under the National Companies and Securities Scheme to afford people throughout Australia the same degree of protection, and this government is certainly committed to upholding that principle. In regard to the legal situation, I most certainly will report to the House details on this matter, as requested by the member for Stuart.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

My question relates to the state of the Trade Development Zone and its management under the Deputy Chief Minister's predecessor, the present Chief Minister. Will he ask the Chief Minister whether, whilst overseas earlier this year, he personally approved an ex gratia payment to Mr K.K. Yeung? Will he ask him what sum was involved and also whether he made this payment against the better judgment of the Board of the Trade Development Zone Authority, and will he undertake to report his answers to the House before the end of question time?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, let us get a few facts straight in relation to asking and answering questions in relation to the Trade Development Zone. I have told the Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members opposite on many occasions that they are wasting their breath asking me questions which seek information of a commercially-sensitive nature and then expect me to make an instant judgment as to whether such information should be passed to the opposition. Therefore, I ask that any questions that the Leader of the Opposition or any member opposite has about the Trade Development Zone be placed on notice. I will consider whether or not the information should be released. However, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to debate matters relating to the Trade Development Zone, I invite him to begin at any time. If he wants to debate matters relating to the Trade Development Zone, let him move a substantive motion on the Trade Development Zone and I will accommodate him immediately. He can flirt coyly with questions or he can move a substantive motion on this matter right now. It is up to him.

Mr Smith: Wimp.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will withdraw that reference.

Mr Smith: Mr Speaker, I withdraw.

Northern Territory Open Day at Expo

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, over the last 2 days, the local and southern press have commented briefly on the reaction by visitors to Expo 88 on the Northern Territory Open Day which was held on Sunday 2 October 1988. Did the Northern Territory Open Day meet his expectations and what was the response by the officials and the public who attended?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that, as a major exhibitor at Expo, the Northern Territory was entitled to have what is called a 'state' day. As the honourable member mentioned, our day was last Sunday. I and a few other honourable members had the good fortune to be there and to join with many Territorians, and indeed with many people from all over Australia, in celebrating NT day.

A state day at Expo is a day when many of the activities of Expo focus on a particular state. Unfortunately, I was unable to get down to Expo at any other time during its several months of operation. It was my first visit there and, sadly, it was a very fleeting one. Certainly, it reinforced in my mind the value of the Northern Territory having participated which, as honourable members will be aware, we very nearly did not do. We reviewed our participation in Expo 3 times. I think the matter was raised in Cabinet 3 times over a period of several months and, on each of those occasions, we decided that the Territory was not in a financial position to participate. In the early days, no other state of Australia had agreed to participate either, and Queensland was to be the only state exhibitor. However, as time went by and the organisers of Expo cranked up their pressure on all sorts of people to participate to make it a truly national event, the states began to agree to participate. In the end, the Commonwealth contributed some assistance in order to encourage the Territory, Tasmania and others by offering to pay some of the rental for the space required for exhibits. We were the last to agree to participate.

Honourable members will also be aware that we had received a cut of some \$100m from our expected federal allocations in 1987 and that certainly affected our decision. However, in the end, we agreed to participate, and our team went there 10 weeks before Expo opened to look at the space available. To its great credit, the team designed and constructed in the Northern Territory a very attractive and unique exhibit. It is difficult to compete with an exhibitor such as Queensland, which spent \$12m to \$14m on its magnificent exhibit. When you are trying to compete for some attention in that sort of game, you have to do things differently and that is what the Territory organisers decided to do. The innovative design of our stall and the featuring of Territory wildlife on regular occasions has been enormously successful, to the extent that the number of visitors to our stand each week exceeds the population of Darwin. That certainly is commendable. It is getting the message across to many people.

During NT Day itself, a press conference was held early in the day. The Yothu Yndu dancers were present. This is an Aboriginal dancing group which had returned from Seoul a couple of days previously and they certainly attracted a great deal of attention from the press. Expo holds a press conference at 9 am each day. The authority uses the conference to announce the day's happenings. The active participation of the Aboriginal dancers at the press conference on NT Day certainly made it a unique event. We also had a crocodile and a snake there.

The next event was the unfurling of the flag in the central amphitheatre at Expo. A number of Expo officials made speeches of welcome and I also made a speech. These were followed by performances by the 2 Territory artists Robyn Green and Shane Hewitt which were very well received. During the day, there were fashion parades at our stand featuring clothing designed in the Northern Territory and, throughout the day, animals from the Northern Territory were displayed. It was a delight to see the audience reaction when the Northern Territory girls in their uniforms and other rangers from the Conservation Commission walked through the crowds with those animals inviting audience participation. I am sure many of those people had never been so close to a snake in all their lives. They actually had them wrapped around their necks, willingly of course. I am sure that that memory will stay with them.

A luncheon was hosted for the Northern Territory, and that was standard on state days. The Queenslanders led the push. It is their Expo and they have

organised it absolutely magnificently. They host a lunch for the state whose day it is. All our officials went along to the lunch for the Northern Territory Day and various speeches were made. There was a reception later in the day hosted by the commissioners who own the Australian pavilion and that reception was attended by many people from the states and from other countries which are exhibiting at Expo. Some short speeches were made whilst people wished the Northern Territory well.

The evening was the highlight of it all. There was a major concert, again in the amphitheatre. The concert could only be described as a huge success. Ted Egan was the opening performer. Again, Robyn Green and Shane Hewitt sang songs and there was a young fellow called Chris O'Brien, whom I had not heard of before. He is a young Territorian who, I believe, was raised on either Melville or Bathurst Island and who does some singing and entertaining in Darwin's night spots. My assessment of this young man is that he is so good that we will certainly lose him. He has been offered work interstate already and, whilst I hope he will keep coming back to the Territory, I consider that he has an enormous future in the entertainment industry because he is extremely talented. It is such a shame that, in order to receive the rewards of such talent, you have to leave the Territory.

The Yothu Yndu Dancers again were on stage and were an enormous hit. During the day at our stand, Major Les Hiddins, the Bush Tucker Man, who has been engaged by the Northern Territory government on a consultancy basis, featured throughout the day. He is becoming a national figure these days and we are very pleased to be able to be associated with him.

It was a delight to see so many Territorians who happened to be at Expo participate during the day in the audience. Perhaps some of them organised to be there on that day. There was a whole raft of faces that were certainly familiar to me even though I might not have known all their names. I am sure that they felt very proud on that day.

There are further activities this week featuring the Northern Territory. On Monday, there was an investment seminar at which some 140 business people attended. It was addressed by the Minister for Industries and Development and hosted by officers of the Department of Industries and Development. The Northern Territory Economic Development Strategy was also released to those people in order to interest them in the Northern Territory. Overall, it was an enormous success. I am pleased that we participated in Expo. The money has been well spent and we will have to consider our attitude towards these things in the future despite the sizeable expense.

Trade Development Zone

Mr LEO to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Under what section of the act did the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone, Mr Ray McHenry, prohibit contact between the staff of the authority and its board? Does he recognise that such a prohibition is a clear breach of accepted company codes of conduct, and how could members of the board fulfil their obligations under the act while subject to such a prohibition? Has he done anything about that particular direction of the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority? It is my understanding that that direction cannot be allowed to be sustained.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the risk of being repetitive, I am quite happy to answer any question on the Trade Development Zone in terms of debate on a substantive motion. The Leader of the Opposition has been travelling the country seeking information. In fact, he made international telephone calls from his office in relation to the Trade Development Zone in recent times. I am quite happy to supply any information at all about the Trade Development Zone in terms of debate on a substantive motion. If it is as big an issue as the Leader of the Opposition wants us to believe - and he has all this information - let him move a substantive motion right now and I will accommodate him immediately. That is the choice that he has. If he wants to move such a motion, that is fine. But, members opposite should not continue asking coy questions in a build-up to a censure motion. Let us have it out right now.

CSIRO Research Station in Katherine

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Following a visit to the Northern Territory by the Prime Minister's Country Task Force, the Territory federal member, Mr Warren Snowdon, suggested that the CSIRO Research Station in Katherine should be taken over by the Northern Territory government. Is the Northern Territory government considering such action and would the closure of the facility by CSIRO adversely affect the pastoral industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the federal government has advised that the CSIRO will be closing its research station in Katherine in December 1990. I understand that it is intended that a small part of the facility will be retained by CSIRO for horticultural and ecological research as an ongoing program in a small way. The balance of the assets are to be sold. The station has been operational in Katherine since the 1940s and, over that period, a great deal of development has been undertaken. It is now recognised as one of the best-equipped of its kind in the tropical world. Research conducted at the farm has been of considerable benefit to primary producers, particularly in relation to the pastoral industry and also tropical grain and horticultural crops.

I was a little surprised, following the Prime Minister's Country Task Force visit to the Northern Territory, that the federal member should make an announcement that he would be recommending to the Prime Minister that the Northern Territory government take over the control of this facility. I would have thought that, having the interests of the Northern Territory at heart and the interests of research into tropical crops for all of Australia and bearing in mind that it is a Commonwealth facility that benefits the states of Queensland and Western Australia as well as the Northern Territory, he would have made representations to the Prime Minister to ensure that the programs would continue and that the facility would not be sold off in a fire sale. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

We have not heard much in support of the facility from the opposition or the opposition spokesman on primary industry. I think that is a matter for some shame on their part, particularly when we consider the loss of jobs that we have heard so much about from the opposition. In that regard, we should also note the transfer of other positions in the Territory by the federal government recently. Telecom, the Department of Social Security and the Department of Administrative Services have transferred personnel interstate.

It would have been some comfort to people in the Northern Territory had the opposition and the federal member encouraged the Prime Minister to maintain the operation of the research facility in Katherine. The facility is of interest and value to the pastoral industry and the tropical crops industry in the northern parts of Australia. I would like to see it continue.

The question of the Northern Territory government taking over the CSIRO Katherine Research Station is a complex one and will require consideration of a range of matters such as our future research needs, possible interest from other research institutions which might care to avail themselves of the facilities that are provided at the station and other matters such as operational costs and the costs of the acquisition of the property itself. Given that the research station will be offered for sale, my department is considering its options. It is, however, far too early to predict any outcome of those considerations.

Sir Edward Pellew Group Land Claim

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, for some time the Territory government has maintained a policy of opposing sequential and repetitious claims over land that has already been lost. Can the minister confirm that staff of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority are working cooperatively with staff of the Northern Land Council to prepare a further submission for a land claim over the area that was considered by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner in the Borroloola Land Claim No 1, specifically the Sir Edward Pellew Group? If the minister can confirm that this is so, is he able to say whether the government supports a further land claim over that area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can neither confirm nor deny the details of the operations of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority. Often the authority seems to be in a world of its own and it is very difficult to find out what goes on or who is doing what. On the matter of repetitive land claims, it is most obvious not only to all members of this House but to all members of the Territory community that the present Land Rights Act is deficient in a number of ways. Repetitive land claims exemplify one of the worst aspects of the legislation. When a claim is lodged with the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, efforts are then made to identify traditional claimants to the land so that the commissioner can judge whether those people meet the requirements of the Land Rights Act. He then makes recommendations to the federal minister as to whether or not the land should be granted to the claimants. Unfortunately, if the commissioner recommends that the land not be granted, the act allows the Northern Land Council, the Central Land Council or any other land council to lodge a further claim for the same area of land. If the recommendation is again in the negative, a further claim can be lodged and the whole process can continue ad infinitum. While land is subject to claim, activities such as mining exploration cannot occur on it. Clearly, people will not invest in activity on land which is subject to claim. I am sure that most sensible people would agree that repetitive land claims are an example of something that is terribly wrong with the present Land Rights Act. It does need to be changed, Mr Speaker.

Honourable members are fully aware of continual representations made by this government regarding changes to the Land Rights Act. We have been quite loud and forceful in trying to present arguments to the federal government

about the need for changes, and repetitive claims is one of the problem areas that we have identified. The member for Barkly has stated that there appears to be a possibility of a repeat claim being made over the Sir Edward Pellew Group. I can certainly say that I have no knowledge of any government support for a repeat claim over that area. I will certainly look into whether that claim has been lodged and report to the House on what has occurred. In conclusion, I must point out that the government believes very strongly that the present Land Rights Act is very seriously deficient. The area of repeat claims is a perfect example of a situation where, no matter what the umpire rules, the process can be started again. We can all be old and grey or even dead and gone and that process can still be continuing under the present legislation. I believe that is ridiculous.

Moving Walkway at Casuarina Shopping Centre

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It has been brought to my attention that the moving walkway located at the Casuarina Shopping Centre has caused some injuries to children who have used it. Is he able to confirm that that has occurred and, if so, what action has his department taken, under the auspices of the Work Health Act, to ensure that it does not recur?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think honourable members may have seen a television report of an accident that occurred on the moving walkway at Casuarina Shopping Centre. Unfortunately, I did not see that report. I understand that a young child caught a finger in the cones at the bottom of the moving walkway. Following investigation of that particular report, it came to light that there had been 2 other accidents there. Both were of a reasonably minor nature, but were capable of causing quite severe damage.

It is fairly obvious that any piece of moving machinery, such as a moving walkway, presents some dangers. In fact, the moving walkway at Casuarina had been damaged, over a period of time, by shopping trolleys. I am sure that we have all handled those cumbersome monsters at some stage or other and they want to move in all sorts of directions. They have only 2 brakes and, occasionally, when one of those fails, the trolleys wander all over the place. I understand that damage to the walkway had been caused by shopping trolleys hitting the cones along the side and at the base of the walkway. As a result, the sensors were no longer functioning. Normally, a sensor would arrest the walkway at the moment when a foreign body of any sort became caught in the machinery. In fact, that was not happening because of the damage that had been caused.

The Work Health Authority investigated the incident. It discovered that there were problems with the walkway because the sensors were out of order. The cones were damaged and there was too great a gap between the cones and the walkway itself. Those problems have been rectified. However, there is another problem in that young children stop the machinery. There is a stop switch which, if hit, should stop the machinery immediately. Because the kids hit those big switches and turn the machinery off, these have been located near the base of the walkway and are very hard to see. As a result, many people are not aware that those switches exist and, in an emergency, would not know how to halt the machinery. However, there are control switches there. I hope that people will take note of the fact that they can turn that machinery off and avoid any real damage occurring. I understand that it is unlikely

that any major injury will occur if the machinery is halted quickly. Of course, moving walkways can be dangerous wherever they are located. It is incumbent on parents to keep a close watch on children to ensure they are not caught up in moving machinery. The situation is the same with the moving luggage belts at the airport. These are also very dangerous pieces of machinery. Occasionally, you see children playing on the edges of those.

I understand that, in all the incidents at Casuarina, the children were under quite strict supervision by parents at the time but, as those of us with small children know, kids run off at times and do things that may be rather silly, and that could cause quite serious injury. It is important that we are aware that the machinery is dangerous. We should be aware that there are switches that can turn the machinery off. There is to be an educational program to advertise to people that they should supervise their children when they are near that machinery, and to show where the stop buttons are.

Mr Speaker, the Casuarina Shopping Centre is rather like a very large creche and it could be said that some parents deliberately 'lose' their children there while they go shopping. Children can often be seen playing without adequate supervision. I am not saying that any of the cases of injury that have been reported indicate that there was a lack of supervision. The problem is under control. We will keep a close watch on the machinery and we will be establishing an educational program to ensure that such incidents do not happen again.

Trade Development Zone

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer him to the Parliamentary Record for 10 August this year when he stated in question time that honourable members would be interested to learn that the governments of Queensland and Western Australia had sought the services and advice of Mr Yeung in their quest for Asian development. Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table documentation from the Western Australian government which shows conclusively that the only connection between Mr K.K. Yeung and the Western Australian government is that he is one of some 300 people who was on a list to receive a pamphlet.

Leave granted.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, can the minister explain why he has misled this House by stating that Mr K.K. Yeung had a brief to provide advice to the Western Australian and Queensland governments when we have documentation which will prove conclusively that he was only 1 of some 300 people on a mailing list?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as usual, the member opposite has omitted two-thirds of the facts which relate to South Australia and Queensland, but never mind. Mr Speaker, I repeat to members opposite that, if they wish to debate the Trade Development Zone, which they obviously do not, they should raise the issue by way of a substantive motion. We can debate that now and they can produce any information which they have. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said that he will create a storm and that all will be revealed. Members opposite have done nothing. I put it to them again. If they want to debate the Trade Development Zone, let them do so by way of substantive motion and let them do so now.

Karama Child-care Centre

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

For some time, I have been pestering the minister about the lack of community facilities in Karama. He promised to provide a child-care centre there. I believe that he is now in a position to advise myself and the House concerning the future of the Karama Child-care Centre.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, you may not be aware of it but today is good news day and my good news is that I am able to get the member for Karama off my back. In all seriousness, I have often said that the most effective people in terms of keeping ministers of this government on their toes and getting things done for the constituencies of the Northern Territory are the backbenchers of the CLP government. This is another classic example of their effectiveness.

I have received very effective representations from the member for Karama for quite some time in relation to the establishment of a child-care centre in his area. There is no doubt that, in the development of that suburb, a number of community services were overlooked. Without going into that issue too far, it is clear that the suburb has a very young population. The member for Karama has been able to illustrate that there is a great need for a child-care centre. In advocating the community's need, he has not approached only myself. He has also approached developers behind the scenes and negotiated for the land that has now been made available for this project. I am very pleased indeed to advise the member for Karama and all honourable members of this House that the contract for the construction of the Karama Child-care Centre was signed yesterday. It will accommodate 20 children at a cost of some \$400 000.

Amex Card Transaction

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

I draw his attention to a transaction made by a former senior member of the Tourist Commission involving the purchase of pearls. Has an investigation been conducted and did it reveal that the transaction was conducted on the Amex card of that particular officer and that the Amex account was subsequently paid by the Tourist Commission? Did the investigation indicate that it became necessary for the issue to be raised with the then Chief Minister, Mr Paul Everingham, and was it only after the Chief Minister demanded personally that the senior officer repay the moneys involved, that the account was acquitted? Finally, was the minister the senior officer involved and, as requested at the last sittings, will he reveal to this House the full account of his Amex card transactions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members who were present on the last day of the August sittings must recall that the opposition called into question my competence as the Chairman of the Tourist Commission. I suppose I should have expected that to happen because, given the kind of opposition that we suffer in this place, it is obvious that it would try this sort of stunt at some stage.

Mr Smith: It was a simple series of questions.

Mr POOLE: It is typical of the opposition to criticise a member's career prior to his entry into politics if it cannot fault that member's performance as a minister.

Mr Speaker, we have seen how the opposition has indicated consistently its willingness and eagerness to slither into the gutter in search of political points, no matter how low or irrelevant they might be. It is a fact that I have never been questioned by any Chief Minister concerning my personal expenditures on my American Express card. I held no discussions with Paul Everingham, when he was Chief Minister, on the conduct of my American Express account. There was no investigation ordered because there was never any question about anything that I purchased in the course of my travelling, while I was with the Tourist Commission, as to whether I would pay for it or the Tourist Commission would pay for it. If the Tourist Commission paid for it - and it paid for a number of things which were personal purchases while I travelled around - that money was reimbursed by myself. The cost of any such purchase was charged to me by the Tourist Commission at my declaration, not at its declaration. The acquittal of my expense accounts whilst I travelled around the countryside were all perused. There was never any question raised by the Auditor-General or anybody else of the rights or the wrongs of the way I conducted those expenses.

It is no coincidence that these allegations, which were first raised in this House a month ago, were raised at the time of the Flynn by-election. The opposition had had the information for a number of months. The allegations were raised because it was imperative for the opposition to cast slurs and innuendo and to operate a smear campaign against anybody it could on the government benches and it happened to choose me. What bewildered me at the time was that the members opposite were so desperate to create an issue that they would seize on a situation that was over and done with. It was resolved to the complete satisfaction of all people concerned. No wrongdoing was committed by me or even suggested by anybody else. Their attack and their attempt to smear my name was based on the contents of an anonymously delivered manila envelope. Despite my anger at the attack, I guess I can find solace in the words of Sir Robert Menzies who said: 'Never take notice of anonymous letters unless you receive a few thousand on the same subject'.

Mr Speaker, I remain outraged at the opposition's disgraceful attack, outraged by how more than 6 years of solid effort and proven achievement could be described as 'incompetence' so shamelessly. My contempt for them has no bounds. For the benefit of this House, it is necessary to recapitulate the 6 years that I was Chairman of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and I am pleased to have the opportunity to do so. Let the facts speak for themselves because it was a very satisfying period of accomplishment.

When I stepped off the plane in Alice Springs on 2 January 1980 to assume the chairmanship of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, it was apparent that much needed to be done and that much could be done. Representatives of my meagre but enthusiastic staff met me and we worked for 59 hours non-stop to prepare a budget urgently. After preparing that budget, I flew to Darwin and argued successfully for a tremendous increase in the amount of money with which I believed the government should have funded the Tourist Commission. It was the first of countless trips that I was to make over the following 6 years, trips undertaken with the sole aim of drumming up business for the Northern Territory tourist industry.

My early travels were to 5 existing bureaus outside the Alice. The staff at those bureaus were excellent but they were too few and were underpaid, and

the premises left much to be desired. The Sydney bureau was stuck away on the 11th floor of a city office block. It had been doing shockingly badly for about a dozen years. I could not even find the Brisbane bureau because it was hidden in a corridor on the 1st floor of a building between 2 shops with a blackboard that said, 'NTGTB Upstairs'. Looking at the sign at the time, I really thought to myself: 'No wonder we are not getting the sales that we should be getting'.

Mr Speaker, I led the team that set about making the bureaus fully professional as a matter of priority. We put the staff in uniform, we computerised the systems, we dressed up the offices and relocated them to more prominent positions as soon as possible. We established sales targets and we awarded incentive prizes to achievers. I visited every bureau personally every 10 weeks to help develop a team spirit which we maintained with daily contact through the telephone and telex networks. We commissioned market researches. We have developed a unique television advertising campaign around a new logo. That brolga in the sun logo is probably better known now than any other Northern Territory symbol except perhaps our own Northern Territory flag.

By the end of the first half year in office, 2 of the Territory's city bureaus had at last written \$1m in business, and we all celebrated because we knew we were on the right track at last. By the end of 1980-81, my first full financial year at the helm ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition's questions are still fresh in your mind as I am sure they are still fresh in the honourable minister's mind. The questions were simple and straightforward, and related to a particular transaction. They did not require the minister to give a full cavalcade of his experiences in the Tourist Commission prior to his joining this parliament. I would ask that you rule that his answer, at least in part, relate to the questions.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the Minister for Tourism to relate his response to the questions.

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, it is important to put my answer in the context that I am addressing: the business of the day and the duties that I was performing at the time as Chairman of the Tourist Commission. It is a fact that, in 1980, I was on the road for 176 days and, for the next 4 years, my travel schedule was similar if not greater. I was marketing, promoting, and selling the Territory to whoever would listen and could help. That included travel agents, tour operators, investors, airlines, advertising organisations, media representatives, hotel chains and transport ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! You have just asked the honourable minister to relate his answer, at least in part, to the questions. The questions were specific. You have asked the minister to relate his answer to the questions. He is still not relating his answer to the questions and I would ask that you direct him again. Obviously, he is reading from a prepared speech that has absolutely nothing to do with the questions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Again I ask the minister to relate his answer to the questions. I believe that, at least in part, he has answered some of the Leader of the Opposition's questions and I will allow him to continue.

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, I was away from my Alice Springs home and family for about two-thirds of the working days in the 6 years that I was Chairman of

the Tourist Commission. In return for the physical and mental strain that was placed on myself and my family, I was getting results and the runs were piling up on the board. A list of the achievements of the Tourist Commission covers many pages.

Successful marketers all advocate that money be spent, be it on advertising, promotion, publicity and other awareness campaigns, or on personal selling through business travel. Unfortunately, selling means expenses - necessary expenses. Sometimes some of the things that we did in those days raised a few eyebrows around the place. Not every decision that I made as Chairman of the Tourist Commission turned to gold. Nobody is perfect but, on the whole, the calculated commercial risks that I took during those years paid off for the Territory. In that context, in my book, that is what administrative competence is all about. It is about results, the seeking for, attainment of and surpassing of goals. Even our 1984-85 promotional film, which cost much more than it should have, had its bright side. Although the company originally commissioned to make the film did not deliver on part of its contract, eventually we did have the film completed. It is still being shown and it has won many awards - among 23 such honours the Tourist Commission received for its work during my tenure as chairman. Awards are incidental; results are what count.

There was the tourist awareness campaign that we commissioned: 'Tell a tourist where to go'. I can remember arguing as to whether or not that campaign was effective. Mr Speaker, I was still arguing 5 years later. I said to a guy who was screening it: 'Of course, it is effective. If it is not effective, we would not be arguing about it now'. It is this type of commercial administrative decision-making that competence is all about. It is what it means to lead any organisation well. Are members of the opposition seriously trying to tell this Assembly, through the questions they asked in the last sittings and today, that those years that I put in as head of the Tourist Commission did not pay off for all Territorians? The Tourist Commission and I, as its leader, persuaded Royal Brunei to come into Darwin. We convinced Garuda to increase its capacity. We were instrumental, with the ministers of the day, in bringing Singapore Airlines and Thai Services in next year. Again with the support of the ministers, the Tourist Commission persuaded international hotel chains, like 4 Seasons and Sheraton, to establish multiple properties in the Territory. Despite criticism from the members opposite, we were the people to employ an Aboriginal liaison officer, and we actively campaigned to encourage Aboriginal communities to enter into the tourist industry. It was unkind of the honourable member for Arafura to suggest otherwise the other day.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Mr Speaker, twice you have advised the honourable minister to relate his answer to the questions. He is now talking about statements made by the member for Arafura who did not even ask the questions. Mr Speaker, this response is so ridiculous it is reaching the point of insanity. Would you instruct the honourable minister, in stronger terms, that he will answer the questions?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I put it to this Assembly that the honourable minister is answering properly and fully the questions that were put to him in this Assembly today. It is no secret to any of us that this is part of an overall attack by the opposition in relation to the competence and propriety of the honourable minister when he was the head of a statutory authority. It relates specifically to expenses and travel by the honourable minister.

I think the minister is doing an excellent job in totally debunking the misinformation and slurs that have been cast on him by members of the opposition, purely for electoral advantage in recent times. They seek to continue it now for some unknown reason, presumably because it is all they can think of doing after botching everything else for the last 2 days. When they are given the full story, they try to distract this Assembly and everybody else, as they often do, by raising crazy points of order. They are frightened to hear the real answers and, once they start hearing the answers they do not like, they start raising points of order. I believe this is a very serious matter and it has been twice before this House. The honourable minister deserves the opportunity to give the answer fully and comprehensively in his own way.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, the member for Nightcliff referred to the competence of the former chairman of the Tourist Commission and the present Minister for Tourism. That has not been called into question. Neither the opposition nor this House is interested in a detailed blow-by-blow description of his actions. What we are interested in, and what we are not getting answers on, are the proprieties of his Amex card transactions. The Leader of the Opposition asked very specific questions. The Minister for Tourism has been on his feet for a quarter of an hour and has refused to answer them.

Mr SPEAKER: Again, I ask the minister to relate his answer more closely to the questions. I am aware that, from the minister's point of view, there was a censure motion which raised the competency question at the last sittings. If the minister wants to respond to that, it should more properly be done by way of a personal explanation.

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, I still believe it is important to explain my business transactions with the Tourist Commission in the way I am doing and to answer the questions the Leader of the Opposition has raised.

Mr Speaker, there is no question that, in the last 18 months of my tenure as the Chairman of the Tourist Commission, I fell behind in the paperwork which related to the separation of personal expenses and travel expenses, and the general acquitting of my account. Both types of expenses were paid for on the same American Express card, in accordance with the system in force at the time. At no time was there any suggestion from the Auditor-General, or anybody else for that matter, that I was not reconciling my expenses satisfactorily, even if sometimes tardily. There were some unavoidable delays and I was continually reimbursing the commission for personal expenses which it paid along with my travel expenses. That came about simply because, when many of my accounts came in, I was not even in Alice Springs. I was not using the system for my own benefit in any way. At the time, it was the only possible way to operate. There has never been the slightest suggestion that I was receiving any sort of benefit through the system, a system which was later changed.

Mr Speaker, if I had not been living out of a suitcase, I would have had the luxury of sufficient time to properly rationalise the extensive paperwork needed to document my expenses on my journeys. Because I relied on innumerable events which had occurred months before, I was unable always to identify legitimate claims. The penalty was that I had to pay for them because the policy of the Tourist Commission was that, if you did not have a receipt for an amount over \$10, you had no reasonable and supportable evidence to make a claim. Even in this job, there are numerous, out-of-pocket expenses which are inevitable. However, there was always much more important work to be done. Like many others in my position, I got on with the job and cut my losses.

The commission had a staff of 140 people and they also had more pressing issues to address. Personally, I had many more pressing issues to address than asking commission staff for their help to look after my expenses. Inevitably, there was always another business engagement somewhere which could not be put off to enable me to find time to do paperwork. In the end, I paid for all the so-called personal expenses. I have no conscience about it because I had resigned as chairman of the commission to enter politics and I wanted to wipe the slate clean as quickly as possible.

I returned from a 30-day overseas trip on 12 March 1986 and, 2 days later, I was called to Darwin for 3 days. Then I returned to Alice Springs and applied for preselection. I was interviewed on 25 March and, 2 days later, was accepted as the CLP candidate for the seat of Araluen. I immediately walked into the Tourist Commission and I resigned on the morning of 1 April 1986. I then undertook an election campaign and was elected to the Assembly on 19 April. At the end of June, I reached a total reconciliation with the commission for my remaining expenses, most of which had come in from overseas in April and May. I repeat that this reconciliation met all the very stringent requirements of the Auditor-General who issued an unqualified acquittal.

I am now a minister of the Crown and, as every member of this Assembly is aware, my job as a minister is to help frame and implement government policies and not to administer any expense account finances except my own, which I acquit fastidiously. As I proved as Chairman of the Tourist Commission, I am more than competent in the handling of an overall budget allocation. In fact, I believe my record was outstanding for someone who was involved so personally in the success or otherwise of the commission's work. Remember, Mr Speaker, that we have gone from 200 000 visitors to 1 million visitors in the time that I have been involved with the Tourist Commission and this government. Anybody can look at my business track record to find results that indicate far more than mere competence.

Mr Speaker, let the honourable members opposite produce any member with a track record of competence and a record of commercial success on behalf of his fellow Territorians equal to mine. Let them show to me anyone who has sacrificed so much of his personal life to guide an industry's growth from nowhere to become the second biggest and fastest-growing industry in the Northern Territory. If there is such a man, only that man, if he exists, has a right to cast stones at me. I repeat that I have never been questioned by the Chief Minister of the day with regard to any of my personal American Express expenses, and I have no conscience about them whatsoever.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Why did the previous minister, now the Chief Minister, promise the board of the Trade Development Zone Authority at its May meeting that there would be a full inquiry into the authority's operations and why, on the very next day, did he change his mind and inform the board that the inquiry would be confined only to marketing aspects? Further, did he promise to provide the board with the terms of the inquiry within 1 week? If so, why did that not happen?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thought that the Chief Minister spoke about marketing and incentives rather than just marketing. I am not sure whether the Leader of the Opposition is quoting from board papers but I thought the inquiry was to cover more than simply marketing. A number of issues, including consultancies, were to be investigated by the consultant. I will take the question on notice. I will find out to what minutes the Leader of the Opposition is referring when he says that the inquiry was to be directed solely towards marketing.

Trade Development Zone

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT

The Leader of the Opposition has made a great deal of play about an apparent discrepancy between a pay-out figure to the Trade Development Zone's Hong Kong consultant, Mr K.K. Yeung, quoted in a reply to a question on notice, and the figure quoted by the honourable minister in the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill. Can the honourable minister explain the apparent discrepancy and can he set the record straight?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can set the record straight and I thank the honourable member for providing the opportunity for me to do so. Regrettably, it is my duty to inform honourable members that the Leader of the Opposition has got it wrong again. If he had had his wits about him last night, he would have realised that I was giving him more than a passing hint about the likely outcome of his concerns. There is no discrepancy. There is also no inaccuracy in the figures I have quoted to the House in relation to payments concerning Trade Development Zone consultants. The answers are simple and can be simply demonstrated. An appropriate analogy may concern a person who asked the price of 1 apple and 2 oranges and then separately asked the price of 2 apples and 1 orange and received a different answer. The misguided purchaser then squeals loudly that the vendor has misled him on the price of fruit because he received 2 different answers.

What happened was that the Leader of the Opposition received precisely the right answers to the several specific questions that he asked. It is his problem if he cannot manage to ask the right questions. This is just another example of his fundamental lack of knowledge of the basic tenets of accounting practices, the difference between financial years, how to read quarterly statements and how to understand the system of government. The list goes on. In other words, he has demonstrated once again that he cannot add up.

Let me explain in simple terms the cause of his confusion. In respect of my answer to written question No 61, I said: 'Moneys paid to Mr K.K. Yeung since 1985 in conjunction with his activities on behalf of the Trade Development Zone total \$624 127. The specific components of this amount are not appropriate for release as public information and are a matter between K.K. Yeung and the TDZA'. That is a correct answer to the question which was: 'What is the total amount of money paid to Mr K.K. Yeung as a retainer, contact fee, the letter of intent stage, start up fee at establishment in the zone, and reimbursement of expenses in promoting the zone since his engagement as the prime consultant?' Mr Speaker, you will note that the question had 4 specific components: the total amount paid to Mr Yeung in respect of his activities as they relate to those 4 specific components is \$624 127, which is the answer I gave. Had he asked for an amount which comprised other components, for example, retainers for subconsultants and their expenses, some of which were paid through Mr Yeung, he would have received a different answer again. I repeat, however, that I will not disclose to him the specific amounts relating to those components as that is commercially-confidential and private information.

Let us turn now to the questions and the answers which gave him heartburn last night. Again, the questions put to me were specific and were as follows: 'What amounts were paid in 1987-88 to K.K. Yeung as a retainer, commission on letters of intent, travel, seminars, subconsultancies, commission in respect of enterprises, actual establishment in the zone and others, showing separately all advances?' Again, I gave the correct answer which was that, the total of those components during 1987-88 was \$572 000. I do not intend to break that down into those components either, Mr Speaker. The message must be getting through to the Leader of the Opposition by now.

To cap it all off, and to demonstrate the ineptitude of the Leader of the Opposition, he went back to the answer that I gave him to his second question last night and totally confused the financial years in respect of the information that I provided to him. He sought to establish the respective amounts relating to interstate and overseas marketing activities of the zone. His specific question was: 'How much of the marketing incentives and assistance is for overseas activity and how much for interstate activity?' The question was loosely constructed and further demonstrated a lack of appreciation of the zone's activities. It should be obvious that any incentives provided relate to prospective zone operator activities in the Northern Territory and therefore cannot be related to overseas or interstate activities. Given that his question did not relate to Territory operations, my response was that the budget calculation had been based on allocations of \$800 000 for overseas and \$260 000 for interstate activities. My use of the word 'calculation' made it clear that I was referring to 1988-89 budget figures, which was the whole focus of the debate, and not actual expenditure in respect of 1987-88. He failed to appreciate this, however, and immediately tried to reconcile the 1988-89 figures with the amount of \$572 000 for 1987-88, which I gave in response to question No 3. He became hopelessly confused, and the level of debate reached a new low.

Further confusion developed when the Leader of the Opposition went diving for the Parliamentary Record to throw in a figure generated in debate in 1986. Again, we ended up with apples and oranges. He did not realise that the figures which he attempted to quote with authority from his previous debate were, in fact, estimates of future expenditure rather than summaries of actual expenditure. He should have realised it because his own question in the 1986 debate asked what amount of money had been set aside in the 1986-87 budget as a retainer for Mr K.K. Yeung. In other words, what was estimated would be spent rather than what was actually spent.

Let us summarise this mass of confusion, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition has employed a series of figures to attempt to show that false information has been supplied by the government, but his figures derive from different fruit stalls and do not relate to any financial logic. He has entangled himself in a web of his own making. In short, all the answers he received were correct but he was unable to relate those correct answers to what he thought were his questions.

That foreshadows the level of accuracy that he will be bringing to the debate on the Trade Development Zone that he has loudly promised. Nevertheless, I repeat the challenge that I issued to him during question time yesterday, and perhaps, in the ensuing 24 hours, he has had time to get his act into gear. I repeat that, if he wants to put forward a substantive motion, I am ready and willing to accommodate him and we will debate the matter right here and now. He did not feel up to it yesterday but perhaps today his biorhythm charts are in better shape and he feels he is in a lucky mood. The Leader of the Opposition has pumped himself up about the big trouble he intends to stir up in relation to the Trade Development Zone. He was unable to act when the crunch point came yesterday. Maybe he will take the plunge today.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, given that confusing tangle of statistics provided by the minister, I rise to seek clarification. Did he say that the figure of \$572 000 that he talked about and we talked about last night was a prospective figure for the 1988-89 financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was a written question. It was 1987-88.

Mr Smith: Thank you.

Mr COULTER: That is the question that you asked.

Mr Smith: Five minutes ago, you said it was 1988-89.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I gave the correct answer that the total of these components during 1987-88 was \$572 000.

Again, we have an example of his confusion. He is doing it very well. He has had good press every day this week and, if I were him, I would not bring on a censure motion either. I would keep dribbling out this nonsense, creating this confusion and destroying the reputation of the Trade Development Zone. He does not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up and be counted in a debate so that we can see exactly what sort of substance he has. Once again, I challenge the members opposite to come up with a substantive motion on the Trade Development Zone because, if they do not, I will not be rising to answer their questions any further.

Fire at Alice Springs Abattoir

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I ask this question on behalf of yourself. Can he advise if the government has taken any action in relation to the recent conflagration that occurred at the Alice Springs abattoir complex?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I inform the Assembly that I have asked the Department of Industries and Development, the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and the Department of Lands and Housing in Alice Springs to hold a meeting with the operators and owners of the Alice Springs abattoir with a view to giving the government a report on their problems and their intentions in order to determine what role the government may have to play in this unfortunate matter.

Film North Contract

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

It is my understanding that the Northern Territory government has employed a Darwin firm to produce a video covering the Masters Games in Alice Springs in October. I believe the name of the Darwin company is Film North. I ask the minister the following questions. On what basis was Film North chosen to produce the video? Was it by public tender or otherwise? Why were local film producers not asked to tender for the production of the video? If the video tender was not put out for public tender, what other contracts have been given to Film North in the last 2 years without going to tender? Does Film North have any favoured position with the Territory government that precludes work given to it by the government from going to public tender?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer to the last question is no. I will endeavour to obtain the details that the honourable member requires before the completion of proceedings today.

Education Problems

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The minister has gone on record several times appealing to communities to support the government in its efforts to provide education. I think the first problems arose at Imanpa. More recently, there have been reports of problems at Belyuen and at the new Katherine High School. Can the minister advise whether these problems have been resolved and what level of support has been shown by the communities concerned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. There has been a good deal of community support at Imanpa and Belyuen in terms of dealing with problems. Honourable members will recall the very unfortunate circumstances that arose at the Imanpa school where teachers felt threatened and were removed from the school. There was a period when there was disquiet between the community and the Department of Education. We tried to consult

with that community to resolve the issues and I am very pleased to inform the House that those matters have been resolved and that there is now a teacher at Imanpa. I want to point out that, if the community had got its act together and discussed the issue with the department in the early stages, I believe the issue would have been resolved very quickly. I am very pleased to see that the community has now made the effort to get its school up and running so that its children can be educated.

In this context, I point out to honourable members that the subject of incentives for teachers in isolated areas has been widely discussed. Indeed, in my address to the Northern Territory Teachers Federation earlier this week, I put forward a proposal for a zonal system which will improve the rate of retention of teaching staff and provide more stability in services to bush schools through the use of contracts and bonuses to encourage the retention of experienced teachers in those areas. The members for Barkly and Stuart have both raised their concerns about the situation of isolated teachers and the government is addressing the issues.

With community support, we have resolved the problem at Belyuen. It is unfortunate that the school had to close as a result of the community council withdrawing the permit of the school's head teacher. That sort of action is really not necessary. If the community had discussed the issue with the department in the first instance, the problem could have been resolved more quickly. The situation was the subject of a report in yesterday's NT News and I am very pleased to say that the school will be open for business on Monday. The principal of the school, Mr Bill Turner, will remain. Areas of responsibility for the community council, school council and school will be clearly defined, set down in writing and agreed to. Departmental officers and the parent group liaison officer from the Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations will visit to assist the community in defining roles and structures.

The Belyuen Council representatives want to commence planning for the 1989-91 triennium with strategies relating to: firstly, the upgrading of the second-year phase of the Remote Area Teacher Education program; secondly, the placement of Aboriginal people in specific jobs within the school complex to undertake training on site whilst upgrading their qualifications; and, thirdly, investigation of the possibility of a position of an Aboriginal principal-in-training. The Department of Education has agreed to assess students at the school and to have discussions with the council concerning the various grade levels at the school. These are the sort of issues that are being talked about and discussed. If, in the first instance, the community had contacted the department about its concerns with what was being experienced there, I am sure the matter could have been resolved. I am very pleased to see that that community feeling and support is there in both those cases.

The final issue referred to by the honourable member concerned the Katherine High School. I was very disappointed to hear that Katherine High School was vandalised last Monday. The school was broken into and paint was sprayed across one of the classrooms. Fortunately, the damage was not as great as it was originally thought to be. There was no disruption and there will not be any disruption to schooling. Again, it is a wonderful community facility which cost the taxpayer \$12m. It is a pity that idiots in some communities act in the way that has occurred in Katherine.

I ask the community at Katherine, and the community in any town in the Northern Territory that has schools and public facilities, to keep their eyes

open for any suspicious activities and report them immediately to the police because we cannot allow the development in the Northern Territory of the situation that has existed in several of the states where considerable vandalism has occurred. We have wonderful facilities and we must keep them that way. I am very pleased to say that, in many cases, the communities are showing commitment to the education of their children. I ask the people in Katherine to keep their eyes open for any suspicious activities at the new school. I ask that the same care be taken to protect all schools in communities throughout the Territory.

Trade Development Zone

Mr LEO to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I draw his attention to the Trade Development Zone Act regarding the frequency of board meetings. The act states that the interval between one meeting and the next should not exceed 45 days unless otherwise approved by the minister. When did the government become aware that the Chairman of the TDZA, Mr Ray McHenry, had told board members that there would be only 4 meetings in 1988? Did the minister authorise that decision? If so, when did the minister authorise that decision and what were the minister's reasons for authorising that decision?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, once again, if anybody has anything to add to any part of the debate on the Trade Development Zone, let him get up and say it. The opposition is creating this storm by asking a few questions here and there. They were approved. They were all approved. It has ministerial approval.

Mr Smith: By whom, when, where?

Mr COULTER: Let us stand up and have the debate. Let us make it a substantive debate.

Mr Smith: If you would answer the question, we might not need a debate.

Mr COULTER: It is nice to sit there smugly with arms folded and head back, Mr Speaker. Why won't the Leader of the Opposition rise to censure the government or bring this matter on as the subject of a discussion of a matter of public importance? If he moved for a substantive debate, he could draw it all out. The opposition will not do that. Members of the opposition will not do that because they have nothing to contribute. They rely on rumour and innuendo. They are using guerilla warfare. They are trying to sabotage the Trade Development Zone and they have no idea of the damage that they are doing. Mr Speaker, this is Yulara revisited.

In 5 years time, they will be ashamed of themselves. Their actions now will be noted in my black book along with their actions in relation to the pipeline. Yesterday, they said that they had never knocked the pipeline. I pointed out to honourable members opposite that Senator Bob Collins had said that it was a ludicrous idea and that the then member in the House of Representatives, Mr Reeves, said: 'We will have to re-examine the funding from Canberra if we go gas-powered instead of coal fired'.

The Trade Development Zone will be another millstone around their necks. They will rue the day that they knocked the Trade Development Zone. They have no idea of the damage that they are doing internationally to this very

worthwhile development in the Northern Territory which will be the saving grace for considerable manufacturing potential that could not have been realised in the Northern Territory without it. It is a shame that we have this 'Yulara Revisited' attitude from the opposition benches.

It will come back to haunt them. It will be another chapter in my black book which demonstrates that they have consistently knocked any development. It is all right for them. The member for Nhulunbuy can retire to Queensland with his \$200 000 pension. We are looking for jobs for Territorians, and 100 of them are being advertised for the Trade Development Zone at the moment. It is all right for the Leader of the Opposition with his \$200 000 pension due and payable to him. He is quite comfortable. We are interested in future Territorians and providing meaningful full-time employment. That is what I am committed to, Mr Speaker, and they will not stop me.

Northern Territory University

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer him to the proposed new Northern Territory University. I note that the Darwin Institute of Technology is currently issuing degrees. Will the degrees conferred at the new university continue to be University of Queensland degrees, will they be Northern Territory University degrees, will there be a continuation of DIT degrees or will there be a rationalisation of the degrees or some mixture or transitional process for the degrees? Can the minister advise on what steps are being taken to protect and enhance the integrity of degrees that will be issued by the new university?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, initially degrees will be issued by both the University of Queensland and the Northern Territory University. There is still a long way to go in terms of the actual courses which will be provided at the new university. There will be a transition period, during which courses at both the DIT and the University College of the Northern Territory will be taken into account.

Honourable members will be aware that we have an agreement with the University of Queensland in relation to degrees. That agreement extends until 1991. The reason for involving the University of Queensland with the University College related to credibility, as we have often pointed out to members opposite and the Commonwealth. We do not want our university to be a second-rate university; it must have credibility. The degrees issued in conjunction with the University of Queensland will continue to be issued until the agreement is completed. I have indicated that I would like the agreement to be extended because of the continuing need for credibility.

In the future, the issues will be the province of the Northern Territory University Council which will set up its own procedures involving faculty and academic boards. The decisions will be made by the Northern Territory University Council and, at some stage, the University of Queensland will disappear from the scene. The degrees will then be issued solely by the Northern Territory University. For the time being, degrees offered at the new Northern Territory University will be from both Queensland and the Northern Territory. If it is found that courses being taught at the new Northern Territory University are similar to those at the University of Queensland, students could have the choice of either a Queensland or Northern Territory degree. That is not to say, for example, that there would be 2 arts degrees.

It would mean that, if they were similar, students would have a choice. There is still a long way to go, Mr Speaker. We are developing a university which will have credibility and the best way to do that is to retain the Queensland connection during the early stages.

Amex Card Transaction

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

Mr Speaker, having had an opportunity to study the minister's lengthy reply to yesterday's questions on the subject of an Amex card transaction regarding pearls, I note that 2 central questions remain unanswered. I repeat the first question. Did he use his Amex card to pay for approximately \$2000 worth of pearls? Secondly, what period elapsed before he repaid the Tourist Commission for that expenditure?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, here we go again. I do not believe that I have repeatedly to answer questions about my previous employment. I repeat what I said yesterday and what I said previously in this House when the opposition moved a want of confidence motion. My accounts were properly audited and acquitted by the Auditor-General. If the opposition has questions about my role as Minister for Tourism or my responsibilities for the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission, I am happy to answer them. I will take on notice any other questions relating to my previous employment.

Karama Child-care Centre

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Can he advise of the circumstances surrounding the recent signing of a contract for the construction of a child-care centre in Karama?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, actually I was expecting a question from the shadow spokesman for my portfolio on this subject this morning. Once again, he seems to have been short of the mark.

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, that comment is indicative of the mentality of the honourable member opposite and of the standard of his contribution to this Assembly and to the constituency of the Northern Territory generally.

The contract for the construction of the Karama Child-care Centre was signed this week with a company called Interconstructions Pty Ltd. The value of the total contract, including land, was \$403 850. The centre will have 20 places. Karama was chosen as the site for this child-care centre as a result of an assessment by a combined Northern Territory and Commonwealth government planning committee which indicated that a need existed in the area, particularly for a service catering to children under 3 years of age.

The criteria for selection of site locations are agreed to on the basis of a Commonwealth and state formula. The site selection was made because there was no appropriately zoned land available other than rezoning open park land in Karama. If anybody is familiar with the suburb of Karama, he will know

that there is not too much to spare as far as open parkland is concerned. The developers offered land in an appropriate location, and their offer to supply the land and construct was agreed on. The site was agreed on by both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth ministers on the advice of both of their departments.

In the May economic statement of 1987, the Commonwealth reduced the total NT allocation of the number of places for child care. We were faced with only 41 remaining places and priority was given to needs Karama and Tennant Creek. The Northern Territory and Commonwealth ministers agreed to split those remaining places 21 to Tennant Creek and 20 to Karama.

Why is it to be undertaken by a private developer? A great deal of credit must go to the member for Karama. His hopes were almost forlorn of ever obtaining a much-needed child-care centre constructed in Karama. He went out and spread the word around his electorate that we needed some cooperation from the landowners there. The company that I mentioned came forward and offered a land and building proposal appropriately located in the Karama area. The site was then agreed to by the Commonwealth minister. The Commonwealth was fully aware of all of the negotiations at each stage. The developer and architect have previous experience from developing successful proposals for other child-care centres in the Northern Territory, particularly at Humpty Doo and Malak. The agreement was prepared by the Department of Law.

Mr Speaker, in relation to the cost of the building, I am sure that to all honourable members and people out in the Northern Territory community, the cost of \$403 000, including the land, for a 20-place child-care centre seems to be quite outrageous. I agree, but the fact is that that is what it costs. Let me cite some prices relative to the cost per place in a facility. The Dripstone Child-care Centre on land belonging to the Darwin Institute of Technology cost \$9744 per place. That was constructed by the Department of Transport and Works.

Mr Smith: It is a long way away from \$20 000.

Mr Dondas: That is not the land.

Mr DALE: No, that is right.

The Moulden Child-care Centre cost \$13 875 per place. That is for 32 placements and was constructed by the Department of Transport and Works. The Katherine East Child-care Centre cost \$11 950 for 40 placements and that was constructed by the Department of Transport and Works. The Karama centre is \$16 191 for 20 placements. That is an increase on those previous prices that I quoted. The others were completed more than 18 months ago. There has been an increase in costs since then. However, the Karama facility has another cost factor because it caters for babies under 2 years of age. Therefore nursery, laundering, air-conditioning, plumbing costs etc are a major increase in the cost factor for that particular facility. By the way, the Commonwealth's contribution is a fixed amount per place, according to the formula that I mentioned, at \$4450 per place. Under the joint agreement, the Northern Territory is required to commit the balance of funds needed to complete the facility.

The Northern Territory government had a commitment to many young families living in Karama and the fulfilment of the commitment is and was a priority. The Commonwealth agreed with every step that we took in finally arriving at the signing of the contract for the completion of this facility for the

parents of young children in the Karama area. I hope that puts to rest any of the scurrilous innuendo that oozes out of the honourable members opposite. The actions of this government are implemented with the best interests of the people of the Northern Territory in mind. We had to go to great lengths - and I must confess, in some circumstances during these negotiations, great pains - to come up finally with a much-needed facility in Karama that was agreed with by the Commonwealth government in Karama. Now the people of Karama can enjoy that facility.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

There is one simple way, Mr Speaker, that the minister can lay to rest the confusion that he has managed to create about the total amount of money paid to Mr K.K. Yeung. What is the total amount of money that has been paid to Mr K.K. Yeung, either personally or through his company or in any other way, since his appointment as a consultant for the Trade Development Zone?

ANSWER

Now we are getting somewhere, Mr Speaker. He has found out what he really wanted to ask. It took him a long time. Because of the sensitivity of this matter and because of the confusion, and to ensure that I have the wording of his question absolutely correct, I will take that on notice and supply him with that information. However, I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for finally coming to grips with what he really wants to ask. That has been a very interesting exercise for him. In future, let us hope he makes his questions as precise as were the answers given in the Assembly last night. He accused me of misleading the Assembly, of making deliberate distortions and was called to order a couple of times for calling me a liar. Finally, he has come to grips with what he really wants to ask. It is a momentous day for this parliament. The penny has finally dropped, and I am thankful for that.

Road Safety Council

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I understand that the Road Safety Council is taking some new initiatives in respect of road safety problems in the various Territory centres. Can he outline those new initiatives that will be taken by the Road Safety Council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to answer the question from the member for Casuarina who has always taken a very genuine interest in road safety matters. Darwinites will be pleased to hear that a Regional Road Safety Council for the Darwin area has been formed, the last throughout the Northern Territory to be formed. Until now, matters pertaining to the Darwin area have been handled by the Northern Territory Committee of the Road Safety Council on behalf of the local community whereas all other centres - Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Jabiru and Nhulunbuy - have had their own road safety committees which are able to interpret on-the-ground matters of concern to the local community such as dangerous intersections, requirements for traffic control devices, traffic lights, stop signs etc. They also assist the Road Safety Council in delivering its programs to the local community in the form that is the most effective.

The committees on the ground deal with issues locally. They talk to the local councils or to Department of Transport and Works officers to try to resolve issues promptly and appropriately at the local level. That is really quite important and most effective. The committees help take much of the load off the Road Safety Council. Not only was a need to localise safety issues identified but the work of the Road Safety Council was becoming quite burdensome. At the moment, I think the Road Safety Council has some 9 or 10 full-time employees and they are extremely busy putting together programs.

Many of the recent programs relate to Aboriginal communities. I am sure honourable members opposite will be pleased to know that an advertising campaign is being finalised. Aboriginal communities have been involved in the preparation of programs to deliver appropriate messages about road safety to their communities. We are having a great deal of difficulty in a number of areas which relate to driving on remote roads, gravel roads etc. Of course, for many Aboriginal communities, the only method of transport is in utilities. There is an ever-increasing need for care to be taken. Another area of concern, as I have mentioned in this House before, has been for Aboriginal people visiting the larger towns where they are confronted with traffic situations that they are not used to in their own communities.

A series of programs are being developed, both in cassette form and for TV distribution through Imparja and the ABC. The cassettes will go to those communities that still do not have access to television. In addition, the Road Safety Council runs the important school programs very effectively and the regional councils have a very important role to play there as well. I am sure honourable members would agree that the displays that the Road Safety Council puts on at each of the annual shows in the Territory is of a high standard and they are extremely effective. They are able to get the message across. Much of that work is done by the local regional councils.

As I mentioned, it is important to ensure that policy matters and matters of concern that are raised at the local level are fed back through the NT Road Safety Council so that others are able to share in that localised knowledge. Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am sure that Darwinites will take advantage of this new regional committee and will raise issues such as the standard of some of the local council roundabouts, for example, the one at Crisp Street in Rapid Creek. Although the committee has been in existence only some 2 weeks, already it has identified a considerable number of issues that it can address. An example is the danger caused where trees obscure vision at intersections. Some of those issues may sound fairly trivial but, in reality, can lead to fatal accidents as easily as more major hazards. I would implore all honourable members to encourage their constituents to take advantage of this new regional committee to provide meaningful input into ensuring that our roads remain safe for our citizens.

Amex Card Expenses of Minister for Tourism

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

I refer him to his statement in this House yesterday when he said: 'It is a fact that I have never been questioned by any Chief Minister concerning my personal expenditures on my American Express card'. I draw the attention of the honourable minister to a comment made by the then Chief Minister, the member for Nightcliff, in this House in August this year: 'I happened to become the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. At that time, the Auditor-General made me aware of concerns associated with unacquitted expenses and the discussions that were occurring with the Tourist Commission itself.'

It is true'. Is it a fact that the then Chief Minister said that, after being alerted by the Auditor-General about those unacquitted expenses, he had discussions with the Minister for Tourism about the matter, and how does the minister reconcile his answer yesterday with the comments of the member for Nightcliff?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am thinking about the dates. I do not remember any such discussion with any Chief Minister at that time. I would think that what the honourable member is referring to occurred after I had left the Tourist Commission.

Mr Smith: So you had discussions with a Chief Minister which you denied yesterday?

Mr BELL: A supplementary question, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

State Square Project Finance

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Would he confirm for me, if he can, a matter raised in discussion with the member for Nightcliff yesterday relating to the State Square project, namely that the right to borrow money for that project is actually tied into the project and, if we do not borrow it for that project, we cannot borrow it for any other? If that is true, would he confirm that that direction came from the federal Treasurer, Mr Keating? Further, is he aware, as most of us are that, Mr Keating and Mr Anderson, the proposer of that project, are known to be very good friends?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to clarify the situation in regard to the Territory's Australian Loans Council borrowing limits, as honourable members know, the federal government itself puts forward the Territory's bid each year to the Australian Loans Council for a global borrowing limit. The Territory, not being a state, is not a member of the Loans Council and, in this situation, that is significant. What the Territory does is submit to the federal Treasurer each year - and this has been done since self-government - a list of proposals that it would like to fund under loan borrowings. Almost invariably, the list is reduced somewhat in much the same way as the states' bids for global borrowings are usually not completely satisfied. The Northern Territory's bid goes forward to the Loans Council - we are supposed to be an equal partner but it does not quite work out that way - along with proposals from the Commonwealth's statutory bodies such as Qantas. Our bid is lumped in amongst those.

An amount is approved which, in a technical sense, is the Northern Territory's global limit and technically can be used on any loan program activities that the Northern Territory government desires. However, with a project such as the Channel Island Power Station which would be constructed over a period of years, that global borrowing is not permitted up-front. Only the component that we believe we will use in the first year can be applied. There is an understanding that, in subsequent years, the project will be funded to its completion.

In this context, the Northern Territory government put forward the State Square project to the federal government and it was approved by the federal government as part of the Northern Territory's bid. It is a project of some \$100m, as I have indicated to the media, for which we require loan funds. In the Northern Territory's global borrowings for this year, we have a figure of \$20m in loan borrowing capacity. If we do not use it, we can carry it over to next year.

I say that because I have already indicated to members that the currently proposed program with the State Square project is for the developer to finance the construction phase. In that case, we will not require our \$20m borrowing to be drawn down this year. It will carry over and be added to the 2 or 3 years following through on that program. Notwithstanding all that, in a technical sense, the Territory government has the ability to say that it has changed its mind and will spend this year's \$20m on something else. Of course, it will not do our future relationship with the federal government the world of good.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

What position is adopted by the Northern Territory government in regard to the proposal by the federal government to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a most important matter and I hope honourable members are generally following the developments with ATSIC because it will be very much in the news in future years if it is established. It reminds me a little of the early days of the Lands Rights Act where parliamentarians were doing things with no idea how it would all turn out. I believe that the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission under the present bill is really an attempt to establish another government within Australia, a government that will cross state borders. I am sure that, if members care to pick up that legislation and study it carefully, they will come to a similar conclusion.

The Northern Territory government recognises that the Commonwealth has a special constitutional responsibility to the Aboriginal people of Australia and that it is the right of the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to organise the delivery of services to the Aboriginal people of Australia. However, the Territory government opposes the proposed commission in its current form. For the benefit of the Assembly, I will outline a couple of the reasons for this opposition.

Despite the extensive consultation program conducted by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, there remains widespread concern amongst Aboriginal communities and organisations. As recently as Tuesday this week, my office received representations from the Pmara Jutunta community expressing its dismay at the proposed zone regional council boundaries. I was intrigued by a recent media report that a group of south-east Queensland Aboriginals had resolved to reject the commission proposal as if it were somehow a right-wing plot. That goes to show the level of confusion in the community as to what it really means.

The support of urban-based Aboriginal groups does not translate automatically into universal acceptance by all Aboriginal people, particularly Aboriginal Territorians. Despite representations by the former Chief Minister and the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government to both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, there has been no government-to-government consultation on this proposal. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs undertook, at the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council meeting of 4 December 1987 in Perth, to consult with state and Territory governments and the wider community. As I said, this has not been done.

All parties in the field of Aboriginal affairs, the Commonwealth government, the Northern Territory government and Aboriginal organisations share a common objective: the improvement of the well-being of Aboriginal Territorians. It is notable that most of the advances in Aboriginal development have been achieved through consultation that has resulted in a bipartisan position on particular issues and objectives. The most recent example of this is the agreement between the Commonwealth and Territory governments to jointly fund the town camp and housing infrastructure program.

Mr Speaker, I remind members opposite of a statement made by the former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Clyde Holding, when addressing the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice on 16 March 1985, on the need for support from the majority of Australians:

It is essential to remember that, if national land rights legislation or any other legislation designed to create rights for the Aboriginal people of this nation is to be enduring and successful, it must have the support of the majority of Australians. It cannot ignore the rights, aspirations or concerns of the majority of Australians.

The legislation to establish this commission has been prepared ignoring the rights, aspirations and concerns of the majority of Australians. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission legislation contains a preamble. What does the preamble purport to do as a matter of law? The preamble purports to be the acknowledgement of prior ownership of Australia by Aboriginal people which was extinguished in 1788. However, a preamble is to be treated with respect as it contains the parliament's reasons for passing the act and it expresses the opinion which the parliament holds. The far-reaching implications of this legislative action ought to have been the subject of consultation with all of the people of Australia and their democratically-elected governments.

The Northern Territory government is deeply concerned that the proposed commission has the potential to interpose on valuable and cooperative arrangements already established between the government and the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory. This is particularly so in relation to the Territory government's innovative and successful form of local government, specifically aimed at small remote communities, the majority of which are comprised of Aboriginal Territorians. I am sure that the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government will advise the Assembly of the less-than-satisfactory response received from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the likely impact of ATSIC on the community government scheme.

Finally, the proposed commission has the potential to divert and channel funds made available currently by the Commonwealth to the states and the Northern Territory and to determine distribution among states and territories and among Aboriginal communities. I am sure that is exactly what it is intended to do. That issue ought to have been subject to intense deliberation

by individual governments. The position of the land councils, that the proposals should be implemented immediately and that the deficiencies that they have identified can be corrected after the legislation is law, is outrageous. Mr Yunupingu may agree to give a blanket endorsement to the bill but he has no charter to endorse it on behalf of other Territorians. The interests of all parties, particularly those of the Aboriginal citizens of the Territory, would be better served if the Commonwealth devoted its resources to a re-examination and reorganisation of its functional responsibilities and to enhancing systems of financial distribution to strengthen the position of the Northern Territory government, which is in the best position to program for the satisfaction of Aboriginal needs.

The Commonwealth bill has been available only since 24 August and more and more questions unfold daily. The Northern Territory government will be forcibly expressing its position and concerns again to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Prime Minister, as it did to the Senate select committee on 22 September. We have finally obtained a copy of a map of ATSIC zones. Sadly, we had to obtain this from sources other than the federal government. The map seems to indicate that 1 of the 2 zones covering the Northern Territory extends well into Western Australia and South Australia. The zones would probably contain 40 000 Aborigines, 30 000 within the Territory and about 10 000 in Western Australia and South Australia. With 2 zones, the Northern Territory has 2 commissioners on the body running ATSIC. Tasmania, which claims 6500 Aborigines, has 1 representative. That is just one example which shows that this organisation is not in the interests of the Aborigines in the Northern Territory and should not proceed in its current form.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Electorate Office of Member for Flynn

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I rise to provide answers to 2 questions which have been asked in these sittings. The member for Stuart asked me to investigate a scheme promoted by the member for Flynn and to inform the House of the outcome of my investigation. On reflection, it is not appropriate for me to decide whether or not there has been a breach of the criminal law. Any response I could give would be on the basis of hearsay only. Further, I am not aware of any complaint that has been made or that any undue influence has been brought to bear. If there were such a complaint, it would be a matter for investigation by the police. Speculation or further comment by me could serve no purpose and I do not intend to become involved in hypothetical exercises.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will read the relevant sections of the Criminal Code. Section 88 says:

Any person who -

- (a) gives, confers or procures, or promises or offers to give or confer or to procure or attempt to procure, to, upon or for any person any property or benefit of any kind on account of anything already done or omitted to be done, or to be afterwards done or omitted to be done, by an elector at an election in the capacity of an elector or in order to induce any person to endeavour to procure the return of any person at an election, or the vote of any elector at an election;

- (b) being an elector, asks, receives or obtains, or agrees or attempts to receive or obtain, any property or benefit of any kind for himself or any other person on account of anything already done or omitted to be done, or to be afterwards done or omitted to be done, by him at an election in the capacity of an elector;
- (c) asks, receives or obtains, or agrees or attempts to receive or obtain, any property or benefit of any kind for himself or any other person on account of a promise made by him or any other person to endeavour to procure the return of any person at an election, or the vote of any person at an election; or
- (d) advances or pays any money to or for the benefit of any other person with the intent that such money shall be applied for any of the purposes mentioned in paragraph (a), (b) or (c), or in discharge or repayment of money wholly or in part applied for any such purpose,

is guilty of a crime and is liable to imprisonment for 3 years.

Section 89(1) says:

Any person convicted of any of the crimes defined by section 87 or 88 with respect to an election of the Legislative Assembly becomes incapable for 3 years from the date of the conviction of voting in any such election or holding any judicial office and, if he holds any such office, the office is vacated.

Section 89(2) says:

He also becomes incapable for the like period of being elected to or sitting in the Legislative Assembly; and, if at the time of the conviction he is a member of it, his seat is vacated.

Mr Speaker, it is obvious that care should be taken by all honourable members or those standing for election to bear in mind these provisions of the Criminal Code. They are sensible and fair provisions. In the light of recent decisions in other jurisdictions and noting the incidence of electoral challenges in the Northern Territory, it is obvious that there is an increasing scrutiny of the conduct of candidates for election. Accordingly, it is appropriate that I give a word of warning to all honourable members and potential candidates. If they have innovative schemes, they should ensure that they receive legal advice in relation to the provisions of the code or, for that matter, the Electoral Act and the Self-Government Act. The Northern Territory cannot afford the cost of unnecessary elections.

I would suggest that the member for Flynn make himself fully conversant with the provisions of the National Companies and Securities Code, sections 53 and 54, and sections 99 and 104 of the Companies Code. I wish him well in obtaining an office in his electorate. Some of my colleagues in the House, namely the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government and the member for Ludmilla have had difficulty in obtaining office accommodation and have been forced to utilise demountables.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I used to use a caravan.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Koolpinyah was forced to use a caravan.

I do not wish to discourage the honourable member from being innovative but I indicate that he should research carefully any steps that he intends to take to ensure that they are proper and legal.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Sir Edward Pellew Group Land Claim

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, there was a question from the member for Barkly regarding the Sir Edward Pellew Group. He asked if I could confirm that a claim has been made over the area and, if so, whether I am able to say whether the government supports a further land claim over the area.

Mr Tuxworth: And were you aware that your staff are supporting the claim?

Mr MANZIE: Again, Mr Speaker, whether the staff of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority are my staff or not seems to be unclear. The court has thought otherwise in certain circumstances, as the honourable member for Barkly is fully aware. However, we will sort that problem out with the introduction of legislation in the near future.

The new land claim was lodged with the Aboriginal Land Commissioner on 5 September 1988. Originally, the area was claimed as part of the Borroloola Land Claim No 1. In 1977, Justice Toohey heard that claim and he recommended no grant. A second claim was made and then a third which were lodged on 24 January and 5 March 1979 respectively. Neither of those claims has been heard. On 8 February, the Town of Pellew site was proposed and that included the South-west Island. I can assure honourable members that, with the developments occurring in the McArthur River area, we will certainly be opposing aspects of these land claims because the present Land Rights Act is such that it causes many problems for all members of the Territory community. My wish is that the federal Land Rights Act will be changed so that we do not have to go through the process to protect the rights of all Territorians and we can all operate with peace and with goodwill.

Mr Speaker, returning to the staff, I think I pointed out quite clearly that the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority - and the member for Barkly sits there and makes facetious remarks ...

Mr Tuxworth: I am not being facetious.

Mr MANZIE: He knows how it all began. He was the one that the Director of the Sacred Sites Protection Authority made a fool out of. I think that he ought to be ashamed to raise the matter in this House. Certainly, he did not look too good the last time he tried to.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the question paper. I remind honourable members that, when the 10 minutes following question time is used to respond to interjections and becomes involved in the provision of additional information, that prolongs the time. If we have a little more discipline, we can proceed through question time more quickly. I will have more to say about that at a later date.

Audit of K.K. Yeung's Business Dealings
with the NT Government

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Last Thursday in this House, he stated he had commissioned an audit for Mr K.K. Yeung's business dealings with the Northern Territory. Will he now table the letter setting out the terms and conditions of the audit that he commissioned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can probably answer that question to the satisfaction of the Leader of the Opposition if I offer the following explanation regarding the audit. The Leader of the Opposition has failed once again to understand the audit and what it shows. The audit examines only retainer and supervisory fees received by K.K. Yeung Management Consultants for the period 13 May 1986 to 13 September 1988. It is unreasonable and downright foolish to compare such figures with the total payment to consultants since 1985. The audit figure does not include fees and expenses incurred under the first agreement in 1985-1986 or retainer fees for subconsultants and expenses for all consultants under the subsequent agreements.

Perhaps it would be helpful to the Leader of the Opposition if I were to provide some background on the audit report. The first audit was conducted in May this year by direction of the TDZ Authority to confirm claims by K.K. Yeung Management Consultants of time cost losses. The audit was sought to examine the time costs and determine if a loss in fact had been incurred. It was not intended to examine all consultancy payments. The second audit - the one that I tabled here last week - was commissioned by myself on the same basis. Principally, it was to provide independent authority and to check claims made in the first audit, which was done by a certified public accountant who could be claimed to have links with K.K. Yeung Management Consultants. In other words, I sought the second audit to allay any concerns that might be raised about the veracity of the first audit. It does not pretend to be an audit of the Trade Development Zone Authority payments to Asian consultants and it is only the Leader of the Opposition who pretends that it does. We already know what the authority has paid to Mr K.K. Yeung Management Consultants and it is the figure that I stated in the House last week.

Mr Speaker, whilst I am on my feet, I wonder if I may answer the 39 questions which the Leader of the Opposition put to me last week. I hear 'No' from the members of the opposition but I get the nod from the Leader of the Opposition. Once again he is asserting his authority over his band of 6. I propose to answer the so-called 39 questions asked about the Trade Development Zone last week. However, I do so with some concern because of the potential to cause damage to the reputation of the Northern Territory government and its commercial dealings with the Asian business community. My concern is that Asian business people will be reluctant to do business with the Territory because of the perceived likelihood that their business will become a matter of public record. However, there appears to be a widespread perception in the Territory, sponsored by the opposition, that the government has something to hide or to cover up in its marketing and promotional activities relating to the Trade Development Zone. I answer these questions therefore to dispel that perception because there is nothing to hide and no cause for concern in relation to the government's activities. Mr Speaker, I will read each question and then supply an answer.

Question 1: Who located K.K. Yeung Management Company in the first instance? Mr K.K. Yeung Management Consultants Ltd was located by the Northern Territory Development Corporation after consultation with Asian business people.

Question 2: Who recommended him to the Trade Development Zone Authority? The question needs correcting, Mr Speaker. It was not an individual that was recommended, but a company of consultants. Mr Yeung's company was recommended to the Board of the Northern Territory Development Corporation by its Chairman, Mr Ray McHenry, and a former minister, Mr Nick Dondas, after they had interviewed the principal of the company. The NTDC Board formally approved the appointment of the consultant company.

Question 3: Who drew up the initial contract with K.K. Yeung and with whose authority? The original contract was drawn up by the Northern Territory Development Corporation on the authority of the NTDC Board.

Question 4: What were the conditions of his contract? The conditions of the original contract have been disclosed previously in the Legislative Assembly. For the record, however, they were as follows. The original contract was for a period of 12 months with fees of \$A3000 per month plus expenses. In addition, success fees were payable on the signing of letters of intent to establish an industry in the zone on the following scale: up to \$A1m - 2%; from \$A1 to \$A5m - 1.25%; and over \$A5m - 1%. The areas covered were Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China and Taiwan.

Question 5: What models were used to frame it? The basis of the original contract was formed from information obtained from government and private-sector enterprises, particularly in regard to retainer and success fee arrangements.

Question 6: How long was Mr K.K. Yeung contracted to the authority before the board was informed? The question is meaningless, Mr Speaker. The original agreement was approved on 13 May 1985 and the Trade Development Zone Authority Board did not exist until 25 September 1985. At its first meeting on that date, board members noted the agreement.

Question 7: Did the board express reservations about the contract conditions from the outset? No board member expressed any reservation about the original contract conditions or the subsequent contract. In fact, at the meeting of 17 and 18 April 1986, the board members stated, and I quote: '... the need to ensure the ongoing attraction of investment to the zone from South-east Asian region. Members agreed that, in order to ensure the above objective and adequately remunerate the consultant, the agreement should be placed on a fully commercial footing'.

Question 8: If it did, what were those reservations? As I said, no such reservations were expressed about the original contract or the subsequent contract.

Question 9: What actions did the chairman or the minister take to address those concerns or reservations? Mr Speaker, I have to keep taking these questions at face value, and I have to repeat that no concerns or reservations were expressed about the contract the Leader of the Opposition specifically refers to. Therefore, no action was necessary.

Question 10: What were Mr Yeung's reimbursed expenses for the years 1985-86, 1986-87, and 1987-88? I presume the question refers to K.K. Yeung

Management Consultants and, therefore, not only Mr Yeung but all his staff and all the subconsultants. Mr Yeung himself, as an individual, of course was not reimbursed for any expenses at all, and any payments received were as the principal of the company and acting for the company. I should also explain that the term 'expenses' means payments made by any of the consultants for seminars, travel, accommodation, hospitality or any other function not covered by retainers and fees - in other words, tasks on the TDZA's behalf for which they could justify reimbursement. The total reimbursed figure for the years mentioned was \$306 544. For all South-east Asian regions, that is, reimbursements that are included in the total government payment to Asian consultants, the figure for the years mentioned was \$495 485.

Question 11: How were those expenses audited before being paid, and by whom were they audited? The TDZ Authority's internal accounts procedures cover processing of all payments. These, of course, are subject to audit each financial year by an independent auditor appointed by the Auditor-General.

Question 12: What were the reimbursed expenses of the following board members, Mr Col Fuller, Mr Laurie Jones, Mr Tony Richards, Mr Bob Matthewson, Mr Ray McHenry? Reimbursements from 25 September 1985 to June 1988, a period of almost 3 years, for the board as a whole, was \$122 205. Mr McHenry, as chairman, carried most of the weight of those reimbursements because it was he who travelled most to Asia and to other world regions for and on behalf of the board to meet contacts discovered by consultants and to conduct the business of the zone. Clearly, it was Mr McHenry's charter to handle negotiations personally, and his reimbursements reflect that. He acted as agent for the board and the zone.

Question 13: How were those expenses audited and by whom? Expenses were paid subject to supporting documentation as is covered under the TDZ Authority's procedures. The authority is subject to external audit each financial year by an independent auditor appointed by the Auditor-General.

Question 14: What amounts were paid to Mr K.K. Yeung for retainers, commissions, letters of intent, travel, seminars, subconsultancies, commissions in respect of enterprises established in the zone and any other activities? Mr Speaker, I do not want the Leader of the Opposition to become confused, as he did last week. Therefore, I will presume he means how much was paid to K.K. Yeung Management Consultants in total since the company was engaged as principal Asian consultant and which covered payments to subconsultants in Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia and China. I will also presume he means K.K. Yeung, the individual. Of course, the answer is \$1 439 573, as I stated to the House last week.

Question 15: What were those amounts in each of the financial years 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88? In each of the financial years, the amounts were as follows: in 1985-86 - \$325 071; in 1986-87 - \$431 342; and, in 1987-88 - \$683 161.

Question 16: How many days in each year was Mr McHenry involved in overseas travel? The chairman spent the following number of days overseas. In 1986, 63 days; in 1987, 51; and, in 1988 to 30 June, 69 days.

Question 17: How many of those trips in each year involved a visit to Mr K.K. Yeung? Mr Speaker, the question is poorly worded. I can supply an answer to a question asking how many of those trips involved a visit to Hong Kong: 4 in 1986, 4 in 1987 and 3 in 1988. Of course, those Hong Kong visits may not actually have involved a personal visit to Mr Yeung. He might have

been away from Hong Kong at the time, and it might be that Mr McHenry visited members of K.K. Yeung Management Consultants' staff. It might also be that Mr McHenry saw Mr Yeung or members of the consultancy staff in places other than Hong Kong. Indeed, one would expect that he did because it was the job of the consultants to advise the zone and its chairman.

Question 18: How many trips overseas were undertaken by other members of the board in the same period? Trips by other board members were as follows: in 1986, 2 by Mr Bob Matthewson and 1 by Mr Lawrie Jones and, in 1987, 1 by Mr Tony Richards.

Question 19: How many trips were undertaken by staff members? The answer is as follows: 1986 - 8; 1987 - nil; and 1988 - 7.

Question 20: On how many trips did a minister accompany or meet with Mr McHenry overseas? The answer is on 5 occasions.

Question 21: Which ministers and when? The answer is: Hon Ray Hanrahan in September 1986; Hon Nick Dondas, representing the responsible minister Hon Marshall Perron, in August 1987; Hon Marshall Perron in February 1988; Hon Marshall Perron in May 1988; and myself in September 1988.

Question 22: When was the first variation of Mr K.K. Yeung's contract approved and by whom was it approved? The contract for Mr K.K. Yeung Management Consultants was revised and approved on 17 April 1986 by the TDZA Board which comprised Mr Ray McHenry, Mr Bob Matthewson, Mr Rick Allert, Mr Laurie Jones and Mr Tony Richards.

Question 23: What subsequent variations, including ex gratia payments, impresses and advances on fees and retainers, were approved and by whom? I will answer this in conjunction with question 24.

Question 24: What were the amounts involved in each case? Subsequent variations are as follows. In June 1986, the board approved an increase in retainer fees for the Taiwan consultant from \$2000 to \$3000 per month. The board also approved an additional payment of \$45 000 to K.K. Yeung Management Consultants to cover demonstrated losses during the period of the first consultancy. At its meeting on 7 and 8 April 1987, the board agreed to increase the Taiwan and Singapore-Malaysia subconsultants' retainer by \$2000 per month. In December 1987, the chairman approved an advance of retainer fees for 3 months totalling \$40 000. This was fully acquitted and board members were advised at the March 1988 meeting. Also in December 1987, the retainer for the Taiwan consultant was increased by \$1000. This was endorsed by the board. In January 1988, the retainer for the Thailand consultant was increased by \$2000 and this was also endorsed by the board.

At its March 1988 meeting, the board considered a paper for renewal of contracts for K.K. Yeung Management Consultants and asked that other options be canvassed. The minister did not support those options and, after consultation with the board and K.K. Yeung Management Consultants, and then Cabinet, he determined a formula along existing lines in preference to those options posed by a majority of the board. In May 1988, board members endorsed the proposal by the minister to enter into an interim agreement with K.K. Yeung Management Consultants on a month-to-month basis, subject to negotiations by the minister and the chairman during a visit later that month. As a result of those negotiations, a new agreement was entered into for a period of 6 months, expiring on 13 November 1988. This agreement is due to be reviewed following receipt of the final report at the end of October by the

independent consultant studying the zone's marketing and promotional activities, Mr Fergus Simpson. Cabinet agreed that an advance of \$120 000 be paid to K.K. Yeung Management Consultants against success fees which would accrue in the near future.

Question 25: What investigations, audits or other inquiries preceded those payments? Normal internal procedures were applied, together with detailed investigations of time cost losses.

Question 26: Were the payments approved by the board before or after the event? Details of this question were supplied in the answers to questions 23 and 24.

Question 27: Which of those payments were rejected by the board but subsequently approved by the minister? K.K. Yeung Management Consultants put in a claim at the May 1988 board meeting for a payment based on the company's interpretation of its contractual entitlements. This was not supported by the board nor was it supported by the minister.

Question 28: Which minister approved payments which were rejected by the board? No payments were rejected by the board and then approved by the minister.

Question 29: When did Mr McHenry direct his fellow board members not to speak to staff members of the Trade Development Zone Authority and vice versa, and why did he do it? At the March 1988 board meeting, the chairman requested that, in future, all communications between board members and staff be directed through him. I am informed that this followed an incident in which some board members sought to hold secret and clandestine meetings and communications with staff with the proviso that the chairman or the deputy chairman was not told.

Question 30: Did he consult the minister before issuing this directive and did the minister approve? It was the chairman's prerogative to take such a course and it did not need ministerial approval.

Question 31: When did Mr McHenry direct that the authority's fax machine be moved into his office? The authority's fax machine was not moved into his office. However, an additional machine was installed for the use of the chairman and it is located for his convenience outside his main office.

Question 32: When did he direct that all staff correspondence be routed past his desk? On 24 August 1988, he requested that all incoming mail be directed to him in the first instance so that he could be kept informed on matters of importance and to update him on matters that might have occurred while he was out of Darwin.

Question 33: What were the reasons for those most unusual decisions? I do not see anything particularly unusual about them. As I understand it, and I stress that we are descending into administrative arrangements that hardly seem worth the attention of this Assembly, the main motivation was an office structure which would allow his senior executive assistants to fax copies of important correspondence to him when he was out of Darwin.

Question 34: When was the decision taken to terminate the board membership of Mr Col Fuller, Mr Tony Richards and Mr Laurie Jones? Strictly speaking, the correct answer is 'never'. However, I will explain the circumstances. In June, Cabinet decided to restructure the TDZA Board and to

reduce its membership from 5 to 3. The primary reason for this was that it was considered necessary to use the talents of local people. Mr Laurie Jones was based in Sydney and Mr Tony Richards had moved his business from Alice Springs to Brisbane and, in any case, he was away for most of 1988 on an overseas holiday. Board membership was not terminated but the memberships of Mr Jones and Mr Richards were not renewed. Nor was the membership of Mr Col Fuller terminated. He resigned because his departmental responsibilities had changed. The new member on the board is the Darwin businessman, Mr Haig Arthur, who will join Mr McHenry and Mr Bob Matthewson. The new board has met already.

Question 35: Did Mr McHenry recommend that their memberships be terminated? No, he did not. As I explained in the previous answer, no memberships were in fact terminated.

Question 36: Why had their skills become redundant? As I explained previously, Cabinet took the decision to replace interstate board members with local members. All the major policy decisions required local business expertise, including attracting potential overseas investors to Darwin.

Question 37: Does the government intend to review Mr McHenry's contract, and when does it expire? It would be highly inappropriate to answer such a question and completely and utterly unfair to the public servant involved. I could just as well ask the Leader of the Opposition when the contract of his economic advisor expires and whether he intended to renew it, or whether the manager of the ABC intended to review Claire Martin's contract. The Leader of the Opposition goes beyond reasonable bounds with such a question, and he knows it.

Question 38: Can the minister explain the reasons for the Trade Development Zone Authority's non-compliance with the clause in its act that specifies that the interval between meetings be not greater than 45 days? There was no non-compliance. The act provides for a responsible minister to approve any extension of the period between meetings, and this approval has been properly obtained in all cases.

Question 39: Will the minister advise what are the terms of reference for the commission of Mr Fergus Simpson to investigate the operations of the Trade Development Zone Authority and when they were approved by the board? The board did not commission the review. It was endorsed by Cabinet and the appointment of Mr Fergus Simpson was on behalf of the Northern Territory government, not the TDZA. Board members were informed of this decision and the letter of appointment was provided to them for noting at the board meeting on 26 September 1988. I will read into Hansard the terms of reference under which Mr Simpson is operating. These are as follows:

TERM

The review is to commence immediately with the final report to be completed by 31 October 1988.

AREA

The areas to be reviewed will include Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The report should take into account the following factors: (a) industries suitable for establishment in the Trade Development Zone and target markets; (b) a review of the Trade Development Zone Authority's marketing strategies and marketing programs as they relate to Asia and Australia; (c) a review of the use of consultants or appropriate alternatives; (d) a review of the adequacy or otherwise of incentives and assistance packages able to be offered by the Trade Development Zone Authority.

Mr Speaker, I have completed my answers to the questions put to me by the Leader of the Opposition. I have answered those questions in the most fitting way and I have provided a veritable mountain of information. I trust that the Assembly will not now witness another 39 questions to be followed by another 39 questions, ad nauseam and ad infinitum. There is a limit to this process and I think it has been reached. A further barrage of questions will go beyond any call of obligation and could be regarded as mischief-making for the sake of it. I repeat what I have been saying since the start of these sittings. The opposition has not alleged any impropriety nor has it put forward any evidence that could give cause for real concern. All it has done is to put questions and, without further substance, there is a definite limit to that blatant political tactic.

If I cannot persuade the Leader of the Opposition to let these matters rest and to let the Trade Development Zone get on with the job that it is supposed to be doing, let me put it to him that he should stop the grandstanding. If he has allegations of impropriety, let him make them. He has not done so yet. If he has another list of questions, let him put them on the question paper so that I can properly consider them and address whether or not they should be answered. This charade should not continue, Mr Speaker. Enough is enough.

Installation of Roundabout on Daly Street

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I congratulate the minister's department in regard to the roundabout that has been installed recently at the intersection of Vanderlin Drive and Lee Point Road. Will he undertake to have discussions with his Roads Division and engineers of the Darwin City Council in relation to the possibility of installing a roundabout at the intersection of Daly Street and Smith Street, an intersection believed by some to be very dangerous?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would certainly be more than pleased to take that matter forward on behalf of the member for Casuarina and the member for Port Darwin. I am familiar with that intersection which is extremely dangerous. As the honourable member said, the new roundabout at the intersection of Vanderlin Drive and Lee Point Road has proved to quite effective. Line marking was completed last week and I trust that people are now becoming used to the manoeuvres required to use the roundabout. Some of the earlier expressions of public concern reflected a lack of familiarity with the usage of roundabouts and that will be solved with the passage of time.

The Department of Transport and Works has already cooperated with the Darwin City Council in relation to a roundabout which is to be installed at

the intersection of Dick Ward Drive and Progress Drive, following representation by the member for Nightcliff. In fact, \$150 000 has been provided to the council and I understand that, whilst it has taken a little time for the council to put together its documentation for the project, it is to be completed before Christmas.

While we are talking about city traffic problems, I should mention the intersection of Mitchell Street and Knuckey Street where there are 4 stop signs. That situation is very confusing to drivers. I have put it to the council that it might like to address that specific problem. In conjunction with the State Square project, the government is encouraging the council to assist in a review of the total traffic and parking requirements at this end of town. Maybe we can solve some other problems at the same time. When I say that we are 'encouraging the council', I recognise that the council has a legitimate role to play in traffic management within the Darwin CBD. The government is more than willing to provide some additional resources to assist the council in preparing a document which will help us provide appropriate traffic arrangements at this end of town, particularly with the forthcoming construction of a new Supreme Court building.

Tourist Commission's Petty Cash Accounts

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

What steps have been taken to investigate the alleged abuse of petty cash accounts in the Tourist Commission's Darwin and Alice Springs offices by the former Chairman of the commission?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any alleged petty cash account abuses. If the honourable member cares to ask specific questions, I will be happy to answer them.

Environmental Impact of Darwin Airport Construction Work

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer him to a recent newsletter issued by the member for Millner. By way of explanation, I happen to reside in that electorate and I was somewhat surprised to find, in that newsletter, a request by the member for Millner asking people in the electorate to contact the Environment Centre about some concerns that it was expressing about possible run-off from the Darwin Airport construction into Freshwater and Rapid Creeks. Is the minister aware of concerns about possible run-off from the airport construction and, if so, has that matter been properly addressed? Has he been approached by the Leader of the Opposition or any of his staff to ascertain whether there is any factual basis to the allegations by the Environment Centre as expressed in that newsletter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in answer to the latter part of the question, I have not been approached by the Leader of the Opposition recently nor during that period when the Territory government was lobbying for the opportunity to construct this much-needed facility. I too am a little surprised that the honourable

member has seen fit to pander to the Environment Centre over this non-issue. Since 1983, the development of the Darwin Airport has been addressed time and time again in this House. Planning and issues relating to environmental impact assessment for the area have been continually highlighted in this House.

A very thorough and very comprehensive environmental impact statement and assessment of run-off into Freshwater Creek/Rapid Creek were undertaken as part of the federal government's planning. In 1983, Cameron McNamara completed a very comprehensive study for the airport in regard to run-off and the impact on the creek in particular. As a result of that, monitoring of the creek was undertaken to provide an appropriate database to identify specific points for water sampling in the long term so that effects, if any, on the creek could be quite positively and accurately assessed. Monitoring continued well into 1985. By that time, the federal government put the chop on the construction that had begun on the site of the terminal. Perhaps that lapse of almost 4 years has confused the Leader of the Opposition and he has forgotten all the intense environmental assessment work that was done in those early days.

There is a monitoring team in place and the baseline information is there. The team and the committee to assess the effects within the catchment area is in place. The chairmanship of that committee rests with the Conservation Commission, and quite correctly so. It was established in 1983 and is ready and available when the project is continued. The Environment Centre did not need to stick its bib into this matter. All it needed to do was to check with either the Territory government or with the federal government to ensure that the appropriate arrangements were in place. That is all that was required. Nevertheless, it runs through the community trying to create an impression that the right thing is not being done and is not likely to be done. Probably the only highlight of the press release is that the Environment Centre has now moved to a shop in Cavenagh Street called the Green Turtle. Honourable members would recall that it used to reside in an arcade off the Mall in a shop that was known commonly as the Black Cockroach.

Mr Speaker, it is most irresponsible of the member for Millner to be stirring up strife and using his newsletter to pander to the Environment Centre. It is ludicrous and a waste of time.

Silversulphadiazine

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recently, I wrote to every member of this Assembly in relation to the drug silversulphadiazine, which is used in the treatment of ulcers and burns, and its availability. Does the minister have an answer for me?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I received some correspondence from the honourable member. That correspondence is now with my department. It will advise me in the near future and I will then advise the honourable member.

Today Show

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TOURISM

Television 9 Network this week is featuring the Northern Territory on the highly-rated Today Show. How did the visit come about and what was the cost involved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The Today Show is aired by about 125 television stations and translators to an audience of many millions. This week, George Negus, Elizabeth Hayes and the Today's Show production team are broadcasting from the Northern Territory every day from 7 am to 9 am Eastern Standard Time. They were in Jabiru and were still there this morning. They were at Yellow Waters and Obiri yesterday and will be there today. Tomorrow, they will move to Bathurst Island and to Uluru National Park on Thursday. On Friday, they will broadcast from Bond Springs Station.

The producers approached the Northern Territory Tourist Commission some months ago about their plans and asked for some financial assistance in meeting the high satellite costs to undertake these sorts of broadcasts. The satellite costs involved are \$60 000. The Department of Industries and Development contributed \$20 000, the Department of Primary Production and Fisheries gave \$10 000 and the balance of \$30 000 was provided by the commission from its marketing budget. I believe that this money has been exceptionally well spent. The commercial value of this exposure certainly would be very difficult to estimate but the resulting publicity of course would be measured in many millions of dollars. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Today team on the scope and the quality of the production which I think everybody in this House would agree has been first class.

BTEC Destocking Statistics

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Is he aware that officers of his department have refused to give pastoralists in the Katherine region a simple breakdown of BTEC destocking statistics? Is he also aware that the reason provided is that the figures for destocking, as opposed to the figures for compensation, are 'red-hot'? Is that why he still refuses to conduct a full audit of the BTEC campaign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the honourable member, it seems that we will have another ongoing saga from the members opposite and that they will continue to cast aspersions on people in primary industry and in my department. I am not aware of the further allegations that the honourable member has just made.

Honourable members will recall that, in this Assembly last week, we debated a purported matter of public importance raised by the Leader of the Opposition on the subject of BTEC. In the course of that debate, the member for Stuart put forward a number of scurrilous allegations based, it would seem, on hearsay. They cast doubts on the credibility of employees of my department, pastoralists and, by association, almost anyone working in the

pastoral industry or servicing it. Hansard will show that the government had no difficulty in proving that the opposition's claims had no substance. We had no difficulty because we deal only with facts, not innuendo, hearsay and gossip.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member continued this unfounded attack in an interview on the After 8 ABC program last Friday and the reporter, Tony Walker, introduced the segment by reiterating 2 of the so-called rorts that the member for Stuart claims to have unearthed. He spoke of a sackful of ears and trucking stock across the border. He then asked the honourable member what proof he had that the so-called rorts actually had occurred. No doubt, honourable members and people in the pastoral industry would have been impressed by his response. His answer to the question was: 'I did not raise them as things of proof. I raised them as issues which, if you go to any pastoralist around the central Australian region and, I dare say, in the Top End, you will find people will tell you stories that they have heard of allegations of rorts in BTEC'. He did not raise them as things of proof, but that did not stop the honourable member from casting aspersions on people in my department or people in the industry. He had no proof, but tales from people who have heard stories about allegations.

The honourable member was then asked about a Commonwealth review of the Territory's handling of BTEC. He replied in terms of a review, expressed in 1984-85 by the Commonwealth minister, Mr Kerin, which was disparaging to say the least. What he failed to mention was the independent review commissioned by the Commonwealth in 1986. That review found the Territory's management to be an example worth holding up for the states to follow. The Territory's program was recommended to the states as one which they should use as an example.

Mr Ede: Stop the program.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, the honourable member opposite continues with his unfounded allegations.

There is no question that the honourable member was not aware of the 1986 review. It was discussed in this very House last Friday. Nevertheless, the honourable member ...

Mr Ede: It was last Thursday.

Mr REED: Last Thursday, yes.

The honourable member has relied on his very selective and convenient memory palpably to mislead the public. But this is not the end of it, Mr Speaker. When asked who was participating in the rorts, he used a very broad brush indeed. He gave us: 'Only a minority of pastoralists, but a reasonable number nevertheless, and some trucking companies or small-time operators'. Thus, everyone in the trucking industry is included under this cloud of suspicion that the member for Stuart has cast. Finally, and this really sticks in my craw, people in the actual BTEC program itself are included. By way of elaboration, he said: 'It may have been stock inspectors'. Thus, all of the stock inspectors are under a shadow of doubt and suspicion that has been cast over them without a scrap of evidence.

The honourable member continued: 'It was probably some departmental staff anyway or else it would have been uncovered a lot earlier'. What would have been uncovered? The fact that there are people in the rural area who know

someone, who heard from somebody else that the bloke on the next lease had a mate who was ripping off the system? There was no evidence, Mr Speaker.

What is the real situation? The real situation is that we have a campaign that is held in high regard by the Commonwealth government. We have a campaign that is supported by the industry and, indeed, that is substantially funded by it. We have achieved this through a great deal of hard work, with departmental staff and industry working together. What do the staff get for their efforts, Mr Speaker? They are labelled as being corrupt by a self-deluded opposition which will not accept the truth no matter how carefully it is explained to them. It is not only myself who has explained it to them; it is the industry as well.

To say that the departmental staff engaged in BTEC are furious over the member for Stuart's claims is a major understatement. It is more on their behalf than my own that I demand - not ask, but demand - that the member for Stuart provide the information we have requested continually so that the government can investigate his so-called rorts. The honourable member has a moral obligation to substantiate his claims or to apologise in order that the credibility of those people working in the pastoral industry or in my department can be restored. I can assure him that his information will be treated with the utmost confidence and referred to the police for investigation.

I am not aware that any allegations that he has made have any basis in fact whatever. If he cannot substantiate those allegations, and he has admitted that he has no proof, he must apologise publicly to the government, the staff of my department, the pastoral industry and the transport industry. Not to do so imposes on the civil rights of all those people. This government holds dear the concept of justice. We cannot and do not condemn the accused on hearsay evidence, unlike the opposition. Certainly, we have heard stories about BTEC but, without proof, they are simply that: stories. Mr Speaker, I call on the member for Stuart to substantiate his allegations. Let him give us something that can be investigated and cease casting aspersions and making baseless accusations. Such actions must be investigated if they have occurred. If he has the evidence, we will ensure that that is done. However, his disgusting and unfounded allegations must be withdrawn if he cannot substantiate them, and he must lift the cloud of suspicion that he has cast so unfairly on members of my department and people working in the pastoral industry.

Crocodiles

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer the minister to statements made on television last night regarding the need to remove large crocodiles from populated areas and to establish more crocodile farms in the Top End. Could he advise the House of the current position regarding the removal of problem crocodiles and the establishment of new holding facilities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must admit that I was disappointed to hear the member for Barkly's comments about crocodiles yesterday. They certainly displayed his ignorance, not only regarding what the government is doing generally but also about what is happening in his own electorate. The member should be well aware that, as part of its management strategy for crocodiles, the government

conducts a public safety program which includes the removal of nuisance crocodiles from populated areas.

If the honourable member kept in touch with his constituents in the Gulf area, he would be aware also that the Conservation Commission is discussing proposals with people in Borroloola and other centres, as well as places like Nhulunbuy, to establish crocodile holding facilities. It is intended that these facilities will be used in public education and in the tourist industry, as well as providing breeding stock for the Territory's expanding crocodile industry. As Dr Grahame Webb said on television last night, such developments do not come about overnight. However, the process is already under way and I believe that the member for Barkly knew that when he made his public comments.

The program which deals with problem crocodiles concentrates on the major population centres of Darwin, Gove and the Borroloola stretch of the McArthur River. It also operates on call at public centres throughout the Territory's coastal regions. For example, this year, the commission has been talking to the Tiwi community and the central Arnhem Land communities of Milingimbi and Maningrida. The member for Arnhem and the member for Arafura would be aware of these discussions the aim of which is to keep crocodiles from becoming a direct threat to normal community activities. It is significant that, in our discussions with these communities, people have been very concerned that we do not go back to the Rambo-style slaughter which the member for Barkly now seems to be advocating.

The member's comments appear to have been generated by a recent case where a young man was taken by a crocodile in the Cato River area. We are all aware of the unfortunate circumstances of that case and everyone in this House has sympathy with the family of the person involved. However, the member's comments are even more dubious in the context of that case. It is unfortunate that he is so cynical that he is prepared to use a tragic incident to score cheap political points. The Aboriginal people in the area where the tragedy occurred, for whom the crocodile has particular traditional significance, have specifically asked the Conservation Commission not to interfere with the crocodile which killed the young man unless it is required either for police forensic purposes or to establish that what is reported to have occurred, did in fact occur.

It is important and appropriate that, where traditional lifestyles of people are involved, the relevant authorities heed those people's feelings. Conservation Commission rangers are not going to rush in with guns or traps against the wishes of the people who reside in the area. The fact that we have consulted with the Aboriginal people and respected their wishes makes a mockery of the member for Barkly's suggestions that we should be measuring crocodiles and shooting any which are more than 12 feet long. It is a fact that the crocodiles which inhabit our waters are extremely dangerous. It is also a fact that, even if we could shoot or remove every large crocodile that is seen, there would still be danger. That is because there is no way anyone can guarantee that the coastal waters in northern Australia will ever be totally free of crocodiles.

The honourable member commented about negative impacts on tourism. In an economic sense, we are fortunate that the presence of crocodiles aids the tourist industry rather than detracts from it. With the continuing high level of publicity that follows crocodile attacks, it cannot be said that any tourist entering the Territory is unaware that the danger exists. Indeed, it is a rather macabre irony that such attacks probably draw more people to the Territory than the expensive advertising campaigns that the Tourist Commission

quite ably carries out throughout the country and overseas. If honourable members doubt that as a proposition, they should consider which stories about Territory affairs are run in the southern media. We are all aware of the stories of crocodile attacks or of a crocodile walking across a road. People in south-eastern Australia are under the impression that we have crocodiles in our backyards and that it is dangerous to take a bath unless we have someone standing guard.

The lesson to be learned is that, provided we are aware of the very real risks associated with crocodiles, we can still enjoy and profit from the crocodiles themselves and the landscape that is their habitat. We all agree that it is important that the crocodile as a species be protected and allowed to inhabit open areas of the Territory. As the member for Arafura pointed out, they have been around for a great deal of time. They were here before we came and, obviously, they will be around for much longer. As Grahame Webb has said, the only way to ensure the survival of the crocodile is to ensure it has economic value. The crocodile industry in the Territory is developing at the moment. The value of crocodiles can be seen with the number of people who visit the crocodile farm. The value of their hides for export is becoming known to Territorians and is providing jobs and income. The value of the meat as a delicacy is also becoming well known. I believe \$29 a kilogram is the price of crocodile meat on the market.

We have a program for the removal of problem crocodiles. It removes them as effectively as shooting does. The crocodiles are becoming a valuable resource. In the very near future, crocodile farming will probably rival the pastoral industry as a source of income.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Film North

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to respond to questions asked last week by the member for Flynn. The honourable member asked on what basis Film North was chosen to produce a video and whether it was by public tender or otherwise. My answer is that Film North was chosen to produce the video on evidence of past productions, its availability to perform the task at the time required and the competitive quotation submitted. Public tenders were not invited. The Treasury regulations and directions exempt certain classes of expenditure from the public tender process. This exemption certainly applies to advertising agents and the media. The process followed was that expressions of interest were sought from a number of Territory companies and those interested were invited to submit written quotations.

The honourable member asked why local film producers were not asked to tender for the production of the video. Local film producers were asked to submit expressions of interest. They were not involved in any tender process for the reasons I have mentioned. Expressions of interest were sought from 6 Territory companies: NTD Channel 8, FCB Territory Advertising Services, Iloura Productions, Film North, True North and Imparja TV from Alice Springs. Only 3 companies expressed interest and subsequently submitted quotes.

He asked also if the video tender was not put out for public tender what other contracts had been given to Film North in the last 2 years without going to tender. The Department of Health and Community Services has not previously entered into any contract with Film North. He asked if Film North has any favoured position with the Territory government which precludes work given to it by the government from going to public tender, and I answered that question last week.

Mr Speaker, the details of this particular contract are interesting. The finished product is to include a 15-minute, high-class commercial television tape, a 60-second commercial tape and a 30-second commercial tape to be used in public relations advertising for the proposed 1990 Masters Games. I remind honourable members that, on my recent trip, I was able to succeed in finalising a further \$200 000 of sponsorship for the 1990 Masters Games from Honda Australia. In addition, the film will act as an historic record of the 1988 Masters Games.

Negotiations have taken place through Film North to feature the Masters Games through Sky Channel, Wide World of Sports, Good Morning Australia, and 10 Network News. Channel 10 CNN American Cable Network Television will broadcast the opening of the ceremony through 65 countries to 300 million viewers. I think that vindicates the work that this Northern Territory government is doing for the promotion of the Northern Territory through sport.

TIO Involvement with Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, the TIO Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 1988 refers to 'an abnormal write-off of \$1.48m in respect of a venture capital investment in a local manufacturing company ...'. Obviously, that is Hungerford Refrigeration. I have a couple of questions arising out of that. How is it that such a write-off is necessary given the oft-repeated claim that the TIO investment had been secured to the extent of some \$500 000? In other words, that the TIO had a first claim over payments arising out of the Hungerford Refrigeration collapse.

Secondly, I understand that amounts owing to local creditors by the same manufacturing company totalled about \$460 000 and, on 17 May, the then Treasurer said in this House: 'TIO has assured me that it will look closely at those in hardship, particularly those who have consistently supported the company in the past'. What efforts has TIO made on behalf of the local creditors to reimburse them for the \$460 000 or thereabouts that they have lost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have information before me to enable me to answer the honourable member's questions at this time. It is unfortunate that perhaps he did not ask them on one of the earlier days in the sittings. I could certainly seek the information that he has requested and make it available to him, but I am sure he will ...

Mr Smith: Today? It is not hard for you to find out.

Mr PERRON: I will endeavour to seek the information during the course of the day.

Tanami Highway

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I understand this particular matter is of great interest to the member for Braitling who is often seen out in this area. What steps are being taken to upgrade the Tanami Highway?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure honourable members that quite significant steps are being taken and have been taken to ensure that the Tanami Highway remains accessible to the ever-growing traffic in that region.

Mr Smith: You did not even know where it was until my colleague spoke to you about it.

Mr FINCH: The Leader of the Opposition has drawn my attention to the matter raised by the member for Stuart who referred not to the Tanami Highway but the Tanami to Lajamanu road. The day before, he seriously suggested the bitumen sealing of the road between Tanami and Lajamanu. Maybe the honourable member is suffering from memory lapse again. I draw to his attention the fact that the road between Lajamanu and Tanami - perhaps he has not been out there for some time, and I doubt that he has - quite often has zero traffic during

the day. It may have 10 vehicles in any one day. The road is some 250 km and 100 km of that is a formed road of a reasonable standard between Supplejack and Tanami. The other 150 km is flat-bladed, as one would expect. I find it absolutely astounding that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition could seriously suggest to this House that this government ought to be appropriating what would probably be in the order of \$40m.

I draw the honourable member's attention to Hansard because, quite clearly, he is suffering another memory lapse. This government grades that road twice a year or whenever is required to keep it open for local traffic. It is very important traffic. In fact, his constituents are the principal users of that road.

The question asked by the member for Jingili, and a matter pursued by yourself with great interest, Mr Speaker, related to the Tanami Highway itself. The government has allocated approximately \$550 000 in this current financial year for resurfacing and upgrading of the principal problem sections of that road. That work will be completed before Christmas. Another \$1.5m has been identified for expenditure next year on a forward capital works program, subject to budgetary constraints. The goldmine has generated a considerable amount of heavy traffic in addition to the normal local traffic. In addition, we are continuing regular ongoing maintenance. We are upgrading the road regularly, and that is a major task given that that section of road is some 500 km long and that there are difficulties in some areas with gravel quality and the supply of water. However, the government is applying a significant amount of its limited resources to ensuring that the road remains open. A separate amount of \$700 000 has been allocated for the maintenance and installation of 5 new water bores which obviously will have some additional benefits out in that region.

Mr Speaker, this government is allocating priorities in its road system appropriately, unlike the member for Stuart with his harebrained \$40m schemes to service traffic of up to 10 vehicles per day.

Supreme Court Case Load

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Can he confirm a story that I have heard which is that the Supreme Court has no backlog of cases?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have some difficulty in understanding the question. However, I can inform the honourable member in simple terms that there always is a slight backlog because the Supreme Court does not sit continuously. I can also assure honourable members that the backlog in Territory Supreme Court matters extends over a few months only. That is far ahead of the situation in any of the states. In some areas of Australia, people have to wait up to 5 and sometimes 7 years to have charges which have been laid against them or litigation which has been commenced against them dealt with by courts of law. All members would agree that that is an entirely unsatisfactory situation.

I can assure honourable members that this government has always ensured that we have sufficient funding, judges and court space available so that any backlog that may occur in our legal system is manageable. We will continue to plan ahead to ensure that we have adequate space and staff in order that Territorians do not face the situation that other Australians face. If they

are involved in litigation or if charges are laid against them, the matters will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible so that judgment is made and punishment exacted or innocence proclaimed and those people are able to go about their normal business. We are proud of our record in that regard and will continue to ensure that that will remain the case.

'Towards the 90s Volume 2'

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer him to the document that was released recently called 'Towards the 90s Volume 2', a discussion document on the future direction of education. That document was open for public discussion until the end of September. In the process of announcing that, the honourable minister said that there would be a sixth information paper to accompany that document. I understand that paper has not yet been made available. As the month of September has passed, firstly, when will the paper be available and, secondly, is he prepared to enable the process of public discussion and consultation over this document to proceed for a further period to enable full consideration of all the matters covered, particularly given the delay in the issuing of some of those information brochures?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it amazes me that members of the opposition always seem to climb into me when I am trying to make information available to them so that they can talk about these issues.

Mr Ede: He is on your side!

Mr HARRIS: No, that is all right. He asked a question and I am quite happy to respond.

Mr Speaker, members would be aware that 'Towards the 90s Volume 2' was developed as a result of the original discussion document, 'Towards the 90s'. At the time of my statement, I believed that the issue of excellence would have been discussed by the Board of Studies. Unfortunately, that was not the case and, in fact, the Board of Studies will be considering the issue of excellence during November. That information will come to me, as the minister, and will still be part of the process of taking into account the community's discussion on this whole issue. In the meantime, so that the debate can continue, I am having a paper prepared on the issue of excellence which will be made available to honourable members and all school councils during the course of the next week. The paper will be widely distributed to allow for comment to be made.

As a result of the delay in presenting that information paper, it is not my intention to have the matter debated during the course of these sittings. I will ensure that it is debated during the course of the November sittings which are approximately 4 weeks away. That will give all members the opportunity to take part in this very important debate. It is obvious that comment on the issue of excellence could have been made without the papers. The papers were provided as part of the 'Towards the 90s' document to assist debate on the issues that were raised in that document. I am quite happy to extend the time for consultation to ensure that people have the opportunity to comment on the 'Towards the 90s' document if they have not already done so. A number of people did request additional time which I am quite happy to give them.

Mr Collins interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: I can tell the member for Sadadeen that I am very interested in members' views. Members have already commented on the original 'Towards the 90s' document and they will have the opportunity to comment on volume 2. I do not want to cut short that opportunity.

It is interesting to note at this stage that very little comment has come back from some school communities. I believe that most of them have been waiting for the discussion document to be issued. It is also interesting to note that COGSO, whose policy previously favoured external assessment, has changed its policy on that issue. It is interesting that that change was made at a time when there was still a week to go before the expiry of the time COGSO had allowed for receipt of submissions from school parent groups. The change in policy surprises me because I believe that many people in the community favour external assessment. The matter should have been discussed in detail and I believe that many parents would like to know why COGSO has changed its policy before reaching the end of its consultation period. I believe that parents who are concerned about excellence should make their views known to COGSO because we need to know what the community's views are. There is no doubt in my mind or in the government's mind that industry and the community are asking for a means of assessing what level students have attained during their schooling. The government believes that external assessment is an appropriate way of achieving what many people in the community are demanding.

I apologise to honourable members in relation to this matter. I am not trying to put off the debate. I want comments on the issues that have been raised in 'Towards the 90s Volume 2'. I inform the House that there will be a paper on excellence available during the coming week. That will be distributed and the debate on 'Towards the 90s Volume 2' will occur during the course of the November sittings.

Payments to Contractors

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware that Territory business people are waiting up to 120 days for payment for work done at Tipperary Station? Will he ensure that this practice is not carried over to contractors and subcontractors engaged in the State Square project? Will he undertake to ensure that contract terms for the project stipulate that payment will be made within a set period?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, without commenting on the affairs of a private company in the Northern Territory, I can assure the honourable member that the Territory government has a real interest in the commercial practices of companies with which it will have direct agreements. That is about all I can say at present. I hope that assurance satisfies him.

Drivers' Licences for Defence Personnel

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I have a considerable number of defence force personnel in my electorate. I understand a proposal was put to the Minister for Transport and Works recently about a special driver's licence scheme for those people. I ask him

whether any decision has been made on that scheme and, if so, what is the outcome?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the last meeting of state and Commonwealth ministers, there was universal agreement on a system of providing defence personnel with the ability to retain their pre-existing licences from the state within which they gained them, subject to a number of matters. The concern was that defence people often moved from location to location at very short notice and for very short periods of time. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles already has the power to grant dispensation to drivers who have a legitimate reason not to be obliged to replace their interstate licences with Territory licences.

That will be done on the basis of the Department of Defence advising the Motor Vehicle Registry of personnel and their families. When licences become due for renewal, they will be obliged to renew within the Northern Territory. We trust that many of those defence people will stay longer than a short period. The federal government has been concerned about morale in the defence forces. As a result of the recent Military Tattoo, an awareness is growing among the Australian public in relation to the role of the defence forces. While this may be a very small token gesture, the federal government needs to be looking at conditions of service that are affecting morale within the defence forces. This small gesture will help a little.

Department of Labour and Administrative Services - Corporate Plan

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Why has the Department of Labour and Administrative Services employed the consultants Network Australia basically to tell the department what its job is? Could he also tell the House the cost of this consultancy work?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is not unusual for a department, particularly a new department that has not previously drawn all of its functions into a cohesive mode, to establish a corporate plan. In fact, any department that did not establish a corporate plan would be regarded as somewhat remiss. The Department of Labour and Administrative Services was formed last year and it was not until November last year that the Office of Local Government was brought into the department. As a consequence, I sought and obtained funds through the budget process for a corporate plan to be put into place.

I will obtain information on the cost for the honourable member and let him know during the course of these sittings. I am very pleased with the work that Network Australia did. There was input from every person in the department to ensure that the corporate plan that we put in place would reflect both the directions of government and the needs of people of the Northern Territory. The corporate plan is a very good one. It will provide the means by which this department can provide the services that it is intended to provide in a better and more effective way. We do not often have people who can coordinate a corporate plan working within departments. It is a one-off job although it will need to be monitored throughout the life of the department and improved as time goes on. The directions have now been set and I believe they will be extremely effective in the delivery of services in the Northern Territory by the department.

Pioneer Walk-in Theatre

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

During last night's adjournment debate, the member for Stuart referred to the Pioneer Walk-in Theatre in Alice Springs. He indicated that the Minister for Lands and Housing was not acting in accordance with some instructions in regard to the demolition of that facade. Can the minister advise whether this is correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Labor Party's appalling conduct offers another example of its approach which is to seek publicity at any cost. The cost incurred by the member for Stuart, the member for MacDonnell, the Leader of the Opposition, Di Shanahan and, to some extent, the member for Flynn, has been the total misleading of the public. Members of the opposition are not interested in finding out the facts. They never are. They like to open their mouths ...

Mr Ede: You are not interested in debate. If you were, you would make a statement.

Mr MANZIE: They will not even listen to the answers to questions because they are worried that a little information may inhibit their role of totally misinforming the community. Mr Speaker, I shall not be daunted. I have been waiting for one of them to ask me a question on this matter during the entire sittings but they have not done so. One wonders whether they knew what the answer might be.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would again remind all honourable members that this part of the proceedings is being broadcast and continuing interjections are disruptive to the general public who are trying to listen to both the questions and the answers.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is obvious that members opposite feel that, if they make a lot of noise, the community will fail to hear the facts.

There is in fact no application to demolish the Pioneer Walk-in Theatre. That has not stopped members opposite telling the public that there is and that I should make a decision on it. It is a bit like the Leader of the Opposition telling me that he would like to demolish the member for MacDonnell's house in Alice Springs and asking me for permission to do that. No matter how attractive such a proposition might be to me or to the Leader of the Opposition, I could not make such a decision without the consent of the owner who certainly would have a great deal to say about it. He might even prove that he could count to 4 as a result. Mr Speaker, I digress.

The owners have said very clearly that they do not want to demolish the Pioneer Walk-in Theatre. I will describe some of the background to the current situation. First of all, we had a situation where the owner of the property wished to sell or dispose of the property and 2 separate people wished to purchase it. One person believed he had reached an understanding with the owner to purchase the property without any building on it. The other believed he had reached an understanding with the owner to purchase the property with the building in situ. Both persons believed that they had reached this arrangement with the owner before the other and, as a result of

disagreement, caveats were issued on behalf of both parties. One said: 'You agreed to sell this to me and you cannot sell it to anyone else. You must sell it to me and you must clear the block before you do so'. The other one said: 'You made an agreement to sell it to me and you agreed to leave the building on it'.

It is not the role of a minister of the Crown to become involved in a private commercial wrangle even though the opposition would lead the community to believe that the government has such a role. That may be appropriate in the socialist concept of things because, as we all know, socialists believe that the government should interfere in all business and private enterprises and in the daily lives of ordinary people. On this side of the House, we do not believe that concept. That is fine. It is a philosophical difference that we have, but the community should be aware that members opposite believe government should interfere with private enterprise and the ability of private persons to carry on their daily lives.

Obviously, 1 party involved in this disagreement did very well through engaging the assistance of the opposition and that was the party which wished to purchase the block with the building on it. The member for Flynn was sucked in and became involved in backing 1 particular party in this commercial undertaking. Meanwhile, the opposition continued with scare tactics: the building will be demolished and what will the minister do about it? Clearly, the minister had no role. As a result of the whole situation, the State Bank of South Australia took possession of the land and is now the owner. The State Bank of South Australia was the mortgagee and it is now the mortgagee in possession of the property. I do not know how much the contributions made by the opposition and possibly the member for Flynn led to a situation where the owner of the property had the property removed by the bank which, as I said, is now mortgagee in possession. We will never know the extent to which the involvement of members opposite contributed to that situation that a private company has found itself in. However, one can imagine.

The present owner, the bank, has written a letter which states that it would oppose any demolition of the improvements - that is, the building on the site. Obviously, that is something that will be an ongoing issue because I believe that the building is to be auctioned and the new owners will have to work out what they will do with it.

It is extremely important that we are aware of 1 factor. I have spoken to the National Trust regarding the heritage value of the property and I have read a report that was prepared by an architect, a Mr Dermoudy. The building itself has not been listed by the National Trust. An application was made in 1984 and the National Trust decided that the building had insufficient heritage value to be listed. Another application was made in 1986. Again, after a great deal of discussion and investigation, it was decided that the building did not have sufficient value that could be established for it to be listed.

The National Trust did ask that some investigation to be carried out into the background of the building. As a result, Mr Dermoudy produced a report. That report says a number of nice things about the warm feelings people have about the building. Again, there is no recommendation to list the property as a building of heritage value. There is quite a strong recommendation that the projection box of the theatre be retained because it is a unique example in the Northern Territory of an outdoor projection box. The report points out that it was actually built in 1985. However, it is an example of something that is unique.

The opposition has led the community to believe that the building is listed with the National Trust. It is not. I find the opposition's behaviour in relation to this matter to be disappointing. The report by Mr Dermoudy points out that, although some people have quite warm feelings about the building, it has been altered and rebuilt in such a way that it can no longer be listed as a structure which has heritage value.

Mr Bell: That is nonsense, Daryl.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the honourable members says it is nonsense. He knows that it is not listed. I find it appalling that the member for MacDonnell is prepared deliberately to misinform the community about an important matter. It is important because matters of heritage value ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Even the Attorney-General would be well aware that to say that my motive for making particular statements is to deliberately misinform the Northern Territory community is a reflection which is beyond the bounds of standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. The minister should not reflect on the motives of any honourable member.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I apologise for reflecting on the motives of the honourable member. I will just lay out the facts. The honourable member did misinform the community. I do not know what his motives might have been and I will not reflect on them. He misinformed the community by creating an atmosphere which led people to believe that the Pioneer Walk-in Theatre was listed on the National Trust Register as a building that had heritage value. That is patently untrue. This is a very serious matter because buildings which have heritage value should be protected and should be respected in the community. However, if the inference is that we should protect every building that people like the look of or value because their brother or uncle or mother might have slept in or sat in it at some stage, the whole concept of protecting our heritage falls down. I certainly would not like to see that happen and I am sure that other Territorians would not like to see that.

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: The member for MacDonnell cannot help himself. When he has the wood put on him, he squirms around in an effort to avoid the facts. If he wants to put his hand in the air and make public statements, he has to wear the consequences. The Walk-in Theatre is the subject of a purely commercial disagreement and the concept that it has been listed is false.

Mr Speaker, I urge honourable members to obtain a copy of Mr Dermoudy's report to see exactly what the Walk-in Theatre is, to appreciate its history, and to be assured that the building has been extensively photographed. Measurements have been taken and plans have been made but, at this time, the building is under no threat and the matter is at a stage where neither I nor any other member of the government has a right to become involved. I would certainly appreciate a little more honesty from members opposite regarding matters that occur in our community.

Capricorn Productions - Contract with Tourist Commission

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

I remind the minister of his statement last week that the film production company Capricorn Productions had failed to complete its \$800 000 contract with the Tourist Commission. Is it a fact that contract funds were used by Capricorn Productions to purchase a mobile production unit worth \$120 000 to \$200 000? Is it also a fact that that unit was only used once or twice before being sold, with the company retaining the proceeds? What action did the minister take at that time and what action has he taken since to recover those public funds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware that a unit was purchased by the film production company that went bankrupt. I am not aware of how the unit was disposed of or what action was taken to recover the moneys. I will certainly find out and advise the Leader of the Opposition.

Beautification of Darwin Central Business District

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TOURISM

Over the last couple of months, the minister has been involved in discussions with the Darwin City Council, the Darwin Regional Tourist Promotion Association and others in respect to the beautification of the central business district of Darwin. Can he outline what stage those proposals have reached and when further action is likely to occur?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a number of projects have been discussed during the past few months in terms of creating an atmosphere that will appeal to tourists in the Northern Territory generally and Darwin in particular. I understand that the Tourist Commission and the Darwin Regional Tourist Promotion Association have been working very closely together over the past 6 weeks or so and have come up with a concept which they have advised me about, which would create the right sort of atmosphere to enable Darwin to become a tourist precinct. For many years, the tourist industry has regarded Darwin as purely a dormitory, a place where visitors can put their heads down for the night before moving on to spend time in Kakadu or Katherine or departing for South-east Asia. As a result, Darwin has been seen as a place where tourists would only spend a night or two.

Obviously, there have been developments over the past few years, such as the casino, that have encouraged people to stay a little longer. There are a number of local tourist attractions such as the fish feeding, the museum etc. However, I do not think that the city itself has developed to the extent that it should have. It is quite interesting to see that private enterprise has played its rightful role. I was approached some months ago by a group of business people who were interested in putting together a project which I think they titled 'The image of Darwin' or, in my terms, 'The Greening of Darwin'. I believe that there is a great opportunity apart from the development of buildings and attractions. The whole area could be made to reflect a city of unique character in northern Australia and become a really tropical city.

There is no reason why we should not plant 10 000 coconut palms along the foreshore of Darwin to give it a truly tropical atmosphere. There is no reason why we should not look at redesigning the Mall and have outdoor tables and facilities for people to watch the world go by and fix the problems of the nation. We could create a downtown shopping precinct that would take advantage of duty free facilities etc. Those discussions have continued with officers from the Darwin City Council, the Tourist Commission and the Regional Tourist Promotion Association. These have now reached the stage whereby we feel we can put something positive to the Darwin City Circle Traders and all involved can work towards making Darwin a unique tourist destination in its own right and create a very positive retail atmosphere for the city business district. This would encourage further employment and, of course, put a little wealth back into the community, particularly the business community of Darwin.

Medical Practitioner for Groote Eylandt

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

I would remind the honourable minister that last month he issued a press release stating that he would negotiate with the Groote Eylandt Mining Company about the placement of a general practitioner on the island. What progress has his department made in respect of that?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am disappointed to have to inform the House that those negotiations bore no fruit whatsoever. I express extreme disappointment that the mining company adopted that attitude. However, my department is now negotiating directly with several general practitioners and, hopefully, we will be able to entice one to take up a residency there shortly.

Apprenticeship Scheme

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Does the government intend to continue funding the joint Housing Commission and Master Builders Association apprenticeship scheme which has been operating so successfully in the Alice Springs area in recent years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very happy to inform the honourable member that Cabinet has approved the extension of the scheme for another 4 years. As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, the joint scheme has been operating in Alice Springs since 1983 and it has been running very successfully. The initial program allowed for 10 apprentices to be employed to construct up to 5 dwellings each year from the Housing Commission's construction program. Over the years, the total number of apprentices who can be employed under the scheme has risen. There are now 12 apprentices in various years of their training employed through it. As apprentices leave the scheme, either by choice or on completion of their apprenticeships, they are replaced by new first-year apprentices. Additional funding has been committed to allow for the new intake of apprentices. A total of \$260 000 will be spent over the next 5 financial years to allow that scheme to continue.

The scheme is jointly operated by the Housing Commission and the Master Builders Association. One of its main features is the requirement that

apprentices be hired out to contractors or subcontractors working in the Alice Springs construction industry. I suppose you could call it a 'dial an apprentice' scheme but it works very well. The demand from both contractors and subcontractors was so great in the first 4 years of the scheme that the Housing Commission's commitment regarding use of the apprentices related to only 2 or 3 houses a year in that early period.

Unfortunately, we are all aware of the downturn in building activity in the past few years which has brought higher rates, negative gearing being removed etc. I think the federal Labor government is now realising that this has caused tremendous problems in our entire community. However, that activity has decreased but the scheme is designed to be very flexible. It can continue successfully through differing economic circumstances by moving into the commission area.

To date, 11 houses have been completed and we have a twelfth nearly completed. We are still working on a thirteenth which has just started. Since the scheme began, 10 apprentices have completed their entire apprenticeship. The scheme is very good in that the apprentices gain experience right across the whole spectrum of the building industry and, when they have finished their indentures, they are widely skilled in all aspects of their trades. The scheme also gives them the ability to experience work in various private enterprise companies. It provides them with vast experience.

It provides employment for Alice Springs school-leavers in the local building industry. It is a very economical method of training apprentices in an industry which has its ups and downs and in which contractors predominate. It is training Territory tradesmen in the Territory for the Territory. The scheme certainly has been very successful since its inception and, as a government, we are very proud to be able to continue our commitment to it and, through it, to training Territorians for the Territory.

Berry Springs Wildlife Park

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

When will the Berry Springs Wildlife Park be open permanently to the public and what form of management option will be put in place? Will the Conservation Commission assume all the management authority for that area or will it call on the expertise of the members of the general public so that a comprehensive board of community members can be established to oversee the management of the new zoo?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it will be opened permanently next year around March or April. As a government, we have not entirely worked out exactly how the management of the premises will be done. I envisage that there will be some sort of board with some public and community input. When the government finalises where we are going on that, I will provide that information to this House.

I will take this opportunity to express again my support for the Berry Springs zoo concept and to remind honourable members of the absolutely magnificent job being done by Conservation Commission officers and contractors on the development of what will be one of the greatest assets in the Top End. It will be an asset not only for tourism, but for all members of our community. As the honourable member for Koolpinyah would be fully aware, it is something that we will all be proud of. When the final options regarding

management are settled on by this government, I will be very pleased to inform all members of this House.

Buffalo Industry Development Scheme

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Some months ago, he announced a \$1.9m buffalo industry development scheme. How many applications have been made under that scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. He is correct in stating that \$1.9m was provided by this government for a buffalo industry development scheme to establish and provide direct and immediate assistance to primary producers of domesticated buffalo, to stimulate the long-term retention and build up of buffalo breeder numbers, to improve buffalo control and domestication, and to improve buffalo herd productivity. The scheme provides for incentive development grants, to a maximum of \$100 000 per property or producer, to be made available to selective applicants to assist in the implementation of agreed buffalo development plans. The assistance will be provided initially in the form of a loan, with the ability to be written off on the satisfactory progress of implementation of the respective plans.

Applicants were required to register expressions of interest, in the first instance, by 30 June. Some 70 registrations were received. The processing of these expressions of interest then called for applicants to submit development programs by 30 September. I am advised that 45 such applications have been completed at this stage. Assistance was provided, where necessary, for consultants in the preparation of programs.

Assessment of the applications and programs is now well advanced, with technical assessments being undertaken by the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and financial assessments by the Department of Industries and Development. It is expected that the first group of applications will be approved within the next week or so in order that programs can commence. Applications will continue to be processed as quickly as possible with approvals being given on a progressive basis over the next month.

The scheme seeks to provide financial assistance to buffalo domestication producers to increase the retention of buffalo breeders and to assist with property improvements. I believe that the buffalo industry has a very bright future and improved management, disease-free herds and breeding programs which will improve blood lines and the quality of stock, will enhance opportunities for the industry and provide access to additional markets. On the subject of additional markets, it is interesting to note that the New Zealand market has just been opened up to Northern Territory buffalo. Whilst the New Zealand Department of Agriculture is slightly more advanced in its BTEC program than we are, nonetheless it is quite satisfied with our progress and is confident of our ability to provide disease-free stock. This is a clear indication of the benefits that are deriving to industry from BTEC and the benefits that will result from this buffalo development scheme.

I am keen to see the \$1.9m allocated to industry for this program working to the benefit of the industry and the Northern Territory. Progressive release will ensure that this occurs at the earliest opportunity and will allow anyone who is successful in gaining a loan to further develop the buffalo industry.

Community Facilities in Karama

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer the minister to his refusal last week to put out to tender the construction of the Karama Child-care Centre. Can he confirm that his statements, in addition to referring to the Karama Child-care Centre, also refer to a proposed development of a community centre and a youth drop-in facility on adjacent blocks in Karama? To adumbrate for the Minister for Health and Community Services, he will recall his refusal to put out to tender the proposal for Joondanna Investments to construct the Karama Child-care Centre. Does the construction of the child-care centre include, in addition, a youth drop-in centre and a community centre?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the construction of the Karama Child-care Centre has nothing to do with any other project.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

17 May 1988

62. Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Did the Territory Insurance Office pay outstanding tax bills incurred by Hungerford Refrigeration or Rupert Hungerford; if so -
 - (a) were the payments for company tax;
 - (b) group tax; or
 - (c) an individual's income tax.
2. Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration secured; if so -
 - (a) in what ways is it secured; and
 - (b) what assets is it secured against.
3. Who first identified Hungerford Refrigeration as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory.
4. Who made the first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer operations to the Trade Development Zone.
5. Why did the directors of Hungerford refuse to provide directors' guarantees to meet any debts incurred by the company.
6. What were the full terms agreed for the transfer of Hungerford Refrigeration to the Trade Development Zone.
7. What departmental evaluations were made of the Hungerford Refrigeration company; its prospects, its projects and its products.
8. What departmental evaluations were made of the reports prepared for the TIO and the TDZ on the prospects of Hungerford Refrigeration.

9. What is the full extent of public funding (including TIO involvement) in Hungerford Refrigeration.
10. Was a directive issued by the Hungerford Refrigeration Board for the company to pursue local orders rather than export orders; if so, why was this done.

16 August 1988

64. Tenth Anniversary of Self-Government

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister provide an itemised account of the expenditure on the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of self-government.

4 October 1988

66. Sentencing under Criminal Code

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In court cases relating to slayings as heard by the Alice Springs Court since the introduction of the Criminal Code 1 January 1983 -

1. How many people have been charged with a slaying offence.
2. How many people have been convicted of -
 - (a) murder;
 - (b) manslaughter;
 - (c) committing a dangerous act; and
 - (d) other.
3. What is the average head sentence imposed by the judge on the above convicted persons.
4. What is the average actual sentence served by the above convicted persons.

67. Treatment of Ear Infections in Schools

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What are the number and percentages of school-age children, by rural school in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine areas, that have:
 - (a) glue ear;

- (b) perforated ear drums; and
 - (c) educationally significant hearing impairment.
2. How many of the schools mentioned in question 1 above have Health Workers involved in full time campaigns at the school to treat the conditions.

68. Leased Premises

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How much space being leased by the NT government as at 1 October 1988 -
- (a) was occupied; and
 - (b) was unoccupied.
2. What are the locations/addresses of the above leased areas.
3. In each case, what is the length of the lease.
4. What is the monthly cost of leasing those areas not occupied.
5. Are there cleaning contracts for the unoccupied leased areas; if so, what is the monthly cost of the cleaning contracts.

22 November 1988

69. BTB Campaign

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. Under orders issued pursuant to the BTB Campaign in the regions: Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Barkly, Katherine, Victoria River, Arnhem Land and Top end; how many (a) cattle and (b) buffalo have been -
- (i) destocked;
 - (ii) shot on property; and
 - (iii) trucked for slaughter.
2. What are the current herd numbers on a best estimate basis for each of the abovementioned regions for (a) cattle and (b) buffalo.

23 February 1988

20. **Staffing of Giles House**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many staff are employed at Giles House.
2. In which categories are these staff employed.
3. How many people have held the position of Superintendent at Giles House during -
 - (a) 1984;
 - (b) 1985;
 - (c) 1986; and
 - (d) 1987.
4. Of the other staff employed at Giles House, how many changes have there been in each category of staff in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987.

ANSWER

1. As at 11 August 1988 there were 17 staff employed at Giles House.
2. Categories of staff employed were:
 - 1 x A8 Superintendent
 - 3 x A6 Senior Groupworkers
 - 10 x A5 Groupworkers
 - 1 x A3 Receptionist
 - 1 x Cook
 - 1 x Domestic
3. Number of occupants in the position of Superintendent were:
 - (a) 1984 - 2
 - (b) 1985 - 4
 - (c) 1986 - 2
 - (d) 1987 - 1
4. Staffing changes against positions other than Superintendent at Giles House:

Category	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
3 x Sen Groupworkers	4	4	21	10
10 x Groupworkers	7	10	24	20
1 x Receptionist	2	1	1	2
1 x Cook	1	1	1	2
1 x Domestic	0	2	1	2

23. Advertising - Channel Eight, Darwin

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How much did government departments and authorities spend on advertising on Channel 8, Darwin in 1987.
2. What was the breakdown of that amount by department and authority.

ANSWER

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT
Department of Education	2 372
Road Safety Council of the NT	16 282
Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries	615
Department of Health and Community Services	18 941
Department of Lands and Housing	1 730
Department of Transport and Works	11 712
Northern Territory Racing and Gaming Commission	64 357
Power and Water Authority	2 370
Department of the Chief Minister	2 238
TOTAL	\$120 617

The above figures have been extracted from accounting records for the year 1987.

Departments and authorities not listed above had nil expenditure in relation to the question asked.

17 May 1988

42. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

29 applications have been made by Northern Territory government departments and authorities under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act 1982.

The purpose of each request was as follows -

1. To obtain copies of Commonwealth Department of Education documents relating to the decision not to grant AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY to Northern Territory students.
- 2-3. To obtain details of Commonwealth tendering procedures and the application of those procedures to the awarding of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands shipping services contract (2 requests: 1 to Department of Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories and 1 to Department of Administrative Services).
4. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding his decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 26 March 1982 on the Kaytej, Walpiri and Warlmanpa Land Claim.
5. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 30 September 1981 on the Warlmanpa, Walpiri, Mudbura and Warumungu Land Claim.
6. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs re decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 31 March 1982 on the Yutpundji-Djindiwirritj (Roper Bar) Land Claim.
7. To Department of Aboriginal Affairs pursuant to S.54 of the act, for a review of decision to make deletions from documents, produced in response to 6 October 1983 application in respect of the Warlmanpa Land Claim. Further documents were produced by the department on 24 May, 12 June and 18 June 1984.
8. To Minister for Primary Industry regarding communications between the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Commonwealth; the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union and the Commonwealth; and the Meat Inspectors' Association and the Commonwealth (i.e. the 'Mudginberri Dispute').
9. To Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations regarding communications as detailed in previous item ('Mudginberri Dispute').
10. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant land comprising part of the Tennant Creek Water Control District, recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 26 March 1982 on the Kaytej Land Claim.

11. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant land comprising part of the Tennant Creek Water Control District, recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 30 September 1981 on the Warlmanpa Land Claim.
12. Application to the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations pursuant to S.54 of the act, for review of decision to refuse access to documents said to be 'not relevant to the terms of the request' of 21 August 1985 ('Mudginberri Dispute').
13. Application to Department of Primary Industry, pursuant to S.54 of the act, for review of decision to refuse access to documents said to be 'not relevant to the terms of the request' of 21 August 1985 ('Mudginberri Dispute').
14. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Sir William Kearney, in his report of 4 March 1985 on the Mount Allan Land Claim.
15. Further application for letter referred to (but not supplied) in documents produced in response to original application of 21 January 1986 in relation to the Kaytej Land Claim.
16. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 2 July 1981 on the Alligator Rivers, Stage II Land Claim.
17. Further request (by telex) to Department of Aboriginal Affairs re minister's decision on Alligator Rivers, Stage II Land Claim.
18. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant Areas 1 and 2 of the Finnis River Land Claim as recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 22 May 1981.
19. To Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding documents relating to 'Kakadu National Park, or any part of it, its environment and cultural and natural heritage'. (1987 World Heritage Listing).
20. To Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Environment regarding 'Kakadu National Park ...' (1987 World Heritage Listing).
21. To Minister for the Environment and the Arts regarding research undertaken/being undertaken in relation to Kakadu National Park and the proposed World Heritage Listing of Kakadu, Stage II. This request covered documents created from 8 July to 26 October 1987 (i.e. since last request).
22. To Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service re research undertaken/being undertaken in relation to Kakadu National Park and the proposed World Heritage Listing of Kakadu, Stage II. This request covers documents created from 8 July to 26 October 1987 (i.e. since last request).

23. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant land recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Maurice, in his report of 17 July 1987 on the Jila (Chilla Well) Walpiri Land Claim.
24. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding information in the Department of Arts and the Environment on any arrangements concerning management, etc of Katherine Gorge National Park or any part thereof. Relates to anticipated ministerial decision re Jawoyn (Katherine Area) Land Claim.
25. To Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. Purpose of request same as previous item.
26. To Minister for Arts and the Environment. Purpose of request same as previous 2 items.
27. To Chairman, Aboriginal Development Commission regarding information relating to Chilla Well Pastoral Lease No 764 and the Jila (Chilla Well) Walpiri Land Claim. Relates to proposed review of the decision of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in respect of the Jila Well Land Claim.
28. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding advice given by any person on the preparation of an answer given by the Hon Ian Viner in the House of Representatives on 17 November 1976. Relates to consideration of stock routes by the federal government during debates on the principal Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Bill in 1976.
29. To Minister for Transport requesting access to the working papers of the Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services to the NT (Hill Inquiry).

43. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to TREASURER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

44. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

45. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

46. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

47. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

48. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

49. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

56. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

16 August 1988

65. Darwin Private Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many private ward bed nights have been leased back to Royal Darwin Hospital during the last 6 months.
2. What have been the monthly occupancy rates for both the public wards and private wards during the last 6 months.

3. How much rent will Health and Life Care be paying the NT government for the land on which the new private hospital is being built.
4. How much money has the NT government contributed towards the establishment of the new private hospital.
5. If Health and Life Care sell their private hospital, will there be a breach of contract. If so, what conditions of the contract would have been contravened.
6. To what extent has the initial projected cost of the new private hospital been exceeded and supplemented by NT government expenditure.
7. What level of federal subsidy has been received during the last 6 months for the private wards.
8. What is the expected level of federal subsidy to be provided over a 12-month period for the new private hospital.
9. Will the private hospital be providing a rehabilitation service; if so -
 - (a) at what cost will it be provided to the NT government;
 - (b) how will it be made available to clients, who do not have private hospital cover; and
 - (c) how does the government intend to apply the Work Health Act provisions.
10. What arrangements have been made with doctors for -
 - (a) the provision of specialist services at the private hospital; and
 - (b) remuneration of specialist doctors for their services.
11. What cost sharing arrangements have been entered into enabling economies of scale to occur between the Royal Darwin Hospital and the private hospital for -
 - (a) ambulance services;
 - (b) pharmaceutical products;
 - (c) x-ray films and equipment; and
 - (d) laundry and catering.
12. What arrangements have been made to contract out pathology, radiology, catering and any other services to the private sector.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

ANSWER

1. 17 bed days.
2. There are no public wards in the Darwin Private Hospital and it is presumed this question relates to the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Occupied bed rates for the last six (6) months for both hospitals are as follows:

<u>Month</u> <u>1988</u>	<u>RDH*</u> <u>Occupied</u> <u>Bed Days</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Occupancy</u> <u>Rates</u>	<u>DPH**</u> (assuming 72 beds equipped)	<u>Occupancy</u> <u>Rates</u>
August	8858 (601)	94%	NOT AVAILABLE	
July	8593 (557)	86%	1042	47%
June	7750 (523)	86%	897	42%
May	8453 (550)	91%	983	44%
April	7550 (480)	84%	924	43%
March	8298 (651)	89%	1013	45%

* Figures include both private and public patients, figures bracketed are the number of private patients.

** Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd figures are based on midnight bed-state only and do not include day patients.

3. The lease is between the Northern Territory and the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd. The value of the lease was \$600 000 and is convertible to freehold when all requirements of the lease have been finalised.
4. No money has been contributed by the NT government.
5. The Crown Term Lease and Development Agreement are between the Northern Territory and the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd.

There is nothing in the agreement preventing a change in the corporate structure of the lessee company or sale of the property. However, any sale involving a change of lessee will require consent by the minister under the Crown Lands Act for transfer of ownership.

6. The NT government has not subsidised the project which was completed under the contract price.
7. Direct Medicare subsidies to private hospitals terminated on 1 October 1986 and no federal subsidy was paid to Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd.
8. As per question 7, no subsidy applies.

9. The Darwin Private Hospital has rehabilitation service facilities in the new building as was required by the Development Agreement. However, there has been no decision about if and when the facilities may be commissioned.

In relation to the Work Health Act provisions, if a patient has an approved claim for workers compensation and rehabilitation treatment is necessary, then the insurer will be responsible for the cost of same.

10. (a) Applications for visiting Medical Officers rights are scrutinised thoroughly and appointed with specified clinical privileges. These arrangements have been approved by the Chief Medical Officer and are common to private hospitals elsewhere and necessary for accreditation under the Australian Council of Hospital Standards.

In line with part-time employment conditions in the Northern Territory Public Service, the Department of Health and Community Services is considering part-time employment for some staff medical officers who wish to treat patients in the Darwin Private Hospital, providing there is no conflict with their obligations to the Royal Darwin Hospital.

- (b) Remuneration for specialist services will be by direct patient billing as currently applies to private patients in the Royal Darwin Hospital, but is a matter between the patients and the specialists concerned.
11. (a) St John Ambulance will continue to provide all ambulance services for patients of both hospitals.
- (b) The Royal Darwin Hospital supplied the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd with most of its pharmaceutical supplies at cost plus 10% until 6 October 1988. This arrangement has now been terminated. However, arrangements have been made to cope with any emergency situation until Darwin Private Hospital establishes its own pharmaceutical service.

It is anticipated that a private pharmacy will lease part of the facilities to establish its business. However, certain specialist services, eg total parenteral nutrition, could be uneconomical for them and may be requested from Royal Darwin Hospital. If this occurs these will be charged at the commercial rate.

- (c) Radiology services for the interim Darwin Private Hospital were provided by Royal Darwin Hospital. Charges were levied by hospital specialists exercising their Rights to Private Practice. A limited service is being provided to the new facility by Royal Darwin Hospital pending a long term decision by Darwin Private Hospital about future arrangements.

- (d) Royal Darwin Hospital is supplying a laundry service to the Darwin Private Hospital for both general use and for operating theatre use. The charge is based on weight.

Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd has arranged its own catering services and is not utilising Royal Darwin Hospital catering facilities in the interim facility.

12. It is unclear whether this question relates to the Darwin Private Hospital or the Royal Darwin Hospital as arrangements for pharmaceuticals, radiology, laundry and catering are covered in the answers to question 11.

Ministerial Expenses

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In the light of events in Queensland, the Territory public has the right to ask him to give his personal and unequivocal assurance that there have been and are no rorts operating in relation to his Cabinet's ministerial expenses. Does the Chief Minister give that assurance and, secondly, will he undertake to establish procedures for full public disclosure of ministerial expenses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly am not aware of any rorts of the system being used in the Northern Territory in relation to ministerial expenses. The system is well defined in the Northern Territory and there are guidelines available to those people who are able to claim expenses, such as ministers, departmental heads and the like. I see no reason why the Leader of the Opposition would infer in any way from events in Queensland that this government is not acting with total propriety. I do not see any reason why we should provide information for the Leader of the Opposition to go on fishing expeditions, which is what he wants to do. Every time that a minister might use his ability to entertain people in the Northern Territory, obviously the Leader of the Opposition would like to know who, why, where and when. I think that a request for such information would be totally unreasonable and, in fact, I do not believe that it would be provided by any government in this country.

Library at Karama

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

There has been some comment in relation to libraries, the importance of community access to them and the provision of government funds for the stocking of those libraries. In light of that, can he indicate what progress has been made and what plans there are to establish and stock a library at Karama?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. I understand that he is circulating a newsletter within his electorate stating the need for a public library in Karama in the not-too-distant future. I understand that he is very disappointed because he has been trying for a long time to have a complex developed in the Karama area in which a library could be situated. The Northern Territory government is committed to providing book stocks, furniture and equipment to establish a library in the Karama area.

I am sure that all members of the Legislative Assembly and, in fact, many people throughout the community are aware of public concern in relation to the book vote. Indeed, this morning, I tabled a petition in relation to that very matter. Some of the comments which have been made are a little disappointing. Library funding was increased in the 1988-89 budget from \$4.894m in 1987-88 to \$5.623m for this financial year. That represents a 14.8% increase. The book vote was maintained at last year's level and priority was given to purchasing monographs which are hard-cover volumes which minimise problems in long-term collection and storage. Librarians were involved in that decision-making process. However, I acknowledge the public concern and I will endeavour to do something about it.

Often, the opening of new library facilities puts pressure on funds which are used to provide magazines and the other items referred to in the petition. Those items are very popular in the community and it is natural for an outcry to occur when funding for them is reduced. I am sure that the member for Karama would not accept that the library proposed for his area should be sacrificed in order to enable libraries in Darwin, Casuarina and Nightcliff to provide their customers with magazines. I think that he would be disgusted by such a proposal. Similarly, I am sure that the existing libraries would not appreciate the member for Karama sticking up a poster in an empty shop saying that books could not be provided in that area because the money was being spent to provide magazines for the Darwin, Casuarina or Nightcliff public libraries.

There is great interest in libraries throughout the Northern Territory. The member for Barkly has written to me in relation to library services in his area. We have opened new libraries at Palmerston and Jabiru. We have done a great deal. I am not saying that we should not open new libraries because of the need to maintain book stocks in existing libraries. We have to provide library services to meet the needs of people throughout the Northern Territory and our commitment to that is shown by the fact that, at self-government, we had only 4 libraries and since then we have opened 23 public libraries. We have increased public library book stocks significantly, to include over 245 000 items. The country borrower service has been extended and service points have been opened at Darwin, Gunn Point Prison, Darwin Hospital and on board the oil rig Jabiru Venture. We have made a strong commitment to providing library services and we will do everything in our power to ensure that we are able to maintain a reasonable book vote.

The government is committed to expanding the library services. Let us not forget that. I have mentioned the areas that we have catered for over the years since self-government and I am happy to indicate to the member for Karama that the government is committed to providing book stocks, furniture and so on for a library at Karama. I indicate that the government will be endeavouring to reinstate the book vote to an acceptable level during the coming year. I want to make that clear. We have not just been bloody-minded about it. We have to provide services to people throughout the Northern Territory and it is very difficult ensuring that all people are catered for. However, during the course of the coming budget process, I will endeavour to reinstate the book vote to an acceptable level.

Ministerial Expenses

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Will he table in this Assembly the guidelines that are in place that determine the travel and expense arrangements entered into by ministers and senior public servants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am prepared to advise the Assembly of the arrangements under which ministers and senior public servants are allowed to use their expense allowances. I point out to the honourable member who, in his earlier question, seemed to draw some inference from events happening in Queensland into a Northern Territory context, that I would ask him to be very cautious about implying that practices may exist in the Northern Territory such as those that are coming to light before the Fitzgerald Inquiry. They range pretty broadly over there. It would be unfortunate if the Leader of the

Opposition sank so low as to imply, in relation to all those people who hold positions in the Northern Territory similar to those held by people in Queensland who have found themselves in trouble as a result of the Fitzgerald Inquiry, that perhaps they have something to feel guilty about. It would be most unfortunate and unkind of him to imply that in any way in relation to the very dedicated people who are working for the benefit of the Territory rather than, as he seems to be doing, working to tear us all down at every opportunity.

Consultation on Amendments to Mining Act

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware of statements made on ABC radio this morning by the member for Nhulunbuy about lack of consultation in respect of amendments to the Mining Act? Can he confirm that the honourable member has been left in the dark?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. Indeed, it was somewhat of a shock to me this morning to hear some of the statements made by the member for Nhulunbuy, the opposition spokesman on mining matters. If the honourable member is in the dark about this matter, it must be because he has taken an unfortunate knock on the head and suffered a bout of amnesia.

On ABC radio this morning, he said that he could not comment on the Mining Act amendments because he had no knowledge of them and implied some sort of fault on the government's part in failing to consult the opposition on this matter. I find it odd that the honourable member has forgotten completely the special briefing on the amendments that he was given on 3 October by senior officers of the Department of Mines and Energy - the Director of Mines, the Director of Special Projects and a member of my staff. At that time, he was offered the opportunity of further briefings and he responded that he merely required copies of the minister's notes. He failed also to mention that he was given a copy of the second-reading speech via the member for MacDonnell, and that he was again offered further briefings. I understand that the member for MacDonnell may not have actually delivered that particular document but it was delivered to him last evening at about 6 pm by a member of my staff and he undertook to forward it to the member for Nhulunbuy who was not in Darwin at the time.

Mr Bell: That is the last time that I will talk to a member of your staff and give an undertaking to pass anything on.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, that is an example of the cooperation that we receive from the opposition. There will be no more speaking to my staff - for which they will be grateful, I am sure - by the honourable member for MacDonnell. However, an attempt was made to pass on the second-reading speech to the member for Nhulunbuy via the member for MacDonnell.

Mr Speaker, I guess we could improve on that situation. We could give the honourable member an annexe at my office. We could make him cups of coffee and hold his hand 24 hours a day. I could fly over to Nhulunbuy a couple of times a week and bring him up to date on the latest gossip. Other than that, I do not see how we could have been more cooperative with the member ...

Mr Smith: Perhaps he could fly to Moscow to meet you.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, he did not even arrive in Darwin until late yesterday, and it is a fair way from Moscow. But I got here yesterday without too much trouble. In short, he has had ample and adequate opportunity and all the consultation that he wanted, and his comments on radio this morning were really unjust.

Some of his statements were incredible. I will give an example. The interviewer: 'Normally, when there are so many changes being made, would there have been some effort to liaise with you or at least let you know what is going on?' This question was directed to a member who was briefed on 3 October by the Director of Mines within the Department of Mines and Energy. The member for Nhulunbuy replied: 'For the smooth passage of any legislation, I think it is worth while for the appropriate person in the opposition to be notified and, indeed, to be briefed on whatever legislation is going to be introduced. It certainly makes for a smoother passage of legislation'. That came from the member who had had a briefing by the department. Officers in the department went to a great deal of trouble and offered him every opportunity for further briefings. He went on to comment about the industry and said that the industry had not been consulted.

In a speech that will be given by the President of the Chamber of Mines tonight, he will discuss the amendments and the consultative process. For the benefit of the member for Nhulunbuy, let me mention some of the matters that will be covered in that speech. Indeed, I hope to see the honourable member at the Chamber of Mines dinner this evening. The president will say that the amendments to the Mining Act follow the closest possible consultation between the NT Chamber of Mines and senior officials of the NT Department of Mines and Energy, a situation which indicates the very satisfactory working relationship which has been developed between the chamber and the Department of Mines and Energy. That is what will be said in tonight's speech. Indeed, I have been conducting one-to-one consultations with Cliff Emerson on this matter. The carefully considered amendments have been canvassed throughout wide cross-sections of the community, not only within the mining industry.

The member for Nhulunbuy did himself no credit at all when he said on radio this morning: 'I would have thought that there would have been the simple introduction of a new act rather than introducing a whole raft of amendments which will just make it that much sloppier'. The Chamber of Mines has strongly endorsed the amendments and the honourable member's comments downgrade the legislative process and the consultative process. I hope that the member will go on radio tomorrow to correct some of the statements which he made today.

Flood Mitigation Works and Recreation Lake at Alice Springs

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Has the contract for the removal of sand from the bed of the Todd River been completed? If so, what effect is that expected to have in terms of flood mitigation? It is understood that the investigations into the foundations for a flood mitigation lake at the Telegraph Station were delayed for some time. What stage has this project now reached and when is it anticipated that it will be completed and a decision made? Recent radio comments stated that the recreation lake investigations have been completed. Can the minister give his assurance that no work will be undertaken on the recreation lake at Emily Creek that may be detrimental to the flood mitigation dam at the Telegraph Station?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will do better than simply give answers to those questions. I will provide the member for Flynn with a full briefing from the department. I think it would be very worth while for him to take the opportunity to receive such a briefing. Indeed, a considerable amount of work has been carried out. I have some updates on sand extraction that I can make available to him, but I take this opportunity to offer him a briefing on the complete flood mitigation strategy that is being carried out at the moment. I am sure that the answers to his questions will be provided. However, I will take the questions on notice, with the exception of the question on sand extraction. I will provide the answers during the course of these sittings. In relation to such an important issue, he should avail himself of a briefing from the department.

I can advise the honourable member that about 85% of the Todd River sand extraction program has been completed and the remaining work is due to be completed very shortly. All sand channel improvement work upstream of the causeway has been completed, most of the dead timber upstream has been removed and all vegetation has been removed from the islands downstream of the causeway. Work still to be done - and it may well have been done in the course of the past week - involves the removal of bamboo clumps and a number of uprooted stumps upstream and removal of sand islands downstream.

All this work has been done in close liaison with the Aboriginal custodians. Sometimes that has meant work has not progressed as quickly as envisaged but I must commend the custodians for their willingness to assist in the flood mitigation exercise and their valuable assistance. Indeed, I spoke to those people. The member for Braitling accompanied me at the time and it was really a worthwhile meeting with those people. Certain trees were duly fenced off. A new access track was opened on the casino side of the river and it passed close to a large tree which the custodians considered to be significant. The tree was duly fenced off and all parties were happy with the outcome.

This is a sensitive issue and we are progressing slowly on it in full consultation with the people involved. I hope that a satisfactory resolution to the flood mitigation problems for Alice Springs will be forthcoming early next year.

ABS Statistics on Territory Population

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The minister was reported in Monday's NT News as saying that the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures pointing to a Territory population decline were incorrect. Could he explain why he believes that this is so and what does he believe is happening with the Northern Territory population figures?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in so far as the population figures affect the employment figures in the Northern Territory, I will accept the question otherwise I would pass it on to the Chief Minister. For some time, many comments have been made with regard to the population decline. Yesterday, the NT News had a headline on page 2: 'Huge Drop in the NT Population'. It referred to a downturn of 900 people between June 1987 and June 1988. Quite clearly, that

was the case shown according to the ABS figures but, as I have pointed out a number of times over the last few months, those figures are contradictory. In fact, right underneath that headline yesterday was another headline: 'Record Numbers Face Exams'. It indicated that a record number of Territory students were sitting for Year 12 examinations this month and that the minister had said that 1155 full-time and part-time students were taking the South Australian publicly examined and school assessed examinations. The number was an increase of 251 on last year's figures, which would not indicate a decline.

In January 1988, the labour force was 67 200. In June 1988, it was 70 700 and, in October 1988, it was 73 000. That is an increase of 5800 from January to October this year.

From December 1987, private telephone connections, over and above disconnections in the period December 1987 to June 1988, were up by 535, which hardly indicated a decline in the population. Private electricity connections over disconnections were up by 397. General connections were up only by 3, but private connections were up by 397. Bank deposits increased by \$6m. Car registrations were up by nearly 100 from September 1987 to September 1988, 348 to 440, hardly indicating a decline in population over that same period.

Mr Ede: How many houses?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I will talk about the housing area. Certainly, in that last 12 months, almost 300 houses in Darwin were vacated by the air force. Those people have not left the Territory. Some have, but they were replaced by people from south who moved into Katherine. The population of Katherine is up significantly. We cannot lose that number of people from the Darwin population without showing some sort of an anomaly, and that is what has been shown, an anomaly and nothing more.

Darwin International Grammar School

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, I have provided the minister with a copy of a press release by Mr Koh and Mr Clarke in relation to the Darwin International Grammar School. He may wish to comment on the accuracy of that press release in his answer to my question. Did he undertake a rescue operation on behalf of the Darwin International Grammar School, and was he in charge of negotiations with a Japanese consortium for the rescue of the school? Is it not a fact that, on 8 November, when negotiations that he initiated had reached a critical stage, he chose to go overseas on a trip? In doing that, was he not simply walking away from those parents who had made commitments to the school and leaving in the lurch the creditors, who now stand to lose quite substantial funds as a result of the crash, and so has failed to protect their interests?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in order for fair answers to be given to the questions that have been raised, and at the risk of it sounding as if I am ducking those questions, I ask that they be referred to the Minister for Education. If the honourable member wants to hear the full story and the answers to his questions, I ask that he refer them to the Minister for Education.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The questions are redirected to the Minister for Education.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will have a great deal of pleasure in answering these questions because, quite frankly, the honourable member is way off track. There has been a considerable amount of comment of late about this particular exercise. We need to make it very clear to the opposition and to the member for Barkly exactly what the situation has been in relation to this issue. I am sure the public is very much aware of the situation. Mr Speaker, let me put it very clearly. DIGS was to be a private school and private companies are involved. No government money has been involved to this date. The assistance that we have offered is in line with normal government policy on funding provided to non-government schools, and there would be no call on government assistance until the school had opened. That is very clear.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is not interested in hearing what the facts are. He interjects continually. I will get to the point that he raised about the involvement of the Minister for Industries and Development. I might say that the minister is to be commended, not condemned, for his efforts in trying to salvage this project. If the honourable member will wait and listen we will come to that particular matter.

The subject of the land has been raised. It is Crown land under a development lease ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: He sold the farm.

Mr HARRIS: There is a performance clause in that development lease which makes it a requirement of the owners to construct school buildings to the tune of something like \$7m by the end of January 1989 and, if they are not able to do that, the lease will revert to vacant Crown land.

The company ran into difficulties in attempting to raise finance, and that is no secret. In fact, I made a statement in August about that because I was concerned about the financing of this school. Obviously, the opposition is not aware that these concerns came to the government's attention at an early stage and that the government took appropriate action. I will read from a press release dated 5 August 1988:

The education minister, Tom Harris, says that, despite strong community support for plans to establish an international grammar school in Darwin, efforts to find commercial backing for the venture seem to have encountered difficulties. The minister says that, although supporters of the school are searching for an alternative through which the project could still be saved, prospective parents and students should now consider alternative arrangements.

Again, I was making it very clear that problems were being experienced with obtaining finance to get that worthwhile project up and running.

Mr Harris said he is deeply disappointed to have received information on further difficulties with a worthy venture which could offer choice in education and opportunity for business and the community in Darwin and throughout the Northern Territory.

Members of the opposition continually knock this issue. We are trying to provide opportunities for students in the Northern Territory. We do not want

them running interstate. We should be able to provide the necessary standard of education in the Northern Territory and we need to cater for the kids from the bush electorates, electorates like those of the members for Barkly, Stuart and MacDonnell. Those areas need to be catered for and we should have facilities that will meet that need.

The press release continued:

Mr Harris said he had first expressed concern about the project 1 month ago after hearing of its failure at that time to attract bank finance.

This press statement was released in August. One month before that I was very aware of the time needed to get the school up and running, the time needed to get high school facilities in place, not primary school facilities, to enable parents to have their children educated correctly. That was no big secret. We knew, the parents knew and the community knew that there were problems. Obviously, members of the opposition are finding this out only now. The press release continued:

Mr Harris said he was reluctant to do anything which could undermine the future of the school but he believed that the time had come and parents and students should be informed about the school's prospects. He said a senior officer of the Education Department had been fully briefed on the project. He would be readily available to parents who had children enrolled in the grammar school and who sought assistance in making alternative arrangements.

That officer is Dennis Hawes and he is still available. I urge parents who do have a concern to ensure that they contact him.

Following that press release, meetings were held with parents - and some of the members of this Assembly attended those - to try to save this project. This has not happened suddenly and the opposition knows that. We were concerned and we informed the parents that there was a problem. At that stage, none of the creditors had any chance whatsoever. They were looking right down the barrel, and that is a fact. It has not happened suddenly; it has been going on since August.

The owners attempted to raise finance but there was no sign of any realistic financial support forthcoming. Only after all of these efforts had been made by the current owners and by other people in the community who wanted to get this project up and running, only after all of those avenues had been explored, did the Minister for Industries and Development become involved as a facilitator, a person who was trying to bring together the vendors and potential investors in an effort to put that private project together. That is when the honourable minister tried to arrange the meetings between these people. He was trying to save this worthy project and that was his only part in this whole exercise.

The opposition is trying to create the impression that there is something underhand has occurred. We are interested in getting that school up and running and we always have been. The honourable minister is to be commended for his efforts. I emphasise again that that was the only part that he played. At that point, the project was in the hands of the private vendors, private investors and private creditors. Could I say that those creditors, who in August were looking right down the big black hole with no chance of getting any money whatsoever, would have had some chance of getting some of

their money back if the minister had been successful in bringing these people together. There was a chance. As far as the creditors are concerned, can I indicate very clearly that it is not my role to provide information in relation to their financial dealings. That is a matter for them to declare. If honourable members want that sort of information, they should go to the current owners or to the creditors themselves. Honourable members would be aware of many of the companies involved with this project. It is unfortunate that private negotiations have broken down. There is still a proper process that they can undertake to seek a return of the money that they have invested. Anyone in the private sector knows that. It is not up to the government to become involved. If members want the names, they should approach the owners or the creditors themselves.

Finally, there is a most important point. I am aware that Andrew Macle hose has written a letter to parents informing them that registration and application fees will be returned this week. All money collected by way of those fees was paid into a trust account and some of that money is now being returned.

Mr Speaker, on this side of the House we are committed to ensuring that the private sector plays an important role in the education system in the Northern Territory. In the states, about 25% of the education system is within the private sector. In the Territory, the figure is about 16%. I ask members of the opposition to address the real concerns of people in the bush and to try to think about Territorians generally. They should not simply knock projects. We want projects to get off the ground and the opposition should be assisting, instead of looking for scuttlebutt to use to attack the government. I do not mind the opposition trying to do that but it should give some thought to the community and to the efforts of people such as the Minister for Industries and Development. He has tried to get this project up and running and that is the only role he has played.

I reiterate that I am very disappointed that it has not been possible to get that Darwin International Grammar School up and running. It would not be fair if I were to say to parents that there was a chance of its operating next year. We all know that it will not and we have made that very clear. I am even more disappointed that the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education, continually carps about such matters instead of trying to do something for the education of children in the Northern Territory.

Crocodiles

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

This question relates to an answer which the minister gave to a question from the member for Ludmilla on 11 October this year. The minister concluded his answer with this statement: 'We have a program for the removal of problem crocodiles. It removes them as effectively as shooting does. The crocodiles are becoming a valuable resource. In the very near future, crocodile farming will probably rival the pastoral industry as a source of income'. How many problem crocodiles have been removed under the Conservation Commission's program this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during the last sittings of this House, I advised members of my enthusiasm about the growing importance of crocodiles in the Northern Territory's economy. I am sure that all honourable members are aware of the

excellent work of Conservation Commission staff in protecting the public from crocodiles which obviously pose a significant danger to people and livestock. I stress that because, regrettably, a particular member of the crossbenches was not above using the unfortunate death of a young man in a remote area to run a scare campaign about the dangers of crocodiles in an attempt to score political points. Unfortunately, that member seems to feel that that is an appropriate direction to take.

We have established permanent crocodile traps in the Darwin Harbour and these are supplemented by night-time ranger patrols each fortnight. A similar system operates in Nhulunbuy and at Borroloola, with some activity also occurring in the Ngukurr area. Since 1 January this year, the Conservation Commission has removed a total of 112 problem crocodiles, most of which have been relocated to crocodile farms. Of these, 11 have been caught at Nhulunbuy, 5 in the Borroloola area and 4 in the Ngukurr area on the Roper River. The other 92 have been removed from the Darwin Harbour between Charles Point and Tree Point. The commission also is supervising the removal of freshwater crocodiles from the Manton Dam area by the proprietors of the crocodile farms. That dam is to become a significant recreation area for Darwinians and, obviously, the removal of freshwater crocodiles is important in that context. In Darwin, Nhulunbuy and Borroloola, rangers will continue to monitor and remove any nuisance crocodiles, particularly over the forthcoming breeding season when there is considerable movement of animals from location to location.

Call at Question Time

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to SPEAKER

Mr Speaker, what was the reasoning behind your allocation of the call for questions without notice in the last sittings of the Legislative Assembly on 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13 October when I did not receive recognition from the Chair at all, despite constant and repeated attempts on my part? I was not apprised of any unparliamentary behaviour on my part that would have attracted this dismissal of my attempts at recognition.

ANSWER

I assure the member for Koolpinyah that it had absolutely nothing to do with unparliamentary behaviour. Whilst I am sometimes reluctant to make personal problems public, I think the honourable member leaves me no option. Some months back, I had an operation on my left eye for the removal of a cataract. During the last sittings, that eye was playing up and my vision to the left side was something of a problem. I apologise to any member on my left side who did not receive a call. However, if any honourable member wishes to examine the records of questions asked on a balance system by either side of the House, those records are readily available.

Community Government

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

How many communities in the Northern Territory have adopted community government and are any other communities considering such a proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter of community government is fairly dynamic at present. Whilst this question was asked at the last sittings, I am pleased that it has been asked again. Since the last sittings, we have had an increase in community governments and a number of other communities are currently talking to the Northern Territory government about community government. The number of community government councils currently in existence is 14 and there are 20 councils under the Local Government Act, 6 of which are municipal councils. The most recent council is at Daguragu which is based at Wave Hill, the township where land rights were born.

I have been concerned for some time that the very real and genuine effort of the Northern Territory government to establish local governments in Aboriginal communities was being damaged by the efforts of the bureaucracy of the land councils to thwart any move to lessen their own power. There is no intention nor any possibility that the Northern Territory government could take away any powers from land councils. Their powers are provided to them under federal legislation and no legislation of the Northern Territory has any ability to take away the provisions of the Land Rights Act.

If land councils have a problem with community government, it is a problem associated only with the fact that people at the community level are having a say in their own affairs. We all know that that is difficult under the present Land Rights Act. In fact, under that act, the powers are too often with the bureaucracy and the bureaucracy controls the community. Community government provides for communities to have a say, to make their own laws, to set their own boundaries and to handle their affairs as they see fit. That has not been the case with the land councils and the restrictions which their bureaucracies impose on communities. In the East Arnhem area and in other parts of the Northern Territory, we are seeing a push on the part of various communities to try to establish their own land councils. I applaud their efforts. They have recognised that there is a better way and that they can handle their affairs more effectively at a local level.

Recently, I have raised my concerns about land councils with the federal Ministers for Local Government and Aboriginal Affairs. I am concerned about the efforts of the land councils to oppose the very genuine movement towards community government in the Northern Territory. The land councils have denied that they oppose this but I have clear written evidence that that is not the case. People who are presently considering community government in their areas have told me that the land councils have informed them that they are keen to do away with the Territory's community government legislation and to replace it with their own. Every time that we have managed to get a community government in place during the last couple of years, a process which takes some years in terms of negotiating boundaries and the particular local parameters, the land councils have moved in in our wake. This has occurred at Borroloola, Belyuen and Ngukurr, where the land councils have attempted to change the directions that have been set by the communities and to insist that they look at establishing councils under federal legislation.

We know that the federal legislation provides only for Aboriginal people. It gives no power to Aboriginal councils to control Europeans living in their communities. Our legislation is far superior. Local government is a state and territory responsibility, recognised by the federal government, and the federal minister has reassured me that that is her view. Unfortunately, the land councils are attempting to cause problems and, in that context, I am very pleased that the Northern Territory's fourteenth community government council

has been created at Daguragu in my electorate. That means that every major community in the Katherine region is now under community government.

Clearly, community government will expand. Every community which has opted for it states that it is the best method that it has ever had for handling its affairs at community level. I am proud to say that the scheme is making great inroads in communities throughout the Northern Territory. We need to make greater inroads in the Centre, where the land councils have made it very difficult for us in the past. I believe that, given time, we will be able to establish community government in central Australia with the same effectiveness as we have done in the Katherine area and the Top End generally.

Darwin International Grammar School

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to the honourable minister's reply to the previous question on this subject in which he stated that Darwin International Grammar School was a purely private enterprise and not the concern of the government. For his benefit, I would like to quote from a press release issued by Mr Koh and Mr Clarke from DIGS and Education Holdings. It states: 'The government negotiated with the Japanese consortium. The proprietors of DIGS never met the buyers. All negotiations were conducted by the government and the owners of DIGS were not aware of the details of those negotiations'. My question is: how can the government walk away from any responsibility it may now have to the creditors of that failed enterprise given that, if that press release is correct, the scrip for all the shares in DIGS was delivered to the government? I ask the minister whether he had any agreement to disclaim any liability to the creditors of DIGS after having become the holder of the DIGS shares?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a nonsense. What are you on about, Brian?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Ede: You took it over.

Mr HARRIS: Took it over nothing!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both honourable members will address their remarks through the Chair.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the notion that we took it over is a load of nonsense. I said very clearly that the creditors were in trouble back in August. They were already committed then. The Minister for Industries and Development should be commended for trying to give them some chance of getting their money back. That is what he did. That is the only role he played. He tried to bring things together and ultimately, unfortunately, that did not happen.

I do not know what the member for Stuart is on about. We have tried very hard, and we will continue to try, to have a grammar school developed in the Northern Territory. Indeed, I hope that members opposite will help us to do that. It is important to be very clear that, in this particular instance, a private investor was considering taking over the shares of the current owners. That has not occurred and that is the end of the story.

'The Territory on the Move'

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the Chief Minister done anything about publishing an addendum to 'The Territory on the Move' so that people interested in the booklet's contents will have access to a list of contact persons, with their telephone numbers and addresses, and so that the booklet will have a practical use?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not initiated any action to publish an addendum to the booklet setting out the Territory's economic development strategy. Indeed, this is the first time that I have heard of such an idea.

Mr Collins: I talked about it during the debate on the economic development strategy.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, if the honourable member raised it in the last sittings, I apologise for the fact that I have not heard about it before. Perhaps the honourable member raised it during the adjournment debate or at some time when I may have been absent temporarily from the Chamber.

The development strategy is an excellent document which has been distributed very widely throughout the Territory. I am sure that people who are of a mind to seek further information about any of the directions outlined in that document would be able to obtain a copy of the Northern Territory Government Directory which lists all the departments in the Northern Territory and key people to be contacted. Of course, phone calls to ministers' offices would certainly result in people being directed to the appropriate area within the government where they can obtain information. Indeed, I am sure contact with members would also result in their being pointed in the right direction. I do not see any point in printing additional lists of names and phone numbers and circulating them to thousands of people who already have the document right across Australia, not only within the Northern Territory. I am sure that it will not deter any of those people who are keen to help us develop the Territory.

State Square Project

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

When did the government agree to pay a developer's fee to Tipperary Developments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the Acting Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to ask the first of the questions which were referred to by his leader last night. I wonder whether he wishes me to answer all 6 questions now or simply to answer this one.

Agreement on the development was reached after lengthy negotiation with Tipperary Developments. It was formalised in a signed agreement on 28 October 1988 and the public was informed of that through a media briefing on 31 October.

Domestic Cat Problem

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I preface my question by giving some background information. One of my constituents alleges that a problem exists in relation to the keeping of cats by a neighbour. This matter has come to the attention of several ministers. The Minister for Lands and Housing, the Chief Minister and the Minister for Health and Community Services are all familiar with it. Can the Department of Health and Community Services do anything to alleviate my constituent's problems in relation to the keeping of cats by a neighbour?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we certainly cannot afford to get this one by the tail. I am aware that the honourable member's constituent has complained about his neighbour's cats and their smell to members of the Legislative Assembly, including ministers, to officers of my department, the Ombudsman, the NT Planning Authority and the Darwin City Council. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that he is a very frustrated gentleman. The apparent lack of administrative action by this or any other arm of government has led to his complaint being the subject of articles in the NT News. It has also been mentioned on 3 radio shows.

In terms of my department's role, the first issue is whether it has powers to prevent loss of amenities due to infringements by a neighbour. The short answer is that it does not, provided that there is no contravention of public health regulations and no threat to public health. Secondly, is it reasonable that a large number of animals be kept on a small suburban block? The answer is that, unless there is demonstrable risk to public health, the matter should not concern the Department of Health and Community Services. It is more appropriate that control of domestic pet numbers be managed at a local government level. What is appropriate on a 5-acre block at Humpty Doo or a small suburban allotment should be a matter for the relevant local government authorities rather than the Legislative Assembly whose decision would impact on the entire Northern Territory.

In several states, local councils regulate the number of cats which can be kept on an urban block through appropriate by-laws. The department has

provided copies of these by-laws, together with a letter from myself, to the Darwin City Council. The council has the power to introduce by-laws along similar lines if it considers it appropriate. My department arranged for the Ombudsman to take a role in the matter as a conciliator. Since the owners of the cats do not appear to be breaching any legislation, there is no means by which my department or any other departmental or local government authority can retrieve the amenity which the complainant alleges he has lost due to the alleged unpleasant cat odours.

In fact, since the meeting was arranged between the Ombudsman, the complainant and the owner of the cats, the complainant in fact has taken civil action against the owner of the cats. The Ombudsman will take no further action until that action has been resolved. It is quite apparent that any legislation that I might initiate to try to control the frustrating problem that this complainant has would relate to the entire Northern Territory and would therefore be inappropriate. It is a matter for local government and I suggest that all local governments throughout the Northern Territory take this matter into their thoughts and try to do something about it because this person is extremely frustrated by the inaction.

State Square Project

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has a fixed price for the State Square project been arrived at and, if so, what is it? If not, at what stage of the development does the minister expect that the fixed price will be arrived at?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I note that this is a question that the Leader of the Opposition posed yesterday, but he found it too difficult to hang around to hear the answer. Quite simply, if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or the absent Leader of the Opposition had listened to the debate and had taken note of what has been presented to them over a long period about the fixed fee, they would realise quite simply that the fixed fee is arrived at when all of the subcontract packages have been tendered on, accepted and summarised - that is, added together, for the benefit of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. That would then form what would be a fixed price that would be non-variable by rise and fall and which would remain for the duration of the project unless, of course, the government saw fit to amend the extent of the work or other such matters that would form a legitimate variation at our demand. With that exception, the price would remain constant for the duration of the project.

Mr Ede: When do you expect that?

Mr FINCH: When the last of the subcontract packages have been determined and that process completed.

With regard to the Supreme Court building, 2 buildings are involved. The Supreme Court is moving immediately - as one could hear if one opened one's ears - to the adjacent building. There is fast tracking of design and subcontract package documentation, that is the plans, specifications and bills of quantities, and they are currently being put together for excavation and then the basement. Subsequent packages will be forthcoming over the next 2 months. When the final package is tendered on, we will have the fixed price.

Mr Ede: It could be a year or so.

Mr FINCH: I will repeat for the member for Stuart that, depending on the rapidity with which all the packages can be put together, one would expect that, within that 2- or 3-month period, the final fixed price will be determined. What is important is that the agreement has in place the mechanism for obtaining that fixed price. The project control group will determine the size and content of each of the subcontract packages, who will tender on them and who will have the power to vet those tenders. Allowance must be made for a normal tendering period of 2 or 3 weeks for each package and post-tender assessment of a short period of a week or so or perhaps longer if there are complications in assessment. Assessment relates to price as well as local content. What is in place is the mechanism for moving to the fixed price. There will not be any rise and fall formula as is the normal case with projects of a similar size.

Gurig National Park

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I remind him of work that has been progressing for some time in respect of the development of a tourist resort at a location called Coral Bay within Gurig National Park. What progress has been made on that proposed wilderness resort at Coral Bay?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the wilderness resort proposal at Coral Bay in the Gurig National Park is an extremely exciting project. Honourable members will recall that, in April this year, agreement was reached between the Cobourg Peninsula Sanctuary Board and Coral Bay Wilderness Pty Ltd to open the way for a \$7m development to proceed. The intention is to construct a wilderness lodge with 32 double rooms, with a high level of privacy and high-quality support facilities. The government has been advised by Coral Bay Wilderness Pty Ltd that all the conditions for the project to proceed have been met, including the locating of a suitable water supply which was causing some problems, and the project is to go ahead. Design work and some of the prefabrication for the materials will occur over this wet season and builders are expected to be on site in late March or early April next year. I believe the resort is scheduled to open in April 1990.

The Territory government strongly applauds the project as an important development for the Territory tourism industry in general and for the particular region. I think it is worth while mentioning that it is a good example of cooperation between the Northern Territory government and the traditional Aboriginal owners of the Cobourg area. As members are aware, many years ago, the Territory government negotiated an arrangement with the traditional owners of the Cobourg Peninsula which resulted in the setting up of a board which was controlled by the traditional owners. As a result, the Conservation Commission has been involved in running the park according to a plan of management. Things out there are working extremely well.

The Coral Bay Wilderness Resort is an example of the enlightened approach adopted by the members of the board and the community there. It is an example to other Territorians of the positive results that can occur when there is cooperation. It shows the willingness of the Territory government to proceed in cooperation with traditional Aboriginal people.

State Square Project

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In response to my last question, he did not give an answer in relation to the Parliament House. I am sure that he would like to answer it now. I ask him also why Tipperary Developments is still in control of the State Square project when it has ceased to be a private development and has become entirely a public project?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the timing in regard to Parliament House will be far more normal, if you like, as opposed to the fast-track approach with the Supreme Court building. The timing for construction is late next year, around September. The documentation will be completed at one time although there will also be subcontract packages. The project team will be able to put out to tender at the one time all of the subcontract packages for Parliament House. In the middle of next year or a little later, we should have the fixed price for Parliament House.

The justification for continuation of control by Tipperary Developments is its proven track record as a developer and its performance. It has a reputation for being able to get on with the job and produce results. More importantly, over a period of 14 months, it was involved in the planning of the precinct - the landscaping, location, and stages of the development of the project. It was involved from the beginning. Obviously, the company and its consultant team have an intimate knowledge of the project. That includes the interpretation of the client requirements for both the Supreme Court and for the Parliament House as it is now developing.

It would have caused disruption to an extremely tight program, among other things, to have paid Tipperary Developments off as was suggested by some members of the opposition, the crossbenchers and by the 5-firm consortium. It was suggested that we should pay the development fee, bid the company goodbye and use its idea. The government is not prone to behaviour of that sort. We did not act in that manner in respect of the John Holland slipway at Frances Bay nor in respect of the Hans Voss proposal at Kahlin Bay where the government has been asked to become involved in the ferry terminal and charter boat facility. This government is not about dumping those who have put in great effort and gone to great expense at high risk to come up with proposals leading to what is a very worthwhile project that this government has sought to put into place very quickly.

We have stuck with people who have been innovative, people who have put forward concepts and worked tirelessly over a period of 14 months. Of course we have stuck with them, and quite justifiably so. What amazes me is the lack of support that we probably ought to have from members on the crossbenches in particular who, one assumes, are free-enterprise oriented. It may be presumptuous of me to suggest that the member for Koolpinyah is free-enterprise oriented so I will exclude her from my comment. However, I would have thought that those members would have supported this government sticking with people who have come up with developments. Not only is the government justified in sticking with that project manager, the financial arrangements we have with the company are most appropriate and extremely fair to the Territory taxpayer. As I say, the developer ought to be totally supported, at least by members on the crossbenches.

Manton Dam

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I have had a long-term interest in the use of Manton Dam as a recreational facility. What progress has been made on upgrading this facility and when will it be opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. Indeed, he has been well known for his participation in aquatic sports in recent times. The Manton Dam project will offer a great opportunity for boating personnel to participate in the sports that they love so much, particularly during the wet season. In short, work to prepare Manton Dam as a public aquatic recreation facility is largely complete. All that really remains to happen is for sufficient wet season rain to fall to fill the dam. I guess this is the most nervous part of the decision that I have taken to open up Manton Dam. There is a 16-inch gate valve at the bottom of the wall and we were not able to drain the water out of the dam and therefore we put 2 12-inch siphon pipes over the top of the wall to drain the dam. That all looked pretty impressive. I went out there recently and it had drained it. I have been practising rain dances ever since in the hope that the dam will fill this year. A great deal of work has been put into clearing the dam and removing dead trees.

I understand that, at the moment, there are 20 crocodiles that have to be removed. They are believed to be freshwater crocodiles although there are conflicting reports about that. However, they are very large freshwater crocodiles. In fact, one of them is believed to be in excess of 3 m in length. I spoke in the Assembly previously in response to a question which I think the member for Koalpinyah asked about the dam. I said then that the people cutting down the trees with chain saws insisted on the presence of an armed croc spotter to watch them as they walked out into the water. That work is all but completed now. The road into the area has been completed. I understand the last pour of concrete has been completed for the boat ramp and it is all ready to go. It is a magnificent boat ramp and could quite easily accommodate 4 or 5 boats at a time, and the road also is particularly good.

The tree clearing has been completed, as I said, and the access road and car park are nearing completion. Tenders for the barbecue area closed earlier this month and this work is expected to be finished by early February. The allocation for this major exercise was identified in the 1988-89 budget as \$930 000. When completed, Manton Dam will offer residents of Darwin and its environs and, no doubt, a large number of visitors and tourists, a superb recreational water facility. It will fill an important community need for power boating and related activities such as water skiing, and a recreation environment free from marine stingers and crocodiles.

My latest advice is that Manton Dam should be open to the public some time in February next year, and I remind honourable members that the only factor that will stop that from happening is if the amount of water that is present in February is inadequate. All indications are that we will have an early and a large wet. I believe it will be a magnificent facility, and I look forward to seeing all honourable members out there. Perhaps we could have a barbecue and a water ski competition there. Members of the opposition and members on the crossbenches might like to challenge the government benches to some sort of water ski competition. I would encourage that as an ideal way of doing it. The first competitor should do 3 or 4 laps of the dam just in case there are

any crocodiles after the Conservation Commission has finished clearing them, but I have every confidence that commission officers have identified the 20 crocodiles. They have spent considerable time and effort identifying them and I would really like to ...

A member: We don't want to know their names.

Mr COULTER: In response to that interjection, they have identified them. They are well known to the Conservation Commission.

A member: Have they gone?

Mr COULTER: No, not yet, but they will be gone by February.

Corporate Plan for Department

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer to an answer that the minister gave to a question I put to him on 13 October when he told the House that the Department of Labour and Administrative Services had employed the consultants Network Australia to develop a corporate plan for the department. Has that corporate plan been completed and will he provide a copy of that corporate plan to members of the House who may wish to have one?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the corporate plan has been completed, and I am quite prepared to provide a copy for the honourable member.

Pornography Pedlars

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

My question is in 2 parts. First, is the Chief Minister aware of a quote from John Howard in the Bulletin of 22 November: 'I am amazed, and I believe hundreds of thousands of decent Labor voters will be amazed that the government has been so gutless on this issue and has capitulated to the pornography pedlars of Canberra'. That quote related to the decision on X- and R-rated videos. Secondly, has he received a letter from John Howard which read something like this: 'I am amazed and I believe hundreds and thousands, well maybe tens of hundreds, of decent CLP voters will be amazed that the government has been so gutless on this issue and has capitulated to the pornography pedlars of the Territory'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not strictly sure I got the gist of the honourable member's question. Matters relating to censorship belong primarily to the Attorney-General.

In regard to correspondence to myself, I do not recall receiving any such letter from the federal Leader of the Opposition along the lines that the honourable member indicated nor do I recall seeing in the Bulletin the article he mentioned. Sadly, because of time constraints, I do not have much time in which to peruse the Bulletin.

Kakadu National Park Fees

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TOURISM

I preface my question by saying that I was in Kakadu National Park a few weeks ago and I was appalled at the standard of management of the park and the lack of maintenance of some of the facilities there. Some of the walkways at Obiri Rock had been burnt to a cinder, obviously by a fire that had been very small and easily containable. It was still smouldering some hours or perhaps some days later. I was not particularly impressed with the standard of management there. Is the minister satisfied with the recent announcement from the federal minister responsible that the proposed entry fees will now be set at \$5 rather than the previously proposed \$10?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. It was an interesting press release that the honourable Minister for the Arts, Sport and the Environment, Senator Graham Richardson, issued last week and it was made more interesting because of its timing. Obviously, it was designed to gain maximum media attention. It was issued at 4.21 pm on Friday afternoon which I think every politician in Australia knows is a good time to issue something when you want to hide it.

It is quite apparent that the federal minister has ignored completely the comments and the requests that have come from myself, the Chief Minister, the tourist industry and the tour operators seeking some relief from this very high fee which, we are told, will come into effect from 1 January 1989. The imposition of fees was suggested originally by the ANPWS as a means of controlling visitor numbers. I believe that, in the days when fees were discussed originally and were implemented at Uluru National Park, \$1.50 was widely suggested as being an adequate fee. It is quite funny that the original charge proposed by Senator Richardson was \$10 per person, and this included the cost of a video presentation at the ranger's headquarters which cost a fee of \$3.

The Senator has announced now that the daily visitor fee will be \$5 for adults or a maximum of \$20 per family. We have a distinction in the Northern Territory. Uluru and Kakadu National Parks are now the most expensive parks in Australia, and I think that is disgraceful. These new fees will cover entry, recreational fishing, remote-area camping and ranger-guided tours. The video presentation will still attract a separate charge of \$3. This means that Senator Richardson has graciously responded to whoever wants to claim to have lobbied successfully - for example, our own Northern Territory Labor Senator Bob Collins or our Northern Territory member, Warren Snowdon - by reducing the fee by the great sum of \$2. Fantastic, Mr Deputy Speaker!

But what about the independent tour operators who provide their own guided tours? How much can they deduct from the \$5 entry fee to compensate them for not needing a park ranger to help them? Incidentally, in his press release, he states in the last paragraph: 'The minister stressed that the lower charges were an interim measure to soften the impact on the tourist industry. The effects of the new charges will be reviewed. If there is an increase in fees, he said, they will not apply before 1 July 1990'. Very condescending, Mr Deputy Speaker.

As has been stated previously in this House, we are not opposed to the user-pays principle and this would mean that guided tours, camping fires, film

presentation, the use of gas barbecues and hot water would be paid for by those using them at fair and reasonable prices. However, surely everybody realises that 99% of the people who visit the park do so on coach tour packages and are probably in the park for a period of 3 or 4 hours? Only a fraction of the 0.25 million people who visit Kakadu will need the services provided by the ANPWS. Territory families should be able to visit Kakadu or Uluru freely and at any time. It is their Territory. Why should they have to pay? The federal minister claims that the Commonwealth has spent considerable funds in providing high-class visitor facilities at Kakadu. In fact, one of the federal ministers made the statement a few weeks ago that the total amount of money that had been spent was about \$20m over the last 5 years.

On 15 November 1983, the then Leader of the Opposition in this House, now Senator Bob Collins, announced that the federal government was about to unveil tourist development plans for Kakadu, for facilities costing more than \$30m. He also foreshadowed the expenditure of another \$40m on park infrastructure. 3 days later, on 16 November, Labor's media machine in Canberra lifted the expected federal contribution to Kakadu's development to \$36m, and said it would be spent over 6 years.

On 18 November 1983, Prime Minister Bob Hawke at last made his grand announcement. The amount was not \$30m but \$70m, plus additional expenditure of \$36m over 6 years. On the same day, Senator Collins followed his leader and claimed that the initial investment by the federal government would be a magnificent \$20m which would create about 1500 new jobs, 200 more than the number promised by this big-noting leader in his press release. Of course, there was an election on at that time - an election for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. You could tell because, later on the same day - 18 November 1983 - the Labor media machine put out information which promised that Hawke's \$36 commitment was likely to be only the start. Using the old ploy of 'government sources', it was announced that up to \$270m of government and private funds would be committed to Kakadu over 5 years and that the total federal expenditure was expected to be around \$72m. Of course, where private enterprise was expected to find and spend the other \$198m was not explained.

On the following day, 19 November, the then Minister for the Environment, Barry Cohen, issued a press release in which he said that federal government expenditure would be \$70m spread over 6 years. He said also that private investment in the same period would be \$40m and spoke of 1400 additional jobs. The Prime Minister could not restrain himself. He had election promise fever. On the same day, he told the media that there would be a \$70m public works program for Kakadu and that private enterprise was to invest \$40m in the same 6-year period. Still on the same day, the media was later told that the federal government was anticipating \$117m in government and private expenditure over 6 years and that this included \$36m already approved by Cabinet.

The vote-buying spree by his federal colleagues was far too much for the then Leader of the Opposition. On the following day, 20 November 1983, he issued a press statement saying that a Territory Labor government would negotiate with its Labor colleagues in Canberra to set up a branch of the federal Department of Housing and Construction in Darwin to help spend the \$70m that the federal government had promised to spend at Kakadu over the 6-year period. The federal Minister for Housing and Construction, Chris Hurford, weighed in to back him up. Months later, on 24 May 1984, he confirmed that he was considering the establishment of a Darwin branch.

Now let me go back to the election promises. On 21 November 1983, the Prime Minister spoke again of the \$36m that he was to spend at Kakadu over the next 6 years. Not to be outdone, Barry Cohen issued a statement on the same day in which he referred again to a total government commitment of \$117m. The machine was still working. Two days later, references were made to Hawke and Cohen spending \$70m over 6 years at Kakadu and creating 1600 permanent jobs. A week later, the then Leader of the Opposition must have thought that was a bit too rich. He spoke to the media about the \$70m creating 1300 new jobs, dropping permanency and 300 jobs in the process.

Since that time, 5 years have elapsed. Precious little of the promised \$270m, \$117m, \$110m, \$72m, \$70m, \$40m, \$36m or even \$30m - if you take the lowest figure provided - has been spent at Kakadu. We acknowledge that some road sealing has been done. There are some new buildings for the rangers and some wooden steps around several sites. Apart from that and the provision of signs, little has been done. The crocodile hotel has been built but the federal government had precious little to do with that. Now, however, it is asking for huge fees at Kakadu and Yulara.

Mr TIPILOURA: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I think the honourable minister has answered the question. Frankly, I think he is carrying on too much.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr POOLE: It is asking for huge fees at Kakadu and Yulara. Does it need the money to honour its promises or is it trying to turn the parks into areas for use by rangers rather than the public?

BTEC Procedures

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH TO MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Accreditation of properties, with status ranging from highly infected to clean, is a feature of the BTEC program which comes within the minister's portfolio responsibilities. Bearing in mind the extreme undesirability of placing cattle from an infected property in proximity to cattle from a clean property which, I believe, would completely cancel out the clean status of those cattle, can the minister inform me whether it is correct that cattle from dirty properties destined for slaughtering at local abattoirs for the purpose of a carcass competition at the Darwin Show in July were housed at the Darwin showgrounds? Did all the other cattle at the show come from clean properties? Did the housing of the cattle from dirty properties change the clean status of all other cattle at the Darwin Show and, subsequently, the status of the properties to which they returned?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have no knowledge whatsoever of the matter raised by the honourable member. I am happy to have it investigated and to report back to the Assembly at an appropriate time.

Bus Stop in Coconut Grove Area

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT AND WORKS

In prefacing this question, I remind the minister of my successful representations to him in relation to the need for a pelican crossing on Bagot

Road in the vicinity of the Millner Supermarket. That crossing significantly assists students of Millner Primary School who reside in Coconut Grove, as well as the pensioners and other people who live on the Coconut Grove side of Bagot Road. I also remind him of representations that I have made on behalf of citizens in that area for a bus stop to be located closer to the pelican crossing, particularly so that aged pensioners returning home from Casuarina Shopping Square do not have to walk too far. Can the minister advise me of what progress has been made in relation to that bus stop?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I well recall the honourable member's representations. In fact, I thought they were most unusual at the time, given that the area is well within the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Hatton: Somebody has to look after them.

Mr FINCH: The member for Nightcliff is probably very correct in looking after the interests of residents of Coconut Grove. I commend him for his interest in the pensioners who live there. As honourable members would be aware, I have a commitment to the aged and those people who are theoretically enjoying their retirement.

Mr Bell: I suppose you will be there one day.

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I certainly intend to retire in the Territory. Given the support which this government provides, the Northern Territory would have to be the most desirable place in Australia for pensioners to reside. I can advise the member for MacDonnell that the statistics support that. The increases in the aged population of the Northern Territory far outstrip the rate of natural growth. That is because people are now coming here to retire because support for pensioners is so great.

To turn to the subject of the member's question, following representations by the member for Nightcliff, the Darwin Bus Service installed a temporary stop close to the pelican crossing on the eastern side of Bagot Road. The purpose was to make it as easy as possible for pensioners returning with their shopping from Casuarina Shopping Square to cross Bagot Road safely. Some minor difficulties were encountered in providing a suitable location that was far enough from the crossing itself and the bend on Bagot Road near the Nightcliff Road intersection. That provides a temporary solution until such time as the Jape people proceed with their development. A slipway enabling buses to move off Bagot Road safely will be installed together with a new bus stop, probably complete with seating, which will provide much safer access for buses and passengers. Those works, together with the sheltered bus stop on the opposite side of Bagot Road, will bear witness to the very effective representations made by the member for Nightcliff in the absence of any from the Leader of the Opposition. That representation is leading to most appropriate solutions.

Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I am sure that this question without notice will come as no surprise to the Chief Minister, who will recall my question on notice about his use and his government's use of the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act. I am sure that the Chief Minister will remember, as he reaches for his briefing

notes, that his written reply advised me that his government had used the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation on no fewer than 29 occasions.

By way of further preface, I would like to point out that the Chief Minister's look-alikes, the federal Leader of the Opposition, John Howard, and the NSW Premier, Nick Greiner, have both commented on that legislation during recent weeks. In the former case, the substance of the comment was that the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation ought to be extended. In the latter case, Mr Greiner advised that his government would be introducing freedom of information legislation. I ask the Chief Minister whether he is aware of his own use and his government's use of the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation? Is he aware of the views of his Commonwealth and New South Wales counterparts? Does he support them and does he support freedom of information legislation to the extent that he will introduce it in this fair Territory?

ANSWER

The member for MacDonnell is about to find out, as we have enunciated on a number of occasions, that the CLP is not part of the federal Liberal or National Party. The CLP is a party wholly constituted within the Northern Territory and has no masters outside the Northern Territory. I am certainly aware that the Northern Territory government has used the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation to obtain information on a number of occasions. Indeed, it was I who authorised the answers to the member's questions on notice. I am very much aware that we have taken those opportunities and indeed we will continue to do so when we see fit. However, that does not convince me that there is a need for such legislation in the Northern Territory. I do not propose to elaborate much further at this stage. I anticipated some debate on this very subject during the course of these sittings. Rather than bore honourable members today, we will save it up until then.

TB Cases West of Alice Springs

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Are officers of his department taking action to deal with the apparently high number of tuberculosis cases in the area west of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Once again, I had to organise its being asked through the backbench of the Country Liberal Party, the only effective opposition in the Northern Territory. Of course, the reason for that is that the shadow spokesman for health matters is not very diligent in carrying out his duties. That is why we have to use these tactics.

Analysis of data regarding tuberculosis in the Alice Springs and Barkly regions has shown a consistently higher incidence of reported tuberculosis over the past 8 years from the Hermannsburg, Papunya, Areyonga and Haasts Bluff area than for the Northern Territory generally and other parts of central Australia. The actual number of cases reported from that area since 1980 is 15. Treatment of clients and follow-up of contacts have been occurring as cases are identified. However, in view of the ongoing nature of the problem, additional measures are considered essential in order to decrease the incidence of tuberculosis in those communities. Mantoux testing, with

subsequent chest x-ray only where clinically indicated, will be implemented for children under 14 years. Portable x-ray equipment has been sent from Darwin and will be used for the Alice Springs survey.

State Square Project

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What portion of the \$1.75m payment to Mr Warren Anderson's Tipperary Developments covered documentation costs and, secondly, what was the exact financial formula applied in calculating the \$1.75m payment to Mr Warren Anderson's Tipperary Developments?

ANSWER

In arriving at the fee of \$1.75m, cognisance was taken of a great number of factors. The fee was not based only on the experiences of the Department of Transport and Works and local industry. Statistics and information from right around Australia were evaluated in order to arrive at an appropriate fee for the developmental work. One is not in a position to indicate all of the individual components for a very good and logical reason. The developmental fee does not encompass only the return to the developer for his concept, the high risk investment that he has made through the engagement of consultants and the putting together of all of the various drawings etc. In this case, it involves also a great deal more, and I refer to the working up of the program to the starting point of detailed documentation. That includes the conceptual floor plans, the interpretation and the sketching of client requirements through the various proposals. The range of work included the evaluation of the government's requirements for office space, currently and for the future, the interpretation of usage of both buildings in the precinct, and the production of detailed sketch plans, models and perspective drawings.

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr FINCH: Yes, some of the very raw sketch proposals, cost evaluations and area requirements that were part of the original office building, whilst only minimal, would have been part of the expense to which the developer was put. The study for the original office building was included.

Also involved was liaison with the NT government and its officers to finalise the design requirements and the production of developed sketch plans and detailed cost plans. It was necessary to obtain the approval of the Territory government through the Department of Transport and Works. There was the submission of the maximum guaranteed cost of the works, including provision for escalation and various other components such as consultants' fees. The company was responsible for the early commissioning of consultants, the preparation of the cash flows accordingly, and the production of the construction programming to meet the government's requirements.

In the early days, one option was that the 2 buildings would proceed together. For very logical reasons, such as meeting the government's requirements as well as other practical considerations, construction of the 2 buildings has been planned to occur almost 12 months apart. Thus, there is development of the various construction programs and the cash flows. It has to be ensured that various components of the works do not overlap. It is not desirable to place a demand on concretors on both projects at the one time. That would have the adverse effect of overheating the demand on certain sectors of the trade capacity in the Territory.

The company carried those costs throughout, including the travel costs of various consultants and other people associated with the development of a project. It absorbed all of the preliminary design costs. All of those matters were taken into consideration in the justification of the fee. The determination of what was a fair and reasonable fee was based on a great deal of research. It was clearly established that, at the very least and where no risk is involved, fees of 1.5% to 3% of the value of the works is the normal developmental figure. That applies throughout Australia in respect of government and private developments.

The question that then arises is whether that percentage is applied to the \$87m pure building cost, to the \$100m total development cost or to the original \$300m proposal. A large part of the effort related to the early stages of the concept. In terms of the real cost of reaching that starting point, I have spoken with a local developer. I would urge honourable members who wish to take this matter further to talk developers in Darwin or in Alice Springs and ask them what it actually costs to get to the starting point. On 1 project in Darwin, which has a civil construction content of some \$13m, the development cost of consultants, architects and engineers is in excess of \$1m. That is before the project is up and going. The justification is there. Information that has been gathered indicates once again that, in the private sector in Sydney and Melbourne where developments are hitting a peak, where there is no risk component, 4% to 6% is a more than reasonable fee. When there is risk - that is, where there is a risk affecting returns against the investment because the development relies on rentals and other factors - that fee shoots up to anywhere around 17% to 22%.

Certainly, in this case, the developer, Tipperary Developments faces a reduced level of risk but, nonetheless, there is some residual risk. Where the developer has done all of that developmental work of producing drawings after drawings and models after models ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: When are we going to see them?

Mr FINCH: ... a figure of \$1.75m which, in round terms, is probably 1.75% if you want to use the \$100m figure simplistically, is seen to be more than reasonable. By the time Tipperary Developments has paid out its consultants, the residue will be only a minimally reasonable figure for the developer's fee. As I mentioned earlier, it has been acknowledged by a number of members and certainly by the construction industry that Tipperary Developments is more than entitled to recompense for its efforts. There is more than enough justification for that fee. If honourable members want any further proof, I am more than happy to show them the various models, plans and perspectives. I am sure those alone would justify the \$1.75m.

Myilly Point

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to recent reports about Henry and Walker retaining rights over Myilly Point. Who holds the title to the land, is the government currently engaged on capital works on the land, and what is the status of those works in terms of the tenure over the land?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory holds title to that land. I am not aware of any major capital works being carried out on the land that is held by the Northern Territory. The member for Stuart may be referring to some development in the Cullen Bay area or possibly in relation to the University College. The member is quite correct in saying that Henry and Walker hold development rights. As I said, I have no knowledge of any work being carried out but, if the honourable member would like to provide some details, I am sure that I would be able to provide the information to him regarding those details.

Tipperary School Closure

Mr DONDAS to the MINISTER for EDUCATION

In the current edition of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation newsletter, there is an account of the circumstances which resulted in the recent temporary closure of Tipperary School. The account states that the former head teacher is a casualty of the closure. Is that account correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Whilst I would not use the exact term 'casualty', the teacher who was at Tipperary has been moved. I point out that that was done only after a correct and proper procedure had been carried out. Quite frankly, I was disgusted by the Teachers Federation newsletter, particularly by inferences made in it. It was an inaccurate report and it really displayed an uncaring attitude on the part of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive.

Yesterday, the Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive showed its total lack of concern for its own members when it had the chance to grab a few cheap headlines. I think members are getting to the stage where they have had a gutful of the comments that are being made by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive. In the report, the federation compares the action taken by the department with its action in cases like the ones which occurred recently at Imanpa and Belyuen. I will read out a section of this newsletter. The school referred to is Tipperary. I quote:

Once again, following departmental policy, quite correctly, the senior officer present immediately closed the school. The teacher concerned immediately packed up and left. A similar event occurred at Belyuen some weeks ago and the school remained closed until negotiations had been conducted and the head teacher reinstated. This was not the case at Tipperary. Within 24 hours, the school was open, with staff contacted overnight in Darwin. The reopening had been arranged by the minister and very senior departmental officers. Power and influence had their effect.

What a load of nonsense! I noted last night on the television that the secretary of the Teachers Federation, Mr Col Young, was saying that strings were attached to this particular issue. What about the situation where teachers requested to be removed from places such as Imanpa because they felt threatened? We took action there. Was I then seen to have a string attached to the teachers? It is the same when I do something for someone like Bakamana Yunupingu. We set up a program to help him. Have I strings attached to Bakamana Yunupingu? We provided a school at Hermannsburg. Do I have strings attached to Gus Williams? What a load of nonsense! It really is.

We have been through all this. In relation to Belyuen, for a long period the community refused to negotiate. The department was trying to have the school discuss the issues which were of concern. When discussions were permitted with the council members, a solution suitable to both parties was found. We allowed the community to discuss the issues with the department and an agreement was drawn up. We told the community that we wanted the teacher to return and it agreed to that in line with the conditions drawn up in the agreement. Thus, in respect of Belyuen, it was a situation where the community would not meet initially when the department had requested meetings. After those meetings were held, an agreement was reached and the teacher was returned.

At Tipperary, we were able to negotiate immediately because they wanted to get the school open as quickly as possible. Again, we told the community that the teacher had the full support of the department and myself. She wanted to return there and sections of the community refused to agree to that. We support our teachers but we cannot allow them to return to a situation where confrontation and other serious problems will result. It would be grossly incompetent of us to set up a situation which could explode.

Let us compare the situation at Imanpa. There the 2 teachers felt threatened, and we took them out. We negotiated with the community and replaced the teachers only when the community had agreed to accept its part in the partnership required for education. Again, we listened to the concerns of the community and we took the necessary action. The Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive does not understand the need for this kind of partnership. A lack of stability within a community will affect the children, the teachers and everyone concerned. If there is a problem, we have to act on it. The member for Stuart will remember the situation at Soapy Bore when 2 teachers were fighting with one another. That had nothing to do with their ability to teach but the community saw that that was disruptive and those teachers had to be removed.

Mr Ede: They didn't have any teachers for 2 months.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is trying to oppose the principles involved with teaching in remote communities and providing stability in such situations.

When the situation at Tipperary blew up, the member for Stuart wrote to me saying that the school should be kept open at all costs. Also, the secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation wrote to me saying that the school should be closed until the issue was resolved. It was resolved very quickly.

The executive of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation has shown a shameful lack of understanding of and commitment to education. Through an editorial in its newsletter, the federation has sought once again to raise the

issue and bring it out into the open. A couple of weeks ago, the teacher involved in the Tipperary incident visited my office and spoke to a member of my staff. She said that she was sick of the publicity and that she wanted to get on with her life. We should respect her right to do that. Yesterday, however, the executive of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, which is supposed to represent the best interests of teachers, arranged for its secretary, Col Young, to have a television interview about the Tipperary matter. Unfortunately, the interview about the teacher who is embroiled in all of this trouble was arranged conveniently for the time when the teacher was due to visit the union office. That is a terrible situation to have with the federation executive which is supposed to be looking after the interests of teachers and to be concerned about teachers. The teacher walked into the office where cameras and a journalist were waiting for her. I understand that she walked out and refused to be filmed or interviewed, and I cannot blame her for that. The department does not blame this particular teacher in any way whatsoever for what occurred at Tipperary, and I make that very clear. We are pleased with her record as a teacher and we made that point clear to the Tipperary community.

Mr Speaker, what a shameful way for the Northern Territory Teachers Federation to represent its members that it should allow a camera crew to film during sensitive talks with a union member. I understand that the federation has denied setting up the visit of the television camera crew but, if the federation did not set up this particular meeting, one must ask who did. I look right across very squarely at the master of the 30-second grab, the member for Stuart, who is very able at putting the fear of God into the community about a number of issues. He will make a statement, a 30-second grab which has nothing to do with the situation at hand, and it is reported in the media even though it is completely off the track. If the federation executive has not been involved in this exercise, has not tried to raise this issue, then I wonder who did.

Myilly Point

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer to my previous question to the minister. He has admitted that Henry and Walker retain development rights over Myilly Point. The capital works that have occurred in that area include the university and further developments to the university. We need to know for how long the development rights are to be retained by Henry and Walker, whether there is any possibility of them exercising their development rights and so impinging on the university or at what stage the university may have to move from that area. What is the situation with regard to tenure over that part of Myilly Point which is covered by the university and are there any proposals for the development of or handing back to the government of the balance of Myilly Point?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is rather better. I wish the honourable member had asked the question in that form in the first place. The government's intention has always been that the university would be at the old hospital site for a temporary period only. I recall that, when I was the Minister for Education, that was set as a 10-year period. At this stage, I do not believe there has been any change in that policy by the government. The long-term aim has always been that the university campus would be developed in the Palmerston area. As honourable members know, a site of some 200 ha has been set aside in

Palmerston on University Avenue. That is a further example of the foresight of this government in planning for the future. The development of the University College and now the Northern Territory University on the old hospital site is another example of an initiative which members will recall was opposed bitterly by members of the opposition at the time. It is an example of how this government fought very hard and long, for and on behalf of Territorians, to ensure that Territorians had the opportunity to obtain education that was equal to that offered in other parts of Australia.

At this stage, our policy has not changed. I believe that, with the establishment of the Northern Territory University and the amalgamation of the DIT with it, we will see quite rapid developments in relation to tertiary education in the Northern Territory which will provide opportunities for Territorians and encourage young Territorians to stay here to complete their education and contribute to the Territory. I remind the community in general of the great furore and opposition mounted by the Labor Party to what we were trying to do a couple of years ago and the great outcry it raised against this government working very hard to establish tertiary education facilities for young Territorians. We are very proud of what we have achieved in that regard. The quality of the people involved at the university is something that all Territorians can be proud of, and I certainly see very exciting things happening in that area in the future.

Visitor Attitudes to the Northern Territory

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TOURISM

Have any studies been done on the attitudes of visitors to the Northern Territory, and what is the status of the Northern Territory in the southern marketplace as a holiday destination?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the NT Tourist Commission carries out a number of studies during the course of its operating year. Its attitudinal survey is designed to determine whether people are satisfied with their trips to the Northern Territory. The survey of perceptions of the Northern Territory in the marketplace is carried out and updated regularly.

First, the commission surveys non-visitor attitudes in 5 capital cities, seeking to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. The information on satisfaction levels is obtained from questionnaires which are distributed throughout the tourist industry. People who have visited the Northern Territory are able to return their completed questionnaires when they go home. That information is used to assess visitor satisfaction levels. In a continual monitoring program, questionnaires are administered in group sessions which are aimed at providing feedback on the effectiveness of the commission's advertising program.

Overall, I am pleased to report that the findings are very positive and reassuring. They indicate that the Northern Territory has a strong destination appeal. Its unique features have been highlighted and the Northern Territory can rightly claim ownership to the title of the real outback or the real Australia. Advertising has certainly heightened awareness of the Territory as a destination. There are, however, some specific gaps and problems in our product range and presentation. Those have been identified. They will need to be addressed and, in some cases, I believe that some new investment opportunities will be created.

Visitor satisfaction is very high in a number of areas, including traveller assistance and information provided by our own Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureaus, quality of service and accommodation and tour operator staff. It is very pleasing to be able to say that because I do not think the same would have applied 5 or 6 years ago. The personal warmth and friendliness of Territorians is obviously an important factor. Everyone would appreciate that, if you go on holiday to a specific area and people are not friendly towards you, you might as well not have gone there. It is quite apparent from all surveys that the personal warmth and friendliness of Territorians is a highlight of holidays.

Safety and security are very important issues for international travellers. Members may recall that, a number of years ago, Hawaii was named in the media as a violent place which ought to be avoided as a holiday destination. The effects of that media attention were quite apparent. Visitation decreased markedly and it took some 3 years of strong marketing, together with an effort to police and change the social environment in Honolulu and throughout the Hawaiian Islands, before visitor numbers increased again. I would imagine that Australia gained some of Hawaii's customers in that period.

Poor satisfaction levels generally related to restaurants and nightlife, the variety and diversity of holiday experiences and the experience of history and culture, which a number of people in this House have spoken about with regard to the cultural and historical aspects of holidays in the Northern Territory. I assure honourable members that the Tourist Commission is currently addressing these deficiencies with the appropriate authorities and with the tourist industry.

With regard to people who actually have not visited here, there is a wide affection and desire to see the Northern Territory. This preference is clearly expressed in a comparison of the appeal of various national destinations. In all those surveys, Queensland is quite prominent. However, I am pleased to say that the Northern Territory is very strongly in second place. I guess it is pertinent to know that the Tourist Commission is - and has been doing so for the last few months - undertaking joint promotional activities with Queensland in the international marketplace to promote the northern Australian concept. I think that is a very positive direction for the marketing to be heading.

Northern Territory appeal is broader than the active adventurous holiday. Over the past few years, that adventure holiday has achieved a good spot in the marketplace but it is not the only thing. Apparently, among average potential visitors, the passive alternative environment of peace, tranquillity and open spaces holds a strong appeal. Prime consumer potential for Northern Territory holiday-makers is restricted to specific target markets identified in these studies. Whether we like it or not, consumer attention is focused primarily on 4 major destination areas: Darwin, Alice Springs, Kakadu and Ayers Rock. Opportunities exist to capitalise on the outback personality, both scenic and human, to involve the holiday-maker in the holiday experience, rather than leaving him to passive observation of the attractions.

With regard to the effectiveness of our own campaigns, the television campaign, which is the map ad that has been running over the last 12 months, has certainly established the Northern Territory's uniqueness and heightened awareness substantially. Unaided recall of the NT campaign was the strongest of any individual advertiser and second only to the cumulative recall of Queensland covered by Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and very

strong private resort advertising. Obviously, that is one advantage that Queensland has over the Northern Territory. With a much wealthier and more widely based tourist industry in terms of infrastructure, there is much more television activity by private enterprise.

The most strongly recalled elements for the Northern Territory were Ayers Rock, Kakadu and our wildlife, animals and birds. I think those sort of comments lay augur well for the opening of the Berry Springs Wildlife Park and tourist attractions such as that.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It is not open.

Mr POOLE: It will be opened fairly early in the new year.

It proves what we have been saying for years: the Northern Territory's unique attraction is based on its parks. Certainly, there is heightened awareness of the Aboriginal involvement in tourism. Looking at bookings that are coming through the system for the coming year, it is quite apparent that we can all look forward to a very successful tourist season. In fact, one operation in particular has told me that it has increased its bookings by 40% in respect of coach companies alone. This is an attraction that is fairly close to Darwin. Next year, there will be increased visitation to the Northern Territory and we will pick up some of the market areas that we lost during Expo.

Salaries Section at Alice Springs Hospital

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I received a deputation representing a number of nurses working at the Alice Springs Hospital complaining about their pay section. Typical complaints are: penalties, loadings and overtime paid 6 or more weeks late, incorrect rates paid, receiving someone else's pay, deductions being sent to the wrong places and loading penalties not paid. Obviously, something is wrong. Would the honourable minister undertake an investigation into the efficiency of the hospital's salaries section?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not spoken to the A4s who would be handling that situation but I am sure that I can make inquiries on behalf of the member for Flynn. I am sure that he could have made inquiries himself by ringing the regional director in Alice Springs. However, I will take on board his question and provide details to him.

BTEC

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

During the last sittings, the honourable yet thersitical Deputy Leader of the Opposition made certain claims about rorting in relation to BTEC. The minister called on him either to substantiate those allegations or to apologise to the public servants and members of the industry whom he had seemed to seriously malign.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I seek your guidance as to the use of the epithet 'cynical' in relation to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I think it is imputing improper motives to him. I seek your

direction but I trust that, after your deliberations, you will require the member for Karama to withdraw that particular reference.

Mr PALMER: Speaking to the point of order, Mr Speaker, I did not call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition 'cynical'. I called him 'thersitical', Mr Speaker, which means loud-mouthed or scurrilous. He can take it either way he likes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the member for Karama has lowered his own noose by explaining his comment. He is now asked to withdraw.

Mr PALMER: Mr Speaker, I withdraw unreservedly.

The minister called upon the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to substantiate his claims or to apologise to the members of the public service and the industry that he had seriously maligned. Can the minister advise the House what action has been taken following from the allegations made by the member for Stuart?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. No doubt honourable members will recall the disgraceful performance of and the unfounded allegations made by the member for Stuart during the last sittings. Unfortunately, the member for Stuart has neither substantiated his claims nor sought to apologise to those people whom he brought into question. On the contrary, he has tried unsuccessfully to perpetuate his charade of being a knowledgeable and concerned representative of the rural industry. By his words and actions, he has shown himself to be neither.

We were told that the honourable member had been advised by someone that these rorts were occurring and that it was up to the government to weed out the information and prosecute the offenders - in effect, to stop the rorts. The government would wholeheartedly put a stop to any rorts if there were any to be found.

Certainly, some similar but more detailed allegations were made some years ago and these were investigated in detail by both federal and Territory police but were not substantiated, and I have explained all of this previously. The inability of the member to provide facts clearly illustrates his lack of awareness and genuine concern for the industry. I guess that that was best illustrated by the opposition's failure to nominate a primary industry and fisheries spokesman. It is interesting to note from the list of members that all honourable members are provided with that, among the shadow ministry and opposition office holders, neither the member for Stuart nor the Leader of the Opposition has responsibility for primary industry and fisheries.

Mr Ede: I have.

Mr REED: Well, you might update your information so that everyone will know and so that the industry will be aware ...

Mr Bell: You should see the latest government directory. When are you blokes going to get your act together? We still have Steve Hatton as Chief Minister in that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr REED: ... who to look to for assistance for its members. It is a clear indication of the lack of sincerity of the opposition towards the primary industry sector of the Northern Territory.

I have clearly illustrated that, if he gives me more positive information, not generalised hearsay but a definite allegation, I will immediately pass that information to the police. Mr Speaker, make no mistake, anyone found ripping off the system, as the member for Stuart has alleged is occurring, will be prosecuted with the full weight of the law. All we need is for him to provide the facts necessary to proceed, but that is what the member for Stuart has been unable to do. I wrote to the member for Stuart and to the Leader of the Opposition following the allegations made during the last sittings. As recently as 11 November, the member for Stuart wrote to me, ignoring my request for more information but telling me that I am now to blame for the rorts. This is the latest push. I am now to blame. Do not worry about the truck drivers and the people in the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and the pastoralists who were all accused during the last sittings of ripping off the system, I am now to blame. He tells me that I cannot be talking to the pastoral industry or I would be receiving similar information. There are 40-odd pastoral leases within the honourable member's electorate. I do not know how many pastoralists he has been speaking to. Last time, the allegation was that there were hundreds of pastoralists who were opposed to the system. We have yet to see that substantiated.

Mr Speaker, I have been talking to the industry and the message I get is that the member for Stuart does not know what he is talking about. He does not understand BTEC and he does not understand the pastoral industry. In raising the issue at the last sittings, opposition members clearly underestimated industry support for the BTEC program. They grabbed a tiger by the tail, and it is clear that they had to let it go pretty quickly. They could not come up with anything, and the response that they received from the industry and the fact that the program had been well supported led them to release their grip on the tiger's tail. As a further indication of that, the silence on the question from opposition members during these sittings has been deafening. Clearly, they were embarrassed by the allegations that they had made but could not sustain.

From my contact with the industry, I know that there are problems with the BTEC program. These are usually 1-off situations between individual pastoralists and my department, and we work together to resolve them. There are some individuals who are against the aims of BTEC. They are not representative of the industry as a whole. Nevertheless, we are prepared to listen to them.

As an indication of the support that the industry provides to the scheme, honourable members would be aware that, on Wednesday 2 November, the Cattlemen's Association published in a full-page advertisement in the NT News a letter written to the Leader of the Opposition putting clearly the support by the Cattlemen's Association for the BTEC program and requesting a response from the Leader of the Opposition. I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition or, as we have just been advised, the shadow spokesman on primary industry and fisheries, has responded to this open letter from the Cattlemen's Association.

Mr Ede: I respond to the pastoralists. I talk to them.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, there you have a clear indication of the irresponsible attitude of the honourable members opposite and their insincere approach to primary industry. They have not responded to the principal

industry association in the Northern Territory. If that does not illustrate clearly the lack of concern for and awareness that they have of the industry, nothing will.

The member for Stuart has raised serious issues because he has scented what he believes is a hint of corruption. At present, he stands guilty of slandering hard-working pastoralists, transport workers and public servants because of his belief. I have asked him to tell me why he is so convinced that the system is being ripped off. He has replied by repeating his vague generalities. He must be convinced that he is right, regardless of what myself or members of the pastoral industry have told him, otherwise he would have apologised for his remarks.

Mr Speaker, the Buffalo Industry Council, another association representative of the industry in the Northern Territory, has also come out in full support of the BTEC program.

Mr Ede: It is not representative.

Mr REED: The member for Stuart is fully aware that it is the legitimate association representing the buffalo industry in the Northern Territory. The honourable member can choose to ignore it because its views are embarrassing to him but he cannot get away from the facts.

On the basis of the member for Stuart's actions so far, I have no alternative but to assume that he has nothing of substance with which to support his allegations. He has done nothing but repeat his own time-worn generalities to the extent that even the media is sick of hearing them. If it is his philosophy to convict on the basis of such flimsy evidence, Territorians can be grateful that he will never become the Attorney-General of the Northern Territory. Members opposite will never govern in the Territory if this is an indication of how they operate. To base an investigation program on the information provided by the honourable member to date would be as effective as chasing ghosts. I certainly do not intend to waste taxpayers' money in pursuing this matter unless the honourable member gives me information of greater substance.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries is reading a copious prepared response. As far as I am concerned, the business of this House would be enhanced if he were to use the opportunity available to him to make a ministerial statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: The fact of the matter is ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: ... that he has the opportunity to ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is the second or third time in the last few days that the honourable member has continued to talk over my request for order. If he does it again, I will name him.

Once I am satisfied that there is or is not a point of order, I will interrupt any speaker to deliver my ruling. There is no point of order.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, I do not deny that I have been quoting from some documents. I have also been explaining the facts of this issue. It is clearly a matter of great sensitivity to members opposite. They are grossly embarrassed by the path which they embarked on at the last sittings. They made false allegations. They have been unable to substantiate the allegations made about members of the industry and the officers of my department. I will continue to pursue this issue until such time as the member for Stuart substantiates his allegations or apologises to the large number of Territorians who have been smeared by them.

Inspections of Grape-growing Properties

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I believe that the minister is aware that apparently inspectors from the federal Department of Primary Industry have been going around to every table grape property in Australia and investigating the varieties of grapes being grown. I ask the minister to explain the purpose of this inspection, which is obviously very expensive. What are the implications for the Australian table grape industry and, of course, the growing Territory table grape industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a fact that members of the federal Quarantine Service have been inspecting the grape-growing areas of the Northern Territory and, indeed, of the states of Australia. The problem relates to the alleged import of certain varieties of grapes without the approval of the owner of the rights to those varieties. The question has been a long-standing one. The matter has been raised with the federal member and the quarantine responsibility lies with the federal government. The issue lies solely within its sphere of influence. I understand that some grape vines in the Northern Territory may be suspect and are of concern to the Commonwealth in relation to this alleged breach of varietal rights.

It is not an issue that falls directly within the responsibility of my department. However, it is creating considerable interest and concern in the grape-growing industry throughout Australia. I understand that, if the matter is not resolved, produce currently due for harvest cannot be exported. That is a requirement of the quarantine regulations. If areas are placed under quarantine, it could cost Australia in the order of \$3m in export income during this financial year. I repeat, however, that it is a Commonwealth matter and is not being dealt with by my department.

Housing Package

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the honourable minister to comments by the federal Minister for Housing on ABC radio this morning, including the statement that he intended to send officers of his department to the Territory to discuss the Territory government's new housing package. What effect, if any, will this have on the Territory government's proposal to introduce the package on 1 December?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, first, I will state quite categorically that it makes no difference whatsoever to the Territory government's intention to introduce the housing loan package on 1 December. I would like to take this opportunity to

assure all Territorians that we will be proceeding to implement the schemes outlined in my statement on Tuesday. It is interesting to look at the result of the Leader of the Opposition's attempts to torpedo this scheme. Terry the Terminator went down ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will refer to honourable members by their correct titles and he will withdraw that reference.

Mr MANZIE: I withdraw the remark, Mr Speaker, and I refer to the Leader of the Opposition.

What did he achieve? Part of the interview this morning was quite enlightening, remembering that this was a result of a meeting which was supposedly about a major breach by the Territory government of an agreement between governments - the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Do not forget that the political career of the Leader of the Opposition rested on the trip to Canberra - and if it does not, I believe that it should. When asked about the new scheme, the federal minister said: 'Well, I am still a little bit in the dark'. He is still a little bit in the dark! The Leader of the Opposition was said to have gone down to explain in detail what the terrible Territory government was doing. What in the world did the Leader of the Opposition do? Did he use a couple of days flying time and have a cup of tea down there? He was reported as going down to provide information, yet the federal minister is still in the dark. That is something that needs to be answered when the Leader of the Opposition returns.

I was pleased to hear the federal minister say: 'I am not averse to what, in round figures, I understand Mr Manzie is proposing. I can see some very good reasons for that and I want the people to be reassured about that and Mr Manzie'. Obviously, he was under pressure to support his political colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, but he was making it quite clear that he supported what the Territory government was doing. When asked whether I should have contacted him, he retorted that he thought that would have been in the spirit of the agreement. I suppose that one cannot argue against that. As I said the other day, there was talk between officers and the loan scheme proposed by the government does fit within the parameters of the agreement.

When asked about his interpretation of the so-called clause 27(1)(a), he pointed out that there is a little bit of semantics in that. In other words, he was admitting that it could be looked at in the way the Territory government had looked at it and that interpretation means that the Territory government has the ability and right to make these proposals and carry them out. When the federal minister was asked whether he would be vetoing the scheme, he said: 'From what I have seen at this stage, I doubt if we will be. From the information received last night, I think basically it is what needs to be done'. The report finished by saying that both Warren Snowdon and Senator Bob Collins had welcomed the Territory's proposed scheme and, 'although they joined Terry Smith in his talks with Peter Staples, in fact Senator Collins is reported as saying the scheme is the best in Australia'.

I would like to make it quite clear that I believe the federal Senator is quite supportive of the Territory government and embarrassed by the fact that the Leader of the Opposition took it on himself to go down to Canberra. Obviously, that in itself intimates that he believes that the Territory's federal members could be inept in doing their jobs. I think that all Territorians would totally reject that proposition. I believe that he realises now that what he did was actually incorrect in fact. I think that anyone who heard the federal minister today would realise that he was

endorsing what the Territory had done. I hope that Australian Airlines was broadcasting the ABC this morning because it would have enlightened the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, in this context, it is important to point out what moneys are spent in the Northern Territory on housing and what part of that is Commonwealth money and what part is Territory money. I will run through the figures for a couple of years. In the year 1986-87, a total of \$31m was provided by the Commonwealth. Of that, \$12m was tied and \$18m was untied. That was out of a total of \$129m that was spent by the Territory government on housing. In 1987-88, the Commonwealth's contribution dropped a bit to \$30m. Of that, \$13m was tied and \$16m was untied. That was out of a total of \$119m spent by the Territory government on housing. In 1988-89, we have budgeted to spend \$124m on housing. Of that, the Commonwealth contribution is \$30m, of which \$15m is tied and \$14m is untied. The untied figure keeps dropping. I think honourable members should know that, of our total housing expenditure, only 25% is Commonwealth funded and, of that, only \$14m is untied. I think it is also worth noting that, under the CSHA, the Territory must spend a minimum of 50% of untied funds on rental housing. Actually, we spend over 60% of our untied funds on rental housing. We spend 38% on home purchase assistance.

Working on the basis of 600 people taking out loans over a year, the new scheme, which will be commencing on 1 December, will cost \$230 000 in its first half year of operation and it will cost \$1.7m in the first full year. It has been calculated that, to provide similar assistance under NTHPAS, the cost would have been \$16.8m. That shows the effectiveness of the new scheme and puts paid to any argument that the new scheme is not an effective use of money. It is also worth while repeating that the Territory government produces 75% of the funding for housing in the Territory. I can recall that, a few years ago, the Wran Labor government did not provide any money in New South Wales to match the Commonwealth contribution.

I repeat that anybody with any sympathy for the Leader of the Opposition would have squirmed with embarrassment when he heard the federal Minister for Housing on the radio this morning as, I am sure, members opposite squirmed. I repeat my assurance to all Territorians that we will commence the new loans scheme on 1 December. I believe that all Territorians should be fully aware of the cheap, nasty, hollow and cynical attempts of members opposite to torpedo this scheme. Territorians should be thankful that the attempt failed.

Overseas Trip by Minister for Industries and Development

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Will he give a full report to the House on achievements resulting from his most recent trip to Europe and Asia? Yes or no?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, before I give an answer, I wonder if I may refer briefly to some of the matters that I may explain more fully if and when I give such a report. In Paris, I was able to talk with representatives of Elf Aquitaine. We spoke about bringing gas onshore from Bonaparte Gulf. Elf Aquitaine has now dispatched a specialist to look at some of the gas proposals that we are putting together in the Northern Territory and he will be in Australia next week. I would like to have the opportunity to discuss that next week, perhaps by way of ministerial statement.

In Dusseldorf in Germany, we spoke with representatives of the chemical company Uhde Hoechst and the giant steel manufacturer Ferrostaal, also in relation to gas-related projects. In fact, a representative from Uhde will be in the Northern Territory next Tuesday evening and the Chief Minister and myself will be dining with him. There is an immediate result there.

In Moscow, we spoke about a range of matters, including manganese. The Russians are very interested in increasing their manganese supplies. Already they receive some 100 000 t from Groote Eylandt and they are talking about ferro-manganese smelters and so forth. We spoke about a range of other things including, of course, the railway development. I understand that there will be a Railnorth meeting in Sydney on 12 December. A representative from Russia will be in Australia next week to discuss the situation in relation to non-ferrous metals. The Russians are particularly interested in diamond mines. They are involved with Ashton at Lake Argyle and are aware of the trough which, they believe, extends into the Northern Territory. A range of options and opportunities are available there.

My visit to China related mainly to the Trade Development Zone. I was fortunate enough to be there at the time of the signing of the alumina contract, which is a first. It is a 3-year contract for 100 000 t a year, which is worth approximately \$120m. That is the first time that a mining company has done business in China with an end-user. That was significant.

There were also significant opportunities in relation to the Trade Development Zone. Representatives of CITIC, the merchant bank which is the economic wing of the Chinese government, are coming to the Territory in February. They are looking at joint-venturing goldmines. The bank has been involved in discussions with North Flinders Mines, but that company is involved in litigation in Victoria at present and the bank had difficulty in buying into the project. It is looking to invest up to \$20m in goldmines in the Northern Territory. The Chief Minister met with its representative earlier this year and they will be here again in February. That is pretty exciting stuff. Indeed, it is also exciting and significant that the second-most powerful man in the Chinese government will be travelling through Darwin today. The Attorney-General will be meeting with him at 12 noon today.

When providing a brief statement to the House next week, I will describe the trip in general terms. In my period as Minister for Mines and Energy, I have sought aggressively to open up as many opportunities as possible. We have changed legislation and we have sought investment and venture capital for resource development. We have gone out into the international market. We have involved people in the development of our hydrocarbon resources in the Timor Sea as well as onshore. Honourable members will know that we will drill some 25 wells in the Territory this year, which is more than in all of the other states combined.

On Sunday, a representative from Singapore Offshore Petroleum Services will be in the Northern Territory. We are looking at the development of an offshore base here. Indeed, I had the opportunity last Sunday, when I was with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, to explain the concept of the development of that base here. He was very supportive of and very sympathetic towards the development that has been carried out in the Territory, particularly in our hydrocarbon area.

The time has come now for value-added, downstream processing of both our minerals and our hydrocarbons and this is the next phase that we will enter into aggressively. It is an exciting time for Territorians. Oil and gas are

now worth around about \$400m to us, and minerals are worth about \$1200m to us. Let us hope that we can enter this new and exciting stage of downstream, value-added processing of our huge resources in the Northern Territory aggressively, to develop those resources, provide meaningful, full-time jobs and really catapult the Northern Territory into the international marketplace. I will be providing that statement.

Central Australian Honda Masters Games 1988

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I preface the question by complimenting the minister and his departmental people on the excellent job that was done in organising the 1988 Central Australian Honda Masters Games. During the course of those games, there was considerable discussion about the every extensive amount of media coverage that was being achieved around the world. The honourable minister gave some very exciting news in the course of that discussion, but we found that the latest cynical response emanating from central Australia emerged from the member for Flynn when he undertook to consume a wheelbarrow load of salami if the honourable minister's statements were correct.

I have 2 questions for the minister. First, can he verify the accuracy of his statements and, secondly, if he can, could he organise for a wheelbarrow load of salami to be delivered to the member for Flynn on about 4 December because I will be in Alice Springs at that time and will look forward to witnessing its consumption?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question, particularly the first part of it which I wrote for him. I understand that the member for Flynn is fairly new to this Legislative Assembly and, I suppose, also to the responsibilities of various members, but I must say that I was rather surprised that he was the only person in the Northern Territory or Australia or, for that matter, throughout the world, who had any criticism to make whatsoever of the 1988 Honda Central Australian Masters Games. I will refresh the memory of honourable members by quoting from his press release of 20 October: 'It is not appropriate for Mr Dale to claim that our games' - note 'our games' - 'are being televised in 65 countries, when everyone in the television industry knows it is nonsense. If Mr Dale can prove that coverage was transmitted in 65 countries, I will eat a barrow load of salami in the Todd Mall'.

I suggest that the diet promoters get the 'before' photos now before the honourable member rushes out to arrange his public salami eating orgy. I will outline the invaluable international and national publicity central Australia received as a result of the games that the member for Flynn was so quick to knock. Film North Productions of Darwin won a contract to produce 2 video documentaries and a number of commercials about the 1988 Honda Central Australian Masters Games. As a bonus for the games' publicity program, Film North was able to supply several video news items plus a short documentary package direct to the national Channel 10 network. Most were what are known as 'human interest' items. For example, 1 feature item distributed through Australia's Channel 10 national news network, which supplies programs to metropolitan as well as country stations, featured a relay team of Queensland women athletes, each well over 60 years of age, who compete regularly together. Other news items covered a range of Honda Central Australian Masters Games sports plus what are known as 'colour pieces' about central

Australia taken at Standley Chasm, Ayers Rock, the Olgas etc. Tourist developments at Hermannsburg were also covered. The Channel 10 news distributed this throughout its national network. There were a number of live broadcasts direct to Good Morning Australia in which sporting legends, such as Dawn Fraser, told a national audience that sporting facilities in Alice Springs were almost as good as those she had just left at the Seoul Olympics. Sky Channel is still running a 10-minute documentary on the games.

The value of such publicity and promotion of central Australia, in support of the Northern Territory tourist industry, cannot be calculated. But television coverage of this year's Masters Games did not stop inside Australia. I have received telexes and statements from Film North and the overseas bureau manager of Network 10 Australia. These show that several news items and a 3-minute documentary devoted to the 1988 Honda Central Australian Masters Games were snapped up by the American Cable News Network for broadcast on its weekly international news, World Report.

The Cable News Network, based in America, is the largest cable television network in the world. Honourable members will be aware that cable television network viewers pay a monthly subscription to receive programming direct to their homes. Cable News Network head office in the United States has supplied the following figures for its paid-up, worldwide audience: in Europe 100 million, in Japan 70 million, in the United States of America 70 million and, in South America, 70 million. For the benefit of the stomach of the member for Flynn, these audiences alone total 310 million. This news network supplies its programming direct to networks in 83 countries, not the 65 that I mentioned, with audiences totalling tens of millions on top of those that I have already mentioned.

The items that I described were distributed worldwide by Cable Network News to a paying audience. That cost the Northern Territory government nothing. Film North has earned some extra money for supplying the footage to Channel 10 and Cable Network News but the big winner has been the Territory tourist industry. I would suggest to honourable members that, by chance, the makers of Cavali Venator salami have also been big winners. This was the preferred brand mentioned by the member for Flynn in one particular interview with ABC radio news. Let me add that, in that radio interview, the member for Flynn had the very good grace to mention that he would pay for the barrow load of salami himself.

In his original press release criticising the Honda Central Australian Masters Games, the honourable member suggested that I had a habit of playing loose with the truth. If he wishes to contact my office, I will pass on names and telephone numbers of the appropriate television network personnel who can confirm the information that I have provided today. For the record, I table a letter received from Film North Productions signed by its director. It gives the details and talks about the distribution through places such as the Far East, Japan, the Pacific Islands, China, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Zimbabwe, all Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada.

Mr Speaker, I table also the now infamous press release by the member for Flynn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member wishes to have those documents incorporated into Hansard, rather than tabled, he must seek leave.

Mr DALE: I seek leave to table these documents and for them to be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

NATIONALS M E M B E R F O R F L Y N N
Northern E N Z O F L O R E A N I
Territory

Barrow Full of Salami

Press Release 20 October 1988

National Party member for Flynn Enzo Floreani said today he was astounded at Minister Don Dale's statement in the advocate implying he is against the Masters Games.

Mr Floreani said that he had been an active participant in both Masters Games and fully supported them.

Mr Dale's statement is simply a political gimmick to hide the lie made in his statement regarding television broadcast to over 300 million viewers in America. 'Mr Dale has a habit of being loose with the truth', Mr Floreani said.

Mr Floreani believes the Masters Games are a most successful initiative by the government and would fully support its expansion and heavy promotion.

It is not appropriate for Mr Dale to claim that our games are being televised in 65 countries when everyone in the television industry knows it is nonsense! If Mr Dale can prove that coverage was transmitted in 65 countries I will eat as barrow load of salami in the Todd Mall.

F I L M

N O R T H

P R O D U C T I O N S

Film & Video Producers

7 Bishop Street, Stuart Park

Mr Mike Dale.

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Darwin NT 5794

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Alice Springs NT 5750

Shop 72 Ford Plaza

The Mall, Alice Springs

Phone: (089) 52 5866

24.11.88

Dear Mike,

Listed are the outlets we provided stories and footage of the Masters Games.

1. Network Ten News.
Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra and regional stations.
2. Good Morning Australia to over 100 stations throughout Australia.
3. We also presented two live eye's direct to the the Good Morning Australia programme from Alice Springs.
4. C.N.N. Worldwide Cable Network 83 countries worldwide.
5. N.H.K. Japanese Television (70 million audience).
6. Wide World of Sport.
7. Sky Channel 1 x 15 min. Doco (for repeated airings).
8. Channel 8 Darwin.

As well C.N.N. goes to 83 countries world wide including the following:

Far East, Japan, Pacific Islands, Australia, China, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Zimbabwe, all Latin America, Caribbean, Canada.

Yours faithfully,
Danny Sim
Director.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, so that the member for Flynn can illustrate this to all the people throughout the Northern Territory, I have arranged that, at 9.30 next Wednesday morning outside of this House, Film North will be present to witness the member for Flynn carrying out his promise. I do ask for one concession, Mr Speaker.

Mr Collins: It is supposed to be the Todd Mall.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, the honourable member might compromise on the location in which he carries out his promise in that he did accuse me of not telling the truth. I think that I have proven that I have. The compromise is that Film North will be outside of this Assembly next Wednesday morning at 9.30 and the distribution of the coverage of my giving the honourable member his first taste of the salami will be covered throughout those stations that I have already mentioned.

TABLED PAPERS

Expenditure Guidelines for Ministers and Departmental Heads.

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, during question time on Tuesday 22 November, I undertook to provide honourable members with the guidelines and procedures currently in force for ministerial and departmental head expenditure. I table the documents.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
State Square Project

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, on Tuesday night, the Leader of the Opposition asked 6 questions pertaining to the State Square project. I note that a token follow up on those has been made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who is opposition spokesman on transport and works. Some 3½ questions remain unanswered. However, 1 of those questions is a repeat and I think that illustrates that the opposition has now exhausted its token opposition to the State Square project.

The first question asked when I would table the agreement between Tipperary Developments and the Northern Territory government. I inform members that for me to do that would be totally inappropriate and certainly unnecessary. Therefore, I will not be tabling the document itself. We have revealed the basic content and conditions of the agreement. Naturally enough, there are matters in the agreement which are commercially confidential. However, honourable members would be aware that we have taken the most unusual step in this circumstance of revealing actual payments etc. There is no other project management agreement that government or private enterprise has made public previously. I do not intend to set a precedent by tabling that agreement.

The member for Barkly requested the tabling of the agreement also but, as he would be well aware from his own experience as Chief Minister, the tabling of documents such as the agreement on the pipeline was totally out of the question. Quite appropriately, at that stage, he did not release the details of such matters. Generally, the document reflects the normal type of project management agreement which the Department of Transport and Works uses with the various firms that do business with us in terms of project management. It has additional localisation components and contains all of the relevant clauses and conditions of contract which one would expect in relation to such things as time of construction, rise and fall and fixation of the prices, all matters which I covered yesterday in response to questions. They are in addition to the important clauses which will ensure localisation.

The second question was partly answered yesterday. It asked, first, when the government agreed to pay the developer's fee, and I answered that. The latter part of the question asked, and I quote: '... and have the claims for payment been ordered?' Given that the quote comes from the Daily Hansard, I suggest that 'audited' was meant rather than 'ordered' which would not make sense. The claims for payment have not been audited as such. They are processed by the project control group under the auspices of the Department of Transport and Works and, as with all matters pertaining to the department, will come under the normal government audit system. The opposition's fixation with audits is quite surprising, particularly now that it seems to focus on audits and financial advice from southern firms. I am not sure why the Leader of the Opposition does not have the confidence in the Northern Territory ...

Mr Perron: He doesn't trust anyone up here.

Mr FINCH: It is probably more a case of people having stopped talking to him.

The third and fourth questions were answered yesterday. The fifth question asks: 'Does the agreement contain any meaningful clauses relating to local involvement in the project?' Of course it does. These clauses relate to localisation of the design, which means designing to local conditions as

well as local supply of materials. The project control group, which is the administering body, has the entire say in relation to what materials and other design components will be included. Naturally enough, where there is an option of using materials of different types, those that are available locally will be specified. The agreement relates also to the methodology of selecting subcontractors. Of course, they need to demonstrate their bona fides as local concerns employing local people and purchasing materials locally. These matters all form part of the process which will be administered through the project control group under the basic head agreement.

The sixth question, which was somewhat confusing, asked: 'What is the format that was used to calculate the \$3.75m developer's fee?' Of course, there is no \$3.75m developer's fee. The amount is \$1.75m. Perhaps the question intended to refer to the 3.75% project manager's fee. In either case, it is a repeat of the first question or has been answered elsewhere.

The member for Koolpinyah asked whether the State Square project was linked in some way to the Berry Springs Wildlife Park. That is not the case. There is no hidden deal anywhere in this agreement. It is a straight agreement between the government as the client and Tipperary Developments as the deliverer of services both in the development process and now as project manager with the task of ensuring that the job is constructed to government requirements. It is as simple as that. There are no hidden deals, as intimated by the member for Koolpinyah. It is all aboveboard and open.

The member for Barkly referred to scandals in an interview on ABC radio the other day. He said that the State Square project was the greatest scandal that has hit the political scene in Australia for about 30 years. He is familiar with political scandals. I would assume that his reference to Queensland making State Square look like small beer is quite correct. I understand his sensitivity regarding some Queensland people. I understand that the Fitzgerald Inquiry is identifying some people who are among those who bankroll his party. Of course, the member for Barkly's comments about the State Square project were nonsense. He talked about the \$100m. That matter has been addressed already. It is useless to talk about anything other than current net value. There is no way, in 10 or 20 years time, that the federal Parliament House will be referred to as anything but a \$1200m project. The relevant sum is the cost at the time of construction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I close by mentioning a couple of minor points which are important in terms of putting the entire matter to rest. The member for Barkly referred to his diary notes. I need to correct him because I also make diary notes, particularly when I have meetings with him. His reference to a 10% commission was totally incorrect. He asked me what fees would be paid to Tipperary Developments. I said that they were not yet finalised. When asked to make a guess, I refused to do so. When he suggested that the amount would be 10%, I refused to acknowledge that it was accurate in any way. I wish it to be recorded that I consider that the member for Barkly has made an untrue statement in that respect. His comment about \$13m-worth of landscaping was also untrue. The amount of \$13m, which takes the cost from \$87m to \$100m, is comprised of design and consultant fees, project management fees, landscaping and State Square itself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, that ought to finalise all matters pertaining to State Square. Arguments put forward by the opposition and from the crossbenches have studiously avoided the facts, as gimmickry always will. It is time to let people get on with the job. I am confident that this government will go into the next election with the State Square project having a triple A rating.

Proposed Amendments to Federal Airports Corporation Act

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he aware of an amendment proposed by his federal colleague, Mr Blunt, to the Federal Airports Corporation Act last week which reads:

That the bill before the federal House be referred to the Standing Committee on Transport Communications and Infrastructure for inquiry and report with particular reference to the following:

- (1) the powers and responsibilities granted under Federal Airports Corporation legislation;
- (2) the value of assets transferred by the government and the basis for financing the corporation with particular reference to the implications for charges imposed by the corporation;
- (3) the corporation's plans for developing its airports and, in particular, its proposals for Sydney, Brisbane and Perth Airports;
- (4) the procedures adopted by the corporation for its commercial activities, with emphasis on requirements and procedures for calling tenders and letting contracts;
- (5) the implications of the Federal Airports Corporation monopoly petition for the aviation industry, in particular, general and sports aviation and non-scheduled airline and charter operations;
- (6) the appropriateness of the Federal Airports Corporation's monopoly position in the deregulated aviation industry;
- (7) the legislative basis, financial structure and incorporated objectives of the corporation; and
- (8) the corporation's organisation, structure and staff numbers?

Can the minister see that, if passed, these proposals would have disastrous consequences for progress on the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports? What did he do to dissuade his Canberra colleagues from pursuing this particular proposal which, thankfully, did not get up? What is he doing to dissuade his Canberra colleagues from seeking to push this particular resolution through the Senate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I clearly understand the embarrassment and concern of the Leader of the Opposition in this matter. He left this House last week for 2 days to go to Canberra on some new-found mission to save potential home buyers in the Northern Territory. While he was there, what did he do apart from sitting beside a pool sipping on a cup of tea? Mr Speaker, I put it to you that he did absolutely nothing.

Mr Smith: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I will answer the question and I will answer in my own way. If I sound frustrated and annoyed, that is because I share the frustration and annoyance which all Territorians feel at the lack of activity by the federal government in relation not only to Territory airports but to airports throughout Australia. I am not familiar with the detail of all points put forward by the shadow spokesman ...

Mr Smith: Why don't you get on top of it?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, we will get back to who should be getting on top of what later. I can understand the deep frustration which is felt, not only by the federal opposition but Australians generally with the Federal Airports Corporation and its lack of action.

Mr Speaker, I will tell you why there is a lack of action. It is because the Federal Airports Corporation, supposedly formed to take the monkey off the federal government's back by relieving it of the pressure of meeting its commitments in relation to airports around Australia, was snookered right from the start by the extremely high capital valuations put on existing facilities paid for by the taxpayer long ago. In most cases, they were paid for decades ago. Artificial valuations have been put on facilities, forcing the FAC to charge users at a rate which is 3 or 4 times what it should be, a rate which will be reflected no doubt in costs to passengers. No doubt the opposition spokesman has quite correctly raised some concerns about the FAC, where it is going and why it is going there.

Perhaps this issue could encourage a positive approach from members opposite because, to date, they have not put a single constructive point to their colleagues in Canberra. They have left everything to their 2 federal colleagues who, I must acknowledge, have made some constructive attempts to solve the problems at the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports. These people opposite have been content to sit on their butts and do absolutely nothing while not only the travelling public of the Northern Territory goes down the drain but tourism itself is hampered. Indeed, the overall development of the Northern Territory is hampered.

The federal opposition spokesman has recognised that the FAC is frustrated by the constraints placed on it by the federal government and is attempting to seek some rectification. There is no doubt that the subject of the airports will continue to be raised in this Assembly and I will ensure that I pursue it to the absolute end. I will not rest while these honourable members opposite are content to sit back and do nothing. They come up with nothing more than negative bagging of everything that this government or its colleagues in Canberra do.

Trade Development Zone

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In previous debate in this House, the honourable minister referred to the Hong Kong based company, Hengyang, and its plans to move into the Trade Development Zone. Have those plans come to fruition and, if so, when does the company plan to start operations at the zone?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. Indeed, Hengyang will be in the zone and operating before Christmas. There will be

140 employees of that firm. It is the first time that we have been able to bring skilled workers to Australia and 27 Chinese girls arrived in the Northern Territory yesterday to take up positions with Hengyang. I am happy to announce that some 4 employees from a now defunct textile factory in Tasmania have been relocated in the Northern Territory to take up positions with Hengyang. There were 500 applicants for the 140 positions in the textile industry.

It is the success story to cap off what can only be described as an interesting year for the Trade Development Zone. Last night, I had the opportunity to be present with all the people that have made it happen, and I pay particular tribute to the Miscellaneous Workers Union and to the trade union movement in general. Who would have thought 3 years ago that I would be standing up in the House and talking about a blooming textile industry in the Northern Territory, in particular in Darwin? If it had been said in this House that we would have 200 people employed in the textile industry before the end of 1988, the member for Barkly would have had the member who said it locked up.

However, it has happened and I think it is a tribute to the dedication and hard work of many people. The immigration department has worked very hard and so have the ladies involved in the English as a Second Language program. The courses that are being run for the new intake of people into the zone are excellent. It is a credit to those people. The Commonwealth Employment Service has contributed too. I understand that either the member for Stuart or the member for MacDonnell questioned the cost of putting out pamphlets for the Commonwealth Employment Service to recruit people to this particular company. That was put under severe questioning at the height of the Trade Development Zone debate. I would like to pay particular tribute to the ladies and men in the Commonwealth Employment Service who have worked so hard conducting interviews and providing the facilities to bring those job opportunities into the Trade Development Zone and into the Northern Territory in particular.

Mr Speaker, I do not intend to make any further statement on the zone but I can tell you that 1989 will be the year of the Trade Development Zone. I see a smirk ...

Mr Ede: Let us hope so.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, of course, the member for Stuart has always been a supporter of the Trade Development Zone. I ask honourable members to cut out the little article that appeared in the Sunday Territorian some 2 months ago which said, 'TDZ in Crisis', because that is really what started this debate off. They should pin it to the fridge and we will have a debate about it next June. We will consult the public record and note what was said about the TDZ. We will then see members opposite run and duck for cover.

Hengyang is now negotiating for stage 2 in the Trade Development Zone. It is a warehouse of the same size as the one that it is already operating in. Indeed, the machinery has arrived and is being put in place at this moment. The opposition should watch my lips: it is actually happening at the moment. We are now talking to the company about stage 3. One of the parent companies is from Shenzhen which the Chief Minister and myself have had the opportunity of visiting. The parent company turns over \$US2000m a year from mainland China. In fact, it provides 50% of all the perishables that enter Hong Kong. To have companies with such backing coming into the Northern Territory at the speed that they are is a tribute to the dedication of Ray McHenry in

particular. Scurrilous attacks have been made on him by members of the opposition and the crossbenches from time to time. Let us see where they stand in relation to the Trade Development Zone next June. When we look at the 'TDZ In Crisis' headline on the fridge, we will have the member for Barkly saying that he has always supported the Trade Development Zone. The excuse for the comment will be that it was only the way Coulter handled it and, if it had not been for Coulter running it, everything would have been all right. There will be 1000 excuses.

We are proud to have Hengyang in the Trade Development Zone. Whilst I am on my feet, can I also say that I am very proud to have Darwin International Textiles in the Trade Development Zone, and I welcome the wife of the proprietor, Helena, and the 2 children who have just arrived - in fact, they began school here at the start of this week - and the proprietor's mother who was visiting China to say goodbye to her relatives because she was off to live in Darwin. Mr Speaker, if you think that the immigration debate has not caused us damage over there and that we are not in real trouble now, I will tell you that there has been a 50% downturn in business migration. This country cannot afford that and I hope that the standard and quality of debate will be raised in this Assembly because the quality of the debate has done some terrible damage to us.

I congratulate the Chief Minister on his statement. I have modified it a little and I have been telling the people in China, Hong Kong and Singapore that it does not matter what the colour of your skin is or the shape of your eyes and that, in Darwin, those things are about as important as the colour or the shape of your car. In the Northern Territory, we live multiculturalism. Mr Speaker, go out in the streets and have a talk about multiculturalism. Nobody will be able to tell you what it is, but we live it, breathe it, sleep it, play sport with it, do business with it and it is alive and well in Darwin. It is that attitude which will promote us in the Asian countries and bring in more firms such as Darwin International Textiles who, in the near future, will be producing over 2 million garments in the Northern Territory with that 'Made in Australia' stamp on them. That is just part of the success story of the Trade Development Zone. Stay tuned for further announcements for all the knockers that have put it down recently.

New Parliament House

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Arguably, the new Parliament House will be the most important public building undertaken in the Northern Territory in the next 15 years. Does the Chief Minister believe that the new Parliament House design will be determined in part or wholly by the design of the proposed Supreme Court building?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would see the matter of the design of the new Parliament House to be largely in the hands of the New Parliament House Committee which will consider the requirements of parliament in the forthcoming decades. As honourable members know, a great deal of work has been done by that committee over several years. I understand that it is meeting occasionally these days to finalise the requirements of the new Parliament House in terms of floor space, facilities and equipment, requirements which will determine, to a large degree, the shape and size of the building.

As for the architectural qualities of the building, I suggest that it would be improper for the architects not to take into consideration the building's site which, of course, will be opposite the new Supreme Court which has already largely been designed. The design should also take the setting into consideration on the site where we sit today. In summary, the Supreme Court building will have an impact on the design of the new Parliament House, as will many other factors. As honourable members would be aware, when the New Parliament House Committee completes its work, it is required to report to this parliament. I am sure that will occur in due course, whereupon this House will have the opportunity to debate its report.

Commonwealth Funding for Higher Education

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I remind the minister that, on Friday, it was reported that the Commonwealth had agreed to provide \$50m for higher education in the Northern Territory, an amount which included support for the new Northern Territory University. Subsequently, the interim chief executive officer for the university, Professor Caro, stated on last Friday's 7.30 Report that he was disappointed with the allocation. Could the minister comment on the allocation and clarify whether he regards it as being sufficient properly to launch the new university?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the outset, I must say that I was somewhat surprised at the glowing comments that were made in relation to the federal government's funding of the Northern Territory University, particularly the comments made by the member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon. I have been most disappointed in the level of funding that has been proposed. We have fought very hard in this Assembly to reach the stage where we are today. I do not need to go into the history of that. All Territorians have ever wanted is to have the same opportunities as other Australians. We wanted access to a university in our own Territory and we have gone through a very difficult period. We have agreed to a merger of the University College of the Northern Territory and the Darwin Institute of Technology and there has been a great deal of heartburn involved in that exercise. I would have expected that, at the least, the federal government would have respected our efforts to comply with its wishes. Having to come to grips with what it was proposing was difficult in itself.

Unfortunately, it would appear that the understanding reached between officers of the Northern Territory government and officers of the Department of Employment, Education and Training have not been reflected in the federal minister's financial package. I will be speaking to the federal minister about that at a later stage. The level of funding that is proposed is a disappointment and I think that many people in the Territory will be disappointed by it. It is all very well to fund our Northern Territory University at the national average. I would remind members that, during the establishment years, there are other costs that need to be catered for and that, during their formative years, other universities throughout Australia received financial assistance to take account of the fact that they were opening and establishing a new university. I do not see why we should be treated any differently.

I will be approaching our 2 Senators, Senator Bob Collins and Senator Grant Tambling, in relation to this matter. I believe those 2 members

have the interests of Territorians at heart. I hope that they approach the federal minister with a view to obtaining additional funds during our university's formative years. I make it clear that I do not hold a grudge because of the fact that West Sydney has received \$150m under the Dawkins plan. It is a new university and good luck to it. However, I would expect a further announcement from the federal minister in relation to the assistance that is to be given to the establishment of our university.

I call also on members of the opposition - and I have given the member for Stuart some correspondence in relation to our efforts - to have the federal minister look at the situation here.

Mr Ede: I have never received any.

Mr HARRIS: I will check that. You asked for the correspondence and I want you to help us. I hope that the opposition will start to make an effort towards gaining for Territorians what is rightfully theirs. It can help in this exercise. It does not mean that the Leader of the Opposition has to fly to Canberra to make these things come into being. He can do it from here and opposition members should work very hard to ensure that we receive what is rightfully ours.

In relation to the university, I wish they would speak to the member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, and try to get him to stop being an apologist for his federal colleagues and to look at working towards helping Territorians. That is what he does not do. Every statement that he makes is negative. He needs to get his act together and talk to his colleague, Senator Bob Collins, who is interested in the welfare of Territorians. I am disappointed. We do need further assistance. I believe that the discussions between officers indicated that the situation would be different from that outlined by Minister Dawkins. I will be taking that matter up and I urge all members of this Assembly to do the same, particularly members opposite. I will be asking the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education, to make representations seeking additional funding for our university during its formative years.

Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

The TIO Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1988 referred to 'an abnormal write-off of \$1.48m in respect of a venture capital investment in a local manufacturing company'. Obviously, that was Hungerford Refrigeration. I have 2 questions. First, why is such a write-off necessary given the oft-repeated claim that the TIO investment was secured to the extent of some \$500 000, meaning that the TIO had a first claim over payments arising out of the collapse of Hungerford Refrigeration? I understand that amounts owing to local creditors by the same manufacturing company totalled about \$460 000. On 17 May, the then Treasurer, the Deputy Chief Minister, said in this House: 'TIO has assured me that it will look closely at those in hardship, particularly those who have consistently supported the company in the past'. My second question is: what efforts has TIO made on behalf of the local creditors to reimburse them for the amount of approximately \$460 000 which they have lost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure what the preamble had to do with the question concerning the extraordinary write-off of \$1.5m. That was a decision of the TIO Board which, I am advised, was made after taking advice from professional accountants.

Mr Smith: Half of it was supposed to be secured.

Mr PERRON: If the Leader of the Opposition would like to be quiet whilst he is actually in the Assembly, he might get a response to his question.

Mr Coulter: There was something to be said for his going to Canberra.

Mr PERRON: That is very true.

Mr Speaker, the advice was that the amount should be written off. If the TIO receives some funds subsequently as a result of the liquidation of Hungerford, that would reduce the loss. In accounting terms, those funds could be recorded as extraordinary income in the following financial year. I do not see anything unusual about that. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is not aware that even secured creditors of a company which goes into liquidation cannot always recover their funds, and his question is somewhat nonsensical in that regard.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the situation of unsecured creditors. Until such time as the liquidator has completed the winding up of the company and the resolution of its remaining assets, it is inappropriate for any decisions to be taken in regard to the treatment of unsecured creditors.

Application for Casino at Yulara

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TOURISM

Is it correct that there is an application before the government for a licence for a casino at Yulara? If so, is it proposed to introduce legislation for this at these sittings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. My understanding of the situation, which I will confirm later today with the honourable member, is that the licensee of the Alice Springs Casino has shown an interest in extending the operation to Yulara. I think that is all I can say at present. It is obvious that there is some discussion concerning it. To my knowledge, we have not received any firm proposal at this stage, but I will clarify that and advise the honourable member.

Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Campaign

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I preface my question by saying that, last week in this House, the member for Koolpinyah jumped on the BTEC bandwagon ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I did not jump on the bandwagon - I asked a question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PALMER: ... and made certain allegations in the adjournment about the operation of the campaign especially in relation to the buffalo industry component. Is the minister aware of those allegations and can he advise if they have any substance in fact?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and apologise to the member for Koolpinyah for not answering her questions earlier. I had intended to do so after question time last Thursday but did not have the opportunity. The honourable member raised a number of questions, some of which were based on fact and some not. The honourable member alleged that, during the course of a meeting held by buffalo industry people on Friday 18 November, staff of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries snuck out to Woolner Station and shot some animals that belonged to the owners of that station. I can advise the honourable member that that allegation is incorrect and the staff of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries had nothing to do with any actions of that sort.

The second question related to a suggestion that staff of the department undertake shooting activities in various areas and that their attitude is that they will shoot the animals and sort out the problems that arise from that action later. I can advise the honourable member that this is definitely neither the policy nor the practice. In fact, animals are shot only if there is a high prevalence of disease or in circumstances where there are animals left over following mustering or pet meat operations, to reduce the number of animals that are wasted and maximise their utilisation. Of course, it is usually the case in most circumstances that agreement is reached with the landholder before shooting occurs.

The third question suggested that the honourable member had been refused advice by a senior officer of my department when she sought information. The Daily Hansard of last Thursday indicates that ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It was before you were a minister.

Mr REED: Well, now we are going back into history. That was not indicated last week. By interjection, I am advised by the honourable member that that occurred before I was a minister.

Mr Speaker, may I just say that it is normally the practice for officers of the department to provide information if they can but, in the event that it involves a matter of policy, then the honourable member may be referred to the relevant minister. Quoting from Hansard, this was in relation to another person. The honourable member said that it was not confidential information and that she did not intend to use it in any illegal way. I think the public servant rightly felt that he could not give information in relation to another person and the advice given to the honourable member was that she should obtain it from the minister. That was probably appropriate in those circumstances. However, if the honourable member has any difficulty, I will be happy to pursue it if that still remains the case.

Another issue was raised in relation to the incidence of TB in the United States. The suggestion was made that that TB is still prevalent in the United States and I assume that the honourable member was referring to cattle. The information provided to me by senior personnel from the Animal, Plant and

Health Inspection Service of the United States, with whom I met in Darwin recently, was that, in fact, 7 to 10 herds per year of a total of 1.8 million do experience outbreaks of TB. To date this year, there have been 8 outbreaks in 4 states. I understand that Canada is free of both TB and brucellosis in its cattle herds. There is a clear indication that there is a very low prevalence of TB in the cattle herds of the United States which is very keen to ensure that the disease is eradicated.

The fifth question related to the buffalo development loans initiated by this government. The question was: has the government changed its mind in relation to the loans? The answer is no. In fact, I advise the honourable member that the loans are in fact for \$100 000, not \$10 000 as she stated last Wednesday. They are not buffalo industry grants, as she indicated, but loans. However, they can be converted to grants over a period if specific performance criteria are achieved by loan recipients. So far, 9 people have been advised of their success, contrary to the advice of the honourable member.

The member's sixth question related to the wiping out of the buffalo herd. I think the government's commitment is clear in relation to the buffalo herd in the Northern Territory. If we look back a few years, we will remember the leases provided to people wishing to commence buffalo domestication initiatives at Point Stuart. A number of domestication programs are under way in that area and I am sure that the people involved will achieve their goals and that we will see the buffalo industry prosper in the Northern Territory.

In more recent times, we have had the buffalo development loans which, as I have just indicated, are being processed at present. The days of the feral buffalo are numbered and there is no doubt about that. Hardship is resulting but there is no doubt that, without the BTEC program and the ability to farm the animals in a controlled situation, the buffalo industry would have no future. The buffalo industry's future depends on the BTEC program. The herd will be disease-free and will have access to new opportunities to enter markets throughout the world.

The honourable member alleged that, at a meeting on 18 November with 60-odd people in the buffalo industry, I did not answer any questions. I attended that meeting for 45 minutes and we were able to discuss a whole range of issues. I answered a number of questions. It would be fair to say that my answers were not fully accepted by some of the people present, particularly my response to a request that I extend the completion date for the BTEC program beyond 1992. Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to do that. It is a national program. The target has been set and there is no indication from either the federal government or the cattle industry nationally, which funds 50% of the program, that we can achieve an extension.

As a follow-up to the meeting of 18 November, yesterday morning I spent 2½ hours with 20-odd people from the buffalo industry. Again, we went through a number of issues. The honourable member has suggested that I should consult more with industry rather than just listening to advice from my department. I totally refute any suggestion that I have not been consulting. I have been doing so on a continuous basis. I am sure that most of the people who attended yesterday's meeting were satisfied with the outcome in terms of the issues raised, and with the processes which we are putting in place to deal with those issues, some of which have also been raised by the member for Koolpinyah. Those processes will ensure that the program will continue and that the buffalo industry will have a bright and prosperous future in the Northern Territory.

Population Drift from the Northern Territory

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

When will his government take constructive steps to gather firm data on the ongoing population drift from the Territory? Does he accept that, without that data, planning processes for the provision of services and for economic growth must be seriously flawed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure the member for Stuart that he and his colleagues certainly need not concern themselves too much about being in a position to worry about ongoing services for the Northern Territory's population, given the way they conduct themselves. There has been considerable debate in the community about statistics released recently indicating that there is a fall in the population of the Northern Territory. A great many charges and counter-charges have been made. There is no doubt that the figures indicate a trend which has been of concern to the Territory government for some time. The very latest figures relate to the June quarter of this year and are therefore 4 or 5 months old. We believe that other, more recent indicators suggest that that trend has been arrested or, hopefully, reversed. We will not know for certain until further figures become available.

The reasons for some decline in the Northern Territory population are pretty well known. For example, Telecom has relocated 200 staff to Adelaide and, no doubt, a substantial number of additional people who are members of their families. That would certainly not have helped. The Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction has also relocated people out of the Northern Territory. Of course, some of the federal government's funding cuts in recent years have not helped either.

Notwithstanding those decisions, we have managed to maintain an environment in the Northern Territory which, we believe, is conducive to further investment and which will create jobs in the Territory. Certainly, at some time in the near future, if it has not happened already, those efforts will begin to increase the Northern Territory's population once again. In recent years, our population growth has been phenomenal and has exceeded by several times the national rate of population growth. It was inevitable that the rate of increase would decline eventually. In recent times, the Northern Territory government has taken action to ensure that there is continuing activity in the construction industry in the Top End. The State Square project, much criticised by members of the opposition and the crossbenches, is a prime example. Those members believe that a vacuum in terms of construction activity during the next couple of years will do their political cause some good. It is not surprising that they are arguing that the government should drop the State Square project.

If indications in relation to the proposed new Darwin and Alice Springs Airport terminals are correct, we really do have something to worry about. That is because the expected commencement of spending of \$30m to \$70m on the Darwin Airport redevelopment in January next year seems unlikely to occur. When the Leader of the Opposition chose to leave this Assembly in the middle of a sittings to go to Canberra, perhaps he should have addressed the issue of the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports and thereby acted in the interests of Territorians, rather than wasting taxpayers' money on the ridiculous jaunt which he undertook.

Air-conditioning of Preschools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

A report in last Saturday's NT News indicated that the Northern Territory Teachers Federation had called a meeting of preschool teachers to discuss the issue of preschool air-conditioning. Is the minister aware of this report and could he advise of his current position in relation to this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the report to which the member for Jingili refers. I can say, once again, that the executive of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation is off-track. I wish that it would stop misleading its members. In fact, teachers at some of the preschools are very much aware of what the Northern Territory government is doing in relation to this. It is no secret that honourable members of this Assembly have presented petitions. The member for Jingili himself has made repeated representations on this very issue.

Mr Bell: Ad nauseam.

Mr HARRIS: Indeed, ad nauseam, but nevertheless he has been working hard for his constituents. There is no secret about what we have been doing and I have commented on that.

I have commissioned a report which again has a time limit on it. It is to be back with me by the end of January next year. I have visited a number of preschools over this period and I will continue to visit preschools. Money was identified in the budget to enable those schools which were experiencing extreme heat problems to have particular areas air-conditioned. Some schools were already obtaining quotations in relation to that.

The report will be ready prior to the date that I suggested - that is, the end of January. That report will canvass the issues. The wishes of parents who are not in favour of air-conditioning preschools have to be respected. That will be canvassed and we will be looking at those schools that have installed air-conditioning at their own expense. I know the member for Nightcliff has such a school in his electorate. There are others that have decided to air-condition their preschools. Those matters have to be looked at responsibly. The government is doing that and that is on record.

I wish that the secretary of the Teachers Federation executive would start to get his facts straight. I am disappointed. Again, I say in this Assembly that it is very difficult for me to work with failed, would-be politicians who are in these executive positions. Often, I have occasion to speak to teachers and others and I need to have their confidence. Under circumstances where there are people who have been involved actively in politics, particularly as far as the opposition is concerned, it is impossible for me to continue to have that confidence in them. I ask that the Teachers Federation executive start looking at the issues raised by its members and start trying to take note of its members views. We need that partnership. We need to be able to work together. I am happy to work together with them but I wish the secretary of the NTTF would get his facts straight before he issues press releases to the media.

Needle Exchange Program

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Does he know that, according to a statement in the press of 20 November 1988, attributed to Mr Ian Lauchlan, the executive officer of the Northern Territory AIDS Council, there has been a trial run of a needle exchange program for intravenous drug users which appears to be in direct contravention of section 12 of the Criminal Code which deals with abettors and accessories before the fact? Will he institute proceedings through the normal police channels against these people for breaking the law? If not, why will these people be treated so benevolently when other people who break the law by committing traffic offences, car thefts, assaults, house-breaks etc are all charged with offences against the law?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, previously a statement was made in the House indicating that a trial needle exchange program is being operated in the Northern Territory at present. For further details on this matter, I refer the honourable member to the Minister for Health and Community Services as he has principal carriage of the subject in this House.

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, I feel grave concern about the attitude of the member for Koolpinyah on this particular issue. She is trying to relate the fact that a needle exchange program for needles that she wants to use on her goats is as important as the AIDS situation that is confronting the Northern Territory. That will be the basis of her contribution to the debate on this issue when it comes before this House later today.

Mr Speaker, a trial program has been in place. It has been carried out by agreement with this House and with the police and the judiciary in the Northern Territory. A situation confronts us at this time that all responsible members of this Assembly and people in the Northern Territory will see that we must combat. Exchange programs are in place throughout Australia, bar the state of Tasmania and the Northern Territory. We have started this program following professional advice and I will be illustrating later today that that has been a very responsible move by all involved in the trial program. We will continue with that program until such time as appropriate legislation is in place.

Security and Protocol Problems at Yulara and Uluru

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his press release of 16 November in which he complained of security and protocol problems at Ayers Rock during the recent visit of the Singapore Prime Minister. Mr Speaker, I remind the Chief Minister that, with yourself, I accompanied the Governor-General to Yulara and Uluru where different administrative arrangements apply, chiefly of the government's making. I further remind the Chief Minister that during that visit there were no security or protocol problems and I further remind him that my inquiries at both Yulara and Uluru indicate that no such security and protocol problems exist. What actual difficulties do exist?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member refers to a press release that I issued prior to the visit by the Singapore Prime Minister to the Uluru National Park. It was issued following a letter that I wrote to a federal minister asking that the nonsense, which has become normal practice in relation to VIP visits to the Northern Territory, be set aside. It came to my attention first when I was examining with our protocol people the itinerary of the Singapore Prime Minister in the Northern Territory. As hosts to such people, we plan with them very carefully their itineraries in the Northern Territory. Indeed, we have a high responsibility for their care and for the smooth operation of their itineraries. When these people come to the Northern Territory, they stay at the very fine establishment at Yulara that the Northern Territory government had built some years ago. They are briefed in the interpretative centre there, constructed and operated by the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. We then take them to the boundaries of the Commonwealth national park and hand them over as if it were some sort of East German/West German situation.

It is absurd that Northern Territory Conservation Commission rangers are not permitted to escort or act as tour guides to VIPs travelling through Uluru. It is a classic example of the nonsense which we tolerate in the Northern Territory because we are a territory and not a state. It seems that the Northern Territory government can be trusted with a \$1500m annual budget, with 650 police, with powers to pass laws for the order and good government of the Northern Territory and with powers to appoint Supreme Court judges for life. All of those powers are vested in the Northern Territory government, but the power to operate a national park is something that we cannot be trusted with. That is absurd. I find considerable embarrassment in having to admit to VIPs, who visit the Northern Territory and who take considerable interest in the administrative arrangements of areas that they visit, that the Commonwealth government believes that areas such as Kakadu and Uluru should be administered totally by some other regime.

Once we hand the visitor over at the border to be escorted around the park by the ranger from the ANPWS whom, I am advised ...

Mr Coulter: It is true.

Mr Bell: When was the last time you accompanied someone down to Ayers Rock, Barry.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I am advised that, having handed him over to the ANPWS rangers, the Northern Territory government would have to take a step back in relation to security arrangements for the Singapore Prime Minister during the time that he was walking around that piece of territory that is alien to the Northern Territory. I find it most distasteful and unacceptable to Territorians. I will continue to work to have it eliminated.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on notice. For the the benefit of the member for MacDonnell, the answer is the Queen of Denmark.

Capricorn Productions - Contract with Tourist Commission

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

On 13 October, I asked this question of the Minister for Tourism. He promised to get back to me and he has not done so and therefore I ask the question again. During the last sittings, a statement was made that the film production company, Capricorn Productions, had failed to complete its \$800 000 contract with the Tourist Commission. Is it a fact that contract funds were used by Capricorn Productions to purchase a mobile production unit worth somewhere between \$120 000 to \$200 000? Is it also a fact that that unit was used only once or twice before being sold, with the company retaining the proceeds? What action did the minister take at that time and what action has been taken since to recover those public funds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, firstly, I apologise to the Leader of the Opposition because I did sign a reply. I will check and see what happened to that reply which contained the information that was available through the Tourist Commission in answer to his question. My understanding of the situation is that the company concerned did buy a mobile production unit. I have no idea, but I accept it if the Leader of the Opposition says that the company paid for it out of funds that were paid to it. Obviously, I have no internal knowledge of the workings of the company. We paid it the amount of money according to the contract that ...

Mr Smith: Even though it did not perform?

Mr POOLE: No, no. There were certain performance clauses in that contract and the company was paid. The first payment was made and then the second payment was made. Then the company ran into financial difficulties. Up to that stage, it had performed to the satisfaction of the Tourist Commission. As for what happened to that vehicle, I have no idea. Officers of the Tourist Commission have tried to talk to the liquidator. They have been pushed from pillar to post, I understand, and have spoken to a number of legal people and a number of accountants. The company has now been deregistered and the directors of the company have not made themselves available to answer the technical queries that the Leader of the Opposition has raised.

Mr Smith: Another \$120 000 has gone down the drain, and no one cares.

Darwin Tourism Feasibility Study

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is happening in relation to the tourism feasibility study being conducted in the Port Darwin area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members are probably aware that the government has commenced a study to identify the potential for developing tourism opportunities around the peninsula of Darwin, particularly around the port area. That study is being conducted in association with a study of some parts of the peninsula by the Darwin City Council and local tourist industry operators. The obvious aim is to utilise the natural environment and the

features of the port itself, including the safe harbour for fishing boats, to the best advantage. The Department of Transport and Works has engaged 2 consultants. The first is a local architectural firm, Woods Bagot, which is investigating the potential for tourism infrastructure. Its study is to be completed in December this year. The second is a local firm of consulting engineers, Sleeman Dunkley Tracy Mounsell Pty Ltd, which is looking at the impact of tourism on the operation of the port itself. That study is due to be completed in January.

A number of local businesses have come out of the woodwork and made suggestions about features which might be incorporated in the development of the peninsula. Some of those look extremely interesting. They include restaurants, fish markets and other related features. I am certainly confident that, early in the new year, in association with the Darwin City Council and the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association, we will be in a position to put to the public a comprehensive study setting out possible future directions in terms of tourism facilities on the Darwin peninsula.

Aboriginal Membership of Gove District
Hospital Management Board

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware that, according to the 1987-88 Annual Report of the Gove District Hospital Management Board, the composition of that board does not include a single Aboriginal person? Given the dependence of Aboriginal people on that hospital's services and their usage of them, will the minister undertake at the earliest opportunity to make the board more representative of the people whom the hospital services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be absolutely delighted to have involvement from people in every community which receives the various aspects of health and community services provided by this government. However, particularly in relation to Aboriginal people, I will not countenance token representation on any board whatsoever. Recently, I had a meeting in Darwin with Aboriginal health workers from throughout the Northern Territory and several from interstate. A number of very important issues were discussed and a number of recommendations which were put to me are now being addressed. One of those recommendations addressed the issue raised by the member for Nhulunbuy, and I gave the same response as that which I have just given. The fact is that, in general terms - and I stress that that does not mean in every individual case but in general terms - the attendance of Aboriginal people at the meetings of boards to which they have been appointed has been extremely poor.

I challenged the health workers at the meeting to seek out people who would be dedicated in giving their time to serve on such boards so that they could have a very substantial input into the affairs of hospitals throughout the Northern Territory. They have taken up that challenge and I am confident that they will not be putting forward token gestures next time vacancies crop up on the various hospital boards throughout the Northern Territory. I am sure that they will put substantial people forward and I will be very honoured indeed to appoint them as their names come forward.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Is he aware of the case of one Centralian pastoralist whereby mismanagement of the BTEC program cost him \$400 000 in 10 weeks this year? That followed an inaccurate test result for brucellosis and subsequent delays in getting accurate results from the department. Is he aware also of claims by another Centralian pastoralist that the losses caused by the project have now reached \$1m, and how can he possibly justify his complacent assumption that the program is not damaging the industry which he is here to protect?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, here we go again with more allegations. Unfortunately, the member for Stuart is unable or is not prepared to indicate who the people are who are concerned, which properties are involved and precisely what the problem is. As I have indicated to the honourable member previously, if he can provide me with precise information, I am only too pleased to have it investigated and I will get back to him.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr REED: By interjection, the honourable member is suggesting that it is one station. If he could provide some comprehensive information - and no doubt we will hear all about it today because there is an item on the Notice Paper - I would be only too happy to answer the allegations. To date, he has been unable to come up with any substantive information that can be investigated. If he can do so, I would be only too pleased to have the matter fully investigated.

Rabbit Flat Roadhouse Liquor Licence

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TOURISM

I am sure honourable members will fully appreciate the great significance of this particular question. Are there any plans to change the trading hours and liquor licence provisions at the Rabbit Flat Roadhouse?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Rabbit Flat Roadhouse is very important to the tourist industry because of its isolation on the Tanami Road. There are problems there and we have decided to assist the operator to achieve the operating hours that he requires. After discussions with Bruce Farrands of Rabbit Flat and information provided subsequently by the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission, we have decided that it is possible for Mr Farrands to amend his liquor licence from a roadside inn facility to a tavern licence. This has ramifications for travellers on that highway. It will enable him to trade on only 4 days per week, as he has proposed, with closure on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The current roadside inn licence will continue trading until Monday 2 January.

Meanwhile, there has been an application for a new style of licence by Mr Farrands. Because of his isolation, the commission has assisted him with preparing the necessary advertisements and lodged them with the Centralian Advocate and the Government Printer with the request that the commission be billed for all costs associated with those notices. In turn, those costs will

be recovered from Mr Farrands. We thought it necessary to take this action to ensure there was no delay in getting the application before the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission due to possible inconvenience to travellers in that isolated area. The commission has reduced the period for lodgement of objections to 14 days. The advertisement appears in the NT Government Gazette on 2 November and the commission will meet to discuss the application as soon as possible after the closing date of 16 November. I understand that is about to happen. The Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission is still bound by section 48 of the Liquor Act and if any objection is lodged within the prescribed period, the commission must meet to discuss the validity of the objection.

Mr Farrands has been afforded every assistance in his quest to obtain a variation to his licence and he is certainly well aware of all the actions that have been taken. After discussions with the Tourist Commission manager responsible for development, Richard O'Sullivan, Mr Farrands has told us he will have no problems with a new roadside facility being developed along the Tanami Road as long as it is some distance away from his property. The Tourist Commission has since been in contact with the Central Land Council which is investigating the possibility of developing a new roadside facility on the Tanami track at the Lajamanu Road turnoff, which is some 43 km north of Rabbit Flat. Royalties received by the traditional owners from the Granites and Tanami goldmines will provide the necessary funds to develop such a facility. Talks were held with the Central Land Council on 21 October in Alice Springs regarding the matter and the Central Land Council will continue to investigate the possibility and feasibility of running this roadside facility. There is also a possibility that the new roadhouse would not be applying for a liquor licence due to the sensitivity of the liquor issues there.

The oilfield which is located fairly close to the site at Kintaro would supply water. The Jungampa Association would be the developers and incorporated in the development could possibly be a base for outstations which could be created in this area. This base could incorporate health, education and maintenance facilities. In any event, the Tourist Commission will continue to liaise with the Central Land Council on this matter.

In terms of informing the general public of the partial closure of the Rabbit Flat facility, the Australian Automobile Association in the NT is contacting all its sister associations throughout Australia to inform all members of these new trading hours. All Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau staff throughout Australia have been informed of the new trading hours and this will be conveyed to all persons in contact with the commission or a bureau who intend travelling along this road.

Mr Ede: Are you going to put signposts on the highway?

Mr POOLE: Yes. The Tourist Commission has suggested that the Department of Transport and Works erect a sign at the Western Australia entrance into the Northern Territory and at the Stuart Highway junction. It has been suggested that the sign be in Japanese, English and German and advise of the condition and isolation of the track. These signs could be similar to those used on the Birdsville Track - that is, advising travellers to carry water, food, spare fuel etc.

There are some planned changes along that highway and I guess that, as a community, we should thank Bruce and his wife for operating that very isolated facility for the last 20 years or so. It is obvious that he has decided that he wants to take a bit of a break, at least for 3 days of the week.

Administrator of the Northern Territory

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

Could the Chief Minister advise Territorians whether he and the Prime Minister have agreed on the appointment of a new Administrator or whether there are any changes to be made at all?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I propose to make a statement on the subject of the Administrator at the appropriate time. Until such time as I am in a position to do that, I do not believe it is appropriate for me to speculate on the matter.

Katherine Airport

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the statement we heard on airports yesterday, which took up quite some of the time of the House, is he able to give any indication of what the future of the Katherine Airport terminal is to be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there was much discussion yesterday about responsibilities for airports and their facilities. It is fairly ironic that, while we were debating the future of our 2 major airports, information was made available to us about a fairly catastrophic decision concerning Katherine Airport. Unlike Territory-held strips, such as those at Yulara and Jabiru, and even strips like that at Milingimbi, where the Territory government accepts and meets its responsibilities most appropriately, the future of airports and facilities, such as those at Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, are in the hands of the federal government and it is quite distressing that news came through to my office yesterday that the \$600 000 redevelopment project for Katherine Airport had been scrapped. I understand that, instead, the federal government will allocate a token sum of money to repair the existing terminal.

Mr Coulter: It had better be quick. The white ants will eat it.

Mr FINCH: In fact, that is a problem. There are a number of problems associated with Katherine terminal facilities and one of them is that termites are eating the structure. We need to speak to our Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries and see if he has a special, accelerated breeding program for termites so that, perhaps, they can give us a bit of a hand.

However, it is not only termites nor the structure that are problems. Obviously, the amenity at Tindal is most inadequate, not only because of the role that Katherine and Tindal play in our tourism development but also because of the increase in traffic that will emanate from the Tindal RAAF Base facility. Whilst we were given assurances that the terminal was to be included the 1988-89 construction program, it seems that not only was the federal government going to drop that, it was not very keen to let us know about it. We found out about it almost by accident. Yesterday, officers from my department were informed by colleagues in other relevant federal departments that the terminal project had been 'deferred indefinitely'. 'Deferred indefinitely' means that we need to wait for another change in federal government, and I guess the only good point is that that is only 18 months away.

Whilst I have not had any positive confirmation or notification from the federal government, I understand that a representative from the federal minister's office has confirmed to one Northern Territory media representative that that rumour is entirely correct. I will be seeking to make further representations to the federal Minister for Transport and Communications Support to see if there is any possibility that this inappropriate and totally unacceptable move can be turned around.

Mr Dondas: I would not waste my time.

Mr FINCH: The member for Casuarina speaks from his experience with previous federal Ministers for Transport and Communications. Whilst I would not hold my breath, certainly I will be attempting to gain some satisfaction on behalf of residents of Katherine, and I am sure the member for Katherine and the people of Katherine who have put a great deal of work as a community into rationalising the initial design which was a bit grandiose. They put considerable effort into helping the federal government to come up with an appropriately modest facility at a cost of some \$600 000. I am sure they will be extremely disappointed but, on their behalf, I shall endeavour at least to have this totally unacceptable decision turned around.

Effects of Manganese at Angurugu

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware of the growing concern at Angurugu in relation to health problems associated with manganese? What action has he taken to reassure that community about those risks?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that it is accurate to say that there is growing concern. There has been some concern for quite a number of years. In fact, the gentleman who was quoted on the airwaves this morning has been out there doing research. He was employed by the mining company there for some time. The Menzies School of Health Research has been involved in the situation. It is working in close consultation with the experts on Groote Eylandt and we will take advice from it.

Herbicide Use at Oenpelli

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES.

The ABC radio news this morning intimated that a herbicide being used for the control of *Mimosa pigra* at Oenpelli may not be approved for such broad-scale use. Can the minister clarify the situation regarding the use of that herbicide?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I had a little difficulty in matching the headline with the actual substance of the news report. Honourable members will be aware of the problem which *Mimosa pigra* poses on our floodplains. It covers an estimated 30 000 ha in the Adelaide River area and another 15 000 ha in the Moil River area and western Arnhem Land. *Mimosa pigra* is a woody shrub which grows in very dense thickets and makes the land virtually useless. It has a very great impact from a conservation and recreation viewpoint and renders the land virtually useless for pastoral purposes.

The Northern Territory government initiated a biological control research program with CSIRO in 1979. Of course, programs of this nature have long lead times and the development of controls takes some time, particularly because of the need to ensure that any biological control which is introduced does not affect other plants or otherwise impact detrimentally on the environment. There is no better example of what can go wrong than what has happened with the cane toad. Whilst research into biological control continues, it is necessary to develop an integrated approach to the control of mimosa. If we sit by and do nothing, the plant will infest further areas and land will be lost for production and other purposes.

As a consequence of that, the use of Graslan 20P herbicide is to be expanded. Small areas have been trialed in recent years and it has been found that the herbicide has not spread beyond those areas. It is now necessary to determine the suitability of the use of the herbicide over larger areas. In conjunction with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Northern Land Council and local Aboriginal owners, a 2000 ha infestation near Oenpelli is being treated by the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries. The herbicide is being spread by air. Trials by the department during the last 5 years have found Graslan to be very effective in the control of mimosa. It has a number of advantages over other herbicides which warrant further trials in larger areas.

The pellet form of Graslan is less likely to drift from aerial application on to non-target areas than the liquid foliant sprays. Its residual nature can control seedling regeneration the following year, thus minimising further seed production and the need for annual chemical control. Being a dry pellet, there is no necessity to cart large volumes of water to the aircraft loading site. It is less sensitive to weather at the time of application than are the foliant liquid herbicides. The herbicide is contained in pelletised clay. After being applied from the air, it is leached into the ground following rain. It has been found to date, as I have indicated already, that the herbicide is residual and has not moved from the areas to which it has been applied. Principally, it attacks woody plants and has little effect on grasses which either regenerate from their own root stock or from seed stock.

I am sure that honourable members will agree that we cannot hesitate over the control of mimosa. If these trials continue to be effective, consideration will be given to expanding them in the hope that we can continue to apply control measures until such times as the biological control measure is introduced. Honourable members will be pleased to hear that we are working in close consultation with the Environment Unit of the Conservation Commission to monitor very closely the application of the herbicide and any other possible side effects or any drift that it might have from the site to which it is applied. We are also in consultation with the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory.

Dumping of Radio-active Material at Ranger

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In the last few days, we have heard of a truckload of radio-active material being put in the wrong place at Ranger. Can he give the Assembly and the Territorians listening the details?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no doubt honourable members will know that the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy is required by legislation to investigate possible infringements of the highly-regulated mining procedures at Ranger. In accordance with its obligations, Ranger informed the department last Friday afternoon of just such a technical infringement. Because of a failure in a discriminator, which sorts various ore grades, a quantity of low grade uranium-bearing rock had been placed in the waste rock dump which is outside the restricted release zone. It must be stressed that the dumped rock contained extremely low quantities of uranium ore, too low to be crushed, which is why it was consigned to waste. The infringement has not caused any concern for the environment in either the Department of Mines and Energy or the Office of the Supervising Scientist.

It is a minor matter which could be described as a technical infringement. Until a full report is compiled by the department, I am unable to report the duration of the failure of the discriminator or the amount of rock placed in the waste rock dump. However, I am advised that the matter is not one which should be viewed as posing any practical threat to the surrounding environment. Were it not for the fact that Ranger is the world's most highly-regulated mine, it probably would not have been a reportable matter at all. Remedial action has been taken by Ranger in the form of a wall built around the waste rock dump and repair of the fault discriminator.

Denial of Permit to Don Dunstan

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer to the visit to the Territory by the former Premier of South Australia, Mr Don Dunstan. Why was Don Dunstan unable to travel through local government communities even though his visit was coordinated by the Office of Local Government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a very good question. For some time, I have been attempting to bring to the Northern Territory representatives of local government, including Ministers of Local Government and Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs, to look at community government in the Northern Territory. On 2 occasions this year, I had organised meetings, the last of which was cancelled with only South Australia being able to attend. The minister from South Australia said to me at the ministers conference in Brisbane this year that, because they were very keen to look at community government, they would have somebody come up and have a look on their behalf. The minister appointed Don Dunstan, a former Premier of South Australia, to come to the Territory to look at community government. Members would be aware that Don Dunstan played a major role in setting up the land councils in the northern regions of South Australia and has maintained a strong interest in that area. Indeed, he has been very keen to ensure that Aboriginal people have responsibility for their own affairs at a local level.

I met with Don Dunstan in Darwin. In fact, I had dinner with him last week and we discussed community government and some of the difficulties that we are facing with respect to opposition from some sections of the Aboriginal bureaucracy and the land councils. Mr Dunstan had visited Daguragu, Batchelor College and Katherine. He was due to go to Ngukurr on the last day of his visit. I have with me the approvals from the Ngukurr community for

Mr Dunstan's visit. The first one is the application form sent from the Katherine office of the Northern Land Council to Ngukurr for a permit for 3 people - Don Dunstan and the 2 people with him. That was approved by Eric Roberts and I assume that that was during November. It is dated 16 November. I have also a permit signed by Henry Ponto, who is the real traditional owner of the area and who has the authority to grant this permit. It is signed 7 November 1988. On the night before they were due to visit Ngukurr, they received a phone call at their hotel in Katherine telling them that that approval had been withdrawn by Eric Roberts who is a representative of the Northern Land Council in that area. That has caused a great furore in the area. In fact, there is considerable opposition to Mr Roberts' withdrawal of that permit.

We know that there are problems there at present. Those problems have not been brought about by actions of the Northern Territory government. They have been brought about by the direct actions of the land council bureaucracy which is attempting to hang on to the power which it currently holds over Aboriginal people at community level. I believe that the withdrawal of the permit was a clear sign of that. Mr Dunstan had been around community governments in the Northern Territory for a few days. He had picked up the vibes that community government was effective and that people were happy with the ability it gave them to decide for themselves what they should be doing at the local community level. Because he had been picking up those vibes and because, during his visit to the Northern Land Council, he had sensed that it was opposed to community government, he was starting to get the picture. I believe that is the reason why his permit was withdrawn and he was unable to go to Ngukurr on the last day of his visit.

Mr Speaker, I would like to table 2 documents - the permits which were provided. I would suggest that members peruse them. I think it is an abominable situation when an officer - not a member - of the Northern Land Council can bring pressure to bear on a member of the land council at Ngukurr to withdraw a permit for such a prominent person. In fact, I think this is probably the worst thing that the land councils have done to date in their efforts to thwart the development of community government for Aboriginal people. For the first time, it has brought home to a senior person from interstate the interference of land councils in the running of the Northern Territory and in the ability of Aboriginal people to run their affairs at a local level which can only be done effectively through community government. That cannot be done through the major land councils.

Whilst I do not go out to Aboriginal communities to talk to people about their involvement with land councils, I acknowledge that they have a concern. I support the notion that they should discuss whether land councils, as they exist currently, are appropriate to their needs. Frankly, I suspect that, if they think about it enough, they will find that they are not. I believe that they will find that community government is by far the more effective means of giving people a say in how they run their affairs at community level.

I shall be writing to Mr Dunstan to apologise for the embarrassment that was caused to him. I abhor the attempts on the part of the land council bureaucracy to thwart the development of community government for the people of South Australia.

Commuter Taxi Services at Yulara

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The issue of commuter taxi service licences at Yulara is a vexed one. Can the minister give an assurance that the former commuter taxi service licensees will be able to advertise themselves as running taxis? I ask this because many visitors to Yulara, particularly overseas visitors, recognise the name 'taxi'. Secondly, can he explain why, after such a short trial period, the decision was taken to remove those commuter taxi service licences?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will need to get back to the honourable member with specific details. I am in a position to advise that the very vexed question of the various classifications of passenger transport licences is under review in an attempt to delineate the various classes. From one community to another, there is great complexity in terms of taxi licences, public hire cars, tourist plates, omnibuses, commuter taxis and so on.

After consultation with the community at Yulara, the commuter taxi was seen to be the appropriate class of licence there. From memory, it is a condition of commuter licences throughout the Territory that the term 'taxi' not be used. That term is restricted to specific taxi licences for which people pay an appropriate licence fee which may be as much as \$100 000 depending on the community to which it applies. I am not aware of the specific measures which are proposed in relation to the elimination or classification of the various types of plates, but I will get back to the honourable member with specific advice later in the day.

Review of School Fees

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Earlier this year, the minister called for a review of school fees. What progress has been made on the review and when will the results be known?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members would be aware that the issue of school fees was raised because there were considerable variations in fees from one school to another. I set up a working party to look at specific matters in relation to school fees and I broadened the terms of reference so that they took in a whole range of other issues of concern in the general operation of schools. The membership of the working party included parents, principals and officers of the department. It has prepared a report which is before me at present. The report has suggested a number of new schemes. For example, it has been put to me that the phrase 'school fee' is both misleading and inappropriate and that we should be looking at using terms such as 'parent contributions'. I will be looking at a whole range of issues which have been raised.

The working party held the very firm view that school fees should be used only to enhance a school's basic education program. That is something which we will have to look at. We are responsible for ensuring the provision of funds to operate the basic education programs in schools. I will be making a decision on that particular report in the near future. At this stage, I would urge the schools to operate normally as they have in the past and, at some time in the new year, I will make a further announcement on this matter.

Planning Act

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I have asked this question before and I have written to the honourable minister about it but I have not had any reply. Will he give consideration to revamping the Planning Act with regard to the secrecy provisions now attending the meetings of the Planning Authority, the composition of the Appeals Board, the minister's intervention in development applications and rezoning applications, the subject of costs in appeals and who should pay, simplifying the appeals process, direct and indirect interests of members of the Planning Authority and more consideration for local members on the Planning Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think it would be appropriate for the detailed information the honourable member requires to be put on notice.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I sent you a letter but you have not replied.

Mr MANZIE: I would like to clarify a couple of matters. Under the provisions of the act and in its operation, the minister does not interfere with planning processes. I remind honourable members that, in fact, the majority of people on the Planning Authority are nominees and members of local governments. Suggestions that there is no local representation are untrue. Suggestions that the minister becomes involved in any way in that planning process and influences the decisions of the authority have no basis in fact whatsoever. If the member has any evidence that I, as a minister, become involved in directing the Planning Authority and the making of its decisions, I would ask her to ask me a specific question. If she could refer to a specific area, I could give a specific answer. In fact, it is untrue even to suggest such behaviour.

Northern Territory University

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

There has been an increase in debate about the future location of the new Northern Territory University. What is to be the future location of the university? In particular, does the decision in respect of Palmerston still stand?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a very complex matter because many issues need to be looked at. Cabinet had made a decision to site the university at Palmerston and that is still on the books. The matter of the siting of the university is to come before Cabinet very shortly. I will be able to make an announcement on that by the end of the year. We are not looking at a university situation for 5 or 10 years; we are looking down the track some 50 years. We need to be sensible about it. It is not a matter of simply saying that it should go on the Casuarina campus or whatever. We have to look responsibly at the whole exercise and look to the future. I will bring this matter before Cabinet in the very near future. We have to look at population projections, accommodation, transport and a whole range of matters that are vital to the siting of the university. Hopefully, before the end of the year, I will be making an announcement as to where the new university will be sited.

Women in the Public Service

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Women comprise 59% of the public service yet, on the figures supplied to this Assembly yesterday, they comprise only 12% of the positions at E4 level and above. Of course, that category holds the prime decision-making positions within the Northern Territory Public Service. How do these dramatic statistics gel with the claim of the government, particularly of the minister, that the government has an effective equal employment opportunities policy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously the Leader of the Opposition has a very short memory. I read out some figures last night. I must admit that, since we do not have the latter part of Hansard for yesterday, I do not have them in front of me because I have left that piece of paper in my office. 22.75% of the E levels are women. Indeed, in my department, the Acting Secretary is a female. In the Department of the Chief Minister and the Department of Health and Community Services, the Deputy Secretaries are women.

Yesterday, I highlighted for the Leader of the Opposition the women at E levels in South Australia, that well-known Labor state. I do not have exact figures in front of me, but certainly they were under 9%. In Western Australia, the figure is below 9%. In the long-held Labor state of New South Wales, which is now improving under the Liberals, the figure is 13%. We have 22.7% at E levels in the Northern Territory, yet I am being told that from 0% to 22.7% in 10 years demonstrates a failure of the equal opportunity plan. We have equal opportunity management plans in the Territory, and actions speak louder than words.

Mr Smith: Where are the actions?

Mr McCARTHY: It is happening. Mr Speaker, just look at the results: 22.7% is better than any state in Australia.

Mr Smith: Are you happy with that result?

Mr McCARTHY: No, I am not, and we are continually improving, year by year. Only in the last 12 months, the Deputy Secretary of my department appointed a woman into that area.

Mr Smith: Oh, wow!

Mr McCARTHY: The situation is improving year by year. They do not want to listen to the facts, Mr Speaker. The facts hurt because those Labor states that members of the opposition like to talk about are not doing so well. We know a great deal about Western Australia Incorporated. There are direct links down there. The figures for Western Australia Incorporated and South Australia are below 9%. In fact, it is considerably less than that in South Australia. It is improving now in New South Wales under a Liberal government. The figure is 22.7% in the Northern Territory. I cannot repeat those figures too often because they demonstrate the facts.

Tourism Statistics

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

My question relates to the recent figures he issued on the increase in tourism figures to the Northern Territory. The reason we ask the question is that considerable doubt and confusion has been created by his claim that the tourism sector has enjoyed a 22% growth. The doubt and confusion is experienced by the accommodation owners who say: 'If there has been 22% growth, why aren't we getting our share of it?' Will the honourable minister confirm that the 22% growth figure is grossly inflated by the inclusion of normal visits by friends and relatives, who do not stay in paid accommodation, and does he acknowledge that the paid, bed-night increase figure is not 22%, but 5% or 6%? If he acknowledges that, will he accept that it is vital that the industry be supplied with accurate figures for its own planning needs in future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I guess that I acknowledge all that the Leader of the Opposition has said. The major point in any visitor survey is that visiting friends and relatives are worth as much to the economy of the Northern Territory as anybody else. They all eat, visit restaurants and buy petrol.

Mr Smith: They do not stay in paid accommodation.

Mr POOLE: The Northern Territory Monitor, which is the methodology of transcribing the statistics that are collected throughout the Northern Territory through visitor surveys, has always indicated that it includes visiting friends and relatives.

Mr Smith: The point is that people were going on the figures as given in your statement.

Mr POOLE: I pick up that point. My statement was no different from any other statement that has ever been made throughout Australia by any other tourism minister. To my knowledge, no states ...

Mr Smith: Is that an excuse?

Mr POOLE: No, it is not an excuse. I do not think an excuse is needed on a question like this. Whether the Leader of the Opposition likes it or not, he will find that anybody involved in small business in the Northern Territory accepts the fact that visitors to the Northern Territory, whether they be commercial travellers or friends or relatives of people who live in the Northern Territory, are a vital component of the industry. We accept that this has been a tough year. The fact of the matter is that there has been a 22% increase.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that the figure was discussed with many major hotel operators and small hotel operators prior to my announcement because I accept that statistics can be made to say anything. In making that announcement, it was very important to me that I did not give the impression that this had been a fantastic year and that everything was rosy in the tourist industry. Among the 40 or 50 hotel and motel operators to whom I spoke, the general feeling was very much along the lines suggested by the statistics released in the NT Tourist Monitor. Both major airlines reported that their percentage increases this year in the Northern Territory were in

the order of 22% to 24%. I think there was a 2% difference between the 2 airlines. Figures for visitor nights certainly reflect the increases quoted in the figures.

I cannot find any evidence in the figures which indicates that my comments in this House on a previous occasion were in any way inaccurate. The Top End showed a 17% increase. The Katherine area had a 29% increase and the Tablelands a 60% increase, most of which occurred in the Gulf area. The Centre experienced a 24% increase. Whether the Leader of the Opposition likes it or not, many people in the tourist industry are operating quite successfully. Visitor nights increased by 14%. Whether the Leader of the Opposition acknowledges it or not, that is a statistical fact and it relates to hotels and motels. The commercial market increased by only 6%.

Mr Smith: That is right. That is the figure that I gave you.

Mr POOLE: I have no argument with that. But, at the end of the day, the total number of people who came to the Northern Territory increased by 22%.

Mr Smith: The commercial market increased by 6%.

Mr POOLE: We acknowledge that, overall in marketing, the one area that was probably soft this year was in the coach marketing area. I spoke to a number of coach operators. We really suffered in the 1-off coach market. For years, the guy who operates the school buses in a fairly large town or small city has been coming to the Northern Territory on 1 or 2 trips. This year, they all went to Expo and there is no argument about that. I would also add that one of the larger operators of a tourist attraction in the Northern Territory - the crocodile farm in Darwin - told me that his bookings by coach companies are already up 40% for next year, and that is what it is all about. Everybody acknowledged this year that Expo was a major attraction and, in these tight economic times - and the opposition have things to answer for in respect of that with their federal colleagues in Canberra - the average Australian cannot afford to take 2 holidays. This year, many of them went to Expo. For us in the Northern Territory, whether the increase is 6% or 22%, depending on what area of the market you are talking about, is largely irrelevant. Every state in Australia, apart from south-east Queensland, suffered a percentage decline. That includes the visiting friends and relatives. The Northern Territory did not.

I am quite satisfied that the Tourist Commission responded to the market demands quite well earlier this year through the amount of money that it was able to obtain from the tourism marketing duty. It went out into the marketplace and sold extremely well. All the sales in every bureau went over budget this year. That is not to say they had a perfect year nor is it to say that everything is sweet and rosy in the tourist industry. As everybody knows, it never has been. It is a hard industry to make money in. The properties that are well-marketed, that have the right financial package behind them and that have not borrowed 99% of their money make money in the Northern Territory and always have. The properties that have a poor financial package, that are poorly marketed and that do not spend the amount of money they need to spend on marketing suffer, and they will continue to suffer, as they have in past years. I am sure some of them will continue to do so in the future.

Life Education Centres Telethon

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer the honourable minister to the telethon that was held last weekend to promote Life Education Centres and the increasing interest that is developing throughout Australia in this very worthwhile cause. Does he support the Life Education Centre concept and, to that end, is the government prepared to provide funds to help the Life Education Centres set up mobile caravans to serve the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and begin by saying that I am very supportive of Life Education Centres. I think they do a wonderful job in our community. Indeed, I have had a submission from the Life Education Centres in relation to assistance that the government could give. I have been looking at ways by which we can do that. The problem is how it will fit into the education system. I have always seen Life Education Centres as being separate and assisting the education process. I can assure honourable members that that is a objective that I am moving towards. The problem is that the department, which provides a valuable service in that area as well, may be seen as taking over the Life Education Centres. I will ensure that that will not happen. However, I will seek to provide some form of assistance in relation to ongoing costs to the educator.

We support the Life Education Centres wholeheartedly. I think they do a wonderful job. Provided they fit in with our curricula, I cannot see any problem with them continuing to visit the communities throughout the Territory. I wish that more caravans were available. Obviously, as a result of the wonderful effort from the people of Australia in the telethon, they will be able to provide more caravans to meet that need in our community. We are looking at providing some form of assistance to Life Education Centres.

BTEC Program

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I remind the minister that it is now only 24 days to Christmas, which is a significant date for pastoralists in central Australia. It is the date for which there was a commitment from the minister's predecessor and himself that the impending-free line that puts restrictions on the movement of stock out of pastoral properties would be moved north to above Elliott and just south of Katherine. Will people receive that Christmas present? Will the target be reached by Christmas Day and where will the line be at that stage?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to hear that question from the member for Stuart, given the stance that he took on the issue yesterday, the strange statements that he made in relation to the BTEC program and the clear evidence that he provided that he does not understand the program and wants to write it off. Indications from the honourable member were that the 1992 target had to be abandoned. Of course, effectively that would mean that the whole program would fall apart.

Today, the honourable member is asking when the impending-free line will be moved north, as if that is a matter of great concern. He is trying to do a

little grandstanding in an endeavour to recover some credibility with the pastoral industry because events yesterday indicated clearly that he does not understand the program at all. The member for Stuart is trying to patch up the dreadful mess he made in the House yesterday and in October, when he made statements in relation to the BTEC program and the cattle industry and cast aspersions on all sorts of other people, both publicly and in this House.

I will be meeting with the Northern Territory BTEC Committee in December and relocation of the impending-free line is on the agenda for consideration and discussion at that meeting. The pastoral industry in the Northern Territory will be advised of the results of that meeting. We heard yesterday the minutes of all the meetings that the honourable member has been to. No doubt, he will obtain a copy somewhere of the BTEC Committee meeting and he might be able to learn about that. He will not be there, just as he has not been to any of the other meetings of the industry.

Mr Ede: Are you going to answer the question or not?

Mr REED: He does not go to meetings, he does not consult the industry and he does not have a clue what he is talking about when he refers to the BTEC program.

Mr Ede: Answer the question.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, the matter will be considered at the next BTEC Committee meeting and I will be able to advise the honourable member of the outcome of the discussions held at that meeting. The meeting is scheduled for the week after next and advice will be forthcoming following the decision reached at that meeting.

Apprenticeship Training Schemes 1989

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Claims have been made that, in the past 12 months, the number of apprenticeship training schemes have fallen away. In view of the fact that we are now coming into the new school program for 1989, what steps has he taken in an attempt to increase the number of apprenticeship schemes that will be available in the 1989 school year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, preliminary figures for September 1988 show that the current downturn in the building industry is reflected in a downturn in that area of apprenticeships in the Northern Territory. Actually, figures for apprentices in the Northern Territory are up. The figures in September 1985 were 1283; in September 1986, 1287; in September 1987, 1265; and in September 1988, 1294 which is up 29 on the previous year. Perhaps one of the promising aspects is that there is a continuing increase in the number of females in apprenticeships in the Northern Territory. I think that reflects the efforts of my department and the Division of Employment and Training in attempting to make a greater diversity of apprenticeships available in the Northern Territory and encouraging women to take up employment in areas that have not been traditional for women in the past.

One of the most effective means that we have in the Northern Territory for increasing apprenticeship numbers is our well-funded and very comprehensive school leaver program. For the last 2 years, we have put significant sums of

money into school leaver programs. This was an initiative that I brought to Cabinet last year to improve the positions available for school leavers at the end of 1987, when we knew there was a downturn and that we would need to encourage employers to take on school leavers who were coming on the labour market in fairly large numbers. That has been a very effective program. It is so effective that we have put up a similar sum of money this year, which will expand the program quite significantly, and I expect that we will be able to increase the number of trainees by up to 350 places.

As I said previously, the downturn in the building industry has caused us some concern. Apprenticeships in the building industry are down from 201 in 1987 to 176 this year. The numbers in the metal and electrical trades have shown significant increases and that is what has turned the figures around. The State Square proposal is now under way and I would expect that to improve the number of apprenticeship places in the building industry throughout the coming year. Of course, if the federal government and the Federal Airports Corporation were to come good with the developments at the Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs Airports, apprenticeship numbers would increase significantly.

The Northern Territory government is providing support for school leavers, particularly in the form of traineeships, which are the up and coming form of training for employment. Traineeship programs throughout the Northern Territory are now making significant inroads into the training of employees for all industries. I hope that we can continue this trend and I am certain that the very effective methods which have been implemented will help to achieve this.

Forthcoming Visit to Indonesia by Chief Minister

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Is it a fact that the Chief Minister is preparing for a second visit to Indonesia and that, once again, he plans to be accompanied by a large media contingent? Is it also a fact that the Chief Minister has approved the exclusion of ABC television from that contingent? Is the Chief Minister aware that the ABC is the only television broadcaster which covers the whole of the Territory and can he explain his reason for excluding the national broadcaster?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the short answer to the first 2 questions asked by the honourable member is no. However, I will expand briefly on my proposed forthcoming trip to Jakarta, hopefully to meet the President of Indonesia and senior ministers. I hope to be accompanied by some members of the media, although the contingent will not be as large as that which went to East Timor which, I believe, included 11 members of the Northern Territory media. It is proposed to take 3 members of the media on this particular trip and I have given no instructions whatsoever in relation to excluding the ABC and no proposition has been put to me suggesting that I should. If such a proposition is put to me, obviously it will be considered on its merits. At present, however, the honourable member is clearly operating on information which I do not have. If I am to make the decision, the matter will be in my hands.

Katherine Airport

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question follows from the question asked yesterday by the member for Casuarina in relation to Katherine Airport. On ABC radio this morning, the member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, made allegations that the Minister for Transport and Works had misled the House in relation to promises by the federal government for the construction of a terminal at Katherine Airport. Can the minister advise the House whether, in fact, he has misled the parliament and what is the true position in relation to Commonwealth promises concerning Katherine Airport?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in no way whatsoever have I misled the House or the public of the Northern Territory in regard to the Katherine Airport project. The apologist for the federal government in the Northern Territory, the honourable Warren Snowdon, is undoubtedly feeling extremely sensitive about matters relating to airports generally. In fact, Mr Snowdon accompanied me on a trip to Katherine, among other places, late last year with the then federal Minister for Transport, Peter Duncan. During that visit, preliminary plans for the new airport terminal at Katherine were relayed to myself. Warren Snowdon was there to help in canvassing comment on the design from the Katherine community. It was proposed that the terminal would be constructed in 1988-89. I took the design sketches in good faith. I was asked not to make them public and I did not do so. Certainly I canvassed the opinion of the local community, particularly the council.

Mr Collins: How could you not make them public and canvass opinion?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen has illustrated clearly his lack of capacity in all matters throughout these entire sittings.

We provided comment to the federal department. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, the federal department wrote to us saying: 'As discussed on 20 June 1988, find enclosed copies of drawings etc for the proposed new passenger terminal'. It referred to a new passenger terminal, not repairs to a termite-ridden old building. The letter continued: 'Australian Construction Services preliminary estimate for this work is \$500 000. This proposal is currently included on our 1988-89 draft works program with a tender target date of January 1989 with completion of construction expected in December 1989'. It was signed: 'Department of Transport and Communications Design Agent and Construction Agent'. I am happy to table that letter, Mr Speaker.

From our conversations with the then federal minister, I and my department were under the very clear understanding that, subject only to budgetary control, that item was to be proceeded with. It was included on the draft program. Of course, what the federal member gave us this morning was a clear indication of the total revocation of a commitment to airports and air terminals in the Northern Territory. Mr Speaker, while airports around Australia have been upgraded over the last decade or 2 ...

Mr Hatton: And Cocos Island.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, we can include Vanuatu and all sorts of places overseas.

However, let us get back to the Northern Territory because that is what is pertinent to us and what ought to be pertinent to the federal member. Quite clearly, that proposal was to be included in 1988-89. It was clearly explained by the federal member this morning that, despite the fact that everywhere else in Australia had copped its share of the taxpayer's dollar, once again the Northern Territory will not receive a cracker. The \$95m for Darwin has gone, the \$20m for Alice Springs has gone and the lousy \$0.6m for Katherine has gone. The reason it has gone is because the federal government has decided that distribution of the taxpayer's dollar to the Northern Territory is no longer desirable and it will hand the responsibility over to the airline companies. The federal member suggested this morning that it was now Ansett NT's fault that the proposal was not going ahead.

It is very easy for the federal government to turn its back on the travelling public of Australia and the Northern Territory by saying that either the FAC or the airlines will have to carry the bundle, but it is totally unreasonable. Ansett is a commercial company and, if it were to pay the \$0.6m that should come from the taxpayer's purse for works overdue for a decade, it would have to increase its charges. That is the principle applying all around Australia. That is why the cost of airline tickets is rising. The costs have been built into the airline tickets as the federal government tries to force responsibility on the industry through the FAC or, in this case, directly.

Mr Smith: I thought you believed in user-pays?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, of course I do, but I believe in the equal sharing of the taxpayer's dollar. If it is all right for Townsville, a Labor-held seat, to receive money for a new terminal, if it is all right for Cairns, Brisbane and Coffs Harbour to get their money, what is wrong with the Northern Territory receiving its share? What has Vanuatu to do with the Australian taxpayer?

No doubt, members opposite are ashamed of their federal colleague, Warren Snowdon, for his apologetic attitude. I have not misled the House. In fact, the journalist from Katherine yesterday went to the trouble of ringing the federal minister's office. Officers have been ringing the federal minister's office for almost a week. We cannot get a phone call returned. Is that cooperation? However, a journalist from Katherine was able to make contact. I will quote him because he had access to the federal minister's office: 'A spokesman for Transport Federal Communications and Aviation Support Minister, Mr Gary Punch, confirmed the \$600 000 development was delayed'. If it was not going to happen, how could it be delayed, Mr Speaker? From here on, we cannot rely on the local opposition or our federal member. All we can do is rely on the termites to do the job for us.

Darwin Taxis

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

At some time during the last few days, I was given some information by a taxi driver relating to work sheets over 18 days where, to put it shortly, for a 12-hour working week, I calculate the average amount of money taken after petrol had been paid for was \$61.50 or about \$5.13 an hour. Does the minister think that adding 4 taxis to the Darwin system will assist the public when present drivers are managing to average a wage of only \$5 an hour?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the exact survey that is being completed but, through the NT Taxi Council, we do carry out surveys to gauge both the needs of and the viable return to the taxi industry. Unfortunately, there are substantial peaks and troughs in the demand for taxis. Over the last 4 days, in casual conversation, I have heard at least 4 complaints about the non-attendance of taxis in response to requests. One person waited 45 minutes or longer. This has not occurred only at peak times. One delay occurred on Saturday morning. Certainly, on Saturday evening, which is a peak period, there was another incident. After an hour, no taxi had arrived. Quite simply, there are periods of peak demand which the existing industry is unable to meet. The NT Taxi Council needs to assess the situation and develop an innovative system which will provide a comprehensive service to the general community and, more particularly, as I am sure the Minister for Tourism would agree, to the tourist industry.

Whilst we are endeavouring to rationalise the total passenger-carrying system, including private hire car and tourist plates, it is necessary to address the vexed question of numbers of taxi plates. That is the industry where prices will be reflected by demand and it is the only sector where owners of vehicles can look forward to capital gains. It is a very complex issue. That study will be used extremely constructively to assess how many extra taxi plates will be required and whether there is a need for special requirements governing restricted periods for use, type of service or whatever.

Town Camps and Local Government Councils

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Is he attempting to amalgamate Aboriginal town camps into local government councils as suggested by at least one Aboriginal organisation, and what has been the reaction to any moves for closer cooperation between these bodies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, comments have been made that I have been attempting to amalgamate town camp organisations with the municipal councils. As honourable members will be aware, in most of the major centres there is a fairly large number of town camps. Alice Springs would be the most obvious example. Town camps are fairly prolific there and, in many cases, are carrying out functions which are quite clearly the responsibility of municipal government.

I have no wish to detract from the good work that the town camp organisations are doing. The Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs and the town camp organisation in Tennant Creek are carrying out very good work on behalf of the citizens of their communities. However, there is a degree of duplication in the work carried out by town camp organisations and municipal councils. That provides a good case for asking municipal councils and town camps to sit down together and talk about the ways in which they could come together and carry out some of those functions with less duplication.

I first raised this matter at the combined local government meeting in Darwin earlier this year. That raised a few eyebrows because it was thought that I was making an attempt to push the town camps out of existence. That is certainly not my intention. As I said, the town camp organisations are doing a great deal of very good work for their citizens. They all have workshops.

They do considerable housing and building work, mechanical maintenance and area beautification as well as providing training. In Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, they have well-established nurseries to help in the greening of those townships. Their work is excellent. However, where there is duplication, it is my role as minister responsible for local government to ensure that the taxpayers' dollars are expended in the most reasonable and economical way. I have asked the town camp organisations and municipal councils, both through the forum of the combined local government meeting and at various meetings with town councils and town camp organisations, to sit down together. Through the Office of Local Government, recently I appointed a consultant to sit down with people from the town camps and municipal councils to talk these issues through.

Mr Speaker, there is not only much which municipal councils can do for town camp organisations, there is much that town camp organisations can do for municipal governments. In fact, the nurseries which they operate would be a valuable asset to any community. If the town camp organisations are prepared to grow trees for beautification in the more arid areas of the Northern Territory - and I am sure they are prepared to do that because they are looking for markets - they can be a real asset to the towns in which they live. In much of their work in mechanical and building training, they are not duplicating municipal work except perhaps in smaller centres such as Borroloola and Elliott. Generally, however, municipal councils are not involved in building and maintenance and, therefore, the town camps are not duplicating that role.

The very significant employment and training programs that I have put in place are now operating in many centres and will expand significantly in 1989. Those programs will assist town camp organisations in obtaining funds which they might miss out on if a decision were taken somewhere down the line to have less duplication of systems of local government in our major towns. It is quite clear to me and I think it is clear to every member here that there is no place for local government within local government, based on the grounds of race. There is no place for that at all. As minister, I certainly will not allow that to happen. It is my intention to continue the dialogue between municipal councils and town camps to ensure that we do not end up with duplicated local government in our centres.

Nhulunbuy High School

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can the minister assure myself and the parents of children attending the Nhulunbuy High School that it will have the services of a special education unit in 1989, in line with similar services provided in other high schools throughout the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware that the Nhulunbuy High School has had a submission before the department for some time in relation to the setting up of a special unit. Quite often, these submissions become held up for one reason or another. I believe that it has been determined that there is a need to establish a special unit at Nhulunbuy. I am looking at setting up a special unit there with a view to providing a special teacher plus an aide for 1989.

If members have problems in their particular areas, if they could contact me or my office ...

Mr Ede: I did that in relation to Willowra.

Mr HARRIS: Why don't you ask me a question about Willowra? I have been waiting for you to do so.

Mr Ede: Why don't you just give me the answer?

Mr HARRIS: Willowra is a separate issue, and I am quite happy to talk about it if the member wants to raise it. I was waiting for you. Come in spinner.

Mr Speaker, if members do have problems, they should contact me and I will examine those matters. I am not saying that I will respond to members' every desire. We have certain criteria that have to be met and we are responsible in the decision-making process. However, I can assure honourable members that such matters will be looked at responsibly. As I have indicated, we will establish a special unit at Nhulunbuy and we will have a special teacher and teacher aide over there in 1989.

New Land Councils

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

In the press and on radio in recent days, many comments have been made in respect of land councils and their future directions and, in particular, the possible formation of new councils. Can the minister advise the Assembly of the government's position in relation to the possible formation of a south-east Arnhem land council and similar breakaway movements referred to in the media?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have made no secret of the fact that the Northern Territory government would welcome the formation of smaller, regional land councils. However, I can assure honourable members that the Northern Territory government has not played a role in the recent events leading to the push by south-east Arnhem Land people for their own land council. It is obvious to me that, in certain areas around the Territory, Aboriginal people are expressing their dissatisfaction with the way the Northern and Central Land Councils are handling their affairs.

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act is a federal act and it is time that the federal government took some more responsibility for the administration and impact of that legislation in the Territory. The land councils are charged with the responsibility to conciliate where disputes arise between Aboriginal groups on Aboriginal land. However, these emerging land councils are saying that they have no confidence in the Northern and Central Land Councils. I am obtaining legal advice as to whether it would be appropriate to have the Aboriginal Land Commissioner investigate these situations. Most of these disputes are arising on land which was formerly reserves and became Aboriginal land by decree without investigation into traditional ownership. I think it is normally referred to as schedule 1 land.

Honourable members may be aware that the Aboriginal Land Rights Act contains provisions whereby such matters may be referred to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner. Such action would provide for an objective assessment in a less political forum. Honourable members may also be aware that the Land Rights Act required the land councils to maintain a register of traditional

owners. The land councils objected to this requirement and the act was subsequently amended to have this responsibility made a discretionary one. On receipt of legal advice, I intend to take the matter up with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

It seems to me that the Northern and Central Land Councils, as well as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, have lost touch with Aboriginal people in the Territory. Letters to the federal minister, objecting to land council activities, objecting to the proposed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and seeking assistance to form separate land councils, have all gone unheeded. There comes a time when these smaller groups, lacking material resources as they do, do need help to implement their wishes. Who are they to turn to? The Northern Territory government has received a written request from the South-east Arnhem Council seeking financial assistance, and government officers are meeting the council's steering committee today to consider this matter.

Members would have read the story in the Weekend Australian about the Anmatjerre group of central Australia. These people have used the small profits from its community store to travel their country speaking to all of their kinfolk to determine their views on matters such as mining, ATSIC and separate land councils. The final \$480 in their bank account was spent on bus fares to send a 4-man delegation to Darwin to appeal to the Territory government for help to have their views made known to the federal government.

Mr Speaker, I have referred to only 2 of these emerging land councils. To the best of my knowledge, 5 applications have been made to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and I am advised that there could possibly be up to a further 10. Small, regional land councils will be able to get on with the task of assisting the traditional owners manage their land, as does the very efficient and properly organised Tiwi Land Council, without having to worry about the preparation of land claims and the national political agenda. It is obvious that the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has a problem in deciding how to address this push for additional land councils in the Territory and the Northern Territory government will seek to cooperate with him, his department and the Aboriginal groups in the bush to resolve these issues constructively.

Parole and Early Release Policies

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he considering any proposal to reduce the prisoner population in Territory jails by reviewing the parole periods for prisoners and allowing longer term prisoners to take the opportunity to obtain early release?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member's question gives me the opportunity to say, once again, that the most successful government in Australia today in terms of reducing prisoner numbers is undoubtedly that in the Northern Territory. Figures that I received recently suggested that, over the past 15 months, we have had a reduction of something like - and I am taking this figure from memory - 23% or 24% in our prison numbers. The best efforts of other governments throughout Australia have resulted in an increase of some 3% or 4% in their prisoner numbers. The reason for the large reduction here is the many programs that we have implemented over the past couple of years. They are all working extremely well. I include in that the community service

orders scheme and the home detention scheme which is unique in Australia and is being looked at by other jurisdictions. We are constantly reviewing all areas of correctional services. Undoubtedly, the area that the honourable member has mentioned will come under that review.

Jet-standard Airstrip for Kakadu National Park

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to discussions and previous questions concerning the desire to obtain a jet-standard airstrip in Kakadu National Park. What stage has planning reached for this project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, on the last sitting day of this year, let me relay at least some good news to the travelling public of the Northern Territory. Fortunately, the Northern Territory government has charge of airport facilities in Kakadu as well as at Yulara. We are undertaking some expansion work at Yulara to meet the very heavy tourist demand. Rather than being 10 years behind the times in so far as planning and implementation are concerned in regard to Kakadu, we are 5 years ahead. We are planning constructively and progressively for a jet-standard airstrip in Kakadu. That development has some status in the plan of management of Kakadu National Park and some studies have been under way in relation to that. In fact, I understand that a report is being finalised prior to final appraisal by the Department of Transport and Works before the next stage - that of planning the full environmental impact statement - is undertaken.

Officers of the Department of Transport and Works have been negotiating with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service people, the Aboriginal community in Kakadu and other interested parties. A preferred site has been identified and selected to ensure absolute minimum disturbance to the environment whilst remaining quite accessible to the park itself. The Territory government has undertaken to manage the existing Jabiru strip for a further 5-year term. We have taken it over from the mining company and, unless an ore body is found near it, we will have access to it for another 5 years until the proposed \$3m airstrip suitable for F28s is completed. The new airstrip will provide excellent access for tourists, for the evacuation of medical cases and so forth. The Territory government is on target with its airport planning. In the future, travellers will be able to reach Kakadu more easily, perhaps even directly from Yulara, once access is provided via a fully bituminised airstrip of an appropriately high standard.

Demolition of Ward Building

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What arrangements have been made to maintain work-place standards in the Ward Building whilst one end of it is in the process of being demolished? Secondly, what is the minister doing to replace the 64 parking bays which have been lost to employees in that building as a consequence of all parking spaces being utilised during the demolition operation?

ANSWER

The car parking shortfall is a non-event. Appropriate parking space has already been made available. The number of spaces previously available far

exceeded the requirements. In fact, many of the spaces were utilised by people working elsewhere in the city. We have already provided temporary car parks as well as home garaging for government cars.

Members interjecting.

Mr FINCH: If honourable members would open their ears, they would hear that there has been a full and proper assessment of the car parking needs. I understand that the parking needs of employees in the Ward Building have been met and that there are no ongoing concerns there. We are continuing to monitor the situation. We have given an undertaking to the council as well as to our employees.

As far as the work environment in the Brennan Building is concerned, of course there will be some noise disruption. That is being kept to a required minimum level under the terms of the contract, which also provides for such matters as the control of dust levels. These aspects are monitored continually and appropriately and, whilst there is some disturbance to staff, I trust that they will be satisfied that the works themselves and the jobs which are being provided are ample recompense for that short-term discomfort.

Northern Territory Fresh Fish Industry

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Recently, the minister visited the New South Wales Fish Marketing Authority in Pymont. I might say that an early morning visit to the oyster room there can result in one of the best breakfasts available in Australia, a fact to which I am sure the member for Nhulunbuy will attest. As a result of the minister's visit, and a further visit to Darwin by the Board of the New South Wales Fish Marketing Authority, can the minister advise the House what developments are occurring in the Northern Territory fresh fish industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as indicated by the member for Karama, we did visit the Sydney fish markets a month or so ago. We inspected the building and the new facilities which have been constructed there and found them to be very impressive. Following that visit, members of the Board of the New South Wales Fish Marketing Authority came to Darwin to look at our industry at first-hand and see what we had to offer. They were very impressed with both the quality of the product and the species of fish that were available, given that some local species are not available currently on the Sydney or the southern markets in large numbers. These include gold band snapper and red emperor.

The local company, Seanorth, a commercial fishing joint-venture, is trialing fish traps. The benefits which the Northern Territory can derive from the expansion of our fishing industry are considerable. The members of the board were very impressed with our product and with the high level of cooperation and the good working relationship between the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and the fishing industry in the Northern Territory.

The department is undertaking extensive research in the Northern Territory fishery. The results of recent research have demonstrated that the shelf life of fresh fish in the Northern Territory can be extended considerably, with resulting benefits to the industry. Indeed, tomorrow and on Saturday, a symposium will be held in Darwin, organised jointly by the NT Fishing Industry

Training Committee and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries. The shelf-life issue will be addressed at that symposium, along with the benefits to industry. Considerable benefits and opportunities are available for our local fish product throughout Australia. The New South Wales market has a demand that exceeds the supply, and I am sure that some of the opportunities will be realised in the near future.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Firefighting Services in Aboriginal Communities

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer a question asked of me in an earlier sittings by the member for Arafura. I apologise for the late response to this question. It became caught up in all my paperwork and I did not get to it at the appropriate time.

The question was: what action is the government taking to establish volunteer firefighting services in Aboriginal communities? The answer is that, currently, 23 volunteer fire brigades have been established by the Northern Territory Fire Service. Of these, 10 are in Aboriginal communities, some of which have been operating since 1978. There is no specific program for developing volunteer fire brigades. When any community, whether it is an Aboriginal community or not, feels that it is ready to establish a fire brigade, the council approaches the Northern Territory Fire Service for assistance and advice. Communities are expected to fulfil certain obligations before the fire district is gazetted under the Fire Service Act of 1983.

In some of the communities, members of the Northern Territory Police Force are involved in the establishment of fire brigades in their role as local counter disaster controllers. Sometimes, the firefighting equipment is located at the police station. Training has been provided by the Northern Territory Fire Service for police aides so that, where communities have not established fire brigades, there are at least people in the communities who have basic knowledge of fire protection. Within the restrictions of available resources, the Northern Territory Fire Service Rural Division provides initial and follow-up training to the communities. In fact, recently, the officer in charge of the Rural Division completed visits to a number of remote Aboriginal communities where he checked their situation and, I understand, gave some training where it was deemed appropriate.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Nurses Salaries at Alice Springs Hospital

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, I gave an undertaking to answer during these sittings a question raised by the member for Flynn last week regarding a number of nurses from the Alice Springs Hospital who have complained about salary payments made to them. The complaints related to delays in receipt of penalty pay and overtime payments or incorrect rates of payments and deductions.

Apparently, the current payroll system has been a matter of concern for some time. The system is the Australian Government Payroll System used throughout Australia for paying federal government and most Northern Territory government organisations. It is a cumbersome system which does not adapt well to penalty and overtime payments. However, staff do not usually wait for 6 weeks for penalty and overtime payments, as was mentioned in this instance. In fact, the normal waiting time is about 4 weeks from the end of the relevant pay fortnight until payment is made. The time lag is a direct result of the lead times inherent in the existing salary system.

Given that salary payments are made to well over 1000 employees each fortnight in the Alice Springs and Barkly region, whilst they are unfortunate, I would suggest that some minor errors and delays are only to be expected from time to time. However, I am happy to advise the honourable member that there is some relief in sight and tenders are being called currently for a new payroll system for the Northern Territory Public Service. I envisage that this system should be in place towards the latter part of 1989. The new system should overcome most of the difficulties being experienced in the payment of salaries and the various allowances. I encourage any members of staff in the Alice Springs area who have particular difficulties to take them to the personnel manager who would be only too pleased to hear their complaints and do whatever is possible to rectify the cause.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Commuter Taxi Service at Yulara

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, yesterday, the member for MacDonnell asked me some questions regarding a commuter taxi service at Yulara and, given the honourable member's absence, I seek leave to have my answer incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, with reference to the 2 questions raised yesterday by the member for MacDonnell on commuter taxi services at Yulara, I am now in a position to provide specific details. As a result of the review, the CTS licences were withdrawn and the operators were issued with motor omnibus licences. Written assurance has been given to former CTS licensees that they can continue to advertise as taxis, and they were further advised that this arrangement would be immediately reviewed should the Yulara Corporation grant permission or circumstances change to allow other operators to perform the same service as they were providing.

In answer to the second question, the trial period for the review of CTS licences was not a short period. The review was carried out over 12 months. The review was instigated as a result of 1 of the CTS licensee's wishing to sell his operations. However, his CTS licence could not be transferred. It is standard practice for CTS plates to be surrendered back to the registrar. This has the support of industry.

The review showed that a motor omnibus licence was sufficient for the service provided by the operators at Yulara. With the introduction of MO plates, the business becomes transferable but the plate has no value. The value will be in the business.

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS
NT Government's Housing Assistance Scheme

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, in response to previous questions, I have great pleasure in announcing that the Territory government's Home Loan Scheme is commencing today. It is commencing in the form in which it was introduced into this House. It is very gratifying that we have been able to provide a scheme which has received so much enthusiastic response from the community. At this stage, the Housing Commission's hotline, which was set up to provide a quick response to public inquiries about the package, has received already 450 calls from all over the Territory. Over 300 calls came

from the northern region and 120-odd from the southern region, and more than 270 of those calls were made to ask specific questions about the new Interest Subsidy Scheme or the Home Establishment Grant. We have received about 130 calls regarding the changes to the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme. The remainder have been general inquiries.

We have also had feedback from real estate agents and building companies saying that already there is movement in the community and an increase in interest. Everybody believes that some real benefits will be seen very soon, both in the real estate market and the building industry.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

17 May 1988

62. Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Did the Territory Insurance Office pay outstanding tax bills incurred by Hungerford Refrigeration or Rupert Hungerford; if so -
 - (a) were the payments for company tax;
 - (b) group tax; or
 - (c) an individual's income tax.
2. Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration secured; if so -
 - (a) in what ways is it secured; and
 - (b) what assets is it secured against.
3. Who first identified Hungerford Refrigeration as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory.
4. Who made the first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer operations to the Trade Development Zone.
5. Why did the directors of Hungerford refuse to provide directors' guarantees to meet any debts incurred by the company.
6. What were the full terms agreed for the transfer of Hungerford Refrigeration to the Trade Development Zone.
7. What departmental evaluations were made of the Hungerford Refrigeration company; its prospects, its projects and its products.
8. What departmental evaluations were made of the reports prepared for the TIO and the TDZ on the prospects of Hungerford Refrigeration.

9. What is the full extent of public funding (including TIO involvement) in Hungerford Refrigeration.
10. Was a directive issued by the Hungerford Refrigeration Board for the company to pursue local orders rather than export orders; if so, why was this done.

16 August 1988

64. Tenth Anniversary of Self-Government

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister provide an itemised account of the expenditure on the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of self-government.

4 October 1988

67. Treatment of Ear Infections in Schools

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What are the number and percentages of school-age children, by rural school in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine areas, that have:
 - (a) glue ear;
 - (b) perforated ear drums; and
 - (c) educationally significant hearing impairment.
2. How many of the schools mentioned in question 1 above have Health Workers involved in full time campaigns at the school to treat the conditions.

14 February 1989

70. Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Has Henry and Walker, or companies or a consortium associated with Henry and Walker, been given development rights to Myilly Point. If so -

- (a) what are the terms and conditions of those development rights;
- (b) how long does Henry and Walker have exclusive rights over the land;

- (c) what is the value of the covenants placed on the land;
and
- (d) what value has been placed on the land.

71. Excisions by Department of Transport and Works

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

How much money did your department spend on new excisions in the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88 and how much money has been allocated for excisions for the 1988-89 financial year.

72. Water Exploration and Reticulation on New Excisions

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. How much money did the Power and Water Authority spend in the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88 on -
 - (a) water exploration; and
 - (b) reticulation on new excisions.
2. How much money has been allocated for expenditure in the 1988-89 financial year on -
 - (a) water exploration; and
 - (b) reticulation on new excisions.
3. When will water exploration commence on the following excision areas: Aileron, Coniston, Pine Hill, Mount Cavenagh, Central Mount Wedge, Newhaven, Kirkimbie and Limbunya.
4. Why did it take 2 years for water exploration to be carried out for the Karrinyarra Community on Central Mount Wedge Station after the community had been advised by the Department of Lands and Housing in July 1986 that drilling would occur.

73. Excisions on Special Purposes Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many excision titles have been negotiated under the current guidelines.
2. How many excision titles have been registered; when were each of these registered; and when were each of these agreements reached with each pastoral lessee.

3. When were excision agreements reached on the following pastoral leases: Amburla, Anningie, Atartinga, Derry Downs, Hodgson Downs, Humbert River, Jervois, Koolpinyah, Lake Nash, Loves Creek, Manbulloo, Middleton Ponds (Tempe Downs), Mistake Creek, Mount Riddock, Napperby, Newhaven, Tobermorey and St Vidgeon.
4. Was the area on Maude Creek Pastoral lease negotiated under the current excision guidelines. If so when; or if not, under what process was the area negotiated.
5. How many Special Purposes Leases have been converted to fee simple and what is the name of these excisions.
6. How many and which excisions are currently being prevented from being registered because of caveats placed over the leases.
7. How many excision titles are being held up because the applicant group is awaiting incorporation and what is the name of these excision groups.
8. Has your department formulated long term funding programs in relation to new excisions.

16 August 1988

66. Sentencing under Criminal Code

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In court cases relating to slayings as heard by the Alice Springs Court since the introduction of the Criminal Code 1 January 1983 -

1. How many people have been charged with a slaying offence.
2. How many people have been convicted of -
 - (a) murder;
 - (b) manslaughter;
 - (c) committing a dangerous act; and
 - (d) other.
3. What is the average head sentence imposed by the judge on the above convicted persons.
4. What is the average actual sentence served by the above convicted persons.

ANSWER

The Northern Territory Criminal Code was introduced on 1 January 1984 not 1 January 1983 as stated in the written question. All figures therefore are from 1 January 1984.

1. 53.
2. (a) Nil.
(b) 18.
(c) 8.
(d) 3 - Cause Grievous Harm. (These 3 prisoners were also sentenced for manslaughter, therefore in calculating the answers to questions 3 and 4, the sentences for cause grievous harm will not be taken into account).

The total number of persons convicted of (a) Murder, (b) Manslaughter and (c) Dangerous Act totals 26 out of 53 accused charged. The balance breaks up as follows -

- (i) Not guilty -

(a) Murder	1
(b) Manslaughter	Nil
(c) Dangerous Act	4
- (ii) No True Bill (Section 297A Criminal Code) 5

- (iii) Nolle Prosequi (Section 302 Criminal Code) 1
- (iv) Current 16

3. In a joint judgment (Asche CJ, Kearney and Rice JJ) the Northern Territory Court of Criminal Appeal in R v Anzac said 'As Street CJ point out in R v Withers (1925) 25 SR (NSW) 382 at 394-5 "There is no offence in which the permissible degrees of punishment cover so wide a range (manslaughter)".

There is no standard tariff for Manslaughter and to create one is simply misleading.

The same can be said of Dangerous Act in that it covers (1) such a wide area of criminal conduct and (2) circumstances of aggravation which can take the maximum penalty from 5 years to 14 years.

Using that information and bearing in mind comments relating to the misleading nature of 'average' sentences, it is considered more appropriate to provide a list detailing the range of sentences. The range is as follows -

- (a) Murder - not applicable (mandatory life).
- (b) Manslaughter - (maximum 10 years, minimum 3 years).
- (c) Dangerous Act - (maximum 3 years, minimum 2 years).

4. It is presumed the honourable member's question relates to the term a prisoner has served in jail. Little use, if any, can be made of an assessment of 'actual sentence served'. A person released on parole is for all intents still subject to sentence and under no circumstances can it be said that the person enjoys the full privileges of a person not under sentence. A simple example of this is the fact that a person in breach of parole is liable for imprisonment for the remainder of the sentence not yet completed.

Further, given that a number of persons are currently serving terms of imprisonment, to extrapolate an average term from persons already released would create a nonsense.

68. Leased Premises

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How much space being leased by the NT government as at 1 October 1988 -
 - (a) was occupied; and
 - (b) was unoccupied.
2. What are the locations/addresses of the above leased areas.
3. In each case, what is the length of the lease.

4. What is the monthly cost of leasing those areas not occupied.
5. Are there cleaning contracts for the unoccupied leased areas; if so, what is the monthly cost of the cleaning contracts.

ANSWER

1. The NT government occupied 122 828 m² of leased non-residential accommodation as at 1 October 1988. Of this space,

(a) 120 413 m² was occupied, and

(b) 2415 m² was unoccupied -

Minerals House, Darwin 701 m²

Work Health Authority will occupy this area when fit-out is completed: occupancy is expected by end of March 1989.

AMP Building, Darwin 610 m²

This area, vacated by Department of Lands and Housing staff transferred to Casuarina, has been re-allocated to Treasury.

Lot 1826, Bishop Street, Darwin 204 m²

This vacant area is continuously under review by Properties Division, and a new tenant is being sought.

Cnr George and Barrack Streets, Sydney 537.5 m²

NT Tourist Commission has now occupied these premises following completion of fit-out and has vacated 89 King Street, Sydney.

22 Cavenagh Street, Darwin 363 m²

Vacated by the NT TAB which relocated to Fannie Bay Racecourse.

2. The location/addresses of the above leased areas are shown in Attachment A.
3. The length of each lease is also shown in Attachment A.
4. The monthly cost of leasing those areas not tenanted was \$9913.53. This cost reduced from 1 November 1988 to \$5749 per month pertaining to the NT TAB Cavenagh Street premises.
5. There are no ongoing cleaning charges in respect of vacant premises.

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
<u>DARWIN</u>		
AMP Building	F4,5,6,7,9	5 + 5
AMP Building	F1,2,3,8	5 + 5
AMP Building	Shop 9,13	2
AMP Building	Shop 15	3.8 + 5
Baywood Plaza	F8	5
Berrimah Health Clinic	A11	10 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	F2	5 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 5,6	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 27	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	F1	7 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 4/26	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 7	2 + 2
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 22	2.5 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 24	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 11	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 14	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 17	5 + 5
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 18,20,21,2	3 + 3
Casuarina Plaza	Shop 23A	3 + 3
Casuarina Square	Shop 135/136	3
Cavenagh Court	Ground 1/2	5 + 5
Centrepoint	Gallery G2	10 + 10
Centrepoint	Gallery 15/16	5 + 5

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
Centrepoint	Gallery G6	10 + 10
Centrepoint	F2-5	10 + 10
Centrepoint	Gallery G1	5 + 5
Darwin Centre	F4-7	5 + 5
Darwin Plaza	Part 2,F3	4.5 + 3
Darwin Plaza	Part F4	4.5 + 3
Darwin Plaza	Part 4,F5,F6	4.5 + 3
Darwin Plaza	Part 2	3
Development House	Gnd F1,2	10 + 5
Enterprise House	F1	5 + 5
Enterprise House	Ground	5 + 5
Ethos House	Part Ground	5 + 5
Ethos House	Ground	5 + 5
Harbour View Plaza	Pt Gnd F1-4	10 + 7
Harry Chan Arcade	F1	5 + 3
Harry Chan Arcade	Shop 1	3 + 3
Health House	Gnd,1,2,3,4	10 + 5
Health House	Part 1	3 + 3
Highway House	1	10
Highway House	234	10
Highway House	Part Ground	10
Highway House	Roof	10
Highway House	Gnd Shop 6	5 + 5
Highway House	Part Gnd	3
Highway House	Mezzanine	2

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
MMI Building	Ground	5
Minerals House	Ground	10 + 5
Minerals House	F1,2	10 + 5
MLC	F2	3 + 3
Monterey House	F1	6 + 5
Moonta House	All	5
National Mutual Centre	F4, Part 5	3 + 3
Palmerston Health Centre	Ground	10 + 5
Pan Hellenic Centre	Ground	3
Parap Theatre	All rear	5 + 5
Port Authority Bldg	Part Ground	3 + 3
Satepak Building	Part 1	4 + 1
Satepak Building	Part 1	3 + 2
T&G Building	F1-5	3 + 1
Tamar House	All	10 + 5
Tipperary School	All	Monthly
Winlow House	Ground	3 + 2
Winlow House	First	2 + 2
1624 Coonawarra Road	All	10 + 10
1624 Coonawarra Road	All	6 + 10
1624 Coonawarra Road	All	5
1633 Carey Street	All	
1654 Day & Harvey Sts	All	3 + 3
1669 Coonawarra Road	All	7 + 3
1718/1719 Albatross St	All	5

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
1721 Albatross St	Shed 4	5
1826 Bishop Street	Ground	5
1826 Bishop Street	F1 & 2	5
1745 Catterthun Street	Part Ground	10 + 10
1745 Catterthun Street	Ground F1	8.8
2292 Mitchell Street	F1	3 + 3
2292 Mitchell Street	Shops 1 & 2	5
7 Henry Street	A11	2 + 2
3476 McMinn Street	A11	3
7724 Trower Road	F1	3 + 3
47 Knuckey Street	Part 1	3
516/517 Pavonia Place	A11	5 + 5

KATHERINE

Katherine Govt Centre	A11	10 + 5
Killarney School	A11	
Randazzo Arcade	Part 1	3
Randazzo Arcade	1 Stage 2	10 + 5
Randazzo Arcade	Shops 1,2,3	5
569 Pearce Street	A11	3 + 3
Pandanus Plaza	Part 1st	3 + 3
Katherine Sports Comp	A11	3 + 3

ALICE SPRINGS

AFT Building	Ground	5 + 5
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**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
AFT Building	Ground	5 + 5
CLP Building	1st Floor	3 + 3
Belvedere	1st	3 + 3
Belvedere	F2 Tenancy 9	3 + 3
Belvedere	F2 Tenancy 11	3 + 3
Centrepoint	F1	5 + 5
Ford Plaza	Mess 75	5 + 5
Heenan House		5 + 5
Helms Building	Ground	3 + 3
Minerals House	A11	10 + 5 + 5
Napperby School	A11	
National Bank Bldg	Office 3/4	5
Neutral Junction School	A11	Monthly
TIO Building	Ground 1	5 + 5
1575 Wilkinson Street	A11	3
431 Gap Road	Ground	5
431 Gap Road	Ground 1	5 + 5
YULARA		
Yulara Medical Centre	A11	5 + 5

TENNANT CREEK

Brunette Downs Res	A11	
McArthur River St	A11	10 + 10
Warrego Police Station	A11	
Glynn Building	Shop 5	3

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Department of
Labour and Administrative Services**

Building Name	Location	Floor	Term (years) (Lease + Option)
TIO Building		Ground Pt 1	10

GROOTE EYLANDT

Alyangula Pre-School		All	Monthly
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GOVE

Lot 43		Ground	5 + 5
Arnhem House		First	5 + 5

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
Conservation Commission	Gaymark Building Palmerston	5 years
" "	Baywood Plaza Palmerston	5 years
" "	Industrial Estate Gove	Annual
" "	Katherine Terrace Katherine	To 05/11/88
Aboriginal Sacred Sites Authority	MLC Building Darwin	To 21.10.88
" " "	Belvedere House Alice Springs	To 07/07/89
NT Tourist Commission	Hindley Street Adelaide	5 years
" " "	Ford Plaza Alice Springs	5 years
" " "	Todd Street Alice Springs	5 years
" " "	Queen Street Mall Brisbane	5 years
" " "	Ainslie Avenue Canberra	5 years
" " "	Smith Street Mall Darwin	15 years
" " "	Liverpool Street Hobart	10 years
" " "	Stuart Highway Katherine	3 years
" " "	Bourke Street Melbourne	6 years
" " "	Macquarie Street Parramatta	8-5 years

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
NT Tourist Commission	Hay Street Perth	5 years
" " "	King Street Sydney	To 31/10/88
" " "	George/Barrack Sts Sydney	6 years
" " "	Paterson/Davidson St Tennant Creek	10 years
" " "	Bockenheimer Land- strasse Frankfurt	5 years
" " "	Saville Row London	10 years
" " "	Avenue of the Stars Los Angeles	10 years
" " "	Thomson Road Singapore	2 years
" " "	Adasaka 1-Chome Japan	1 year
NT TAB	Cavenagh Street Darwin	5 years
" "	Progress Drive Nightcliff	3 years
" "	Parap Road Parap	3 years
" "	Katherine Terrace Katherine	3 years
" "	Patterson Street Tennant Creek	3 years
" "	Shopping Centre Nhulunbuy	6 years
" "	Coles Complex Alice Springs	5 years

ATTACHMENT A

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
NT TAB	Vic Hotel The Mall Darwin	5 years
" "	Casuarina Tavern Darwin	5 years
" "	Maranga Hotel Darwin	5 years
" "	Satepak Building Palmerston	5 years
Department of Legislative Assembly	Kerinauia Highway Bathurst Island	To 31/05/91
" " "	Gillen Shopping Centre Alice Springs	1 year
" " "	Ovcaric's Building Nhulunbuy	Monthly
" " "	Patterson Street Tennant Creek	Monthly
" " "	Head Street Shopping Complex Alice Springs	To 14.10.88
" " "	Shop 133 Casuarina Shopping Square Casuarina	Under Review
" " "	Shop 10 Parap Shopping Centre Parap	Monthly
" " "	Helms House Alice Springs	To 18/12/92
" " "	Shop 7 & 8 Moil Shopping Centre Moil	Monthly
" " "	Shop 10 Malak Shopping Centre	Biennial
" " "	TIO Building Katherine	To 10/03/90

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
Department of Legislative Assembly	Howard Springs Shopping Centre Howard Springs	Monthly
" " "	Hibiscus Shopping Centre Leanyer	27/09/90
" " "	Lot 4443 Ludmilla	N/A
" " "	Shop 98A Handyman Centre, Todd Mall Alice Springs	Monthly
" " "	Shop 19 Rapid Creek Complex Nightcliff	To 30/06/91
" " "	Ovcacic's Building Nhulunbuy	Monthly
" " "	Shop 4 Nightcliff Shopping Centre Nightcliff	Monthly
" " "	Highway House Palmerston	Under Review
" " "	Suite T8A Star Village, The Mall Darwin	Monthly
" " "	CLP Building Alice Springs	To -/08/91
" " "	Shop 12 Malak Shopping Centre Malak	To 01/03/92
" " "	Wills House Alice Springs	To 18/01/91
" " "	Tarkarri Road Batchelor	-
" " "	Lot 7082 Tiwi Gardens Road Tiwi	To 11/01/91

**Leases arranged by Various
Departments/Authorities/Commissions**

<u>Dept/Authority/Commission</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Term</u>
Territory Insurance Office	Monterey House Casuarina	To July 1989
" " "	CML Building Darwin	To Sept 1989

22 November 1988

69.

BTB Campaign

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. Under orders issued pursuant to the BTB Campaign in the regions: Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Barkly, Katherine, Victoria River, Arnhem Land and Top End; how many (a) cattle and (b) buffalo have been -
 - (i) destocked;
 - (ii) shot on property; and
 - (iii) trucked for slaughter.
2. What are the current herd numbers on a best estimate basis for each of the abovementioned regions for (a) cattle and (b) buffalo.

ANSWER

See table on following page.

69.

1. Prior to the end of 1984-85, records held by BTEC did not differentiate between cattle and buffalo. The following statistics are therefore broken into 2 sections; up to 1984-85 and post 1984-85.

The Victoria River area is included in the Katherine Region for statistical purposes.

	Alice Springs	Tennant Creek	Darwin	Katherine	Arnhem
1(i) Destocked					
1982-1985					
Cattle	23 843	73 472	39 190	82 426	-
1985-1988					
Cattle	16 948	11 393	43 225	73 933	2 234
Buffalo	-	-	58 704	23	27 633
1(ii) Shot on Property					
1982-1985					
Cattle	1 427	10 440	3 252	15 184	-
1985-1988					
Cattle	2 773	7 547	13 130	30 815	2 129
Buffalo	-	-	21 380	-	16 604
1(iii) Trucked for Slaughter					
1982-1985					
Cattle	22 416	63 032	35 938	67 242	-
1985-1988					
Cattle	14 175	3 846	30 095	43 118	105
Buffalo	-	-	37 324	23	11 029
2. Territory Stock Numbers (approximate)					
	304 100	534 000	190 000	578 000	119 500
	(cattle)	(cattle)	(mainly cattle)	(cattle)	(mainly buffalo)

NB These figures relate to stock for which compensation has been paid.

Fitzgerald Dairy

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to repeated attempts by the Fitzgerald family, the operators of the Noonamah dairy, to get government action to secure all-weather access to their property. Is he aware of the government's powers to guarantee that access? Does he believe the owners have a right to government support, and when will that support be forthcoming?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a good question. Certainly, a correct answer needs to be provided to the Territory community. Before I start, I would like to say that the government certainly recognises the excellent work done by the Fitzgeralds in running a dairy farm successfully under extremely difficult conditions in the tropics. It is a family business that is battling against difficult circumstances. Many years ago, I had dealings with Mrs Fitzgerald in relation to the provision of milk and I admire the tenacity with which the Fitzgeralds have approached their business. I would like to indicate the background of a problem which has occurred with the Fitzgeralds.

At present, the Fitzgeralds have a dairy farm located on section 379, Hundred of Strangways. That particular section is not owned by the Fitzgeralds. It is owned by Mr Ralph Meyering who leases a portion of it to Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald for their dairy operations. The Fitzgeralds have made approaches to the government in the past regarding the provision of suitable land to allow them to establish a dairy on their own property and, thereby, eventually to obtain the benefits that such ownership of land would provide to them. As a result of representations made a number of years ago, the Fitzgeralds have been allocated land and are presently establishing a new dairy at Middle Point. They plan to relocate to that site when their lease with Meyering runs out in early 1990.

The legal situation is that access to the present dairy farm should be provided by the lessee. The area that is leased is on a property which has legal access provided from 2 areas: Jenkins Road, which runs along the southern boundary of the access to the Meyering's land, and Bees Creek Road which runs along the western boundary. In order for the Fitzgeralds to operate their dairy farm, they have been running an access across a private freehold block of land which adjoins block 379. The section involved is 2070, which is owned by R.T. and H.T. Heaslip Pty Ltd which is owned by Mr Ron Trezise.

For the last 28 years, access has been undertaken across that block of land to the Meyering's block and, in recent years, it has been used by the Fitzgeralds. At no time has it been looked after by the Territory government because it is across private freehold land. As I understand it, some 2 years ago, the owners of that block decided that they would utilise the block for some private purpose. I believe it is the establishment of a fish farm. Through their lawyers, they wrote to the Fitzgeralds explaining that they would be closing off access and asking them to make other arrangements. This is a private matter between a private landowner and the lessee of a block of land. I do not know the whys and wherefores or what the private exchanges were but I do know that, by July last year, that access to the Fitzgerald's block was closed officially by the Trezises. As I said, in the meantime, there has been an allocation of land for the re-establishment of the dairy farm and plenty of notice was given that the road would be closed.

Unfortunately, with the onset of the wet season, the access that was being used by the Fitzgeralds for entry to their block was inundated to such an extent that access was precluded and no other access was available.

The options open to the government are as follows. First, we could build another access to the Fitzgeralds' place from another area, and that would involve the use of taxpayers' money to provide access to the Meyerings' which would give access to the leased portion of their land. I do not think that anyone would consider that that is a proper use of taxpayers' money. As I said, access is already available to the Meyerings' property at 2 points. Secondly, as has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Koolpinyah, the government could acquire the land where access was available previously, establish a road and provide access that way. My mind boggled when I heard that the member for Koolpinyah had suggested this. This is the member who became extremely concerned about the 34-mile acquisition, and quite rightly so. She was so concerned that she became involved in politics as a result. Mr Speaker, can you imagine the outcry if people who had used a track across her land to travel from Batchelor to Adelaide River approached the government and said: 'When the water washes the creek crossing out, we cannot get around. We would like you to acquire the access across Mrs Padgham-Purich's land at Batchelor so that we have a road'. The honourable member would fall out of her tree, and quite rightly so. I find the suggestion that the government acquire land ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: The suggestion that the government acquire land to provide an access, not to the owner of the dairy but to the owner of a property that leases to the dairy, is not very sensible for the reasons that I have just outlined. What if the government did what the member for Koolpinyah suggested and acquired that land by riding roughshod over the rights of individuals who have bought freehold land in good faith? And what if the owner of that land decided that he did not like the acquisition and he took the government to court to argue against its ability to take such action? It would take 3 or 4 years for that matter to be settled. The lease runs out in 1990, and the dairy will move somewhere else. The member for Koolpinyah well knows the time involved in land acquisition because she has experience of it. The Meyerings know what is involved because the government went through a process of trying to acquire property from them for the future expansion of Darwin. That took 5 or 6 years of court processes.

It is repugnant to suggest that we acquire private property because it suits the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Koolpinyah. Such action would not solve the problem because it would take many years to effect if the owners of that land decided to fight it. I have been informed that, quite rightly, they would do that.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

That is not a solution for 2 reasons. First, it would take 3 or 4 years to provide a solution and, secondly, it is repugnant to this government to go through the process of simply acquiring freehold land. The legal position is

that we are talking about a conflict between private landowners, nothing more and nothing less. There is provision for the private landowners to take the matter to court if they cannot resolve it between themselves. The Fitzgeralds can apply to the court to enable access ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Koolpinyah has had more than a fair go and I am warning her for the last time.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, they could apply to have access reinstated temporarily on the ground that they were given insufficient notice to enable them to make other arrangements or they could apply on the ground that the access had been used for 28 years and, under the provisions of normal common law, should be deemed a road. That option is open to the Meyerings, and the Fitzgeralds should be saying to them: 'We are leasing a block of land from you and you have the responsibility to provide access'. That is the legal situation. If the government stepped in and simply acquired the land, that process could take 3, 4 or 5 years. Mr Speaker, I have spoken with both parties. I have approached one of the parties and suggested that they might like to discuss the possibility of providing access on a weekly basis until the end of the wet season but my powers did not extend beyond that.

In his press release, the Leader of the Opposition said: 'Lands minister Daryl Manzie should be negotiating in the dispute instead of trying to organise airlifts'. Mr Speaker, despite the Leader of the Opposition's accusation, I have been doing nothing of the sort. Clearly, he does not understand what is occurring. His press release went on to say that the government 'should order the resumption of land to guarantee the Fitzgeralds access to the Stuart Highway'. That would provide no solution. As I have said, resumption would take 3 or 4 years.

The Fitzgeralds are a family of battlers who are doing a good job in operating a business under very adverse conditions. Through no fault of their own, they have been denied access to their property. We are trying as hard as we can to provide solutions. The Minister for Transport and Works has provided staff to assess various entry and access points and to provide information on and assistance in trying to establish an interim access to the property. We have provided another property for the development of a dairy farm at Middle Point to enable the Fitzgeralds to be successful in business. It needs to be understood that there is absolutely nothing the government can do which will provide an immediate solution. The most extreme step that the government could take would be to acquire land.

The Leader of the Opposition laughs but I insist that he listen because his lack of understanding of issues regarding land is absolutely abysmal. I will say this slowly. If the government took the most savage step that it could and acquired land to provide access, that might take 3 or 4 years. Where will the Fitzgeralds be in 3 or 4 years? If they stay there, they will have big problems. There is nothing that the government can do except try to negotiate a settlement - and we have attempted to do that - or provide assistance through the Department of Transport and Works for an alternative route. The issue is a dispute between neighbours and there is legal recourse for the settlement of such a dispute. I would like to know what the member for Koolpinyah would do if, as Minister for Lands and Housing, I attempted to acquire an easement across her Batchelor block to provide easy access for Batchelor residents to Adelaide River because they had been using a track across her land for the last 10 years. She would become most upset, and rightly so.

The government has attempted to do everything in its power to provide assistance to the Fitzgeralds but, under no circumstances, would the action proposed by the Leader of the Opposition provide a solution to the problem. All it would create would be a messy court action at a cost to the taxpayer. Before he opens his mouth, I ask that the Leader of the Opposition ensure that he knows the facts. I ask the media to be a little selective in accepting what he says without checking because his bona fides in this area are certainly not very good. The government supports the Fitzgeralds and what they are doing, and our actions have shown that beyond doubt. We wish them every success and will continue to do everything we can to ensure that they can achieve it.

The Leader of the Opposition, who tries to portray himself as the leader of an alternative government, has given notice to the community that, if an instant solution is available, he will not investigate matters thoroughly, no matter how many people's rights might be trampled on. That is not the appropriate way of going about things in a democratic country and I assure you, Mr Speaker, that it will not be our approach. In conclusion, I would like the Leader of the Opposition to explain how an acquisition could solve the problem this wet season. It could not.

Anzac Hill High School

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he able to advise the House of the outcome of a report which he called for at the commencement of the school year concerning alleged staff shortages and timetabling problems at Anzac Hill High School?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a number of honourable members have expressed concern in relation to staffing in small schools generally. In the case of Anzac Hill High School, the government is employing 3 teachers over establishment levels. It is unfortunate that it was necessary to initiate a report in relation to the staffing of that school. I believe that many people were confused about the role of the over-establishment staff. Because of that, I arranged for a circular to be sent to principals outlining the exact situation in relation to over-establishment staff. Such staff were provided to schools for specific purposes and the normal timetabling provisions do not apply to them, as I believe all honourable members are aware. Certainly, all principals are aware of that. However, to be absolutely certain, the department sent out a direction that principals should not include over-establishment staff in their formal timetabling arrangements.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: In response to that interjection, I will say that the previous Minister for Education had put in place over-establishment staff. I have maintained staffing at that level.

Mr Ede: You have reduced the numbers.

Mr HARRIS: If the member for Stuart is not interested in listening and learning how the system operates, I suggest that he leave the Assembly.

We are trying to inform people about the exercise, and many people have been working on that. I take my hat off to the school council and its

chairperson, Carol Frost, and to the member for Araluen and yourself, Mr Speaker, as well as other people in the community whose comments I have taken on board.

The nitty-gritty of this exercise revolves around the fact that teachers are supposed to undertake a specific teaching load. The department sent 2 officers with expertise in vertical timetabling to investigate the situation at Anzac Hill High School. Their report, to which the member for Casuarina referred, is now before the Secretary of the Department of Education. I have not yet seen it but I am aware of its contents which indicate that existing staff have teaching loads well below normal levels. The normal teaching load for a Band 1 teacher is 80% or 26 teaching periods; for a Band 2 teacher, it is 60% or 19.5 teaching periods; for a Band 3 teacher, it is 35% or 11.4 teaching periods; and a Band 4 teacher has no specific teaching load. The report indicates also that the school can timetable to meet the needs of its students. Incidentally, we will be allowing the maths teacher to remain. I am hopeful that the issue of Anzac Hill High School has now been resolved. I thank all of those people who have been interested enough to contact my office. We have looked at this issue in a responsible manner.

As I mentioned at the start of my answer, I am aware that concern was being expressed by other members in relation to small schools; particularly with regard to staffing of those small schools. The member for Barkly has written me a letter in relation to the Tennant Creek High School. I must say that the Tennant Creek High School has all its teachers working to capacity, and they are to be congratulated on their efforts in providing the options that are necessary for students. In the case of the Tennant Creek High School, it is acknowledged that its teachers have to provide the appropriate courses for Years 11 and 12. It is a difficult situation in those smaller schools.

Mr Tuxworth interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: An additional position will be provided at the Tennant Creek High School and that position will be used 50% for counselling and 50% on teaching time. If members have concerns in relation to the processes that are to be followed in appointing staff or over-establishment staff, all they have to do is contact us and we will look at those concerns.

Mr Ede: I did that last year.

Mr HARRIS: All the member for Stuart is interested in is scoring political points. I am interested in the education of students in the Northern Territory. We are addressing the perceived problems as they are brought to us and often, when a report is carried out on those areas, it is found that the problem is not as it was said to be in the first instance.

We will continue to look at the issues as they are raised, and I can assure the Anzac Hill High School Council, yourself, Sir, the member for Araluen and the opposition, that any matters of concern will be addressed in the appropriate manner by the department.

Coordinator of External Studies at NT University

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it a fact that the Coordinator of External Studies of the Northern Territory University moonlights as a promoter for the Bond University, and is

it a fact that this gentleman carries out that function from a conference room provided by the Department of Education in Capricornia House? Does the minister agree that this entails a conflict of interest, amounting to gross disloyalty to his employer, the Northern Territory University, which is fighting for every student it can get? How did the Department of Education permit itself to become linked with this disgraceful episode by giving it the added credibility of the use of a conference room in the department's own building?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of a report that appeared in the paper yesterday and I am having that matter investigated. Also, I am ...

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, what do members of the opposition want?

Mr Leo: Very simply, Tom, for you to do your job.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, this does not involve just listening to what they have to say. I want to find out the facts and I am doing that. I will be happy to make the information available to the honourable member when I have the answers.

Report on School Fees

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, in response to a question I asked at the last sittings, the minister stated that a government working party had completed a report on the role of school fees in Northern Territory schools. The minister said he would be considering its recommendations. A couple of weeks ago, the Leader of the Opposition made great play of this issue and set up his own working party to investigate the issue of school fees, no doubt to try to boost his own lagging popularity. Can the minister now give some details of the report that he commissioned from the government working party and indicate where the ALP working party fits into this scenario?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Jingili. He has asked questions about school fees and related matters at other sittings. During the last sittings of this Assembly last year, I indicated that I would comment early this year about that working party. I start by saying that the working party that we established for this purpose involved the following people. The chairperson of the committee was Karen Hall, the Parent Liaison Officer with the Department of Education. Members of the committee were: Mary LeFevre, the Superintendent, Secondary; Ms Rosas, the FEPI representative; Richard Creswick, the President of COGSO; Gordon Fietz, the financial planner Department of Education; John Pinney, another COGSO representative; Mr Warwick Otley, the primary principal representative; Mr Brian Chase, secondary principal representative; and Mr Peter Winckler, who is the executive officer. It is clear that the committee had a broad representation. I indicate also that the Northern Territory Teachers Federation was asked to include a representative on this working party but it declined that invitation.

I will go through some of the committee's recommendations.

Mr Smith: Are you going to table the report?

Mr HARRIS: If you wait until I complete my answer, I will tell you what is happening in relation to this report.

One recommendation was that the Department of Education not introduce a specific policy which requires parents to make a yearly financial contribution in respect of each child enrolled in a government school, and I do not have any difficulty with that. At 5.2, the next recommendation was that the Department of Education issue a statement which endorses school communities' discretion to set and collect a yearly parent financial contribution, such contribution to be used to enhance the basic education program as provided by the school from the department's school allocation grant. Another recommendation was that the total amount of the parent contribution, as set by the school community, shall not at any time exceed the average departmental allocation per student for that school. The recommendation in 5.4 is that a specific committee be set up by the minister to review all aspects of the department's allocation per student - that is, the per capita grants - and that such allocations should consider both departmental set course requirements and the actual cost of a school providing a basic education. I will come back to that in a moment because there are some problems in relation to that and I have established a group to examine specific aspects that have been referred to.

Paragraph 6.1 recommends that the parent contribution, as determined by the school community, should be used only to enhance the school's basic education program. There is no difficulty with that. Paragraph 7.1 suggests that the term 'parent contribution' be adopted as the term applicable to moneys paid by parents to the school and used to enhance the school's basic education program.

The matter of a book hire or book deposit scheme was also examined carefully by this working group. The working group believes that such a scheme is not really appropriate in the Northern Territory at this time. It is supportive of the user-pays principle being adopted where a school seeks additional funds to supplement particular activities which are above the requirements of providing the basic education program. The working party preferred that the concept of a resource deposit be introduced, such resource deposit to be separate from and in addition to the parent contribution referred to earlier. The resource deposit is to be used by schools to cover costs associated with the school obtaining, maintaining and replacing non-consumable resources utilised to supplement the basic education program provided by the schools.

Paragraph 8.1 recommends that the department endorse a resource deposit scheme which may be implemented by a school community; 8.2 that the resource deposit, where implemented, be separate from and additional to the parent contribution where it is in effect; and 8.3 that the resource deposit be identified as providing security against loss of or damage to books, audio and video tapes, and computer software as well as providing a means for upkeep and or replacement of resources supplementing the school's basic education program. Paragraph 8.4 recommends that the amount of any resource deposit be determined by the school community and, as an incentive, contain a refund component payable at the time that the student exists at the school. I do not have any particular problems in relation to resource deposits but it may be more appropriate that the total amount of that deposit paid at the start of

the student's schooling be returned when he leaves the school. That is a matter that I will be putting to my colleagues in the near future.

The working party recognises that certain courses contain elective components which require additional materials and or facilities to be available. The working party endorses that the user-pays principle be adopted under certain circumstances and, accordingly, it further recommends, in paragraph 9.1, that the user-pays principle be applied where a school offers courses or activities with elective components which require additional materials and or facilities. The recommendation in 10.1 is that school communities be required to ensure that students whose parents do not or cannot participate in the parent contribution scheme and or resource deposit scheme, where in effect, are not disadvantaged in receiving a basic education.

The recommendation in 5.4 was in relation to the per capita grants. The government acknowledges that there are concerns in the community about the level of funding that we provide. With that in mind, I have set in place a working party to examine that specific issue. On that party, we hope to include: the Deputy Secretary, Policy and Schools Operation, who will be the chairman; the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Services Division; the superintendent (Secondary); a Northern Territory Teachers Federation representative - and I hope that it accepts the position that is being offered; a Northern Territory COGSO representative; 2 Northern Territory Principals Association representatives, 1 representing the primary section and 1 representing the secondary section; and a representative from FEPP1. I will require that working party to complete its task and report back to me by 3 April so that we can proceed on the basis of its recommendations.

The terms of reference of the working party are: to examine the need for and the use of both the per capita grant and parent financial contributions in the context of the overall resources provided by government and in comparison with the situation in the states and the Australian Capital Territory; to specifically examine how the present per capita allocation and parent contribution are being used by government schools; and that basic education is defined as core and recommended curricula up to Year 10 level and the NT Board of Studies and Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia courses and compulsory and optional courses for Years 11 and 12.

It is important to indicate to honourable members the situation in relation to fees paid in other states. In the Northern Territory, we fare reasonably well. We need to take into account what is happening throughout Australia and not simply that we have a good situation in the Northern Territory. It should be even better. In the Australian Capital Territory, the range of fees is: for Years 9 to 10, \$60 and family concessions are available; Years 11 to 12, \$100 and additional subject fees for art, technology and specialist areas may be levied. In New South Wales, the range of fees is: for Years 8 to 10, \$15 to \$60 and there are family concessions; Years 11 to 12, \$15 to \$60 and there are family concessions; additional fees of \$5 to \$30 may be charged for the elective subjects such as home science, industrial arts etc. In the Northern Territory, the range of fees is: Years 8 to 10, \$30 to \$80, and family concessions apply at some schools; \$20 to \$50 book hire or deposit; and the fees for Years 11 to 12 are the same as for Years 8 to 10, and there is an additional \$50 book deposit charge in one case.

In Queensland, the fee for Years 9 and 10 is \$75 to \$80 and for Years 11 and 12 it is \$80 to \$110. In South Australia, the fee for Years 9 and 10 is \$110 to \$120, and allows for family concessions while, for Years 11 and 12,

it is \$110 to \$120, again allowing for family concessions, and in the first year of high school, a book deposit of \$20 is required by the department. In Tasmania, Years 8 to 10 pay a \$24 book hire fee as well as a \$30 to \$50 total levy for subjects such as home economics and manual arts, and a \$22 to \$30 general levy. Years 11 and 12 pay a \$50 book levy and \$50 is the total subject levy, although for subjects such as home economics and manual arts, there are additional fees. In Victoria, another good Labor state, Years 8 to 10 pay a fee of \$120 to \$240, made up of a \$30 to \$80 general levy, plus subject levies ranging from \$5 to \$12 per subject. Years 11 and 12 pay a fee of \$120 to \$240, made up of a \$30 to \$80 general levy plus subject levies ranging from \$5 to \$12 per subject. In Western Australia, there is a maximum fee of \$155 for each student in Years 8 to 10 with additional fees for expensive subjects such as outdoor education. There are no guidelines for Years 11 and 12, which generally follow guidelines for Years 8 to 10, with some additional charges.

It is important that honourable members be aware of fees and charges which apply in the states, and that they be taken into account when considering the subject. I am pursuing the matter. I have noted the report and the working party which I have set up will come back with further recommendations, after which I will be presenting a paper to my colleagues and, subsequently, making a statement in this Assembly.

The Leader of the Opposition has set up a working party in relation to school fees. I do not mind the opposition trying to develop its policies. It does not seem to have any at this stage and such groups may be one way of developing them. However, such working parties must have real credibility and the community must be able to assume that the people involved will look at the issues in an open and responsible manner. Unfortunately, in announcing this working party, the Leader of the Opposition caused a great deal of concern in the community. Many people felt that it would produce tangible results and that fees would be reduced. The announcement of the working party had an adverse effect on a number of schools which were trying to collect fees at that time, and many people had their hopes raised and believed that the opposition's working party would change the face of government.

Mr Smith: It may well do..

Mr HARRIS: That is a load of nonsense, Mr Speaker. It is disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition has created this problem in some schools. We will address the issues responsibly so that people are aware of the situation. The changes that are being proposed will be announced at the appropriate time.

Let us look at the membership of the opposition's working party, Mr Speaker. Alan Perrin has been in and out of all sorts of things from time to time and I can remember him from the dog track ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Members on this side of the House have been very tolerant with the minister. Mr Speaker, I invite you to reflect on the question which the minister was asked, which requested him to advise the Assembly on the progress of the report which he commissioned into school fees. He left that subject 4 or 5 minutes ago and is now commenting on something that the Labor Party is doing. I do not mind setting the agenda in this House because we always do do that. However, it is inappropriate in question time for the minister to continue with this approach.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I ask the minister to relate his reply more closely to the question asked by the member for Jingili.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I think I have been relating my answer to the question from the member for Jingili.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister quoted extensively from a report on school fees which was prepared by a working party of the Department of Education. It is very clear that he was quoting from that document, which relates to public affairs. Unless the minister intends to claim confidentiality for the document, I request, under standing order 255, that he table the report.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Stuart may raise that matter at the end of question time.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, in closing, I will indicate that it is of concern to this side of the House that matters of importance are addressed in the appropriate manner. The government will look at issues ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I suggest that the honourable minister should seek the leave of the Assembly if, having completed his answer, he wishes to make further comment on the matter.

Mr SPEAKER: For the advice of the member for MacDonnell, the honourable minister sat down while I heard the point of order raised by the member for Stuart. He is continuing his answer to the question.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the opposition knew that the government was examining the matter of school fees. Richard Creswick, the President of COGSO, was well aware of the government's working party and, in fact, 2 members of COGSO and its executive officer were involved in the exercise. I had indicated very clearly that there was a need to look at the issue and the government is doing so in the appropriate manner. Members opposite will be properly informed of the decisions of the government in due course.

Mr Ede: Table the report!

Mr HARRIS: The papers from which I have been quoting are little bits and pieces, Mr Speaker, and I have no problem about tabling them. They do not constitute the report.

Certificates of Compliance

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, he would be aware that, over the last couple of years, there has been a demand that sellers of dwellings provide certificates of compliance with the Building Code. This has created considerable difficulty for people, particularly those buying older houses for which information necessary for the issue of certificates of compliance may not be readily available. This is leading to many problems and costs in the community. Is it possible for procedures to be standardised and advertised throughout the community so that people selling houses have accurate information and are aware that they may have to meet some costs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand what the member for Sadadeen is saying. Sometimes, problems arise when property owners attempt to acquire the appropriate certificate in order to show that their houses comply with the Building Code. People owning older houses may have difficulty in obtaining certification. However, it is incumbent on the government to ensure that the buyer has some protection and knowledge of what he is purchasing. Without an engineering background, probably the average person would have a great deal of difficulty in assessing the structural integrity of a property, and that is the purpose of the certification.

However, I am aware that problems exist of the kind referred to by the honourable member, and I indicate that the Australian Uniform Building Regulations Coordinating Council, of which the Northern Territory is a member, has been charged with the responsibility of producing a uniform building code for Australia so that building requirements and codes become standardised in all places. There will always be problems, however, and the government has to decide whether to weight the situation towards the comfort of the purchaser as against trying to provide easier provisions for the seller. I believe that the average Territorian, being the consumer, must always have the scales weighted slightly in his or her favour. As a responsible government trying to provide the best for Territorians, there is no doubt that we will continue to do that.

I am willing to look at any situation that any honourable member would like to bring to my attention regarding problems in particular instances so that I can then make inquiries with the appropriate staff of my department. However, I do not believe that we should walk away from our responsibilities to people purchasing houses.

Media Reports on Proposal to Construct Powerline to Jabiru

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, given that the federal government has refused permission for the construction of a powerline to Jabiru, is the minister concerned that certain media reports last week may have influenced the decision?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not believe that the contents of the ABC 7.30 Report last week had any impact on the federal government's decision. It is my general view that the ABC is about one tenth as important and influential as it thinks it is. I believe that the decision of the federal minister responsible for the environment, Senator Richardson, is all about pure politics. Whilst talking about the ABC, I will say that, since Territory Extra was dropped, its ratings have dropped to about 11%. I am sure that they are only that high because somebody has 3 or 4 radios turned on inside his home. If I can be an advocate for the ABC for a moment, I suggest that it bring back Territory Extra, although the best part of it was the theme with its clanging drums. The ABC should bring back the program if it wants to be as influential as it likes to think that it is.

There is no doubt that Senator Richardson's decision was taken for political reasons. Anybody who knows anything about politics will realise that the federal government is not about to make any decision at all about any matter in the Northern Territory which it believes might upset the environment

lobby, at least until the next federal election is over. That is certainly clear to the Leader of the Opposition because I know for a fact that staff in Senator Richardson's office rang him directly before communicating the news to me last Friday. Let him stand up and deny that, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: I will, if you give me a chance.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, to return to the honourable member's question, the ABC's report on the Jabiru powerline should not pass without comment. As the honourable member said, the report was undoubtedly unbalanced and highly inaccurate. By way of graphic illustration and file footage, the report pictured the powerline as an endless series of giant steel mega-towers, stepping their way across the wilderness in parallel with the Arnhem Highway and reaching across the wetlands to Jabiru.

Let me deal first with the steel towers. The ABC went out to Channel Island and filmed the big corner towers which are in place only at that location. It told its viewers that such towers would be put in place in Kakadu. Wrong, Mr Speaker! As the environmental impact statement clearly showed, no towers at all would be built for the transmission line. Instead, low-profile carriers were proposed, to blend in more suitably with the environment.

Mr Ede: A string of trees.

Mr COULTER: A string of trees, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says. It will be interesting to discover where the opposition stands in relation to this issue, given its new, born-again, pro-development image and the new script for 1989 which the Leader of the Opposition wants us to believe. I am looking forward to hearing that during the course of these sittings.

It is totally wrong to show the route as running alongside the Arnhem Highway. The route for the powerline had been worked out very carefully in consultation with a range of people, including the traditional owners in the area, and I know what they believed about the transmission line and the benefits to be derived from it. The proposed route lay along the old Jim Jim Road, an entirely different location and one which would not entail crossing the wetlands.

The 7.30 Report used a map which showed Jabiru as the centre of a wheel with future powerlines depicted as spokes running out to future mining developments. That was wrong also. By bringing the route up the old Jim Jim Road, the opportunity would have existed for further transmission lines to future customers, as a natural branching from the main route. The report concluded with dark suggestions that, somehow, the taxpayer would end up subsidising this new power system to Jabiru. That is strange logic because already the Australian taxpayer is subsidising the current Jabiru diesel power system. In fact, Ranger receives an excise rebate on diesel fuel which reduces its costs considerably. Our proposal would have provided a power system on a commercial basis, with resultant benefits for all Territory power consumers.

The whole tenor of the 7.30 Report item was that the proposed powerline would have been unsuitable environmentally. Again, this defies logic. Currently, Jabiru generates electricity through diesel which is a considerably dirtier fuel than is natural gas. Up to 70% of fuel heat in the diesel process would go up the stack. However, I am told that the generators at

Jabiru are 39% efficient which means that close to 61% goes up the stack. The gas alternative would reduce that effect almost to zero. Diesel fuel is trucked into Kakadu by road train at the rate of 4 or 5 loads a week. Let us hope that there are no accidents there and no resultant pollution. We are offering an alternative which would provide a far safer and environmentally acceptable method of generating power in Kakadu. The environmentalists should be aware that what we are proposing is a cleaner and far more environmentally-sound option for the generation of power than currently exists at Jabiru.

I am not putting forward any new material on this matter. It is all contained in the documentation and the environmental impact statement which the federal government has considered. How, then, could the ABC get it wrong? Clearly, there are 2 answers. First, it could be incompetence and an inability to do the most basic research. Secondly, and this is more likely, the ABC has been led by the nose by environmental lobbyists, told what was important and told what it should do. It has been hoodwinked by the environment movement once again. I do not know how many times this has to happen before media representatives wake up to the fact that, on countless occasions, the environment lobby has distorted the truth and told outright lies. No doubt, the 7.30 Report will say ...

Mr Smith: But you would not do that, would you?

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: It is interesting to hear the interjections, Mr Speaker, but I say again that I will be interested to see where the opposition members stand on this issue and whether or not they support the development of this powerline. That is what Northern Territorians will judge them on, not hype and rhetoric but what they really believe in. Let us hear it.

Today, we have heard that we will be under attack by this pro-development, born-again, charisma-implant Leader of the Opposition. So far, we have heard one question from him, but it was not put to the power on this side of the House, the Chief Minister. He has not asked him a single question. He put a question to the Minister for Lands and Housing about the Fitzgeralds' dairy. It was a question of equal importance, but he was not prepared to take on the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. He has been prepared to ask only one question. This is the terror that was supposed to be invoked to strike members on this side of the House by the wimp, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of Government Business will withdraw that reference to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr COULTER: I withdraw it unreservedly, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, no doubt the 7.30 Report will say in its defence that it sought an interview with me on the same program and that I was not available. That is true. I did not arrive back in Darwin until the day after the report went to air. However, that does not excuse the people concerned from their duty to check facts that are put to them by other sources before they accept them as gospel truth.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In April 1988, the former Chief Minister was quoted as saying that Lord McAlpine had made a formal application for the direct sale of Crown land at Myilly Point. What progress has been made on that application?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition is familiar with the conditions of direct land sales. If not, I offer him a copy of the document entitled Land Release Guide which is available over the counter of the Department of Lands and Housing. Under the provisions of the scheme, if a person has an application regarding direct sale presently before the Department of Lands and Housing, any further application for direct sale of the same land lies next in line. If the first applicant withdraws his application formally, the next application in order of priority will take its place.

I think everyone in this House is aware that the development application for the Myilly Point precinct is in favour of the Henry and Walker group. We are aware that the McAlpine group has expressed an interest also and it is listed as having an interest. If the first interest is withdrawn, obviously, the next will move into its place in order of priority. I cannot actually tell this House how many people applied for direct sale of the area or what order applications are in, but I can assure the House that the matter fits the guidelines. As I said, I think it imperative that the Leader of the Opposition make himself aware of how the system works. Because he does seem to have difficulty understanding it, I table that Land Release Guide.

Commonwealth Funding to the Northern Territory

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER and TREASURER

The Northern Territory is emerging from a period of economic difficulty and most members of this Assembly are aware that the electricity subsidy is due for review later this year and other recurrent funding is under review. What action is being taken to preserve the level of Commonwealth funding to the Northern Territory in 1989-90?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is the most important matter facing the Territory at this time and I would like to take this opportunity to alert the House to the potentially grave situation which exists with respect to Commonwealth funding of the Northern Territory in 1989-90 and beyond. What is at stake is at least \$107m or 11% of the funds that we receive from the Commonwealth. Honourable members will recall that, in the current financial year, the federal budget provided \$50m for the electricity subsidy for the Northern Territory and \$57m as a special revenue assistance grant as a result of a Grants Commission assessment of the Northern Territory's situation when it was dragged unwillingly into the states tax-sharing pool. The Commonwealth provided that \$57m to ease us into the pool.

In addition to these specific potential cuts to the Territory's funding, there is the more general concern that the Commonwealth will cut further payments to the states and the Northern Territory as it struggles to deal with

the nation's economic problems. The Territory's possible loss is at least \$107m. A loss of anywhere near this magnitude would be a very major blow to the Northern Territory, particularly coming on top of the reductions in federal funding over the past few years. All honourable members are aware of the very harsh treatment which we have received over the past few years. The figures for funding to the Territory from the Commonwealth are as follows. The real cut to the Territory's funding in 1985-86 was 4.4% compared with 0.6% for the states. In 1986-87, the Territory's cut was 3.1% against only 1% for the states. This pattern accelerated in 1987-88 when the real cut to the Territory's funds from the Commonwealth was 9.5% compared with 4.7% for the states.

The economic downturn which followed these very real reductions has been of great concern to us all. We are acutely aware of the loss of employment and population associated with the downturn in economic activity. In particular, the effect on small business and the construction industry has been considerable. The link between Commonwealth cuts and the decline in economic activity cannot be denied. Therefore, we must do all we can to prevent any further reductions in Territory funding.

I am pleased to advise that the federal Treasurer has agreed to a proposal from me that a joint working party of Northern Territory and Commonwealth officials be established. That working party was established in December 1988 and it is examining the extent of the Territory's fiscal disabilities relative to those of the states. The working party is due to report in 2 weeks time, following which I will be holding discussions with the federal Treasurer on options for providing the Territory with a reasonable level of funds for 1989-90 and in future years. I have already written to Mr Keating outlining the very serious situation and alerting him to the consequences of further cuts to the Territory. I must confess that I am a little heartened by what appears to be a constructive attitude on the part of the Commonwealth officers that we have been dealing with, but I cannot stress too strongly the gravity of the situation if the Northern Territory does receive a reduction of \$107m against the funds that it received last year.

I can assure honourable members that I will be doing whatever I can and that the full resources of my government will be brought to bear in whatever way is necessary to work up the Territory's case and to press it to the Commonwealth in order to preserve our position as the best possible in the light of the circumstances that the federal government is in at present.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to express our full support for the Chief Minister in that regard. It is obviously a very important issue.

As we have confirmed that Henry and Walker has first right of refusal for direct sale of land at Myilly Point, when does that right expire? In other words, is there a time limit on that right? Secondly, what constraints exist at present in relation to the type of land use and the value of development? Thirdly, if the firm does not take up its option within the prescribed time, are there any sanctions available to the government in relation to this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is not aware of the circumstances surrounding Myilly Point and the fact that the Henry and Walker group was given a 10-year right for development over the area about 3 years ago, by a previous Chief Minister.

A member interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: It certainly was not the previous Chief Minister. If there is any illusion that the undertaking was given by him, that certainly was not the case.

That information has been quite public and I have said that over a number of years. It has been said in television interviews. People would be aware that, when the university was established on the site of the old hospital, it was on the understanding that it would be there for a 10-year period. I have reason to believe that there will be quite an amount of activity on the site. We are talking about what is probably the best area on the Darwin peninsula for tourism development. If it is developed, it must be done properly and that will require quite a large amount of money.

Mr Smith: Where is the development?

Mr MANZIE: Obviously, the government is concerned that any development that does occur there shall provide the best use of the land in terms of benefit to Territorians. We will certainly ensure that that happens. I know that the opposition has great difficulty with any development proposal that might create employment. We know that the Leader of the Opposition does everything in his power to ensure that the climate for investment in the Territory is damaged, not only nationally but internationally. He denigrates the Territory continually. He has a 2-handed approach, claiming to support development while going out of his way to create a climate which would create embarrassment for would-be developers. He attempts to denigrate publicly those people who would like to inject money into the Territory. He makes no comment, of course, on the disastrous effects of the turnaround of the federal ALP government in relation to the development of the airport. We all remember 1983, when Prime Minister Hawke sat on a bulldozer, hired for the occasion at a cost of \$2000 per hour, and announced the development of the Darwin International Airport. Of course, as soon as the election was over, that project was abandoned.

Mr Ede: We are asking about development on Myilly Point. We have been waiting for 10 years.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is amazing. We have this constant backchat from the benches ...

Mr Firmin interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: We hear a constant chorus of indignation when the facts are stated, but the opposition has to accept the facts. The federal ALP government has strangled development of tourism projects, particularly in Darwin, through its turnaround in relation to the international airport. Hopefully, through the efforts of Senator Bob Collins and my colleague, the Minister for Transport and Works, the problems will be resolved this year - no

thanks to members opposite who have given no credence to our efforts to encourage development.

I know that some Asian interests are looking at the Myilly Point proposal. I am certainly not prepared to go any further because I do not want to jeopardise the chances of some magnificent developments occurring in that area at a reasonably early stage. I point out that I have had discussions with the executives of Australian City Properties, Lord McAlpine's group, regarding the possibility of its involvement in some sort of joint venture with Henry and Walker. I know that the 2 groups have been involved in discussions among themselves which have not been successful. The fact of the matter is, however, that we do not intend to put up a couple of tin sheds or endorse a 50-room motel on Myilly Point. We have to ensure that that site, which is one of the best in the Territory and possibly one of the best in Australia, is developed to an appropriate level to provide maximum benefit to Territorians.

We know we will have problems with members opposite, but I ask the community to look at our record over the last 10 years and to recognise that the effort that this government has put towards orderly development and the creation of jobs has worked and that should be balanced against some of the very sad efforts of people opposite since the days when they fought actively against self-government. Every year, they try to hamper development of the Territory for Territorians. Certainly, we will be doing the opposite.

Fitzgerald Dairy

Mr HATTON to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to debate in this House yesterday in respect of the Fitzgerald Dairy and ask what action he is prepared to take to provide government assistance to the Fitzgeralds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was interesting to note the debate last night on this matter of the denial of access to a farm which is on a lease held by people called the Fitzgeralds. It is a most complicated matter which involves a number of personalities but, when listening to the debate last night by honourable members opposite, and trying to unravel what they proposed as resolutions to it all, one could conclude only that they were giving as much difficulty as members on this side of the House were in coming to grips with a real answer.

It was most interesting to note that one of the answers proposed from the crossbenches was compulsory acquisition ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: If nothing else, it is practicable.

Mr PERRON: Those 2 words are normally touted in a fearful way. Compulsory acquisition has always been very unpopular in the Northern Territory, yet we heard members ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You have done it already on that block itself.

Mr Ede: That was 6 years ago.

Mr PERRON: ... opposite advocating that to solve 1 person's problem, government should compulsorily acquire an access across another person's land.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You have already done it.

Mr Ede: 6 years ago.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, a number of people have something to answer for in this case. I think the landlord in question, a Mr Meyering, has a fair bit to answer for in allowing a business to develop under lease over a such long time as he has without fulfilling any responsibility that one would think that a landlord would have to ensure that legal access to such a lease was available. I do not think that it can be denied that, through inaction perhaps, Mr Meyering has played a very significant role in the development of this problem.

Of course, Mr Trezise, over whose land access has existed over many years, could be said to have acted fairly precipitously in moving in such a dramatic way to cut off that access and, in doing so, creating this situation. I understand that Mr Trezise argues that he has been giving notice to the Fitzgeralds for at least a couple of years. I am not sure whether that notice was in writing or not, but he indicated that he wanted that access route across his land closed. I guess it is the right of most owners of freehold land to say that they are giving notice that, one day, access will be stopped so that people affected can do something about it. It appears that, to Mr Trezise's mind, it became necessary to make that move. I am not saying that he moved rightly or justly, simply that he certainly precipitated the problem that the Fitzgeralds are experiencing.

The government has sought to find a equitable resolution to this matter because, when government uses taxpayers' funds to assist a group like this, the possibility exists that other people will feel that they are not being treated justly and that they should also enjoy various accesses which have evolved over the years, through no fault of government. If that access problem is resolved, perhaps we should acquire access strips across other private land in order to sort out other people's problems.

At this stage, our proposal is for the Department of Transport and Works to use part of the electricity easement of the Power and Water Authority to locate a route to the Fitzgeralds' lease which can be used on a temporary basis. Unfortunately, this will cost some money. Knowing the sad plight of the Fitzgeralds, battlers that they are, I doubt that they would have much surplus cash to contribute towards such a resolution. Of course, that would have to be a temporary resolution only. We cannot create permanent roads on government easements in this way. The route is not suitable for a permanent access and some cost will be involved in constructing culverts and so forth. The Department of Transport and Works is proposing to make a loan to the Fitzgeralds in order to create the access on the understanding that, as soon as the Fitzgeralds' proposed move to another site occurs, the access can be closed and, hopefully, the department can take the taxpayers' culverts back and use them elsewhere.

This matter has been in hand for a little while. Officers of the Department of Transport and Works have been talking to the Fitzgeralds.

Mr Smith: It is a pity that you did not do it before the wet season started.

Mr PERRON: We have been talking with them.

Mr Coulter: I put culverts in there before the wet started.

Mr Smith: Have you been down to have a look at them lately?

Mr PERRON: The government has moved to try to resolve the problem. I reject the criticisms made yesterday and the suggestion that we should have used the power of compulsory acquisition to resolve the matter some time ago. I also reject the view of the member for Barkly who says that it is a simple matter. In his opinion, the road over Mr Trezise's land is a public road. He is not interested in anyone else's opinion. If it is a public road, certain legal rights apply. Personally, I believe that it is a private road, and always has been, and therefore the laws relating to public roads do not necessarily apply to it.

The good news is that we are working to provide a temporary alternative access to the Fitzgeralds' dairy albeit, sadly, at public expense. This action would be quite unnecessary if particular citizens had accepted their responsibilities at an earlier stage in the development of this saga.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

To sort out the confusion that obviously exists in his mind, and to sort out the lack of knowledge that exists in the minds of anybody else who is not intimately involved in the matter of the lease arrangements over Myilly Point, will the minister undertake to provide this House with accurate information on the terms and conditions and, particularly, the expiry date of the development right that Henry and Walker currently has over the Crown land at Myilly Point?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has asked questions on notice regarding this matter and those questions will be answered in the normal course of events. He will receive the information and ...

Mr Smith: What do you have to hide?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is amazing. The Leader of the Opposition asks a question but he cannot keep his mouth closed. He must like the sound of his own voice even though not many other people do. It is utterly amazing. The idea of asking questions is to try to obtain some information. The Leader of the Opposition likes to ask questions and then make a noise so that, if any information is forthcoming, he will not hear it.

I will say this very slowly, Mr Speaker, so that everyone can understand. The Leader of the Opposition has asked questions on notice regarding this matter. The answers will be provided in the normal course of events.

Mr Smith: When will that be?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's approach in wasting question time on matters which he has addressed through questions on notice indicates that he has nothing of substance to raise in this House. It is indicative also of his general attitude towards the concept of questions on notice. The details will be provided. They will be provided under the rules of the parliament in response to questions he has asked and I have no hesitation in providing that information.

Land Sold to Education Holdings

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

A large area of land was excised from the Berrimah Research Farm and sold as a Crown lease to Education Holdings, the company which proposed to set up the Darwin International Grammar School and which went into liquidation on 30 January. What will happen to that land? Will the liquidator have complete power to dispose of it publicly or privately or will the government take possession of the land again, as the covenants on the lease were not fulfilled and either dispose of it or allow it to revert to the care and maintenance of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the latter course of action is being taken. We have commenced foreclosure procedures to return the lease to the government on the ground of non-performance.

Denial of Access to School Libraries

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In question time yesterday, the honourable minister publicly endorsed the user-pays principle in regard to secondary education in the Northern Territory schools. He stated that students whose parents do not or cannot pay will not be disadvantaged in terms of receiving a basic education. Is he aware that there are a number of high schools in Darwin where students whose parents have not paid or could not pay have been refused library ID cards and are unable to borrow books to do their homework and, given that these students have already lost a substantial part of the first term, will the minister issue an urgent notice advising schools that libraries are an essential component of our schools and are open to all regardless of user pays and such other mindless, shallow philosophies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am really quite surprised by the question because yesterday I outlined the whole matter of school fees and the proposals to address certain concerns. I wish members of the opposition would get the message. We are as concerned as everyone else is about the implications of school fees. We have a responsibility to ensure that facilities and resources are made available for students to obtain basic education. We are working towards that in a responsible manner. A working party has been engaged on that exercise. Yesterday, a load of nonsense was spoken in here about that. I have made it very clear that there are certain aspects of the report that are of concern to me, and I am examining them further.

One such aspect related to per capita funding. I made it clear that we need to take into account what is happening in the states. In fact, fees in some states are up to \$280. Those issues are being addressed by the government. I have set in place another group to look at that particular aspect. I have indicated that the group will report to me by April. I will bring into the Assembly the reports that have been submitted to date and indicate the government's position. I have made it clear that we are handling this in a responsible manner. Well-qualified people are examining those issues and the government will listen to their comments.

Olgas Road

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER to TRANSPORT and WORKS

Recently, I had the good fortune to visit the Yulara area. I had the opportunity to speak to many tourists staying at the Yulara Village about what they thought of the condition of the Olgas Road. That road is in a pretty sad condition, particularly after all the rain that has occurred in central Australia.

Mr Bell: So is Yulara.

Mr DONDAS: At the same time, on driving back to Darwin, there was an announcement...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Question time is a time when members should ask questions, not make speeches. I think that the member for Casuarina is clearly in breach of that requirement of standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the member to put his question.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Speaker, recently an announcement was made by the Minister for Transport and Works that a level of funding would be provided for the upgrading of the Olgas Road by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments. Can the minister inform the Assembly and members of the public, particularly tourists, what is to happen and when it is to happen, in relation to the upgrading or reconstruction of the road?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I noted the interjection by the member for MacDonnell whilst the member for Casuarina was asking his question. He is proving, once again, that he is an apologist for the federal government and its extremely lax attitude towards the Olgas Road. The Territory government has been in a position ...

Mr Bell: Which capital works program did you drag the chain on, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the record of the Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works is equalled by none. For some 7 years, the federal government has neglected the Olgas Road which is entirely within its province. That is how long the Territory government has been putting forward designs and surveys for an upgraded road to the Olgas. The member for MacDonnell ought to know that. It is in his electorate. However, the press releases which he issued about a month ago demonstrated his total lack of knowledge of his own electorate and his ignorance of matters technical and legal. I am amazed that he has the audacity to interject again this morning.

To put it simply, I do not know when the federal government will take action in relation to the Olgas Road. Whilst it has no obligation at all to make a financial contribution towards upgrading the road, this government has committed a modest amount of Territory taxpayers' money towards its upgrading, in the hope that this will embarrass the federal government into making a move. We will have a federal election this year, and perhaps that will result in some action.

Within the last few weeks, I received a letter from an interstate tourist who was most impressed with the roads in the Northern Territory with the

exception of one - the Olgas Road. The tourist singled out the Olgas Road as being a safety hazard and an absolute disgrace to the Northern Territory. It is largely because of the tourism factor that the Territory government has seen fit to commit Territory taxpayers' dollars to this project. I have spoken and written to federal ministers and, at present, officers of the Department of Transport and Works are at Yulara holding discussions with the ANPWS and other federal officers in an effort to come to a resolution. If a decision can be made immediately to commit federal funds to top up the Territory taxpayers' dollars, we can move at once on the construction of the first 17 km which have already been surveyed and designed and, I understand, cleared by the Aboriginal people. It is now up to the federal government to act and, if the member for MacDonnell has any interest in his electorate, he will lobby actively to ensure that it gives a quick response.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he able to give the House an update on progress towards the construction of a flood-mitigation dam at the Telegraph Station in Alice Springs and is he able to advise on the source of funds for building such a dam?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen has been a staunch advocate for the construction of this dam for some years. I can advise him that, last week in Alice Springs, a meeting was held with senior traditional owners and people concerned with the proposed site. That meeting was very successful and the people involved have requested a further meeting with myself in April, and I will be travelling to Alice Springs to meet with them then. In the meantime, plans have progressed to the stage where we are now looking for material, within the immediate area, for the construction of such a facility. Permission has been given for further work in that regard. I am particularly pleased with the state of negotiations at this stage and I pay tribute to the relevant officers of the Power and Water Authority, particularly Richard Marks, as well as to Stephen Davis and the traditional owners of the region who have been extremely frank in their negotiations on this particular matter. I am delighted with the manner in which negotiations are continuing and I would hope that, at the meeting which I am to attend in April, the consultation and discussion will continue in the same vein.

In relation to the funding of the project, the Chief Minister has clearly indicated that he regards the construction of this facility within the next 2 years as a matter of the utmost importance. In fact, I believe he nominated the end of 1990 as the vital date in the construction period. The Chief Minister is the Treasurer. He has said that he will build the dam and he is to find the money. Of course, I will be supporting him in Cabinet's budget deliberations in trying to procure the money for this very important project from our colleagues. I suggest that money may be forthcoming in the 1989-90 budget, and certainly in the 1990-91 budget, to build that facility. The Chief Minister is committed to it. He has said publicly that he will find the money to construct it and his word is good enough for me as the responsible minister. I will be reminding him of that in Cabinet's budget deliberations if I need to, but I am sure that he will tell his colleagues that money must be made available because of the importance which he places on the project.

In summary, the meeting held last week was very fruitful indeed. At present, we are looking for construction material within the immediate area. The Chief Minister has given his commitment to the project with a construction period in 1990. Given that commitment, funds will be allocated either in the forthcoming budget and, certainly, in the 1990-91 budget.

Air-conditioning of Preschools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Honourable members would be well aware that, on a number of occasions, I have raised in this House the subject of the need to air-condition some preschools. I have lobbied the minister at length over the past 18 months or so. Can he now advise whether any action has been taken and, if so, what the current position is?

Mr Dondas: And what about Alawa and Nakara?

Mr Setter: You are the member for that area, not me.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I judge from interjections that a short reply is warranted. Briefly, in recent weeks, some schools would have received offers to have air-conditioning installed in general learning areas in preschools. Those are the schools where it has been found that heat is above what is considered to be an acceptable standard. It has been a difficult exercise. I did call for a report. Unfortunately, the full report has not been completed and I have received an interim report which has enabled me to proceed in this direction.

It was clear that some schools did not wish to have air-conditioning. I reiterate that we are talking about very young children who are in the school environment for up to 2 to 3 hours each day and who move in and out of their general learning area on a regular basis. It has not been easy to take this decision but the present situation is that offers are being made to certain preschools in relation to the air-conditioning of their general learning area. It is entirely up to school councils to decide whether they wish to take that up, and I understand that there are some that are considering not accepting the offer, but that is their decision. Those school councils that elect for air-conditioning will be required to obtain 3 quotations. The lowest, complying quotation will be the one that will be accepted. Money is available. As honourable members would be aware, some \$1.295m was set aside in the budget to air-condition primary and preschools. Once the final report is in, I will comment further.

Registration of Stolen Vehicles

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In light of the recent disclosures on the widespread sale of stolen cars in the Territory, and the subsequent loss of those vehicles with no compensation for some people who bought them in good faith, what steps is the minister's department taking to ensure that stolen cars are not registered in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Territory government has already taken a number of steps and is proceeding with, amongst other things, amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act which will be introduced during these sittings. The need for them was identified some time ago and they will enable the Territory to participate in a national identification of vehicles system. Put simply, that will involve a numbering system. The same number will be marked consistently on about 5 parts of the motor vehicle, from the chassis right through to the engine. Of course, that will enable vehicle inspection people to recognise quickly if a part of a car has been replaced etc, as was the case in the recent scandal. Details are then fed into a nationally-available information system.

In addition, we have given notice that we are proceeding with a motor vehicle encumbrance system. We have been waiting for some time now for the government of New South Wales to decide what it will do with its system which was seen to be the most appropriate for us as a lead towards a national encumbrance registry. Recently, agreement was given by the New South Wales government for us to link into its system. It needs to expand its capacity for other reasons as well as our own entry. In the meantime, we will be proceeding with preliminary work to inform the various lending authorities and the public on the scheme and the information required for registration. Thus, as soon as the system is available to us, we will be able to link in immediately and, even at that stage, have a substantial inventory of encumbrance registrations. That matter is being pursued by the Minister for Health and Community Services who has responsibility for consumer affairs.

Those measures are progressing and will reduce the risk of such scams occurring. Whatever governments do, criminals are bound to find some way of getting around the system. Nevertheless, this should reduce the occurrences referred to by the member for Arnhem.

Devil's Pebbles

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The government and, more particularly, the honourable minister have been accused publicly by the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority of deliberately provoking a confrontation over sacred sites at the Devil's Pebbles near Tennant Creek. What is his response to that accusation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am mortally wounded by such accusations from the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority. I note that he placed an advertisement in last Sunday's newspaper referring to one of the 'Hypothetical' programs. He signed off as 'Bob Ellis, Redneck Baiter'. I am not sure which particular 'Hypothetical' program he was referring to and I am not sure why I am even sensitive about the advertisement.

I have been accused of deliberately provoking confrontation in a number of instances wherever there has been some activity. Mount Samuel would be a good example and Coronation Hill is another. When I pointed out that, in fact, Coronation Hill is not the Bulla site at all, I was accused of adopting a deliberately confrontationist attitude. The Devil's Pebbles debate is part of a continuing saga.

I am happy to respond to the question from the member for Ludmilla. Let me say firstly that I have issued no directions at all in relation to the Devil's Pebbles. In brief terms, this is the scenario. A mining company, Frankenfeld Quarries, wanted to extract marble from prospective pockets in the general region of the Devil's Pebbles to supply a substantial market in Europe. It applied to the Department of Mines and Energy on 22 August 1987 for 4 extractive mineral leases to mine the mentioned stone. The application was advertised in the Tennant Creek newspaper on 11 September 1987, as required by section 163 of the Mining Act. No objections to the grant of the leases were received - none whatsoever. The company lodged development plans with the department and, on 9 January 1989, an authority under section 104(2) of the Mining Act was issued under the conditions that no loose boulders were to be disturbed and mining was to be restricted to in situ massive outcrops.

No objections were received to the application for extractive mineral leases and the department had established, through the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority, that there were no registered sacred sites on any of the areas concerned. Therefore, the department rightly issued the leases. Following that, the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority has claimed that the whole region is a sacred site and it is threatening litigation if mining starts.

Without going into the rights and wrongs of who claims what, the point is that the Department of Mines and Energy has done only what it was required to do under the terms of the Mining Act. Where is the plot that the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority complains about? The only plot I can see is one organised by the director himself to bring into the public spotlight the sacred sites issues that he dearly wants to have a public and bloody scrap about with the Territory government. The closest scrutiny will reveal that, in the past 6 months, I have not issued a single statement about sacred site matters despite the claim by the authority's director that I do so virtually every day. For 6 months, I have remained silent on the sacred sites issue. It is the director who is being provocative, and everybody knows it.

My attitude to the debate on the Devil's Pebbles is that it is a matter for the mining company to sort out in the correct and prescribed manner with the various government departments and authorities with which it must deal. I have no personal involvement in it whatsoever. These continuing public diatribes from the Director of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority are undignified, particularly those in which he makes highly personal attacks on members of the government, and do him no credit at all. They are gutter tactics and I for one will not be getting down there with him to roll about in the muck.

I read the member for Barkly's column in last Sunday's newspaper in relation to this issue and I now have the history of the Devil's Pebbles dating back to 1980. I agree with the member for Barkly that a resolution must be found so that this very valuable resource can be utilised. The matter is now before the courts and it would not be fair or just for me to say anything further at this stage. Thus, I will not continue my remarks other than to provide honourable members with the basic history of my involvement in this matter: I have had no involvement.

The Department of Mines and Energy acted in a proper manner. It sought objections to the grant of the extractive leases and asked the Sacred Sites Protection Authority for clearance of the area. I repeat that there were no objections and there were no sacred sites in the area. Having completed

everything that was required of it, the mining company rightly went in to begin mining. It is now a matter before the courts and I do not intend to comment further on it until it has been resolved in the courts.

Strip Shows on Licensed Premises

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for TOURISM

As a result of the minister's commitment late last year to provide a policy in this respect, has the government developed a policy on the future of strip shows on licensed premises and does the government propose to legislate to enforce the code of ethics which was designed by the industry in consultation with the minister to set the standards of strip shows, whether they are held on licensed premises or not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some 12 months ago, the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission began receiving complaints about the standard of shows on licensed premises. Subsequently, the commission attempted to negotiate with licensees the adoption voluntarily of a code of ethics which the government believes would be acceptable to the general public. Following this, one major hotel chain introduced the code of ethics and, subsequently, that code was adopted by the Northern Territory Branch of the Australian Hotels Association which, in turn, passed it to other hotels in the Territory which are not in the association. Unfortunately, this voluntary code of ethics broke down because not all the premises that were providing the shows adhered to the code. In actual fact, the hotel chain that originally proposed the code of ethics was found to own one of the properties that was in major breach of the chain's own code.

Public comment about these shows has increased over the past few months, and the matter is being examined through the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. Under section 67 of the Liquor Act, the commission has the power to publish guidelines to assist licensees in the conduct of their licences and generally to provide members of the public with an expectation of what might be provided at licensed premises. At a commission meeting which was held on 13 February 1989, the commission approved the publishing of guidelines for these purposes. It is believed, and probably rightly so, that the publishing of these guidelines is not the end of the problem. It is the government's option, and I have instructed the commission to go down this path, to enable the commission to draw up a tighter code of ethics which will result in my coming back to this place and introducing changes to legislation which will make the regulations conditional to the granting or keeping of a liquor licence.

Section 33 of the Liquor Act gives the commission power to vary conditions of a licence from time to time but, in turn, this section also allows a 26-day appeal period which requires the commission to conduct a hearing if so requested by a licensee. Of course, that option was virtually ruled out because of the time involved and the cost to the community. It is apparent that a large section of the community is seeking for some action to be taken. That has been reflected in the past couple of days by the number of people that have signed petitions that have been presented in this Assembly. However, it is also apparent that there is a large section of the community which favours the continuation of shows, and that indicates that the government should not take action to bar them completely.

Mr Speaker, I will be giving notice of my intention to introduce amendments to the Liquor Act during these sittings and one of the areas that will be encompassed by the proposed changes to the Liquor Act will require that licensees be fit and proper persons to hold licences, whether that is enforced at the application stage or in the course of their conducting an existing licence. I think everybody in this place will join with me and, on reflection, say that some of the marketing programs that have been introduced by licensees in the past few months ...

Mr TUXWORTH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister is so far away from the question that I am wondering whether he heard it in the first place. If he wishes me to, I will ask it again.

Mr Coulter: What is the point of order?

Mr TUXWORTH: The point of order is that the answer that the honourable minister is giving has nothing to do with the question which was whether the government has developed a policy on the future of strip shows on licensed premises. That matter has not been addressed.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. In fact, if my hearing was correct, the minister has answered the member for Barkly's question, in part at least, but I would ask him to be more specific with his reply.

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, I believe that I am answering the question. If the member for Barkly did not hear what I said, he should read my lips.

We are introducing guidelines which are a condition of licence to enable people to conduct strip shows according to those guidelines. That is a pretty firm policy. They will be a condition of the grant of a licence. I cannot put it more plainly.

Mr Tuxworth: You did not say that before.

Mr POOLE: I did say that before but you were not listening.

Mr Dale: That was the truth you were hearing, Tuxie, and you are not familiar with it. You will get used to it after a while.

Mr Tuxworth: Well, it does not come out very often from any of you.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, to continue what I was saying, the government must interfere in relation to strip shows and events such as throw-the-baby competitions. In this day and age, we cannot and should not permit activities of that kind to take place on licensed premises. Those are the sort of areas that the commission should take into account in the granting of licences and in assessing whether or not a licensee is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Denial of Access to School Libraries

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer him to a question I asked yesterday concerning the provision of library services for high school students in the Northern Territory, and his refusal to advise. In view of the fact that, to date, students whose parents have not paid fees have been unable to borrow books from their libraries, will he issue a telex this afternoon to those schools instructing the principals that they will open their libraries immediately so that all students in high schools in the Northern Territory can borrow books?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, let us get something straight right from the word go. The education of Northern Territory students is being looked after adequately. There is a partnership between the Department of Education and the school councils. The member raises this issue continually and is misleading the public totally. As far as providing a basic education is concerned, the situation is that the ...

Mr Ede: Books are basic.

Mr HARRIS: Would you just sit down and listen. You ran off last night. You gave me a serve in the adjournment debate ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Education will address the Deputy Leader of the Opposition through the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education, should have stayed in this Assembly a little longer last night to listen to the explanation of the nonsense that he has put around in the community. He is the master of the 30-second grab. He misleads the public totally on issues, particularly the staffing of Anzac Hill High School and other small schools.

I will respond to the question he has asked now in relation to books. It is very clear that the policy of the department is that books have to be available to allow students to undertake their studies. There is no doubt about that. The department and the school councils would not want a situation in which students could not obtain books. We have been going through the question of school fees over the last couple of days. I have made it very clear that we are trying to look at the issue responsibly and in a sensible and unemotional manner. I noted the comments made by the member for Stuart on television about this matter. He should really look at the issue responsibly.

As far as the parent contribution is concerned, Casuarina Secondary College sent out a letter referring to the fact that it did issue ID cards and that, if students had not paid, they would not receive these cards. What the honourable member fails to acknowledge in any of these situations is that there are provisions for those students who are having difficulty to go to the principal and explain their situation. I refer to the letter from the Casuarina Secondary College: 'If you have difficulty with immediate payment, please contact the registrar'. There is no question of library services being stopped if students are unable to afford these fees. It is the same with another school. A letter from that school says, at the bottom, in large

print: 'Would all parents/guardians please note, where genuine difficulties arise in payment of fees and hire charges, please contact either the council chairman or the principal to make arrangements to ensure no students are disadvantaged'. School councils and the Department of Education do not want to disadvantage students. If there are problems in relation to that, we will be looking at them.

The department issued a circular which made it very clear that students would have access to the libraries etc and the member for Stuart would be aware that library facilities are available until 9 o'clock in the evening at the secondary colleges. His implications about the issue of ID cards and students' inability to obtain books is a load of nonsense. I would suggest to the member for Stuart that he start to perform his job responsibly and that he look at these issues. As I said, as far as the government is concerned, we will ensure that students have access to the materials necessary to enable them to carry out their activities and enjoy all the opportunities available to them through our education system in the Territory.

Mr COULTER (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in the absence of the Chief Minister and the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government, questions relating to the portfolio areas of responsibility that the Chief Minister has should be directed to myself and any questions relating to the areas of responsibility of the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government should be directed to the Attorney-General.

Commonwealth Projects on Defence Bases

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will he confirm reports that the Commonwealth government construction projects at the RAAF base at Tindal and HMAS Coonawarra have been deferred and, if so, what impact will that have on our construction industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no doubt members are aware of the precarious situation of the construction industry over the last year or so and of the measures that this government has taken to stimulate recovery in that industry through such projects as the Yulara developments in the Alice region and the State Square project in Darwin. There has been a gradual return of confidence in that sector. I visited Alice Springs recently and found that the building industry is once again operating at a reasonable level and there has been a return of confidence and enthusiasm in that region. The recovery in the Darwin region has been a little slower although there is an obvious turning of the tide. This morning, Senator Collins mentioned on ABC radio the need for a return of confidence. This comes, principally, through construction activity in the Northern Territory.

This morning, we has a press release from the Master Builders Association flagging, as a result of information from Australian Construction Services, a decline in the commitment to both the Tindal and the Coonawarra defence projects. In March this year, there was to be \$9m-worth of work released on the Coonawarra project. I understand that is now to be drawn out over 4 years. We have heard much crowing from the federal member about the federal government's commitment and the positive impact this would have on the construction industry during the next couple of years. In February and March of this year, \$15m-worth of works at Tindal were to proceed to tender. However, I understand from information supplied by the Master Builders

Association, which claims that its source within ACS is impeccable, that the \$15m program is to be deferred until next year. If there is any truth in that, the impact on the construction industry will be catastrophic.

Construction in the Northern Territory relies to a significantly extent on government programs. This year, this government's construction expenditure will be \$35m, boosted by another \$19m on the State Square project, which brings the total into line with the level of 2 years ago. The federal government's construction program usually involves projects to the value of \$50m to \$60m per year and the private sector provides additional construction projects. We all know that there has been some nervousness in the private sector lately, particularly because of the lack of activity at the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports. Given the positive statements from Canberra in relation to the Darwin Airport, I was beginning to feel that we would soon see some light at the end of the tunnel. Business people have been phoning me from Melbourne and asking whether they should invest in the Northern Territory. I have been able to say that I am confident that those projects will proceed.

Mr Bell: How about applying your super, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I hear nonsense about super. I am talking about \$25m of pre-committed federal government programs in the Northern Territory. This is not mickey-mouse stuff; it is fair dinkum big business. If Commonwealth expenditure on construction declines, the construction industry will falter again. I understand that the federal member was briefed on the Tindal matter and I would like to hear from him as to whether or not that \$15m expenditure will proceed this year. He is always pretty keen to let us know when \$100 000 road jobs are under way with money that is forwarded through the Territory government's road program. If he has known about this for some weeks, as I understand he has, I would like to hear some explanation as to why he has not told the construction industry in his electorate.

More pertinently, rather than the member for MacDonnell crowing about superannuation schemes and whatever, I suggest that he and his colleagues use every bit of their good offices and relationships with their federal colleagues to have this decision turned around. The Territory government made its commitment to the State Square project, and that decision was not arrived at easily. It was made on the basis of a balanced construction industry program over the next 3 to 5 years. It is a deliberate, long-term, balanced program and, if \$25m is to be cut out of the overall construction scene, then we ought to have known about it before now. This last minute stop-start business is not appropriate.

In closing, aside from the construction industry exposure, I now need to question the federal government's commitment to the defence of the north. Coonawarra and Tindal, not to mention another scandal that I will refer to later in these sittings concerning radar installations at Port Keats, have been pulled off the program. What about the army establishment for 1991? What about coastal surveillance and all of those other proposals that we all supported when we heard of them by way of announcements from federal Minister Beazley a year ago? What is the federal government's commitment to the defence of the north? What is its commitment to the people of the Northern Territory and to the construction industry?

Police Force Resignation Rate

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In today's issue of the The Australian, an article appears at page 3 which says that the Northern Territory Police Force has a resignation rate of something like 7.88%, or 59 officers, as against an Australian average of 2% or 3%. Obviously, this represents a cost to the Territory. What will the government do to try to reduce this cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to rise as early as does the member for Sadadeen and read The Australian and therefore I am not familiar with the full details of the article. I will take the question on notice because I believe it is important and needs to be answered in full by the responsible minister. I am sure that the Chief Minister will take great delight in answering the question because I know that a great deal of effort is placed on securing employment in Australia's most respected and honoured police force.

BTEC Program

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Recently, the minister attended the Australian Agricultural Council meeting. What was the outcome of that meeting and what decisions were taken in relation to the Northern Territory BTEC program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I attended the Australian Agricultural Council meeting last Friday in Melbourne. It is a very important forum for a whole range of agricultural and primary industry issues. Some of the matters discussed had direct relevance to the Northern Territory, in particular the BTEC program. Approval was obtained at the Australian Agricultural Council meeting for the impending-free line in respect of tuberculosis be moved north as from 1 March 1989. There is a condition relating to that approval in that performance on 5 stations has to be met. I am pleased to say that that has been achieved on 4 of them. The program on the fifth station is expected to be completed tomorrow. All signs indicate that that will be achieved and that we will proceed on 1 March to move the impending-free line northwards to a line through Banka Banka, Muckaty and Brunchilly. The benefits are considerable. The movement of the line will indicate that we are achieving our program goals. More importantly, it will reduce the impediments that are currently placed on the movement of cattle in that area. It will free up the obligations of pastoralists in that area in relation to the movement of cattle to markets. It will include another 59 properties in the impending-free area. Those 59 properties have some 264 500 cattle which will experience the benefits of the program.

The council decided to broaden the assistance under the type C loans. This will enable pastoralists in provisionally-free or higher status areas to obtain some financial assistance in the event of a breakdown. This relates to mustering costs where destocking has become the only option. The council has agreed that it is desirable to keep open the option for continuing to monitor for brucellosis and tuberculosis beyond 1992. This matter is to be the subject of continuing examination over the next 3 years. I gave notice on behalf of the Territory that I would seek to place on the agenda the matter of

funding beyond 1992 to deal with ongoing monitoring and the related costs, as well as the manner in which breakdowns will be approached if they occur. I am not suggesting in any way that I am pursuing an extension of the program beyond 1992, but I believe there is a need to put in place a mechanism to deal with breakdowns. We have to be practical. There is a chance that they will occur and, prior to 1992, we have to address that possibility.

I will say in passing that this was my first attendance at such a meeting. It is apparent to me that life is not made any easier by the irresponsible comments of the opposition spokesman for primary industry in the Northern Territory. His criticisms of the BTEC program during the last 6 months have not assisted the industry. In fact, they have undermined the states' confidence in our involvement in the program. He has committed a great disservice to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory and everyone is aware of that. It has been left to me to mend the fences and to indicate that, although the honourable member has very little knowledge of the program, this does not prevent him from criticising it at every opportunity. I am confident that that has been achieved, that we will be able to maintain confidence in our program, that we will be seen to be pursuing it very responsibly and will achieve our goals in 1992.

The Queensland Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Neville Harper, will be visiting the Northern Territory during the next couple of weeks to study our program and we will be happy to go through it with him. Honourable members will be aware that many cattle from the Territory go to Queensland and, of course, there are landholders in the Northern Territory who also hold land in Queensland. We have much in common and there are many border issues to pursue. I was pleased to be able to arrange a meeting with the Queensland minister and to have him come to the Northern Territory to discuss matters which are of common interest to us. I believe that our talks will bring great benefit to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. I hope to be able successfully to rebut the irresponsible comments of the member for Stuart and I am sure that we will be able to restore confidence in our BTEC program, both in Queensland and nationally.

Industrial Accidents in the Northern Territory

Mr LEO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

This question is intended for the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government. If the minister considers that the figures released recently on the incidence of industrial deaths and accidents throughout Australia, which clearly show that the Northern Territory has by far the worst record, are nothing more than a beat-up, is he prepared to make available the names of persons or companies who have applied successfully for exemptions under the Work Health Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously I do not have that information to hand. I will certainly ensure that the question is answered in full by the minister when he returns. However, I would like to say that the government is concerned about the figures which indicate that working life may be comparatively hazardous in certain areas in the Territory. I also believe, that the Northern Territory has a comparatively large involvement in hazardous industries such as mining. Given that, I believe that the figures indicate that the problems here are no more or less severe than those experienced elsewhere. However, I will pass the question to the minister for a detailed answer and I reiterate that the government is concerned about the safety of all Territorians.

Darwin Foreshore Study

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What stage has his department's study of the Darwin foreshore area reached and what does he expect will result from it at this stage?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to date, a preliminary report has been forwarded by each of the 2 consultants involved. That has been appraised by the department and others, including the Darwin City Council. Some of the works proposed in the initial study were a little impractical and uneconomic. The basic concepts relate to the promotion of tourism facilities around the extremely valuable foreshores of Darwin, from the ferry terminal through to the Esplanade opposite the Travelodge. Specific proposals include a restaurant at the old fuel tank area, opposite the Esplanade, and the utilisation of the mooring basin itself to promote tourism opportunities related to the fishing industry such as restaurants and fish markets. We expect to have a final comprehensive report which can go on public display in about 4 weeks.

We will be seeking input from the general public in relation to aspects of the report which may be modified or taken up as specific private development projects and those which may require input from government in terms of basic infrastructure. All I can say at this stage is that progress has been made. There has been considerable consultation with the tourist industry and the Darwin City Council. In fact, there was a recent visit by the PATA Group. Its comments have been taken into account in the final revision which is expected shortly after these sittings and will be made available to the public for appropriate comment.

Care of Brain-damaged Patients at Tennant Creek Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I have here what I imagine the honourable minister regards as a confidential report. It is a report to himself through the Secretary of the Department of Health and Community Services from the Acting Regional Director for Health and Community Services for the Alice Springs and Barkly region. The subject of the report is the care of brain-damaged patients and the safety and security of nursing staff and patients at the Tennant Creek Hospital. My question to the honourable minister is a simple one. Has he read this report?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the honourable member would pass the document to me so that I may be sure of the accuracy of what he is saying and I can clearly identify what he is waving around, I could answer him more directly. Perhaps this is part of his retraining so that he may become an attendant in this Assembly when he is thrown out at the next elections.

Mr Speaker, I am not certain that I have had this exact document sent directly to me. It is signed by the Acting Regional Director, Alice Springs and it is to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Community Services. I believe that probably what I have is a document from the secretary in which he has included the information in that particular document. The member for MacDonnell and, of course, the member for Barkly who proliferates press releases on nearly every subject that he can think about at any given time that he believes that people may like to hear his views on ...

Mr Tuxworth: You make it pretty easy for us.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, those honourable members are fully aware that, yesterday, I circulated a copy of a statement that I will be making about mental health services in the Northern Territory. This is an ongoing commitment of mine to this Assembly and to the people of the Northern Territory to keep them fully informed about activities that are occurring within my area of responsibility. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition believes it is like reading the telephone directory. I assure him that I place far more importance on this subject.

The one thing I will touch on at this stage is the fact that the 2 honourable members opposite do have an advantage over me in that their approach to people who are being treated for mental illness is that they could not care less what trauma they cause to those people. They could not care less about the confidentiality of these particular people and their families.

Mr Tuxworth: What a load of rubbish!

Mr DALE: At the Tamarind Centre, in excess of 5000 services are given to patients each and every year. A further 2500 approximately are given to outpatients at the Royal Darwin Hospital which means that 7500 treatments are delivered each year. Honourable members opposite pick out 1 or 2, on the odd occasion, so that they can gain a little kudos at the expense of people who are mentally ill. As I have said many times, I think they are sicker than the people we are treating. I intend to pursue this issue in a responsible way and, later today, I will be presenting to this House details of the very responsible programs and policies that this government has in place for people who require psychiatric services in the Northern Territory.

Visitor Fees at Kakadu National Park

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TOURISM

I understand that the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service has made some moves to impose an additional levy on people visiting Kakadu National Park. Is the minister aware of any such new levies and, if there are such new levies and he is aware of them, will he give some information about them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nightcliff for his question. I think everybody in this House is well aware of the trauma that the ANPWS has gone through during the last 12 months with its introduction of various fees, and the arguments that have gone back and forth that, in some cases, have been supported by the federal members of the Australian Labor Party.

Probably, most people in the tourist industry are not aware of the fact that there is an administrative appeals tribunal. I think that has been kept fairly quiet, but we stumbled across it the other day when going through the act. There is an avenue for tour operators to appeal against decisions of the ANPWS. I was interested to read in the newspaper yesterday an article which has great relevance to this question of new and additional fees. This article spoke of the agreement that the Queensland government has reached with the ANPWS with regard to the marine park, the Great Barrier Reef. It does not intend to charge people fees, but will require commercial operators of boats and so forth to obtain permits. They will have to pay a set fee to obtain those permits.

This permit system is in place in the Northern Territory already, and covers areas such as Yellow Waters and the South Alligator River. The operator has to pay a flat fee of \$50. I guess that is fair enough and I do not think people could argue too much about that. Now, it is proposed that they shall pay 50¢ for every passenger carried. That has nothing to do with the general public; it affects the tour operator. The operator will have to fork out 50¢ for every passenger carried. Talk about double-dipping! I do not know of anybody operating boats around the Northern Territory in the tourist industry who has ever retired on the wealth accumulated through his endeavours. The operation is very expensive to organise and run. This levy is an indirect tax which, in the long run, will be passed on to the consumer. Consequently, the cost of boat trips will rise. I cannot see any argument for cost recovery in respect of a boat on the water. I am amazed that this little item has been slipped in under the table to the tour operators in the form of letter from the Director of the ANPWS without any public comment whatsoever.

I think it is disgraceful. The next step will be the imposition of a surcharge for people who want to walk in the park or to go on coach tours in the park. It is a disgraceful attitude. We are already one of the more expensive tourist destinations in Australia because of the distance involved and the cost of operating in the Northern Territory, and all the federal government will do is force costs higher yet again.

Letter from Minister for Tourism to Member for Barkly

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for TOURISM

The minister would remember that I wrote to him in the last 2 weeks concerning allegations laid by a constituent against a senior member of a statutory authority under his control. The minister wrote to deny the allegations, and I thank him for his prompt reply. Will he confirm in the House today that the contents of the reply which he sent me in relation to this matter are true and correct in every particular?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I sense a trap. To my knowledge, on the advice which I received on that day, the comments which I made to the member for Barkly were correct.

Crown Land at Berrimah

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Yesterday, I asked the minister a question regarding the Crown land at the Berrimah Research Farm which was disposed of to Educational Holdings. The minister replied that he has commenced foreclosure proceedings as a result of non-performance. What exactly does he intend to do with the land? Does he intend to return it to the care and maintenance of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries? Does he intend that the liquidator should deal with the disposition of the land? Will it be put up for public auction or does he intend to sell it to the principals of Education Holdings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there were covenants on the lease to Education Holdings and, as a result of non-performance, processes have commenced in relation to the foreclosure of the lease so that the the land will revert to the government.

I advise the honourable member that the government has not considered the question of its future use. It is Crown land and, before any development takes place on it, careful consideration must be given to such things as the visual impact and the fact that that area is not intended to be a development area. The lease to Education Holdings was considered an appropriate use of the land because it involved a school and associated playing fields. The government has not made any decision about the future use of the land and, indeed, has not even discussed the matter. When we reach a decision regarding the land, I will certainly inform the member for Koolpinyah of that decision.

Legislative Assembly Members' Superannuation Fund

Mr TIPILOURA to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, this question is intended for the Treasurer. As a Territorian, I want to see my superannuation contributions invested in the Northern Territory. Therefore, I ask whether the Treasurer endorses the views of the member for Karama who, when the Leader of the Opposition proposed that parliamentary superannuation funds should be invested in Territory business, interjected, and I quote: 'Use your dollars but do not take any of ours'.

Mr PALMER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member claims to be quoting me. I have checked yesterday's daily Hansard and I cannot find any such remark recorded there.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I cannot speak for the member for Karama but, if it is not in the Hansard, it is simply not a matter for the public record, although the daily Hansard is subject to correction.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition cares to listen, I will advise him of the Treasurer's suggestion in relation to this matter.

It is interesting that members opposite are stating that they wish to have their superannuation contributions reinvested in the Territory. The opposition has the opportunity to legislate to invest all superannuation funds, including public superannuation funds, in the Northern Territory. Last night, we heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition talk about a proposal to import buffalo semen from the Mediterranean region into the Northern Territory. If that is the type of proposal in which the opposition wishes to invest the superannuation trust funds of public servants, it has the opportunity to legislate accordingly.

Legislative Assembly Members' Superannuation Fund

Mr HATTON to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

My question is intended for the Chief Minister and Treasurer. Is the Chief Minister aware that the members' superannuation fund is underwritten by the Northern Territory government and, should that fund suffer substantial losses, those losses would be met by the Northern Territory taxpayer, not the members in this Chamber? Is the Chief Minister aware that funds invested by himself and the Leader of the Opposition would not be affected by the opposition's proposal because each of them has served long enough in this

House to receive a guaranteed return irrespective of the value of the fund? I therefore ask the Chief Minister whether the whole proposal to invest members' superannuation funds in speculative ventures in the Northern Territory is nothing more than a potential farce orchestrated by the Leader of the Opposition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I know that the Chief Minister and Treasurer was prepared to issue a press release setting out the substance of some of the matters which the member for Nightcliff has just raised. I am aware that he was seriously contemplating that course of action after yesterday's debate, particularly in terms of the implications for public service superannuation trust funds. Those implications would be considerable in view of some of the proposals put forward by the opposition as investment opportunities in yesterday's debate on the matter of public important in relation to financial services in the Northern Territory. I will leave the matter in the hands of the Chief Minister and Treasurer, but I reiterate to members opposite that, if they are fair dinkum and wish to invest public service superannuation trust funds in high-risk proposals such as the importation of Mediterranean buffalo sperm, they can legislate to do so.

FEPPI Recommendations

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Some time ago, the Northern Territory government adopted the recommendations of the FEPPI report. During the last 12 months or so, some of those recommendations have become outdated. What is the minister's department doing to ensure that the FEPPI recommendations are kept current?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the whole issue of Aboriginal education requires a great deal of investigation and it is my intention to carry out a major review of the area. It will be carried out along similar lines to the review which I conducted on the school councils regulations, although it will be done in much greater depth. I intend to visit most of the Aboriginal communities this year and to discuss with them their concerns in relation to the provision of education services.

Honourable members may be aware that a joint Commonwealth and Northern Territory government review has been carried out and that report has been prepared. The problem with many such reports is that they are often put together by only a couple of people. We need to ensure that the views expressed in such reports are the views of the Aboriginal people themselves. It is my intention to visit the communities in the Northern Territory to discuss those issues with the Aboriginal people themselves. Representatives from FEPPI will accompany me on those visits. Matters that need to be examined include staffing, the bilingual program, truancy provisions and hearing impairment problems that Aboriginal children have. All members would be aware that up to 50% of primary age children suffer hearing impairment. That is of serious concern. The Menzies School of Health Research and the Minister for Health and Community Services are well aware of those problems and are assisting in that regard. In addition, the review will take into account the matter of training. I hope to discuss with the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government his department's programs in this regard. I will be reporting regularly to the Assembly on this vital issue.

It is very important to acknowledge that, whilst there is not so much a need for Aboriginals to control the education provided in their areas, there is no doubt that there is a need for Aboriginals to be involved in the provision of those services in the same way that there is community involvement in schools in the Northern Territory. It is my intention to ensure that the Aboriginal people themselves are involved in this vital exercise. I will be asking the member for Arnhem and the member for Arafura to help in this regard. Communities will be notified well in advance of my coming and they will also be told of the matters that I will be raising. I thank the honourable member for his question. The FEPPi plan is in place. There are some problems with it. We need to ensure that we are up to date in relation to those matters. This will be a major review and I will be listening to the people in those Aboriginal communities and reporting back to the Assembly regularly.

Negotiations with Overseas Interests

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

As all honourable members know, yesterday the government rejected the ALP's proposal to set up a state bank to provide a range of financial services to promote local Territory business growth. Given the government's rejection of our proposal to develop Territory industry, I would ask the honourable minister to bring us up to date with his efforts.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member is raising issues that are incorrect and is trying to make a political statement in the form of a question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I would ask the member for Stuart to ask his question directly.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I ask the Minister for Industries and Development to bring us up to date with his efforts to entice overseas industries here. I know that he will not provide us with details of the amount of Territory money he has to promise them.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member is trying to presume answers.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but again I direct the honourable member to ask his question.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I do not know whether the honourable minister will be able to understand it. I will give him a copy of it because I have been interrupted so many times. My question is: at what stage are his negotiations with the Russians in respect of the processing of McArthur River ore, with the Germans in relation to the development of a chemical complex, and with the French in relation to the development of a liquefied natural gas complex?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if I may go back to his opening comments, the honourable member referred to a debate in this House yesterday and a question asked by the member for Arafura. May I remind them of the advertisement that was placed in the paper. May I remind honourable members that a Smith Labor government would draw on the expertise and success of the Western Australian

model and establish the same system for developing the Territory. That is what he proposed in respect of Territoricorp. Of course, the Northern Territory bank proposal was to be on the same model as the successful Western Australian system. That is what members opposite want. I would think carefully before I invested my funds at the moment. I do not think it would be as successful as the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe. Northern Territory Incorporated is not the type of thing that we want here at the moment. As I said yesterday, I would far prefer to deal with the economic strategies and policies of the socialist left than the Northern Territory Labor Party Smith government Territoricorp. At least, we would know where our money was going - down the drain.

Mr Speaker, I cannot do justice to the honourable member's question in 5 minutes. I am happy to provide him with a detailed briefing on those negotiations. I met with BHP recently. BHP will be in the Northern Territory with Russian representatives. It is too early to detail some of these proposals. I am happy to provide a full briefing, which will require 3 or 4 hours of his time, not 3 or 4 minutes of the Assembly's time, if he is serious about learning what development really means and the effort required to achieve it.

The new script of the Leader of the Opposition relates to development: 'Do not talk to me about environmental issues or Aboriginal issues. I am concerned with economic development and the bread and butter issues'. So far in this sittings, we have had one question on the Fitzgerald dairy - which I think is admirable - and that has been resolved. We have had a question on Myilly Point. Neither question was pro-development in nature. What else has the Leader of the Opposition put forward to this Assembly? What questions has he put to the Chief Minister about development and the economic concerns of Territorians? We have seen this Assembly bogged down on esoteric interpretations of legislation and whether or not we must hand over a document under standing order 255. We have heard nothing during these sittings from this born-again, pro-development, economically-concerned opposition that we are supposed to have. I am happy to provide a full and detailed briefing to the Leader of the Opposition if he can give it the time that it deserves.

Ranger Uranium Mine

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The honourable minister will recall that, in the last sittings of this Assembly, I asked a question regarding the dumping of waste rock at Ranger after a monitor had broken down. He replied that there was no environmental damage. In the meantime, I note that the Office of the Supervising Scientist has claimed that it was the biggest breach that has ever occurred at Ranger. Would the minister care to comment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand 448 000 t of rock was the figure that was mentioned. There can be different types of interpretations regarding environmental damage. If one were an antinuclear, pro-conservation person, one could refer to the whole of the Jabiru zone as an environmental disaster. It has many millions of tonnes of radioactive ore some inches under the ground in many places. The interpretation is all in the mind. Does the honourable member want us to shift all the ore bodies and radioactive material from the area? I will try to arrange it. Let him name the destination that he would like it sent to, the time of delivery and the price. I will accommodate him.

Article in Australian Penthouse

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TOURISM

I am advised that an article was published in the January issue of Australian Penthouse representing the people who live in the Northern Territory as a mob of gunslinging yahoos who behave like raving ratbags and shoot up everything that they see. Representations have been made to me by members who engage in pistol and rifle shooting who have been very upset by this article in that it presents a wrong impression to the tourists who visit the Northern Territory. Has the minister read the article and, if so, what does he intend to do to correct the impression it will create?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this article was cut out and forwarded to me, I believe, by our representatives in Canberra. I received photostat copies of the article and there are a number of ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: But you do not buy it, of course?

Mr POOLE: No, I do not normally.

A number of comments made in the article give a terrible impression of the Northern Territory. It is an unfortunate matter because we were aware that the journalist was in the Northern Territory seeking to do a story on commercial hunting - I forget the name of it - but basically it involves people who run around in the bush firing ink or paint pellets at each other. It conveys ideas about neo-Nazi organisations and that sort of thing. Apparently, he did not get much of a run in the Territory as he tried to hunt these people down and therefore ended up writing an article on attitudes towards guns etc in the Territory. I guess he spoke to some of the more honest and tougher people in the Territory who basically said things to the journalist that perhaps you or I would not like to see printed on the front page of a newspaper, Mr Speaker. Many of the remarks are very irresponsible.

I do not believe anything can be done to correct that once it is done, any more than anything could be done to correct the effect of an article that appeared some 8 months ago in one of the major women's magazines. I forget the name of it. I think it is Mode or something like that. It is laid out in a quite expensive format. That article was about a girl who jumped into a freight truck and drove from Alice Springs to Darwin. She wrote about the comments that were made to her along the way in roadhouses and by truck drivers about women and life in general, and it was absolutely atrocious. I am quite sure it would not be endorsed by any Territorian and certainly it would have done nothing for our image down south at all. I do not think the problem can be addressed, but we are certainly aware of it.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to the statement he made at the conclusion of question time last Thursday, concerning the development rights to Myilly Point. In the course of that statement, he said 2 things: firstly, that there is no time constraint on the development and, secondly, that the government would not allow those development rights to extend indefinitely. In view of the evident contradiction between those 2 statements, I ask if there is a formal, legal agreement between the government and the developers on the development of Myilly Point or is there simply a handshake deal? Secondly, if there is a formal, legal agreement, why has the government refused to lodge details of that agreement with the Land Titles Office, as it is required to do?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to answer that question in the sort of detail required, I would have to seek advice. However, I can assure honourable members that there is an agreement regarding the development of the site, and that is in favour of the Henry and Walker company. I think it is important that we think in general terms of development in the Territory, particularly with regard to the development of specific areas in relation to tourism, as well as other types of development. Regardless of who they are, developers will invest money to obtain a return when conditions indicate that that return will be forthcoming. We have to be aware also of the general economic situation that the Territory is presently in as a result of the policies of the federal Australian Labor Party. I think all members would be aware, as would the community, that events, such as the development of the airport terminal in Darwin, will play a very important part. Mr Speaker, I hear rumblings from members opposite. That is typical.

As I said to one media person the other day, we have a situation where the Australian Labor Party has deliberately tied the hands of the Territory and developers in the Territory. We can look at an analogy of a child having its legs and arms tied together. That is what the Australian Labor Party has done to the economic development of the Territory with its procrastination on such works as the airport terminal development. That situation has continued since before 1979. Those of us who have been here for 20 years or more are aware of the sorts of problems that we have experienced. That sort of procrastination has tied up developers and development in the Territory. We have witnessed the removal of large amounts of funding to the Territory during the last 3 years or so, amounts of up to \$20m. That has caused great problems in the Territory and the blame has to be sheeted home to the Prime Minister and to people like the Finance Minister, and members opposite cannot get away from shouldering some of that blame. That makes times tough and, therefore, we all have to try to do things to promote development in the Territory.

In that economic climate, to ask why a development is not occurring and to blame the government's for that is like tying the hands and legs of a child together, throwing him in the pool, and saying: 'Look, he is not swimming. Sack the coach!' It is ridiculous. I can assure honourable members that a number of developments will go ahead in this town when such projects as the airport redevelopment proceed. There are a number of areas where certain developers have rights to develop land and, hopefully, we will see a turnaround before long. I am certainly doing everything in my power to ensure that we have a climate in which development can proceed.

Mr Speaker, the development rights for Myilly Point are in the hands of Henry and Walker. As I said, there is no time constraint on the developer. Of course, the government would not allow those rights to extend indefinitely. If it appeared that the holding of those rights was to the detriment of development, the government would take action to ensure that those rights were removed.

Darwin Airport Redevelopment

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has he any information or documentation to support his recent statement that the Darwin Airport redevelopment will not physically commence this year, as promised by Warren Snowdon and Senator Bob Collins?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of course I have that information. The Northern Territory CLP government is all about factual representation.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr FINCH: I hear cries from the Leader of the Opposition. Yesterday or the day before, he claimed that this government's comments about the situation in relation to works at Coonawarra and the Darwin Airport were nothing more than a cynical political exercise. He said that we were using scare tactics that had no basis in fact and alleged that the CLP was not telling the truth in relation to these matters.

The simple fact is that the Leader of the Opposition does not know and nor do our federal ALP representatives or the apologists on the opposition benches in this House. Members opposite ought to get their facts straight before they start crowing. The last thing in the world that I wanted to do was to tell Territorians that they had been let down again by the federal ALP government. The reason is that confidence is returning in the Territory business community. That confidence is returning as a result of our progress in re-establishing the construction industry through the balanced programs introduced by this Territory government ...

Mr Ede: Are you going to table it?

Mr FINCH: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asks if I am going to table it. Of course I am going to table it, Mr Speaker. The document that I will table fell off the back of a federal government truck, a truck whose wheels are very rapidly falling off.

Mr Ede: You have been practising that line, Fred.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I have been provoked to this anger because, quite simply, I was seeking some cooperation from the members of the opposition and from our federal representatives to untie the hands of the Federal Airports Corporation. The fact is that the Federal Airports Corporation cannot proceed expeditiously to meet an unrealistic time set for it by the politicians because its hands are tied. Warren Snowdon and Bob Collins announced on 19 August that it would take one month to transfer and that construction would begin immediately after that. To me, 'construction' means bulldozers and work on site and 'immediately' means today, not in 18 months. The apologists opposite may very well feel cocky that their federal colleagues have been

treated gently by the media. Yesterday's editorial in the NT News says: 'Of course, they have promised now that construction work will begin this year. We must take them at their word'. Why should we?

I have a document from the Federal Airports Corporation. It is dated February 1989 and has a FAC letterhead. It is a bar chart indicating how it will develop the construction program for the Darwin Airport. Let me point out 2 or 3 very pertinent aspects. 'Public Works Committee process to commence in June 1989 and completed in October 1989'.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nhulunbuy has been providing a running commentary and I have been fairly tolerant with all members. The minister will be heard in silence.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I understand their embarrassment over this whole saga. Territorians have waited 4 years for what was supposed to be a 6-month review of the construction program for Darwin Airport. We have had promise after promise. There has been complete cooperation from the Territory government.

There is to be 4½ months of Public Works Committee review. A review was undertaken in 1984. Certainly, the scope of the works has changed marginally and, certainly, it is a different Public Works Committee but why put the FAC through this bureaucratic process when everyone has recognised that the principal matter of interest with regard to both airports is time? Next, the design and construction tender processes undertaken by the federal government and imposed on the FAC demonstrate that the FAC is nothing but an attempt by the federal government to distance itself from the real obligation it has to provide infrastructure at airports around Australia. Mr Speaker, can I mention this: 'construction - February 1990'. How do Mr Snowdon and Senator Collins claim that construction work can commence in December when the corporation itself recognises that under ...

Mr Smith: Is that a draft? Does that have 'draft' written all over it?

Mr FINCH: Of course it has 'draft' ...

Mr Smith: Right!

Mr FINCH: ... written all over it.

Mr Ede: Right!

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FINCH: On Friday night, our honourable federal ALP politicians had already written the draft program, had they? Oh, then they are not construction experts! Mr Speaker, I put it to you that, not only is that incorrect, but that the end of this year for commencement of construction is both unrealistic, under the constraints of the FAC, and totally unacceptable to all Territorians, except the galahs ...

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister will withdraw that remark.

Mr FINCH: My apologies, Mr Speaker, I withdraw. Except of course for our apologists for the Territory ALP government, for the federal ALP government ...

Mr Bell: That will be next, Fred. Do not worry.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, may I continue? There have been accusations that the Territory has been engaged in political opportunism. If this is political opportunism, we have been practising it for 4 years and I will continue to practise it until the first aircraft are at the new terminals at Darwin and Alice Springs.

While I am talking about Alice Springs, another commitment was made by Mr Warren Snowdon, on 19 August, in his big press release, when both members put their necks on the line. Do you remember that one, Mr Speaker? I am sure they do, and I am sure Territorians will remember it at the next election. I remember it clearly, because Mr Warren Snowdon said: 'Work will commence immediately on the \$1.3m extension to Alice Springs Airport'. He said that. Another lie, not ...

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister knows that, under standing orders, he shall not make statements of that kind regarding a member in another place.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order. The honourable minister will withdraw that reference to the federal member.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the reference to the word 'lie'. The honourable member for the Northern Territory used a total, absolute untruth, and he knows it. His statement was totally incorrect because, quite simply, construction did not proceed immediately after August. He said, 'transfer of Darwin within 1 month'. Then, later on, he said 'October'. Then Mr Gary Punch said it would take place at the end of the year, in December. Now they say ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister was asked a very specific question by the member for Casuarina, and that was what documents he had to back up his case.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: All that we have heard about from him, and apparently all that he has, is a draft - and I repeat a draft - document from the FAC. Mr Speaker, I think he has answered the question comprehensively.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I ask the minister to relate his answer directly to the question.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, of course I do have other information and so do all Territorians who happen to listen to ABC radio. The general manager for new airports with the FAC has acknowledged that its program indicated a February 1990 commencement. It hoped that it might be able to commence late this year. That is not good enough for me but, apparently, it is good enough for members of the opposition and for Territory federal members. Mr Snowdon acknowledged that he and Bob Collins have known about it for some time and have been quite content with construction beginning late this year. If they knew earlier, why did they not say so and face the music in the community? Territorians expected that they would be true to their word and that construction would commence 'immediately after transfer'.

The irony is that the competitive bid by the Territory government in early 1988 envisaged program commencement by June last year and completion of construction by the end of this year. Works on both Darwin and Alice Springs Airports could have been completed by the time the FAC will begin construction. Why is it taking so long? It has nothing to do with the will of the FAC. The FAC is extremely keen to get on with the job. However, it has been constrained by the bureaucracy of 4 government departments even on reaching the transfer stage. Is 8 months acceptable to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition? It must be. Construction is now to commence in February 1990 or perhaps December 1989 - which is still not good enough - with completion at the end of 1992.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! This is a complete and utter abuse of question time. We have listened to this minister who has comprehensively answered the question. He can make a statement on the airport at any time. If he wants to make a statement, I will debate it with him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order, but again I ask the minister to relate his reply directly to the question.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the information which officers of the FAC have given to the Northern Territory government and to journalists has positively confirmed that the program involves a commencement of works next February.

I will finish by saying that I have raised this matter publicly only after many months of deliberative and constructive dialogue with federal ministers. I gave them fair warning, in writing, of what the attitude of Territorians would be if they failed to produce an early announcement of the date for the commencement of works. I did nothing underhanded. I was made aware of the matter last Thursday afternoon and, on Friday, the FAC's program was confirmed by its General Manager Technical. He said that it was the best possible program in view of the constraints imposed by bureaucratic red tape. I have raised the matter in order to achieve an early resolution. There is still a chance of progress although it seems that the federal member has already shown his hand by declaring that he is not interested in expediting matters by cutting through the red tape. What I seek ...

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr FINCH: For the benefit of the member for Nhulunbuy, we will see what the outcome is at the next federal election. The member for the Northern Territory made political mileage by sitting in front of the television cameras beating his own drum about having secured airport redevelopment. That has not been secured. Our federal Labor members have not even secured transfer of the airports, let alone the commencement of construction works. They have let their side down and members opposite should feel embarrassed and ashamed. They will feel the brunt of this at the next election.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS AND HOUSING

Territorians have been waiting for 5 years for some development to occur at Myilly Point.

Mr Finch: They have been waiting for an airport even longer.

Mr Perron: A railway as well.

Mr SMITH: Have you finished?

This morning and in the NT News last night, the minister blamed the lack of action at Myilly Point on the state of the economy. In fact, he was quoted as saying that the state of the economy 'had delayed development of Myilly Point'. How can he justify that statement when an application for development of Myilly Point was received last April from the McAlpine company, Australian City Properties and, as recently as yesterday, the company indicated it was prepared to go ahead with the proposal if given the opportunity? In view of the state of the economy and the need to get some development going in the Northern Territory, will the minister give favourable and sympathetic consideration to the McAlpine proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will go over the answer that I gave at the last sittings because I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition needs to have his memory refreshed. In respect of development at Myilly Point, I advised the House that negotiations were proceeding regarding a proposal and that I was confident of being able to confirm a major development on the site before the end of the year.

Mr Smith: That is what you said in 1984.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, that is the answer that I gave and I believe the Leader of the Opposition should take notice of it. I believe that he is unaware of a number of proposals that are in the wind for the Australian City Properties group of which Lord McAlpine is a director. That company has development rights on some other properties in town. It has to carry out its role in respect of the development of those. I do not intend to be responsible for moving another development into its hands and thereby locking up future development with one company.

Mr Speaker, isn't it marvellous? He does not know what is going on. His ALP policies are slowly strangling the Northern Territory. He sits back there smugly. I can imagine what happens. He rings his mates in Canberra and asks them to put the screws on a bit more and make it look bad for the government. That is how he carries on. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that, regardless of his attitude to the development of the Territory, which we have seen in this House and in the community year after year, this government will do everything in its power to make it attractive for people to come to the Territory. We have done that in the past and we will continue to do so. The development that has occurred here in the last 10 years is phenomenal. Territorians do not appreciate threats by these people to try to curtail that sort of development.

The McAlpine group has some properties in the city of Darwin for which it has development rights. I can assure members that it will develop those properties before it is given other areas to develop. If any developer has a proposal which we consider would be advantageous for the Territory, we certainly would not knock him back. The Leader of the Opposition knows that I have had discussions with Australian City Properties and I have visited its director. I have had him come here for further discussions. I am aware of the sort of proposals involved and I have brought the developers together to see if they come up with an arrangement. I will repeat it very slowly and very carefully. I can advise the House, including the Leader of the Opposition, that negotiations are proceeding in respect of the proposal. I am confident of being able to confirm a major development on the site before the end of the year.

Trade Development Zone

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has the minister taken notice of the public warning given by the Leader of the Opposition that he is causing participants at the Trade Development Zone to jump into an early grave? Indeed, has he taken such premature and precipitous action, particularly in relation to Skycom?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I have noted the position that the Leader of the Opposition has adopted. In yesterday's NT News, he claimed that I had signed the death warrant for Skycom. In fact, all I have done is ask the proprietor of Skycom to return to the zone to discuss his development proposals. That is highly responsible. I have been in touch with him in America by fax over the last week and a half. I am simply asking him to return to the zone to discuss some of his development proposals.

If the subject were not so serious - and I note there is to be a matter of public importance discussion on the Trade Development Zone today - the nonsense uttered by the Leader of the Opposition would be hilarious, especially given the terms of the MPI. It takes one's breath away that the Leader of the Opposition actually has the cheek to suggest that the government is trying to shut down companies operating in the Trade Development Zone and that he is in some way a champion for them. I would love to be in a position today to announce a proposal in the Trade Development zone, but I am not. I am sorely tempted to make a statement on the zone during the course of this evening or tomorrow. I have probably caused a heart attack to officers of the Trade Development Zone and my staff who have told me not to say anything. Perhaps if the MPI debate drags on into the evening, I may be able to release that information then.

In a newspaper report at the weekend, the Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying that he does not support the zone any longer. The Labor Party has dropped the zone. What egg its members will have on their faces! What commitment do they have to the Northern Territory and projects for its development? They have the same commitment as they had for the Sheratons and for Yulara. They talk about contingent liabilities and treat them like the plague. As for Myilly Point, if members of the opposition had had their way, it would have become a housing commune for highly-paid public servants. That is what they wanted to do with it.

The champion of the Trade Development Zone has arrived and he is now supporting it. He must have the hide of a bull elephant. This transparent, hollow and hypocritical rubbish has come from the lips of the man who has done more than anybody else in the entire world to ensure that the Trade Development Zone is forced to operate under an umbrella of uncertainty.

Mr Firmin: Terry the Terminator.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ludmilla will withdraw that remark.

Mr FIRMIN: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has accused me of acting prematurely in the matter of Skycom's participation at the zone. Let

us look at the facts. Firstly, and this is critical to his accusation, I made no announcement about Skycom's situation, as he has alleged. The story carried in the Sunday Territorian was in response to a reporter's inquiries. Secondly, I have merely put the facts as they are. It is a fact that the Trade Development Zone Authority is concerned about Skycom's progress. Would the Leader of the Opposition prefer me to deny that? Would he prefer me to duck my responsibilities and run for cover? As I said in response to the reporter's inquiries, I regard the Skycom proposal as one with great benefits for the Territory and I am sincerely hopeful that all will proceed as planned. The fact is that the Skycom proposal is way behind schedule and the reason, as I said, is tied up with legal, financial and corporate difficulties, difficulties between the Australian and the United States operations. I also said that the problem would be resolved if the Australian operation was able to secure financial agreements with the international bankers.

According to the message received yesterday from the company's principal, Mr Glenn Nicholls, he is extremely hopeful that finance will be arranged. If that is the case, it is good news. However, the Trade Development Zone Authority remains concerned about the lack of progress and it has rightly sought to have Mr Nicholls appear to explain his circumstances. That is entirely correct and proper. You can just imagine the outrage of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker, if such a course had not been followed in the circumstances.

According to the latest advice, Mr Nicholls will be in Darwin next week. The Leader of the Opposition has made great play about threatened eviction of Skycom from the zone but I can assure him that I made no such comment to the reporter concerned and that such action has not been contemplated. That sort of action could follow, in the course of time, as a result of consistent non-performance by a zone occupant. Indeed, that has happened to one occupant. I am hopeful, however, that it will not be necessary to consider such a course of action in this case. I have not sought to publicise the circumstances of Skycom. My responsibility is to ensure that zone participants meet their commitments and that is what has been happening. If I had failed to meet that responsibility, the Leader of the Opposition might have had cause to complain. He has no such cause and he must have the hide of a bull elephant to make the sort of accusations he has made in the newspaper and in this Assembly. I might say here that the announcement of Skycom's commencement in the zone was made at the request of Glenn Nicholls. At that particular stage, he had his US partner with him, US West, and a representative of that company attended the opening. It had nothing to do with me. I was asked to do it by the proponents.

I look forward to today's debate on the matter of public importance, particularly the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition. As I said, more good news will come out of the Trade Development Zone. What it needs is faith and commitment, and I can assure honourable members that I have plenty of both.

Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Amendment Bill

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I draw the minister's attention to the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Amendment Bill which is currently before the Assembly. I draw his attention also to the fact that the Police Powers Committee, which has been so belatedly convened, apparently has advised the government that its proposed marijuana legislation is vitiated. I would also draw the minister's attention to the

bipartisan support for the needle exchange legislation as a crucial part of the battle against AIDS. Will he take the honest, decent stance and separate the needle exchange legislation from the absurd marijuana provisions which are demonstrably vitiated?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is rather ironical that this question has been asked now. I have just finished reading the final draft of a press release which I have now issued. It states that I will not be proceeding with the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Amendment Bill at these sittings. At the last sittings of this Assembly, I stated that I would be calling for input from the Bar Association, the Police Powers Committee, the Law Society and community-based organisations which are involved in the drug scene and in needle exchange programs. Unfortunately, apparently because of the Christmas holiday period between the last sittings and these sittings, some members of those organisations have had difficulty in addressing what now appear to be some very complicated and technical legal issues arising from this legislation.

I have toiled over this legislation. It has 2 main thrusts. Firstly, it has the purpose, following this government's wish, of getting tougher on the drug situation. Recently in this country, we have seen a senior policeman blown away and, apparently, that crime was related to marijuana. I believe that the governments of this land must take some action and do everything in their power to address the issue. In a very small way, the drug component of the bill does that. Perhaps one of the reasons why other governments have not addressed the issue is because it is a little too hard for them to come to terms with legally. We intend to come to terms with it. The Department of Law is now taking into account the comments of the legal profession in the Northern Territory, including members of the Bar Association, the Police Powers Committee and the Law Society, as well as the comments of people who are involved in organisations which deal with drug-related issues on a practical level.

This government does not resile from its position. We will get at the parasites who are feeding drugs to our kids. That is an undeniable fact. If anybody in the Northern Territory believes that I am not going to push to get the needle exchange program in place, they can come and see me privately. It certainly is not the case. The matters are dealt with in a single bill. We have been critical in the past - and can we ever forget the night of the white-headed boy, when he rushed in here with a piece of legislation ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will refer to members by the correct title.

Mr DALE: I withdraw that comment, Mr Speaker. Of course, I am referring to the member for Barkly who caused some embarrassment to this House with a piece of legislation that he thrust through. I am not going to be a party to that. This is far too important. We are going to get it right. We are going to prepare the legislation so that it can be administered properly, not only by the police but by legal practitioners and by the courts of the Northern Territory. We will get it right so that we can save our kids from the parasites who are growing marijuana on farms like that described on the front page of the newspaper yesterday. We have heard about 4 segments on the airwaves over the past week talking about millions of dollars worth of marijuana that has been grown and is destined, obviously, for the kids of Australia.

This legislation will be proceeded with as quickly as possible after we obtain the best possible legal advice to ensure that all legislation relative to this bill will be able to be administered properly for the benefit of Territorians.

Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service Review

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer the minister to the current review of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. Can he confirm that the Northern Territory government has presented a submission to that review and advise what the Northern Territory government's position has been with respect to that review?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can certainly advise the House of the latest situation regarding the review of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. As members would be aware, this review was instigated by the federal government and various parties were asked to make submissions. The Territory government has made a submission. Simply put, the basis of that submission is: 'Hands off Kakadu and Uluru'. The Northern Territory government has always adopted the position that national parks in the Northern Territory should be managed by the Northern Territory and at no stage have we resiled from that proposition. It is an ironical twist that that proposition is supported by the federal government in its dealings with the states. However, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, that empire-building federal bureaucracy that we know so much about, has managed to gain control of 2 parks in the Territory: Kakadu and Uluru.

In our submission, we have said that the ANPWS should not be involved in the management of national parks in the Northern Territory. It is not in keeping with the role prescribed for it by the Commonwealth government and CONCOM - the meeting of federal, state and Territory Conservation Ministers - since 1986. Its activities are incompatible with responsible self-government for the Territory as laid down in Commonwealth statutes. It is against further social, economic and political development of the Northern Territory, which is the stated objective of all political parties. The Territory's position is very simple. The same rules and procedures should apply here as in the states in respect of national park management. The ANPWS's attempts to justify its position on the grounds that there is Aboriginal preference for its management, where Aboriginal land is involved, and that it has commitments under international treaties are absolute rubbish. The examples of the Gurig National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula, the Kings Canyon National Park and the recent agreement on Katherine Gorge show that the Territory can certainly negotiate successfully and work with Aboriginal owners in joint management of parks. If the ANPWS were to join with the Conservation Commission in negotiating a more acceptable arrangement for Kakadu and Uluru, a similar success story could be created in those areas. However, everyone is aware that the ANPWS steadfastly refuses even to contemplate such a step.

Our submission showed clearly that the expansion of the sphere of influence of the ANPWS into the management of Kakadu and Uluru was a public-service-driven move, irrespective of the views of the governments of the day. The submission also outlines the sorry history of the intransigence of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service in relation to park management. We say that what the Commonwealth government has done, or allowed to be done, in this case should be undone and the management of our national

parcs should be left with the proper authority, and that is the people of the Northern Territory through the Northern Territory Conservation Commission.

Mines Safety in the Territory

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

My question is based on the assumption that the NT News of yesterday was accurate in reporting the minister's demand for an investigation into Territory mines safety. Will the inquiry include representatives of employees of the mining industry and will mining industry employees be asked their opinion of the Mines Safety Control Act? Will the findings of the inquiry be made public and what deadline has been set for the conclusion of the inquiry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it may be easier for honourable members if I read into Hansard the letter that I have written to the NT Mining Board. That letter is addressed to Mr Adams, the Chairman of the NT Mining Board:

I have noted with regret the report by the Secretary of the Department of Mines and Energy of the fatal accident which occurred at the Woodcutters Mine on 16 February 1989. Whilst increased mining activity in the Northern Territory has no doubt led to an increase in the possibility of incidents, I am concerned that this is the third report of a death on a mine site since the beginning of 1989. With this concern for worker safety paramount, I direct you and your board as a matter of urgency to investigate and report to me on the following:

- (1) the appropriateness or otherwise of the provisions of the Mine Safety Control Act 1982;
- (2) the appropriateness or otherwise of the Northern Territory government's policy of self-regulation on mine sites; and
- (3) whether any legislative or policy change would have prevented any or all the deaths and, if so, your recommendations on what remedial action is required.

You and the members of the board should ensure that you consult as widely as possible with the mining industry, the mine management where the deaths occurred, those unions representing workers on mine sites, the Work Health Authority and the ministerial council established to advise the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government on workers' safety. I would expect that your deliberations will be conducted in a manner appropriate to the seriousness of the matter and you should keep me informed on a regular basis.

Mr Speaker, I think that that has answered all the honourable member's questions.

Mr Leo: Will you make the report publicly available?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will make the findings of the report available.

I would like to stress the seriousness with which I view the deaths in the mining industry. Recently, there was a federal announcement about the findings of a survey indicating that the number of deaths in the mining industry were the highest in the workplace, particularly in the Northern Territory. Working in the mining industry is a dangerous business given the nature of the plant and equipment, explosives and the risks involved. It is my duty as the responsible minister to ensure that the risk to workers is minimised as far as possible. I hope that I have demonstrated to the member for Nhulunbuy the seriousness with which I view the recent accidents in the Northern Territory and my concern to make our mining industry a model for the rest of Australia, as indeed I believe it has been. I hope that the report will be presented to me as expeditiously as possible.

Donations to Life Education Centres

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

My question relates to Life Education Centres. Recently, there have been a number of advertisements on television presented by Mr Dick Smith, indicating that donations to Life Education Centres are tax deductible. I understand that this does not apply in the Northern Territory. Can the minister explain the situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I know that there are some people in the community who are a little confused in relation to tax deductibility for donations to the Life Education Centres. In fact, the Chief Minister wrote to the Treasurer on this matter recently. The bottom line is that donations in respect of counselling drug addicts are tax deductible but donations for the purpose of educating children in relation to drugs are not tax deductible.

I urge all honourable members to lobby the federal Treasurer in relation to this because it is an important matter. The only way that the Life Education Centres are able to obtain the capital necessary for their facilities is through donations. It is about time that the federal government accepted this. To illustrate how confusing this is, I have a letter from the Minister Assisting the Treasurer. This letter was written to Mary Reed, the Secretary of the Top End Life Education Centre. I will quote 2 paragraphs:

The Commissioner of Taxation confirmed that, for donations to mobile Life Education Centres to be deductible, it is necessary that the latter meet the description of a 'public benevolent institution'. Although the phrase 'public benevolent institution' does not have a statutory definition, it is generally understood to be an institution for the relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, destitution, misfortune and helplessness. 'Public benevolent institutions' have as a common feature the giving of relief freely to those who are in need of it and are unable to care for themselves.

The commissioner went on to say that, as he understood it:

The role of the mobile Life Education Centres is to educate people, especially primary schoolchildren, about the effects of drugs and alcohol and to equip them with the skills necessary to overcome the pressures to use such substances. While of obvious merit, such activities do not amount to the provision of benevolent relief and it could not be said that the target audience is in need of such relief.

Consequently, the commissioner concluded by saying that gifts to such centres do not qualify for deductions under the existing provisions of the act.

The National Director of Life Education Centres also received a letter from the Commissioner of Taxation on this particular issue. Again, I will quote 2 paragraphs from that particular letter:

Life Education Centres, which do not only have an educative role but also provide counselling services for drug users and their families, are considered to be 'public benevolent institutions' for income tax purposes because they are providing a measure of direct relief from the affliction. Consequently, donations to such centres will qualify for income tax deductions under subparagraph 78(1)(a)(ii) of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

On the other hand, the various mobile units throughout Australia play a purely educative role in the field of drug education and therefore cannot be accepted as public benevolent institutions.

I urge all members of this Assembly to contact the Federal Treasurer and indicate very clearly that there is a need to review this aspect of the act. I have raised the matter with other Education Ministers and I believe that it is extremely important that it be resolved. As far as the Territory government is concerned, members would be aware that we are providing salary assistance for an educator for Life Education Centres. I will be presenting a cheque for \$20 000 to the Top End Life Education Centre on Thursday this week. It is important that we take the opportunity to support this worthwhile cause because it assists us in educating children and counselling children in relation to drugs and their effects. We should try to give assistance wherever possible. Again, I urge all members to lobby the federal Treasurer. I understand that the Treasurer is considering a review of this matter but every letter helps. I urge honourable members to write immediately.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that all further questions be placed on notice.

TABLED PAPERS

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, further to my answer in question time this morning, I table 2 documents: the FAC Darwin Airport Redevelopment Schedule and the Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works Development Schedule.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Police Force Resignation Rate

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I rise to provide some information in response to a question asked by the member for Sadadeen of the Deputy Chief Minister in relation to police resignations. The responsibility falls within my portfolio.

The honourable member asked what the situation was in relation to police resignations in the Territory, and what we were doing about it. I can advise honourable members that The Australian newspaper dated 16 February contained an article which indicated that the Northern Territory Police Force had a resignation rate of 7.88%. That represented resignations from 59 officers during 1988. These figures are incorrect. The number of police who resigned during 1988 was 50, or 7.14%. A recent study by the Australian Institute of

Criminology found that the Northern Territory resignation rate between 1976 and 1985 was 7.43%. Honourable members can see from those figures that there is no wild fluctuation. The Northern Territory police resignation rate compares more than favourably with the remainder of the public service in the Territory which has a very much higher resignation rate than that.

The Australian Institute of Criminology paper indicated that there have been no significant increases in police resignation rates in recent times. It found also that police resignation rates were lower than those occurring in the respective public services right across the country. Of most significance, the study concluded that the resignation rate for the Northern Territory Police force was found to be particularly high, relative to other police forces, but this was thought to be due primarily to non-operational factors such as isolation and distance from families in southern states where, clearly, most of our police recruits originate. This is borne out by the fact that 46% of the members who resigned during 1988 did so whilst in training. About 70% of police recruits are drawn from interstate and undoubtedly, whatever reason is given, isolation and homesickness could be presumed to have played a substantial part in their resignation.

For some time, the government has been concerned about the resignation rate within the police force and recent positive moves are an indication of the government's determination to reduce this rate. These include: firstly, the introduction of a television recruiting campaign aimed specifically at attracting more local recruits, and no doubt honourable members will have noticed that campaign on Territory television; secondly, a review of training methods, procedures and policies in an attempt to update training so that it reflects not only the needs of the police force but the aspirations of modern youth; and, thirdly, a review of and, where appropriate, the introduction of improved management procedures. It should be noted, however, that the effect of the recent removal of conditions from the Police Arbitral Tribunal Determination, particularly the loss of air fares for new recruits, has yet to be gauged on the resignation rate of police in the Northern Territory. It may be that that action in itself will have an effect the extent of which we cannot determine at this stage.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Work Safe Report

Mr McCARTHY (Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer a question that was asked of the Attorney-General in my absence last Thursday, in relation to the Work Safe Report, that indicated that industrial deaths in the Northern Territory between 1982 and 1984 were the highest in the country. The question demonstrates to me that the member for Nhulunbuy does not really know how the Work Health Act operates. He indicated in the question that I had said that the report was a beat-up. In fact, at no stage did I say that the report was a beat-up. I said that the way the figures were used to demonstrate the point that the federal minister made, which was taken up ably by his cohorts in the Territory, was a beat-up. An attempt was made to compare the figures of the Northern Territory with the figures of the Australian Capital Territory, one being the highest and the other the lowest. The Australian Capital Territory is made up of public servants, working like little beavers in offices. There is not much chance of fatal injury occurring to those people. In the Northern Territory, we have the highest rate per capita of dangerous industry: mining, transport and rural. Obviously, in those sorts of conditions, we are likely to have far higher levels of injury and, unfortunately, death.

It is interesting to note that, of the 31 instances which were the subject of this study - and it should be remembered that this is a study of the years between 1982 and 1984, which was long before the Work Health Act came into being - 14 were transport-related accidents. In other words, 45% were transport-related accidents, and I wonder how the employer or the Work Health Authority is supposed to be able to prevent people from driving dangerously. It is impossible to do that.

The government is very concerned about accidents in the workplace and, through the Work Health Act, I believe that we have put in place the best piece of legislation in Australia to lower that incidence. We still have a way to go. No piece of legislation is ever perfect, but I believe ours is among the best. Most of the accidents that have occurred in the workplace over the last few years could have been prevented if employees had been acting responsibly. Many of the deaths that have occurred in recent times indicate clearly that the employee was doing something that really he ought not to have been doing and that his employer certainly did not condone.

In the second part of his question, the member for Nhulunbuy asked me to provide the names of people or companies which have been granted exemptions since the Work Health Act came into being. The Work Health Act is innovative in that respect. It provides for exemptions to individuals but not to companies and, in that respect, I suspect that the honourable member did not really know what he was talking about. The act does not provide for exemptions to companies. It provides for exemptions to genuine subcontractors who are not responsible to the directions of an employer but to their own directions. Those subcontractors have to be able to show proof that they can maintain an income without coming under the umbrella of the Work Health Act. That proof is required of them but, of course, it is impossible to catch up with everybody.

We know there are people in the workplace who are still not insured. As the inspectors employed by the Work Health Authority visit various places of work, they request that subcontractors show proof of insurance cover and compliance with the provisions of the act. If they cannot show such proof, they are instructed to comply with the provisions of the act and, if they do not do so, they are prosecuted. Prosecutions are currently under way in the courts of the Northern Territory of people who have not complied with the Work Health Act.

As I said, the exemption provisions apply only to individuals who are able to show that they are genuine subcontractors. In fact, 2110 exemptions have been given under the Work Health Act since it took effect. Those are genuine subcontractors and, if the honourable member wants me to table the names of 2110 individuals, he will be responsible for taking a great deal of space in the Parliamentary Record. I do not think that he really needs that information. However, if he wants to contact me, I will be quite happy to show him the provisions which apply under the Work Health Act and to give him any further information he requires.

Protection for Subcontractors on Government Projects

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I draw the minister's attention to news reports concerning the haulage contractor Mr Terry Nichols and ask the minister if he will undertake a review of the present system of contract payment in order to provide better protection for subcontractors engaged on government projects.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I addressed this matter when the member for Koolpinyah raised it last night. However, for the benefit of those honourable members who were not here, I will repeat some of the background to the problem. Despite the claims by the member for Koolpinyah, the government has some sympathy and some understanding of the dilemma in which T & H Bulk Haulage now finds itself.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Well, do something about it.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the member for Koolpinyah, I advise that, since September 1987, together with the Department of Transport and Works and my ministerial officers, I have been involved in a large number of discussions with Mr Terry Nichols about the dilemma in which he found himself in 1987 with a road contractor who, to use a term, 'did a bunk'.

At that time, advice was given to Mr Nichols on a number of occasions by the department, the Katherine regional office, the department's secretariat in Darwin, myself and my ministerial officers that, in effect, if Mr Nichols or other subcontractors wished to avail themselves of the protection that is offered under head contracts with principal contractors, they need to enter into proper subcontract agreements under the head terms of principal contracts. That means that any agreement ought, at least, to be in accordance with the standard pro forma public works contract/subcontract agreement. In addition, subcontracts should include a 14-day payment requirement. That advice has been given repeatedly to all within the business community but, sadly, we find that, time and time again, people enter into commercial agreements, sometimes for very large sums, without appropriate protections for themselves.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: He had protection for himself.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah says that, in this case, the subcontractor or, in fact, the plant hirer, had protection for himself. Last night, she produced copies of delivery dockets. I must admit that that was the first time I had seen those documents. I have had only a very short time this morning to have my departmental people assess whether they can in any shape or form be interpreted as a legal and binding subcontract as required under the principal contract. The initial advice is that they do not. They are delivery dockets. There is no definition of intent and no formalised agreement. Unfortunately, the attempt to try to cover the requirements of subcontract agreements, and we need the Department of Law to pursue this fully but ...

Mr Ede: Did he do the job?

Mr FINCH: Can I say, Mr Speaker, that I have no idea ...

Mr Ede: Did he do the job?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, that is a totally irrational question from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. How would anyone know what subcontract agreements or arrangements are in place between a principal contractor and a supplier or a plant hirer if there is not a formalised agreement that is passed on to government? The government's contract is between itself and the principal contractor. We have obligations under that contract just as contractors have entitlements. The level below that is formal agreements between the next group of parties. It is no different if someone seeks to buy a house or have a house built or anything else. If the requirements and the payments according to them are not defined under a legally-binding document, the purchaser leaves himself exposed.

I can reassure the member for Koolpinyah that, despite her protestations last night, to use her words, that officers of the department had displayed 'supercilious arrogance' - and they will be really delighted to hear her substantiate that claim - for 18 months, officers of the department have tried to be as constructive in their advice as possible, not only to this particular subcontractor but to any others who have found themselves in a similar position.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! My question was very specific. I have listened with patience to the honourable minister's reply but, to date, he has not responded in any way to my question. I asked whether he would undertake to review the present system of contract payment in order to provide better protection for subcontractors engaged on government projects. It was a simple question about whether or not he would order his department to undertake a review.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I ask the minister to relate his reply directly to the question.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I inform honourable members that the department has in place a number of measures to help protect the interests of subcontractors under principal contract arrangements. There is the provision that I mentioned: the inclusion of a requirement that any subcontract under the principal contract has a specific format and clauses pertaining to payment. In addition, we attempt as best we can - and it is reasonably successful - to ensure that principal contractors are well and truly vetted before being given jobs. We rely on credit checks within the community and these are usually done by contracting traders etc. We do business checks and we check on previous performance. Unfortunately, the odd number do get through. That is sad, and I feel extremely sorry for anyone who is caught in those circumstances.

In this case, I believe that the principal contractor has skipped interstate. We have a policy that people who default on payment or on product do not obtain further work within the Northern Territory, either as a company or individually as participants in other companies. That policy has been in place. The member for Koolpinyah says that it is a bit late, but where else in Australia is there such a policy? Furthermore, I take this sort of thing so personally that I have taken steps to pursue this contractor interstate and will do the best I can to ensure that he does not repeat this kind of exercise there. It is a vexed question faced by all governments throughout Australia that there are no comprehensive foolproof methods of ensuring that people will not maliciously do a bunk.

The advice that my officers gave at Christmas time to the subcontractor involved was that he should consult a lawyer expeditiously. The member for Koolpinyah suggested last night that that was a problem because of his finances. That was never relayed to me. My advice was: 'Go and see your lawyer. Take your subcontract agreements with you'. I was told then that Mr Nichols had a subcontract and my advice was that he should obtain a proof of debt from his lawyer. I said that we would stall, for as long as possible, the finalisation payment to the principal contractor. We did that for 2 months, but we had a legal obligation under that principal contract. There is a limit to the length of time for which a payment can be delayed and, if people are not satisfied, they simply go to the Ombudsman or take us to court. We did the best that we could but, unfortunately, it seems that action was not taken. When Mr Nichols contacted me, I understood that his lawyer's advice was that, rather than proceed in the direction I had suggested, he should simply go the government. The simple fact of life is that there is no agreement between the department and subcontractors and suppliers. There is no legal entitlement.

Despite claims in the media last night, the government and Fred Finch do not owe Mr Nichols anything. Our obligation is to the principal contractor, not to people down the line. In this case, and in any other case that is brought to my attention, not only do we show sympathy, we also attempt to do the very best that we can to guide people so that they look after their own interests and do not leave themselves exposed to shonky operations.

Mr Speaker, reviews are ongoing. A review was implemented 2 weeks ago through the Northern Territory Traders Association. Its aim is to extend our capacity to conduct accurate credit checks on people. In this case, I am not sure what liquidation action has been taken against the company. However, there will be other creditors and, regardless of what people may think, when it reaches that stage, the government is not able simply to settle with one person and not another. That is a matter for the bankruptcy processors. What I said is that, if people protect themselves with subcontract arrangements and can obtain proof of debt, they can get intervention payment from this government.

Employment of School Leavers in NTPS

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

How many positions were made available to school leavers this year within the Northern Territory Public Service and how many applications were received for those positions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I intend to make a statement on the school leaver employment program during these sittings. I am pleased that the question has been asked now because statements tend to come on quite late in the day.

The school leaver employment program was introduced in 1982 to cater for base grade intake into the public service. That has worked successfully over a number of years. We have taken people into the public service from 1 December to 31 March since that time. Over the last couple of years, we have expanded the school leaver program quite dramatically and, last year, I announced in the House that we would raise the school leaver program to admit 260 people. This year, 440 people will be brought into the work force by means of the school leaver program across both the public and private sectors.

The program is linked into the public service base grade, as has always been the case. In terms of cadetships, the Workstart program has been expanded this year. It is prevocational and broadly based across a range of trades including the metal and construction trades and hospitality. Additional apprenticeship places were announced last year. Public service scholarships are funded by the Department of Education and handled by my department and, for the first time ...

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As the member for Karama and the minister know, the matter addressed by the question is to be the subject of a ministerial statement later in the day. That statement has already been distributed. If the minister wished to attract the attention of the press to the matter, he could simply have said that he would be delivering that statement later instead of trying to have 2 bites of the cherry by delivering his speech twice.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I do not intend to continue at length because, as I said, I will be speaking on this matter later today.

For the first time, we are offering positions for sewing machine mechanics. Mr Speaker, you would be very much aware of developments in the Trade Development Zone. We are certainly meeting the needs of the Territory in providing training for people who will be required in that industry. This year, we are spending the very substantial sum of \$2.43m on our school leavers program, \$300 000 of which is provided by the federal government through DEET, and I am very grateful for that support. We have developed a very sound relationship with the Commonwealth department and the Northern Territory government has continued to demonstrate a high level of commitment.

Myilly Point Development Rights

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

This follows on from a question I asked him yesterday morning, which the minister was not able to answer and sought more time to investigate. I have a copy of the standard legal form on which development agreements over Crown land are lodged with the Land Titles Office. I ask the minister whether any such legal agreement exists between the government and the Henry and Walker group in relation to the development of Myilly Point? More specifically, what is the nature of any agreement that exists between the government and the Henry and Walker group? Finally, if the agreement is in this form, why is it not lodged with the Land Titles Office?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asked me a question relating to the agreement between the Territory government and the Henry and Walker group. The Leader of the Opposition asked why the government had refused to lodge details of that agreement with the Registrar-General's Office. He then claimed on 8DN radio yesterday afternoon that, if there are any legal agreements, they should be registered with the Land Titles Office. I doubt that honourable members will be surprised to learn that, once again, the Leader of the Opposition has got it wrong. Having done so, he has compounded his error by repeating it in the media. It is the old foot-in-the-mouth disease from which he constantly suffers.

The Leader of the Opposition is quite correct that the agreement is not registered with the Registrar-General's Office. What he is obviously not aware of is the simple fact that it should not be so registered and, indeed, nor should any other application for direct sale of land be registered at the same stage. The lesson is simple. The property is still in the hands of the Territory government. We simply have an agreement.

Mr Smith: It is still in the hands of the Territory government. Right.

Mr MANZIE: It is an agreement. It is not yet a lease.

Mr Smith: Where is it?

Mr MANZIE: The same situation applies in the case of any direct land sale, including such things as the Palmerston park proposal or the proposed canal development. The procedures are the same. The Leader of the Opposition has tried to make much of this. If he had bothered to undertake a modicum of research before shooting off his mouth, he would have discovered that the Real Property Act precludes anyone registering an encumbrance on a property until they have entered into a lease with its owner.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has attempted to paint a picture of some kind of murky deal over Myilly Point. He has been going round and round. It is typical of the man. We remember his attitude to matters like self-government, the development of the gas pipeline, Palmerston, the Sheratons, Yulara, the Trade Development Zone and anything at all which might create jobs, employment and opportunities for young Territorians. In relation to anything that may require a little encouragement from outside investment, he tries to paint a very dark picture to prevent its occurring.

The reality appears to be that he is incapable of understanding fairly simple procedures. When Henry and Walker has put together the deal for the development of the site, then and only then, it will enter into a development lease for the project. As with any other development lease, it will contain specific timetables for the project's completion and various covenants will ensure that it is done correctly.

Members interjecting.

Mr Ede: They will have to break down the fence to get in there.

Mr MANZIE: That development lease will also contain an agreement for the site which, I might point out, will be ...

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I will point out ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have been fairly tolerant with interjections. I think the honourable minister should be heard in silence as questions are asked in silence.

Mr PALMER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member for MacDonnell should withdraw his reference to the Leader of Government Business as 'boyo'. I find his continual use of that term most offensive.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. The member for MacDonnell will withdraw that reference to the Leader of Government Business.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, in spite of the honourable ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw it without debate.

Mr BELL: I withdraw it without debate.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The manners of members opposite certainly leave a great deal to be desired, but I think that the community has come to expect that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If I pull up members on one side of the House up, I do not need the other side to continue the debate.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I point out that the agreement for payment of the site will be at Valuer-General's price. There should be no confusion whatsoever between the 2 stages and I will go through them slowly so that the Leader of the Opposition may attempt to understand. I think he does understand. He just wants to create an atmosphere that prevents development occurring.

Firstly, the developer makes application for a block of land. That application gives the developer first right over that area. The second step occurs when the developer has finalised the details of the proposal. The developer ...

Mr Smith: 5 or 6 or 10 years later.

Mr MANZIE: The developer enters into a lease with the government for the purchase of the site in question and, to repeat the point I made earlier, it is then that the details are registered with the Land Titles Office. Such is the case with Henry and Walker's right over Myilly Point. It has been given development rights to the area and it retains those rights. As I said in this House last week, I am aware that Henry and Walker is presently negotiating a package for development of the area. When the company has finalised the details of that package, it will enter into a specific development lease for the site and even the Leader of the Opposition should have no difficulty in finding that in the Land Titles Office. There can be no question that the Leader of the Opposition's approach on this issue has really been nothing short of a cheap political stunt. Without justification, he has attempted to cast doubt on the agreement and he has implied incorrect behaviour by this government. I flatly reject any such allegation or imputation.

It is worth while pointing out that the Leader of the Opposition has also overreached himself in respect of his claims about Lord McAlpine's attitude to the development of Myilly Point. As I said yesterday, Lord McAlpine's company, Australian City Properties, holds a number of sites in Darwin which he intends to develop when the economic circumstances are right and not before. I have held a number of discussions with Lord McAlpine over the past year. We have a positive working relationship and I have no hesitation in stating that he is the type of developer who should be encouraged to come into the Territory. Contrary to imputations by the Leader of the Opposition, Lord McAlpine has never suggested that Henry and Walker should be thrown out

of the Myilly Point development simply for his convenience. Indeed, when my office contacted Australian City Properties yesterday, the company was quite concerned to find that it was the focus of the Labor Party's attention and the subject of allegations by the Leader of the Opposition. I am advised that it was made quite clear to the Leader of the Opposition that such action was not considered necessary or desirable on the part of Australian City Properties because it has an excellent working relationship with the Northern Territory government. He is trying to create a problem with another company which is investing in the Northern Territory.

I would like to make a couple of points in relation to questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition and the allegations that he has made in the media. He said Territorians have been waiting for some years now for development to commence at Myilly Point. He is quite correct about that. However, in response, I would like to ask him a couple of very simple questions. How long have Territorians been waiting for the development of the Alice Springs and Darwin Airport terminals? When will construction begin? Those are 2 simple questions. I would like to remind the Leader of the Opposition of a very important point: the redevelopment of Myilly Point will be undertaken by the private sector. As such, it is clearly dependent on fluctuations in the economy and the ability of governments to put in place the infrastructure necessary to make such projects viable. In this regard, there could be no more important public work than the development of the airport terminal. The Leader of the Opposition would serve Territorians far better by having the guts to ask his mates in Canberra to live up to their promises than by making misleading allegations about private companies which are doing their best to survive in an environment that has been forced on Territorians. They are doing it in the Territory for Territorians and I think they should be supported, not denigrated.

Proposed Visit to Canberra by Opposition Leader

Mr DONDAS to CHIEF MINISTER

Yesterday, on 8DN talkback, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about a forthcoming visit to Canberra to discuss with his federal colleagues the Darwin Airport, the Alice Springs Airport and future funding levels for the Northern Territory. Can the Chief Minister indicate whether, in his opinion, it is prudent for such a trip to be made by the Leader of the Opposition at this time?

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Clearly, the question asks for an opinion and that is prohibited specifically by standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: The member will have to rephrase the question.

Mr DONDAS: Is the Chief Minister able to give the House any reason why the Leader of the Opposition should not go to Canberra at this stage?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's comments on talkback radio yesterday were brought to my attention and I must confess that I was horrified when I heard them. It would be nice to think that Territorians could rely on the Leader of the Opposition to use his influence with Labor ministers in Canberra to support initiatives of that government in the Territory or to support the Northern Territory in its bid for fair play financially from Canberra. Unfortunately, he appears to have no influence with the Labor

machine down there or the federal government or the ministers of the federal government individually. His reputation is that of an ineffectual bungler. This unenviable reputation has been built up during previous forays into Canberra by the Leader of the Opposition dating as far back as October 1986. The Leader of the Opposition issued a press release after a trip to Canberra in which he announced he had raised the application of the fringe benefits tax to Territorians with the Prime Minister and had made strong representations to the federal minister to abandon proposals for a gold tax. That is commendable stuff but, of course, I do not think he got very far. Unfortunately, we still have the fringe benefits tax and the mining industry is on notice that the gold tax will be introduced in 1991.

In March last year, the Leader of the Opposition went to Canberra once again to save the Territory. He clung at that time to the coat-tails of Senator Bob Collins and obtained a meeting with the federal Environment Minister, Senator Graham Richardson. He wanted to talk about mining and the environment in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition got so carried away with the occasion that he reported to the NT News on 25 March that mining would definitely proceed at Coronation Hill and he quoted Senator Richardson as the source of this startling revelation. The NT News printed a blazing headline which read 'Mining Nod', followed by a writer line which read 'Victory for BHP, Says Smith'.

A cautionary note was sounded later in the story when a member of Senator Richardson's staff was quoted as saying: 'Frankly, we were very surprised that Mr Smith would say that'. He was not the only one who was surprised. We were certainly surprised, as were the mining industry, the federal Labor government, the Aboriginal traditional owners and the environment lobby. All were surprised that the Leader of the Opposition would say that. The federal minister spent the next 2 days trying to dig himself out of the mire and, no doubt, cursing the day he agreed to spend 5 minutes with the Leader of the Opposition from the Northern Territory. On 25 March, Senator Richardson simply rejected the Opposition Leader's claims in relation to Coronation Hill. In a subsequent interview with Col Krohn on 8DN Talkback, the Leader of the Opposition admitted that he had got it all wrong. He put it down to, and I quote, 'an excess of enthusiasm'. He never explained if this enthusiasm was for the mining industry or for getting his name in the paper.

Mr Speaker, who can ever forget the sheer ineptitude and total stupidity of the Leader of the Opposition's rushed trip to Canberra to save the Northern Territory government's housing package during the last Legislative Assembly sittings? This was the classic example. He thought that he would cobble together a deal with one of the federal government's newest ministers - the Minister for Housing, Peter Staples - to undo our First Home Buyers Scheme so that it could be put together again under the name of the Leader of the Opposition and he would be hailed as being the saviour of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, inexperienced Hon Peter Staples may be, but stupid he is not. He saw the Leader of the Opposition coming from a long way away. He saw through his flimsy attempt at political grandstanding and recognised the political dangers for any federal Labor minister in opposing Australia's most innovative and generous housing scheme. He handed the Opposition Leader a prepared press release supporting the Northern Territory government's housing scheme, and sent him off with a flea in his ear about a callous waste of taxpayers' money on unnecessary airline trips.

The forays of the Leader of the Opposition into the world of real politics in Canberra have been signposted by bungling, embarrassment and ineptitude. As I said at the outset, the 3 issues the Leader of the Opposition threatens to take up in Canberra next week are of vital concern to every Territorian: our construction industry, our tourism industry and the need for a start on the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports early this year, as we have been promised. We need that \$57m Special Revenue Assistance Grant so that we can continue to deliver a high standard of health, education and welfare services to the community. Every householder who has recently paid an electricity bill knows how desperately we need to maintain that \$50m electricity subsidy.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to go out of town next week, then he should go to the Queensland coast for a few days, to the beach where he worked out his quick-fix economic strategy over Christmas to solve the Territory's economic woes. His going to Queensland for a few days will not help Territorians much but at least it will not cause us any harm. I appeal to him, on behalf of all Territorians, not to go anywhere near Canberra next week while these delicate negotiations over our financial affairs hang in the balance.

If the Leader of the Opposition must go to Canberra, if he cannot resist the urge, then I ask him at least to do it properly after I, as leader of government in the Northern Territory, have met the federal Treasurer and discussed the complex matter of the \$107m ongoing assistance to the Territory. If he must go, then he should make an appeal, after that meeting which is yet to be scheduled, to his federal contacts to be fair to the Northern Territory because we have had about all the financial flogging we can stand. If he has to do it, for goodness sake, let him do it correctly rather than make a mess of it as he has done every time in the past.

Horseracing in Alice Springs

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for TOURISM

I received a fax from the Central Australian Trainers' Association in November stating that horseracing in Alice Springs would cease as insufficient funds were available. I believe the racing industry is anxiously awaiting action on the recommendations of a report called the Bennett Report. Would the minister advise on the current position, and is the racetrack in Alice Springs likely to close?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Flynn for his question. I will be making a ministerial statement tomorrow on the state of the racing industry and honourable members will receive copies of the Bennett Report. I am sure that will answer the honourable member's questions in full.

COGSO Opposition to External Examinations

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

This morning on the ABC radio, the President of the Council of Government School Organisations, Mr Richard Creswick, said that, over the past 17 years, his organisation had developed a policy opposing external examinations such as those announced yesterday by the minister. Is Mr Creswick correct in his statement, and could the minister advise whether COGSO has had this policy of opposing external examinations for the past 17 years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. This morning, it was quite clear that the President of COGSO, Richard Creswick, alluded to the fact that COGSO had spent 17 years developing a policy which opposed external assessment. May I say here that, for 16 years, the Council of Government School Organisations has had a policy supporting the introduction of external examinations. I guess it was disappointing to me to note Richard Creswick making that statement at this time. What he should have said was that, when he became the president in 1988, things started to change. He started to move things along the ALP's line, and this is disappointing to me because, after all, he is one of the Prime Minister's Animals. His job is to speak for the ALP through the ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker? I think it is thoroughly unnecessary for the honourable Minister for Education to refer to any member of the Territory community as an animal.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HARRIS: May I just say for the honourable member's benefit that Animals stands for the Australian National Media Liaison Services. Mr Richard Creswick is the spokesman for the ALP in that regard.

Getting back to the issue of the policy of COGSO, it was a disappointment to me that it decided to change in September. Let us look at the previous policy of COGSO. I make it very clear to parents listening that this was the policy prior to September 1988, and it relates particularly to assessment:

521. Council believes that assessment of students should involve a balance of both external examination and school-based assessment in each instance.

522. Council believes that the system should include provision to give students experience in examination techniques from an early age. Assessment at critical points in a student's life, for example, Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12.

I believe that is a sensible approach that was developed by parents through the Council of Government Schools Organisation to the whole issue of assessment.

In September 1988, it is very interesting to note that a good deal of footwork was going on and that the new President of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, Mike Bradley, happened to be there during the course of deliberations on the motion put forward by the COGSO Executive. That motion deleted from the policy the sections which I have just read out, and the policy now reads:

522. Council believes assessment should be both school-based and system-wide and should include a variety of techniques. Council believes that external examinations are not an appropriate technique in junior high schools.

It is nonsense to say, as Mr Creswick did on radio, that COGSO has been developing a policy opposing external examinations for 17 years. It is line

with the opposition's typical approach to such matters: using scare tactics in an attempt to change community attitudes.

There has been a marked response from the community in relation to external assessment. There is no doubt about it. People have been calling for it for many years and it is disappointing that the President of COGSO is attempting to promote the notion that COGSO has been looking at removing support for external assessment from its policy for years. It is important to correct the record in relation to this. The COGSO policy changed only when Richard Creswick became its president.

Assistance to Horticulturists

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Can he give me details of a proposed scheme in the form of grants and/or loans to help established horticulturists to meet their financial calls from time to time in the expectation of continued successful operation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my department is investigating means of supporting the horticultural industry. Unfortunately, at this time, I cannot provide any information to the honourable member. I understand that she has always been a supporter of the horticultural industry, as so many of us are. During the last 8 or 10 years, the value of the industry's annual produce has risen from about \$400 000 to some \$15m. In conjunction with the Department of Industries and Development, my department is looking at means of supporting the horticultural industry and I will provide relevant advice to the honourable member for Koolpinyah and other members when it is available.

Kangaroo 89 - Business Opportunities

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What role is the Northern Territory government playing to ensure that maximum local business opportunities arise from the Kangaroo 89 defence exercise to take place in north Australia later this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member's question is timely indeed. Kangaroo 89 is not scheduled to start until August but, of course, the business opportunities referred to by the honourable member will arise long before that. The exercise will put previous defence exercises in the north well and truly in the shade. Preliminary cost estimates of Kangaroo 89 have reached \$211m. Although I note that the budget for the exercise still has to be confirmed by the federal government, decisions are expected shortly. That budget includes salaries for defence personnel and I understand that the largest single cost will be for the movement of army equipment. As things now stand, the exercise will involve about 24 000 defence personnel, at least 2 FA18 fighter squadrons and 2 United States warships. The core period of the exercise will be from 1 to 31 August but the build-up phase will start on 1 July. The clean-up teams will be active until the end of September. Let us hope they do not make too much of a mess and that they do not get too fair dinkum.

Obviously, substantial opportunities will exist for local business and industry to participate in areas such as construction, maintenance and the supply of stores and non-specialised material. Not all the opportunities will be realised in the Territory, as much as we would like that to happen. For a start, the exercise spreads from Cape York in Queensland across to Cape Onslow in Western Australia. It seems also that the RAAF buys stores on behalf of the 3 services through an interstate supply link which means that the Darwin supply contract is part of a much larger national contract. However, within the framework, the Northern Territory government has already been highly active. Coordination of the Territory effort to get as much business as possible has been through the Industrial Supplies Office which has been raising the awareness of local business and industry of the opportunities that are available and likewise raising awareness within the services of the capabilities of local industry. Shortly, the ISO will be conducting a seminar to bring together defence purchasing officers and local businesses. Also, the ISO will start a local publicity campaign soon to keep local business informed of those opportunities.

I am happy to advise that, through the efforts so far of the Industrial Supplies Office, the Defence Department has acknowledged that some consumables, which have been purchased traditionally interstate, will now be bought locally. In fact, this change in attitude has been reflected already at Tindal where Katherine suppliers are progressively increasing their market share. Defence construction and maintenance documentation is done locally by Australian Construction Services although some design input is occasionally sourced from interstate. The Industrial Supplies Office has established regular communications with the Australian Construction Services to ensure maximum local participation.

I have outlined the early steps that have been taken to obtain the best possible benefits for local business from the Kangaroo 89 exercise. Of course, the results will not be known until the contracts fall due. However, I am confident that the services will seek to work with local businesses as much as possible. Traditionally, the services have enjoyed strong support from the Darwin community, perhaps stronger than in many parts of Australia. I am sure that they would want that good relationship to continue.

Emergency Service Centre for Palmerston

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer the minister to the petition tabled by the member for Palmerston in relation to a 24-hour accident service in the satellite town. I also refer him to the government's election promise to establish - and I quote from the CLP election document - 'a private hospital annexe in Palmerston with a 24-hour medical service'. Why did the minister renege on that promise and why has he and his department had to be dragged kicking and screaming into providing any service whatsoever?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all I can say to the honourable member opposite is: 'Good try'. As far as this government is concerned, Palmerston is a developing area. In all respects, not only in terms of health and community services, we will continue to pay attention to our commitment to its development. The commitment to a 24-hour service certainly was given and the commitment to the construction of a private hospital in that area was certainly spoken about prior to the last election. Nobody resiles from those commitments. We have

had private companies examine the possibility of the establishment of a private hospital in the Palmerston area. They have said that it is not viable at this stage. We are talking about a private hospital - private entrepreneurs will build that structure. It would have to be an economic and viable project for them to embark on it, just as a shopping centre or any other commercial venture would need to be viable.

We gave a commitment that we would have a 24-hour emergency service there. We also have a commitment - as we have to all other areas in the Northern Territory - to develop medical services for the people of Palmerston. Dating back to when I first became minister responsible for this portfolio, we have had a community health centre there and a doctor was operating for 1½ hours per week in that facility. The policy of this government is to encourage private general practitioners to practise in areas of that kind, such as Jabiru, Groote Eylandt, Gove etc. That policy has been in place for some time and Palmerston is no different in that regard. Mr Speaker, 2 general practitioners saw fit to commence business in Palmerston. They put it to me that the government-paid doctor, who was providing the service from the community health centre, was impacting on the viability of their business. On that basis, that doctor was withdrawn and the general practitioners were left to provide the medical services in that area.

I attended a public meeting and I heard what the people of Palmerston were saying. Despite the fact that all the necessary criteria had not been met at that stage, there was a public perception that there was a need for an increase in the service. After a great deal of lobbying by the local member, the Deputy Chief Minister, that public perception was clarified in Cabinet. It was decided that we would provide a 24-hour service there. That is much more difficult to put in place than many people would think because we do not have general practitioners growing on trees. My department has negotiated for quite some time. Consideration has been given to bringing a doctor from Melbourne and we have tried to encourage a specialist gynaecologist whose spouse is a general practitioner to come to the Territory. One could work at the Royal Darwin Hospital and the other could work at Palmerston. The point is that the negotiations have been very difficult indeed.

To provide the service that we have promised, we have had to renovate the community health centre. We will have a general practitioner available 24 hours a day for the people of Palmerston. I apologise to the people of Palmerston and to the local member for the fact that it has taken so long. However, I beg them to understand the difficulties that we have in attracting medical people to the Northern Territory to take up private practice, particularly when they see members of the opposition asking us to put government-paid practitioners into community health centres which will immediately destroy their business once they get there. That is rather a catch-22 situation, but I can certainly say that this government has fulfilled its commitment to the people of Palmerston.

Underage Drinking

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TOURISM

Has the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission or the police achieved any results in containing the activities of underage drinkers in hotels and discos since changes were made to the laws covering this matter last year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, results to date have been reasonably encouraging. During the past week or so, inspectors of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and police checked nearly 200 young adults in the Northern Territory to determine whether they were of a legal drinking age. This occurred in a number of licensed establishments around the Territory, including a number of prominent nightspots which officers and myself have received complaints about. During the past couple of months, I have received a number of complaints from parents about their children being served alcoholic beverages. The checks did not detect any underage drinkers, but I am not naive enough to believe that the problem has been solved. Hopefully, the new laws are having the desired effect of containing it.

It is worth while noting that, during January, a 17-year-old youth was fined for giving a false name and age to the police and for being on licensed premises. He had actually purchased a scotch and coke which ended up costing him \$150. In January, in another case involving the same nightspot, an underage youth was detected on the premises and asked to leave. At that stage, he was not drinking. He was apprehended later by the police and found to be drinking a stubby. That resulted in a fine of \$150 for remaining on licensed premises and an additional fine of \$150 for being an underage drinker. His stubby cost him \$300.

It is pleasing to note that the media is playing its part by focusing on teenage drinking. The top-rating television drama, A Country Practice, has recently run episodes dealing with the problems encountered by teenagers drinking. The National Campaign Against Drug Abuse has shown that the vast majority of Australians regard underage drinking as a major problem. I am told that 93% of the population believe that it is a problem. The results of our checks of 200 people in the past week or so, which failed to find any offenders, may raise some questions as to whether the problem is as widespread in the Northern Territory as many people think. Of course, as in the case of drugs, parental concern is an important factor. In any case, it is pleasing to see the media dealing with a subject which obviously concerns the community as a whole.

I have asked the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission to continue its efforts in this area and underage drinkers and licensed operators who serve them should take fair notice that they will be prosecuted. I will also mention in passing that I am aware of community concern about licensed operators serving people who are hopelessly intoxicated. I have asked officers of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission to pay particular attention to that matter and I assure the community that licensees who serve people who are obviously intoxicated will be prosecuted.

Allegations by Member for Nightcliff

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of allegations against a member of the public made in this place last night by the member for Nightcliff, and has the member for Nightcliff since made a deposition detailing those allegations and evidence to support them? If not, will the minister ensure that officers of his department interview the member for Nightcliff at the earliest possible moment and, if the evidence does stand up after examination, will he advise us of that evidence and the action that he is taking to sort out the problem? Alternatively, if no action is justified, will the minister make a full public disclaimer?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am sure that those members that were here during the course of the adjournment debate last night were very concerned about the seriousness of the allegations that were made. On completion of the speech by the member for Nightcliff, he made the documents in his possession available to me and I immediately contacted the Secretary of the Department of Education. I have received a note from the Secretary of the Department of Education this morning and I will read it into Hansard. I think that it covers the issue as it has been raised. I will read the text of the memorandum:

From a preliminary analysis of the documents provided, the relevant departmental files and minutes of school council meetings, it is apparent that the matter warrants investigation. There is sufficient documentary evidence from which to draw a reasonable inference that Mr Perrin did not declare an interest in a contract which he was responsible for handling during his term of office as Chairman of Nightcliff High School Council. The documents show that Mr Perrin, as chairman, personally handled significant aspects of a contract between the council and the firm for the contract on behalf of the council and the signatory on an agreement between the Department of Education and the council. During this period, he was associated with the firms which were successful in gaining and carrying out the contract.

There is no evidence from the record of the school council that, during the period when he had an interest in the contract, he either declared his interest or abstained from voting. The Education Act and ministerial guidelines and the agreement between the Department of Education and the school all refer to the requirement to comply with ministerial guidelines, one of which relates to declaration of interests of members and requires members of the council to disclose financial interests and requires a member who has a financial interest to refrain from voting. The documents also reveal other apparent irregularities.

In the circumstances, I have no option but to conduct a formal investigation under sections 71H(2) and 71J(2)(g) of the Education Act. When it is completed, I will provide your office with a report.

Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to table this document.

I indicate to honourable members that, if they have concerns which they believe require investigation, I am only too happy to look at them. We are trying to develop a system whereby the devolution of powers to school councils is carried out so that the community generally has a greater role in the running of its schools. We need to ensure that any concerns are looked at in a responsible manner. When the department's report is complete, I will make further comment.

Relocation of Radar Equipment

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

During question time last week, the minister mentioned what he described as a scandal relating to the shifting of a key piece of radar equipment from Darwin to Port Keats. What radar equipment is involved and what impact is its removal likely to have on the civilian and defence needs of Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, when one speaks about matters as sensitive as defence, one needs to be extremely careful. Last week, I addressed the potential cutbacks in defence spending at both Tindal and Coonawarra, matters which the opposition has attempted in vain to evade over the last few days, but matters which still need to be answered. I raised the matter of spending at Tindal for no other purpose than to obtain some straight answers as to whether the federal ALP government is proceeding with its previously announced defence program in the north.

It has extended the initial part of the Coonawarra program from 1 year to 4 years. In respect of the second part of the announced program, we are still awaiting advice but it appears that that will not occur for 5 years or more. There has been acknowledgement that the Department of Defence is reviewing its program at Tindal. When he visits Tindal next month to open the first stage, the Prime Minister will have the opportunity to clarify that or otherwise. The honourable member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, has been unable to give us any comfort to date.

I pass on to another matter even though it is a matter which I am reluctant to debate too openly. However, it is a matter of concern to defence personnel and to the civilian population alike. We have now a proposal to relocate the 2-crew defence radar from Lee Point to Port Keats. Honourable members opposite might say: 'We are not at war. There is still a radar facility at the Darwin Airport'. That is true, but let me say that the original program of the federal government with regard to defence of the north was to retain Lee Point radar, retain Tindal's new radar and provide additional remote-controlled radars at Port Keats and Point Stuart, thus providing very comprehensive radar cover monitoring the northern skies.

Obviously, what has happened is that 2 of those radars have been dropped off the capital works program. To use simplistic terms, the manually-operated radar system is to be moved from Lee Point to Port Keats. The personnel problems that will be encountered in putting people there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year are a minor matter. The motivation is that, now that we have the Hornets at Katherine, we need to have low-level training covered. I do not deny that that is a reasonable objective, but the way to do it logically is to provide a new state-of-the-art, remote-controlled system at Port Keats.

What this means to Darwin is that a radar system that has far greater capabilities than the one at the airport is to be relocated. Any private pilot knows that the Darwin Airport tower radar system is out of action half a day a week every week. Every private pilot in the Northern Territory is aware that our skies are totally unmonitored for half a day a week. People will say that the radar at Port Keats will cover the skies of Darwin. That is true if you are talking about airspace above 10 000 ft. Whether we are talking about defence or whether we are talking about the use of our skies by drug runners or illegal importers etc, what we need is a comprehensive, balanced system. This federal ALP government, which mutters about the defence of the north, appears not to be matching its words with actions. I am extremely concerned. We are not confronted with any immediate threat, but one of the ways of ensuring we ...

Mr Bell: We are not. I don't know about you.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I accept the member for MacDonnell's comment that he may feel safe down in central Australia, but I can tell him that members on this side of the House take defence very seriously. Obviously the best method of defence is putting into place those mechanisms and facilities which will discourage potential aggressors. We hope that, having the facilities in place, will be enough to keep people away. If our back door is open, anyone can come in, including drug runners, illegal importers and even an aggressive force of some sort, although that might not be next year but in 10 or 20 years time. We need to get the systems in place and I am extremely distressed that, although this government raised this very serious matter with the Prime Minister 2 months ago, we have still not received a reasoned response as to why this totally illogical and irrational decision has been taken.

Mr Speaker, I ask honourable members opposite, who seem to be taking this matter extremely lightly, to reflect on the implications of this potential move and to support this government by encouraging their federal colleagues to meet their commitments.

Nightcliff TAB Agency

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he confirm that he has maintained the time-honoured practice of awarding senior management positions within the racing and gaming portfolio to CLP or former CLP political staffers by awarding the lucrative Nightcliff TAB Agency to a Mr Kevin Norton, a former CLP staffer, without the vacancy being advertised according to established practice?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, most certainly, I understand that Mr Kevin Norton has been awarded a TAB contract. Let me make it quite clear, however, that such decisions are made by the TAB Board. The minister is not involved and normal commercial practice is followed. Applications are received and the board assesses them.

Mr Smith: Did it advertise it?

Mr POOLE: To my knowledge, it was advertised. I will certainly confirm that.

Mr Smith: I think you had better check.

Mr POOLE: I will certainly find out, but I assure the member for Nhulunbuy that the decision was made by the board. After the decision was made, I was advised that Mr Kevin Norton had been awarded the TAB contract. I had no knowledge of it prior to that time.

Release of Water at Ranger

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Recently, concerns have been raised by Greenpeace International, the Environment Centre and the Northern Land Council in relation to the release of water from retention ponds at Ranger. What is the situation in relation to the release of water from those retention ponds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly some concerns have been raised and may I say at the outset that I certainly do not share those concerns. Furthermore, I have to say once again that the stated concerns are misplaced and downright misleading. It is virtually an annual event that Ranger is permitted to release excess water from Retention Pond 4 at this stage of the wet season. It is also an annual event that environment groups make a great deal of noise about it and attempt to mislead the public about the facts surrounding the water release. Let us lay out some simple facts immediately.

The RP4 is not within the restricted release zone and it does not hold toxic water. I say this because ABC television news last night stated blandly, and without sourcing the information, that toxic water had been released and that RP4 was in the restricted release zone. Simple, basic facts are being ignored by the ABC in particular, and it brings no credit at all to its journalists and its research people when it issues stories of this kind. Of course, everyone witnessed another similar story about the Jabiru transmission line. In fact, the line proposed along the highway was not the preferred option for that line. Those maps and diagrams were available to anybody. Again, that was simply investigative reporting of the worst kind. I think that needs to be addressed by the ABC management.

RP4 holds rainwater. It is the collection area for water that falls from the clouds on the general area. Its real purpose is to act as a silt trap to prevent silt from entering Magela Creek. RP4 water has not been used at any stage in the mining process. It conforms in every respect to drinking water quality. Mr Speaker, if you had the inclination, you could drink it and swim in it. Indeed, if honourable members have taken the time to have a look at RP4 at Ranger - and I am sure members of the Sessional Committee on the Environment have seen it on many occasions - they will have been very impressed by the birds and the fish that are breeding there.

Because the volume of water in RP4 builds up naturally during the wet season, Ranger generally applies for a release of water at this time of the year. Prior to 1984-85, release by natural, uncontrolled overflows via a spillway which flows into the Magela Creek occurred via Djalkmarra Creek. In 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87, release was effected by controlled discharge via a direct pipeline to the Magela Creek. Last year, no release occurred because of below average rainfall during the wet season. Approval to release through the controlled method was given by the Department of Mines and Energy, after consultation with the Office of the Supervising Scientist, Ranger and the Northern Land Council - despite what the NLC has announced. Release from RP4 via the syphon began at about 2 pm last Monday and continued until

mid-afternoon yesterday. A total of 11 210 m³ of water was released. That is equivalent to 3 minutes of flow in the Magela Creek.

The quality of the water that was released easily meets drinking water standards. If the Leader of the Opposition has some concerns, I suggest he have a scientist tell the difference between some RP4 water and water from a domestic tap. Currently, the uranium concentration in the water is about 53 parts per billion and the international standard is 1000 parts per billion. Those are the facts and figures.

Monitoring of the water release this week has been intensive, involving daily analysis of water samples at the release point and from the Magela Creek upstream and downstream. I understand there have been mutterings from the anti-Ranger lobby about dead fish and deep concern by the OSS, obviously echoed by the Leader of the Opposition. There is no double guessing where he got his information from.

Mr Smith: Where do you reckon?

Mr COULTER: Certainly not from any scientific body or from any knowledgeable person in the area.

Mr Smith: Do you want to bet?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I offer the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to name his source by way of interjection. Not a word, Mr Speaker.

The most stringent inquiries at an official departmental level reveal that the Office of the Supervising Scientist has no concern about this. Apparently, somebody conducted a series of tests on fingerlings in a tank of water and some died.

Mr Smith: 20%.

Mr COULTER: As the OSS points out, it is usual for some to die in all test circumstances. It is as simple as that. It is a natural phenomenon.

On a similar note, there is a story doing the rounds, which cannot be verified, that dead fish were seen in a waterhole at Mudginberri. According to the story, this happened because local Aboriginal people caught some fish and then, I understand, some female person urged them to throw the fish back because Ranger had poisoned the waterhole. The dead fish were those that were thrown back. Unfortunately, this sort of nonsense is only too common. In just about every sittings of this Assembly, I seem to be required to get to my feet to explain away yet another hysterical complaint from the environment lobby about mining at Ranger. In every case that I can remember, the environment lobby has been substantially in error.

Mr Speaker, I have put the facts of the RP4 water release before the Assembly. I can do no more than that except to urge once again that members of the media check the so-called facts that are given to them by the environment lobby before they run their stories.

State Square Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he confirm the belief of local tenderers that subcontract tenders for the State Square project are being sent to Perth for assessment? If this is the case, does he agree that this is an unsatisfactory method of maximising local input into the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not know in whose office preliminary, subsequent or intermediate assessments are done.

Mr Smith: Well, could you find out for us?

Mr FINCH: I am not sure whether the Leader of the Opposition expects me to look over someone's shoulder. I simply do not know.

Mr Smith: You think the answer is yes, do you?

Mr FINCH: I am not saying that at all.

Mr Speaker, can I set people's minds at rest by emphasising again that the responsibility for the comprehensive assessment of all tenderers and their prices rests with the project control group, all of whom are located in Darwin. I do not know if some preliminary assessment is being done in Perth. I doubt it. However, I simply do not know.

Mr Smith: The local tenderers know.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition would like an answer, I am more than delighted to give it to him. As usual, his concern seems to be more with flapping his own jaw than with receiving factual information. I was going to tell the honourable member that the project manager, Tipperary Developments, has its base office for the project in Darwin. Multiplex, the construction manager, and Norbuilt both have their project offices in Darwin. MLE Architects is, of course, a Darwin firm. The project control group comprises 3 government members and 3 representatives of the project manager. Each of those individuals is based here. The observer in that process, the independent ISO representative, is based also in Darwin. I have no idea what the Leader of the Opposition is driving at in this matter. I cannot give him a categorical answer. I do not know whether any tenders have been sent, after their initial processing, to Sydney, Perth, Melbourne or Alice Springs. Why would I know that? I know that they need to be dealt with expeditiously. The project control group is the overall monitor and decision-maker and will determine to whom and at what price subcontracts are let.

Broome Business Opportunities

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I noted a reference in the weekend press about businessmen from Broome in Western Australia entering into contracts with the Darwin business community for construction supplies. Is the minister aware of this and is he aware of the opportunities for Darwin business in Broome and north-west Western Australia generally? Could he advise of any actions which the Department of

Industries and Development is taking to promote this opportunity for Darwin businesses and suppliers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did have the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Braithwaite group of companies who visited the Northern Territory recently. The story of Northern Territory small business initiatives in the north of Western Australia is one of which the small businesses involved can feel very proud.

The people of Broome have suffered from the same problem of isolation that we suffer in the Northern Territory. The delivery time from Perth is 6 weeks and the supplier always says: 'It's on the truck'. Experiences are similar to those which we used to hear about in the Territory before the sealing of the Stuart Highway and the Newcastle Waters bridge. Perhaps local businesses are a little bit hungry at the moment. They certainly have their pencils sharpened and are having considerable success in their dealings with the people from Western Australia.

Last week, 2 businessmen from Broome, representing the Braithwaite group of companies, dropped into my office to reinforce their satisfaction with the Darwin construction supplies market after spending the week here looking at what was on offer. Mr John Braithwaite, the group general manager, and Mr Roland Parthezius, the project manager, were most enthusiastic about doing business with Darwin, particularly in comparison with Perth. This year, they will be building a multi-million dollar resort overlooking the famous Cable Beach at Broome and, as a result of their visit to Darwin, they will be obtaining most of their supplies from here. Those supplies include an order for 750 000 clay bricks, all the doors and windows for the resort, all the roofing material, all the cladding and all the tiles. I was most encouraged by those gentlemen and what they told me.

Over the years, the Darwin business community has had its share of knockers: 'Prices are too high. Delivery time is too long. Service is unreliable'. How many times have honourable members heard such stories? The Broome experience, however, tells a different story. The representatives of the Braithwaite group were fed up with doing business with Perth suppliers who, in their words, quoted prices too high, delivery times too long and could not guarantee reliable service. Because Broome is equally distant from Perth and Darwin, they decided to look us over. They were absolutely delighted with the results. Darwin, they said, understands the Broome problems. With every company they did business with in Darwin, these people achieved satisfactory prices and delivery schedules. They were also able to talk comfortably about cyclone ratings. Their Perth experience was that industry ducks for cover at the mention of the subject.

This story has more significance than just giving pleasant news about local industry picking up orders. Both those Broome businessmen are members of the Broome Chamber of Commerce and they have gone back to their home town to spread the word about Darwin, particularly after contact with the NT Industrial Supplies Office.

Mr Ede: It should be part of the Northern Territory.

Mr COULTER: They told me that \$43m in construction work will be undertaken in the Broome region this year as the area consolidates its position as a high-quality tourist venue.

In response to the interjection of the member for Stuart, the idea of having Broome annexed to Darwin is not a new one. It looks as if it is happening at the moment, on a de facto basis anyway.

Mr Ede: That is right. Keep it going.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, we are not even talking about real competition for the Territory tourism market. Experience shows that visitors to Broome either go through the Territory or come to the Territory. In that respect, I was happy to pledge a closer relationship between the Northern Territory and the Broome region so that areas of mutual interest can be more fully explored. I think that Darwin business people who hosted and looked after the Broome visitors should be commended.

Financing of State Square Project

Mr COLLINS to TREASURER

In early January, an announcement was made on the radio which, as I picked it up, said that the government had borrowed \$20m as its first instalment for the State Square project at an interest rate of 4%, with interest rates climbing to commercial rates. From whom was the money borrowed, what are the details of the rising interest rates - 1% per annum or whatever - how long is the loan taken out for, and has the government invested any temporarily spare amounts of that money in the short-term money market to obtain an interest benefit for Territorians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can provide general information which may inform the honourable member on this matter and I state first that, for the first time, recently the Territory issued capital indexed bonds as part of its loan program. That is important. The interest on these bonds is payable quarterly on the capital sum which is increased each quarter by the previous quarter's CPI increase. The interest rate is a little under 5% per annum. I do not have information before me on the actual institutions from which these funds were raised.

If there is any confusion about this matter, the important point is that we are guaranteeing a fixed return which increases with the inflation rate, and that is the key to it all. It is not some miraculous sleight of hand that provides money at rates way below those available in the general marketplace, but it is a very interesting method of financing major projects. I understand that the tunnel under Sydney Harbour is proposed to be, or is being, financed by this method. In the press release that I issued on 4 January, I said:

Although the proceeds were not being specifically designated for the State Square project, Mr Perron said, he pointed out that he made reference to the likelihood of such issues while describing the financing arrangements being put in place for that project.

As I have announced on a number of occasions, financing of the State Square project has been included in the 1988-89 capital works program of the government and, during construction, finance will be provided through appropriation. Funds will be raised, when required, as part of the Territory government's normal semi-government loans program. I point out to honourable members that our semi-government loans program is the pool of money that is borrowed by the government from a variety of sources, primarily to get on with

the job of building the Territory's infrastructure. That covers roads, schools, police stations, health clinics, Supreme Court buildings and museums. They are funded partly by loans and partly by appropriation. As I have also mentioned to honourable members before, in the Territory at present, we have assets worth 3 times our loan debt. In other words, when one looks at the Territory globally, as one must when considering these matters, we are putting \$3 from appropriated funds towards capital projects and borrowing roughly \$1.

To date this year, we have borrowed \$87.6m and these borrowings have been raised as follows: public issue \$15.9m; private issue \$14.9m; capital indexed bonds, the subject of this question, \$17.8m; and promissory notes \$39m. Those are the current borrowings. Of course, they stand on our books and will be rolled over as they mature. They will be replaced having regard to market conditions of the day. In doing that, we are acting in exactly the same way as every government in Australia acts. That is how the states run their loan programs and, indeed, the Commonwealth government runs its program in a similar fashion. It is an accepted practice and the Northern Territory is certainly not doing anything unusual. The original reason for my press release was to announce that a form of borrowing was entered into by the Northern Territory government which it had not used before. I will read a further paragraph which may clarify it for the member for Sadadeen.

Mr Collins: I doubt it, but do it anyway.

Mr PERRON: This is a further paragraph from my press release:

The interest rate costs on the issue start at a very low rate of a bit above 4% and rise, with movements in the Consumer Price Index, to a rate approaching present day semi-government bond rates by maturity in the year 2005.

That is the particular one we have at present.

At that point in time, the capital sum plus adjustment for CPI increases will be repaid or refinanced on the market conditions then prevailing.

Caravan Park Development in Jabiru

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The minister has responsibility for the Jabiru Town Development Authority. I understand that development of further tourist facilities at Jabiru is soon to proceed. If this is so, can he provide details of the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question was the subject of a press release yesterday. The Jabiru Town Development Authority has reached a decision on who will develop the new caravan park at Jabiru. It has been probably 12 or 18 months since negotiations first commenced with the Gagadju Association, the ANPWS and Ranger with regard to land at Jabiru for a caravan park development.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform honourable members that the successful tenderer for the development of this project is Australian Frontier Holidays who have quite a large range of operations around the Northern Territory. Many proposals were submitted and the tenderers were narrowed down

to 3 - all extremely good. However, it was clear to anyone who perused the proposals that Australian Frontier Holidays was well and truly in front. It is quite a dramatic development valued at about \$6.5m. The first stage, valued at \$5.5m, will be available for the 1991 season.

It is a much-needed development for Jabiru and Kakadu National Park. Members would be aware that the Crocodile Hotel has opened and is attracting quite large numbers of people. It is a magnificent facility but there is a need for other services and other types of accommodation in the Jabiru area. This project will provide that. There will be 200 serviced and sealed caravan sites, 100 tent sites and space to cater for at least 10 coaches. There will also be bistros, bars, kiosk and barbecue areas. Bunkhouses with showers and toilets in the middle and rooms either side will provide cheaper accommodation. That is very much required in that area for those people who do not wish to stay at the Crocodile Hotel. It has always been the Territory government's desire to see the largest range of accommodation styles possible in all areas. I congratulate the committee members who assessed the proposals and reached this decision to grant the development to Australian Frontier Holidays.

Needle Exchange Program

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In view of the fact that section 12 of the Criminal Code, which relates to aiders and abettors and accessories before the fact, and section 64 of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act, which relates to possession and administration, appear to have been breached by the government-encouraged free needle exchange program for drug addicts, which I understand has been in operation since last June, what is the minister doing about this perceived illegal situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the member's question on notice and supply information later.

Barramundi Plan

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I refer to the government's Barramundi Plan which came into effect earlier this month and included a revised buy-back scheme for commercial fishing licences. Has the Commonwealth government taken the lead of the Northern Territory government and introduced a similar scheme for fishermen excluded from Kakadu National Park?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that, for a number of years, my predecessor was pursuing the matter of compensation for fishermen excluded from Kakadu by the closure of rivers within the park. I took up that cause for commercial fishermen when I became minister in July. The previous minister wrote on a number of occasions to Senator Richardson in relation to this matter. I quote from his response of 6 April 1988: 'During the last 2 years, the question of possible compensation payments has been a subject of detailed consideration'. Senator Richardson went on to say that the decision that the Commonwealth would not pay compensation was made on the basis of

legal advice and consideration of the existing Commonwealth policy and that the points raised in the minister's letter did not warrant reconsideration of the decision.

The Northern Territory government revised its buy-back scheme which came into force this month. It provides the opportunity for fishermen to receive a generous amount for their licence, a base figure of \$75 000 for 1000 m of net and a loading for the production of that licence and its utilisation over the previous 3 years. Last year, the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment produced the Black Report which recommended to the federal government that compensation should be paid. As a consequence of that report, I wrote again to Senator Richardson on 30 November last year and noted in the letter that the plan of management of the committee recommended that 'commercial fishermen displaced from the park be offered compensation by the Commonwealth for their total removal from fishing activities in Northern Territory waters'. I requested Senator Richardson to reconsider his previous position and to compensate fishermen. I received a response from him on the 30 January 1989:

I refer to your letter of 30 November concerning compensation of commercial fishermen in Kakadu National Park. The government is yet to respond to the report of the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment, Recreation and the Arts. My view that compensation should not be paid, conveyed in letters to Hon Marshall Perron on 18 January 1988 and 6 April 1988, has not changed.

Mr Speaker, one would almost think that the Leader of the Opposition had been speaking to Senator Richardson and had given the whole scheme the kiss of death. That seems to be an outcome of discussions that he has with various federal ministers.

I wrote again to Senator Richardson on 15 December 1988 requesting that he reconsider his position. In particular, I suggested that, given the legal position that the Commonwealth says that it is in and the difficulties that it would experience in agreeing to compensate fishermen displaced from Kakadu, he may wish to consider a contribution to the Territory's buy-back scheme which we could administer on the Commonwealth's behalf. That would put it one step removed from the position which it claims prohibits it from offering compensation. We would be happy to incorporate such arrangements in our buy-back scheme and seek an equitable resolution for the fishermen displaced from Kakadu. I hope that Senator Richardson gives this favourable consideration.

I note that the opposition's shadow spokesman has not taken up the cause of commercial fishermen recently. It is interesting that, on talkback radio on 13 February, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the Territory buy-back scheme and the new barramundi management plan. I would advise you, Mr Speaker, not to come too close to him today because he will knock you over as he moves backwards. His statement was: 'It is a classic conflict between professional fishermen and the amateur fishermen, and I don't want to do anything to inflame the situation'. Clearly, he does not want to become involved. That is an indication of the inability of the opposition to grasp the needs of people in primary industry, to support their cause and obtain for them the benefits that they need to continue their operations.

Kormilda College

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of the problems with students at Kormilda College? Is it true that half of the student population has already gone to the communities? If so, could he advise what the problems are and what his department is doing about them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am a little confused by the question because, about a week ago, there were some problems at Kormilda in relation to students who had come in from Lajamanu. I understand that more than 40 students were involved and that an incident occurred, although it was really nothing to do with the school as such. The problems related to a change in processing of applications by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training. I understand that the whole system has changed. There is a range of new forms and my understanding ...

Mr Smith: There was a fight at a football match.

Mr HARRIS: Do you want to hear the answer to the question or not?

Mr Speaker, I am trying to cover 2 or 3 issues because I am not sure which one the question actually refers to. I understand that a Baptist minister from Lajamanu had all those forms with him and there was some confusion when he would not release those forms to DEET. That resulted in problems. Some of the children in Darwin had no money whatsoever and the college itself had to obtain space in one of the hostels in town in order to look after the children.

I understand that the actual incident to which the honourable member refers occurred at a football match. We are talking about people who have come in from the bush communities. It should also be noted that some of those students have a history of problems with the school system. The member for Arnhem realises this. It is not easy to fit them into the Kormilda College situation. A number of those students were sent back to their communities. The principal, Peter Harris, has made it very clear that discipline is a very important part of life at Kormilda College. He will not tolerate the sort of behaviour which occurred on that occasion. He is very reasonable and he talks to the communities. Indeed, I understand that the communities are supportive of Dr Harris's attitude in that regard and that he has a very good relationship with them.

Mr Speaker, whilst on the subject of Kormilda College, I could perhaps say that enrolments this year have been outstanding. At present, some 330 students are enrolled at Kormilda College and this is a marked increase on last year's enrolment which reached only 80. The college is moving ahead in leaps and bounds. There are some 290 boarders, of whom 7 are Europeans. There are 33 day students, all of whom are European.

The handing over of Kormilda to an independent organisation has been very successful. I might just touch on that subject whilst I am on my feet, because it relates to the need to reach a decision quickly so that Kormilda will be able to obtain funding through the federal government. The situation is that negotiations are nearing completion with the church group which will be the principal body in relation to the Kormilda College. The papers are due

to be signed in the very near future, at least before the end of February. I can assure honourable members of that and the federal minister will be informed in due course. All is going well with Kormilda. I realise that there are problems in relation to some of the students being returned to their communities but discipline is a vital part of the whole system and it has to be taken into account. I will investigate further the concerns which the honourable member has raised today.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Given that it is the last day of the sittings and that we will deal with the first 3 items on the Notice Paper only, I wonder if you would use your good offices with the Leader of the House to ask him if he would extend question time for a further half hour so that we can get through the backlog of business.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. A question should be directed to the Leader of Government Business whom I now call.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on notice.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

14 February 1989

70. Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Has Henry and Walker, or companies or a consortium associated with Henry and Walker, been given development rights to Myilly Point. If so -

- (a) what are the terms and conditions of those development rights;
- (b) how long does Henry and Walker have exclusive rights over the land;
- (c) what is the value of the covenants placed on the land; and
- (d) what value has been placed on the land.

73. Excisions on Special Purposes Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many excision titles have been negotiated under the current guidelines.
2. How many excision titles have been registered; when were each of these registered; and when were each of these agreements reached with each pastoral lessee.
3. When were excision agreements reached on the following pastoral leases: Amburla, Anningie, Atartinga, Derry Downs, Hodgson Downs, Humbert River, Jervois, Koolpinyah, Lake Nash, Loves Creek, Manbulloo, Middleton Ponds (Tempe Downs), Mistake Creek, Mount Riddock, Napperby, Newhaven, Tobermorey and St Vidgeon.
4. Was the area on Maude Creek Pastoral lease negotiated under the current excision guidelines. If so when; or if not, under what process was the area negotiated.

5. How many Special Purposes Leases have been converted to fee simple and what is the name of these excisions.
6. How many and which excisions are currently being prevented from being registered because of caveats placed over the leases.
7. How many excision titles are being held up because the applicant group is awaiting incorporation and what is the name of these excision groups.
8. Has your department formulated long term funding programs in relation to new excisions.

16 May 1989

76. Grants and \$1-for-\$1 Subsidies to Schools

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What was the amount of money provided by the NT government to each school for the financial years 1983-84 through to and including 1988-89 for -
 - (a) grants as a total amount and on a per student basis; and
 - (b) \$1-for-\$1 subsidy.
2. What are the criteria applicable to the granting of \$1-for-\$1 subsidies to NT government schools.

77. Cost of Student Education

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What is the total cost on a per student basis of providing primary and secondary education in -

- (a) urban; and
- (b) rural schools in each region of the Territory.

78. 1988 School Examination Results

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What were the PES and SABSA results for 1988 of Territory students involved in these courses on a school-by-school basis both public and private, and subject-by-subject in each discipline. From these results -

- (a) how many students started the course;
- (b) how many students pulled out of the course before the final examination or testing;

- (c) how many students finished the course;
- (d) how many students passed the course;
- (e) what was the pass mark as a percentage of the highest possible mark; and
- (f) what was the percentage of passes in the subject.

NOTE: If the word 'pass' is meaningless please choose the most suitable term, with explanation, in parts (d), (e) and (f).

80. Mathematics Teachers

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many maths classes in the Northern Territory Secondary Education Sector are being taught by teachers who are qualified in the area of mathematics and trained to teach the subject.
2. What proportion of mathematics classes does this represent at each year level of secondary schooling.

82. Liquor Act Offences

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many complaints have been received by the Liquor Commission concerning breaches of the Liquor Act in relation to serving alcohol to people who are -
 - (a) intoxicated; or
 - (b) under age,each year for the last 5 years.
2. How many of these complaints resulted in -
 - (a) legal action being taken against the licensee;
 - (b) convictions; and
 - (c) forfeiture of liquor licences.

83. Primary School Students' Costs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What was the average expenditure per student for primary schools in -
 - (a) the 5 largest urban centres; and

- (b) the balance of the Territory,
for each of the last 3 school years.
2. What was the expenditure per student of providing schooling in outstation schools during each of the last 3 school years.
 3. What is the retention rate through to Year 12 for students who received their primary education in schools outside the 5 major urban centres of the Territory.
 4. How many compulsory school-age children in the Northern Territory attend school less than 50% of the time.
 5. What is the percentage of Aboriginal students entering the Northern Territory education system at or before Year 8 who complete Year 12.
 6. What is the percentage of non-Aboriginal students entering the Northern Territory education system at or before Year 8 who complete Year 12.

86. Reserved Judgments of Supreme Court

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What are the titles of any actions in which judgment has been reserved by a judge of the Supreme Court and where that judgment has not been delivered within 12 months of it being reserved.

87. BTEC Payments to Mr Dunbar

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In the 'Letters to the Editor' section of the Sunday Territorian dated 23 April 1989 you stated that Mr B. Dunbar 'has received more than \$500 000 of BTEC funds to assist him in fulfilling the scope of his agreed program, as well as \$130 000 in low-interest BTEC loans'.

What were the -

- (a) various purposes under which these amounts were provided;
- (b) exact amounts involved;
- (c) works required from Mr Dunbar in respect of each of (a) and (b) above;
- (d) full details of the extent of the works carried out in respect of each of the above by Mr Dunbar as at 23 April 1989; and
- (e) details of outstanding works or moneys on behalf of Mr Dunbar or the Northern Territory government.

17 May 1988

62. **Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd**

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Did the Territory Insurance Office pay outstanding tax bills incurred by Hungerford Refrigeration or Rupert Hungerford; if so -
 - (a) were the payments for company tax;
 - (b) group tax; or
 - (c) an individual's income tax.
2. Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration secured; if so -
 - (a) in what ways is it secured; and
 - (b) what assets is it secured against.
3. Who first identified Hungerford Refrigeration as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory.
4. Who made the first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer operations to the Trade Development Zone.
5. Why did the directors of Hungerford refuse to provide directors' guarantees to meet any debts incurred by the company.
6. What were the full terms agreed for the transfer of Hungerford Refrigeration to the Trade Development Zone.
7. What departmental evaluations were made of the Hungerford Refrigeration company; its prospects, its projects and its products.
8. What departmental evaluations were made of the reports prepared for the TIO and the TDZ on the prospects of Hungerford Refrigeration.
9. What is the full extent of public funding (including TIO involvement) in Hungerford Refrigeration.
10. Was a directive issued by the Hungerford Refrigeration Board for the company to pursue local orders rather than export orders; if so, why was this done.

ANSWER

1. Some time after Hungerford Refrigeration commenced operations at the TDZ, the newly-appointed accountant found that for a significant period prior to TIO's investment, the previous management had not paid certain tax liabilities of the company. These included group tax, payroll tax and sales tax. The existence of these liabilities was not revealed in the credit or accounting checks done on the company in the months before the TIO's involvement, nor did Rupert Hungerford disclose their existence.

In an endeavour to protect the company against the existence of undisclosed liabilities, the TIO followed normal commercial practice and obtained indemnities from Rupert Hungerford and George Stack (the previous management).

Hungerford Refrigeration was obliged to meet these liabilities when they became known. They were not paid by the TIO, nor has any such payment been made of any tax liability Rupert Hungerford may have had.

2. The TIO had security for \$627 500 in loans by way of a mortgage debenture charge over the assets of the company. A further loan of \$500 000 was provided by way of convertible notes and was unsecured at the time the company was placed in receivership.
3. Hungerford Refrigeration was first identified as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory by an officer of Nortrade.
4. The first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer its operations to the Trade Development Zone was made by the above officer.
5. With regard to the TIO-appointed directors of the company, they were nominees of the TIO acting in that capacity in the course of their employment. It would be unreasonable to expect individuals, acting as nominees for the shareholder, to give personal guarantees. The TIO, as such, did not give such guarantees because it would have been ultra vires the TIO Act for it to give guarantees which were not in the nature of insurance.
6. Under the agreement with the Trade Development Zone Authority, Hungerford Refrigeration was given a rent-free period and offered financial assistance to a total value of \$150 000; \$130 000 of which was taken up by the company.
7. The Trade Development Zone Authority was provided with a detailed business plan by Hungerford Refrigeration. This included a marketing plan prepared in conjunction with Nortrade based on a survey of the South-east Asian and Pacific markets and a profile and financial strategy prepared independently by a major accounting company. The authority carried out an analysis of the company's financial projections and inspected the company's facilities and products.

In so far as the TIO was concerned, and because a considerable amount of work had already been done on the company and its prospects (which was made available to the TIO when it became involved in February 1987) it was only considered necessary for the TIO to arrange for a further accountant's report on the company and a technical report on its products and processes. Copies of these reports were also provided to the Trade Development Zone Authority.

8. As per response to question 7.
9. Trade Development Zone funding of Hungerford Refrigeration has been outlined in question 6 above.

The TIO invested \$301 206 by way of equity, \$627 500 as a secured loan and \$500 000 in the form of an unsecured loan. The TIO's investable funds were the source of the equity and loans to the company. These funds are derived through premium income, as well as capital gains and interest earnings on investments, and therefore do not constitute public funding or taxpayers' moneys.

10. An initial series of three (3) marketing trips to South-east Asia and Papua New Guinea was conducted by Mr Hungerford soon after the company moved to Darwin. Despite initial advice, these trips were unsuccessful and no sales were obtained, and because the company was then being exposed to outside financial pressures, it was necessary to take urgent action to get sales throughout Australia in order to support the company. This was to be a temporary measure and it was always the intention that when the financial pressures on the company eased, the overseas effort would be renewed. However, in spite of his confident predictions, Mr Hungerford was also unsuccessful in getting sufficient sales within Australia to support the company.

16 August 1988

64. Tenth Anniversary of Self-Government

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister provide an itemised account of the expenditure on the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of self-government.

ANSWER

See tables on following 7 pages.

10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE

DATE	V/R	PAYEE	DETAILS	\$
1.6.88	7899	Neilson McCarthy Hare - Consult. Fees	Self Govt - Consultancy Fees/Expenses	10 000.00
1.6.88	7900	Neilson McCarthy Hare - Consult. Fees	Production of 2 colour brochures	7 108.79
8.6.88	8089	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Advertising - 10 Years Self Govt - 31/5	528.90
8.6.88	8090	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Advertising - 10 Years Self Govt - 30,31/5	3 874.30
8.6.88	8094	Mr R. Steele	Mr R. Steele - T/A - Self Govt dinner	475.00
16.6.88	8274	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Production/Supervision of Logos	15 993.63
16.6.88	8275	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Self Govt Advert. - Bougainvillea Festival	1 254.89
16.6.88	8276	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Creative & Production costs - TV commercials	43 860.00
16.6.88	8277	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Avenue of Trees - Self Govt	15 000.00
17.6.88	8303	Flag Raising - Nhulunbuy	Self Govt Flag Raising Ceremony	1 684.00
20.6.88	8440	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Bougainvillea Festival - Self Govt Float	5 000.00
24.6.88	8602	Flag Raising - Katherine	Self Govt Flag Raising Ceremony	2 000.00
24.6.88	8603	Flag Raising - Palmerston	Self Govt Flag Raising Ceremony	1 200.00
24.6.88	8604	Flag Raising - Jabiru	Self Govt Flag Raising Ceremony	1 000.00
24.6.88	8605	Flag Raising - Tennant Creek	Self Govt Flag Raising Ceremony	1 488.00
24.6.88	8606	Flag Raising - Yulara	Self Govt Flag Raising Ceremony	600.00
27.6.88	8629	Douglas - key rings	Self Govt - key rings - Protocol	3 728.20
SUB TOTAL 1987/88:				114 795.71

10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE

DATE	V/R	PAYEE	DETAILS	\$
14.7.88	169	Top End Sounds	Hire of backdrop - Modelling Academy Segment	594.00
14.7.88	170	Top End Sounds	Hire of P.A., lighting & Stage Management	4 500.00
14.7.88	187	Chateau Hornsby Wines	Red wine & port - Self Govt Dinner	780.00
14.7.88	193	City Florist	Floral Arrangements - Self Govt Dinner	1 050.00
14.7.88	259	Darwin Party Services	Hire of 170 chairs - Self Govt Dinner	232.06
19.7.88	404	The Hotel Darwin	Protocol Reception for Darwin City Brass Band	688.00
19.7.88	410	Katherine Times	Advertisement - 10 Year Celebrations	160.00
19.7.88	429	Balloon Inflation N.T.	Balloon drop at Beaufort Hotel	533.00
19.7.88	430	Balloon Inflation N.T.	Balloons/streamers	66.60
21.7.88	222	Darwin Youth Orchestra	Beaufort Hotel Performance	400.00
21.7.88	245	Darwin Modelling Academy	Production at 10 Year Celebrations	5 100.00
26.7.88	184	Wellmech Drafting	Names on invitations - Self Govt Dinner	75.00
26.7.88	185	Wellmech Drafting	Names on place cards - Self Govt Dinner	77.50
26.7.88	312	Bloodwood	Entertainment & Sound Equipment for Dinner	700.00
26.7.88	313	Mr Shade	Shade Canopy - Hire & Install for Dinner	120.00
26.7.88	409	Beaufort Darwin Centre	Banquet 270 persons at Beaufort Hotel	18 748.20
26.7.88	517	N.T. Government Tourist Commission	Airfare - R. Steele - Bne/Drw/Bne 28/6 - 4/7	820.00
SUB TOTAL 1.7.88 to 31.7.88:				34 644.36

10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE

DATE	V/R	PAYEE	DETAILS	\$
2.8.88	684	Australian Airlines	Agean Band Fares	841.00
2.8.88	684	Australian Airlines	Agean Band Fares	820.00
2.8.88	684	Australian Airlines	Agean Band Fares	820.00
2.8.88	684	Australian Airlines	Agean Band Fares	102.00
4.8.88	879	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Advertising, Consultancy Fees, Expenses	168 307.62
4.8.88	907	Hanna Match	Boxed matches including artwork	1 622.00
5.8.88	871	Ironstone Lagoon Nursery	Hire of plants - Darwin Oval	150.00
9.8.88	581	Mr Shane Hewitt	M.C. at Celebration Dinner	350.00
9.8.88	702	Long Tan Club	Long Tan Club Reception	129.00
17.8.88	804	Winner Poster Comp. - Dripstone High	10 Year Celebration - School Competition	250.00
17.8.88	805	Winner Poster Comp. - Parap Primary	10 Year Celebration - School Competition	250.00
17.8.88	806	Winner Poster Comp. - Gray Primary	10 Year Celebration - School Competition	250.00
17.8.88	807	Winner Poster Comp. - C.S.C.	10 Year Celebration - School Competition	250.00
17.8.88	808	Winner Poster Comp. - Ludmilla Primary	10 Year Celebration - School Competition	250.00
17.8.88	809	Winner Poster Comp. - Kath Sth Primary	10 Year Celebration - School Competition	250.00
17.8.88	810	Winner Poster Comp. - Marrara School	10 Year Celebration - School Competition	250.00
24.8.88	880	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Advertisement 30/6/88	525.56
24.8.88	1187	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Self Government - Public Relations	10 750.00
26.8.88	758	Australian Airlines	Mr Leo, Mr & Mrs Isaacs - Self Govt Dinner	1 812.00
29.8.88	821	Ansett Airlines of Australia	Agean Band Fares	820.00
29.8.88	1215	Mr Barney Foran	Entertainment Services - Sheraton A/Springs	200.00
29.8.88	1454	Queensland Government Travel Centre	Self Govt Competition - visit to Expo	728.00
29.8.88	1576	Darwin Party Services	Hire tressles/chairs - Judging Students Comp.	148.60
SUB TOTAL 1.8.88 to 31.8.88:				189 875.78

10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE

DATE	V/R	PAYEE	DETAILS	\$
6.9.88	1525	Sheraton Alice Springs	Self Government hospitality	28.20
6.9.88	1526	Sheraton Alice Springs	Self Government Banquet	11 406.00
6.9.88	1532	Tailormade Tours	Self Government Tour	120.00
8.9.88	1188	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Self Govt Promotion & Celebration preparations	50 920.29
9.9.88	1601	Mr D.R. Dempsey	Reimbursement of Petty Cash	533.53
9.9.88	1825	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Advertisements 22/6 - 29/6	200.17
26.9.88	2328	Contingency Fund	Costs of escorting winners of comp. to Expo	2 500.00
SUB TOTAL 1.9.88 to 30.9.88:				<u>65 708.19</u>

10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE

DATE	V/R	PAYEE	DETAILS	\$
20.10.88	3077	Australian Airlines	Winner of 'Be Creative' Self Govt Comp.	448.00
20.10.88	3077	Australian Airlines	Winner of 'Be Creative' Self Govt Comp.	434.00
20.10.88	3077	Australian Airlines	Winner of 'Be Creative' Self Govt Comp.	434.00
20.10.88	3077	Australian Airlines	Winner of 'Be Creative' Self Govt Comp.	434.00
20.10.88	3080	Australian Airlines	Winner of 'Be Creative' Self Govt Comp.	434.00
20.10.88	3080	Australian Airlines	Winner of 'Be Creative' Self Govt Comp.	702.00
20.10.88	3080	Australian Airlines	Escorting winners of 'Be Creative' Comp.	434.00
20.10.88	3080	Australian Airlines	Escorting winners of 'Be Creative' Comp.	434.00
20.10.88	3080	Australian Airlines	Winner of 'Be Creative' Self Govt Comp.	434.00
28.10.88	2936	Tuminello Pty Ltd	Self Govt Morning Tea for 30 persons	150.00
28.10.88	3243	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Advertising - 10 Years Self Govt - 1/7/88	134.38
SUB TOTAL 1.10.88 to 31.10.88:				4 472.38

10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE

DATE	V/R	PAYEE	DETAILS	\$
10.11.88	821	Ansett Airlines of Australia	Agean Band Fares	820.00
10.11.88	821	Ansett Airlines of Australia	Agean Band Fares	820.00
SUB TOTAL 1.11.88 to 30.11.88:				1 640.00

10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE

DATE	V/R	PAYEE	DETAILS	\$
22.12.88	1469	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Advertising, Consultancy Expenses	1 722.15
22.12.88	4950	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Coordinate Hanging of Flag, Soundtrack and Banners in Beaufort Hotel Ballroom	132.22.
22.12.88	4951	Mattingly Woollard Cawrse	Schools Competition - Production	1 332.20
SUB TOTAL 1.12.88 to 31.12.88:				3 186.57
N.B. January 1989 has no expenditure for 10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS				
TOTAL 10 YEAR SELF GOVERNMENT CELEBRATIONS EXPENDITURE (1.6.88 to 31.1.89):				414 322.99

4 October 1988

67. Treatment of Ear Infections in Schools

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What are the number and percentages of school-age children, by rural school in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine areas, that have -
 - (a) glue ear;
 - (b) perforated ear drums; and
 - (c) educationally significant hearing impairment.
2. How many of the schools mentioned in question 1 above have Health Workers involved in full time campaigns at the school to treat the conditions.

ANSWER

1. The information requested does not exist in any accurate form. Results of hearing screening programs carried out by the Department of Health and Community Services in the past have been collated by the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), which is a Commonwealth body. In the future these results will be collated by an Audiologist within the NT Department of Health and Community Services.

A summary of NAL's hearing screening results for the relevant educational regions for the years 1986 and 1987 is attached.

The figures (insofar as they provide sufficiently accurate information) indicate the following referrals as percentages of enrolments:

<u>Region</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
Darwin	2.7	2.6
Katherine	3.6	4.2
East Arnhem	3.2	2.4
Alice Springs	6.6	6.0

2. All Aboriginal Health Workers, nursing sisters and medical officers employed by the Department of Health and Community Services deal with ear problems and promote ear health on a daily basis in the treatment of Aboriginal patients.

As a joint commitment by the Ministers of Education and Health and Community Services an Aboriginal Hearing Program has been established and a jointly-funded Coordinator appointed.

Under this program grants have been made to a number of communities for the employment of part-time Aboriginal Health Workers who will work specifically on ear health programs.

REFERRALS TO THE NATIONAL ACOUSTIC LABORATORIES

Aboriginal School Children with Chronic Otitis Media
and Hearing Losses Greater than 25 Decibels in Both Ears.

Tested by Regional Nurse Audiometrists,
NT Department of Health and Community Services

REGION	1987		1986	
	SCHOOL	CHILDREN REFERRED TO NAL	SCHOOL	CHILDREN REFERRED TO NAL
Darwin	Peppimenarti	5	Peppimenarti	5
	Daly River	2	Daly River	1
	Maningrida	5	Maningrida	3
	Pularumpi	6	Pularumpi	6
	Oenpelli	1	Oenpelli	5
	Goulburn Is	1	Belyuen	2
	Port Keats	11		
	Palumpa	1	Total:	22
	Batchelor	2		
	Total:	34		
Katherine	Ngukurr	10	Ngukurr	5
	Kalkaringi	9	Kalkaringi	7
	Lajamanu	18	Yarralin	4
	Clyde Fenton, (Katherine)	4	Timber Creek	1
			Bulman	4
			Barunga	4
	Total:	41	Beswick	11
			Mataranka	2
			Duck Creek	2
			Urapunga	3
		Total:	43	
East Arnhem	Ramingining	5	Ramingining	2
	Angurugu	9	Angurugu	5
	Umbakumba	7	Umbakumba	3
	Elcho Island	7	Elcho Island	17
	Numbulwar	3	Milingimbi	9
	Lake Evella	2		
	Yirrkala	1	Total:	36
	Total:	34		

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

REGION	1987		1986	
	SCHOOL	CHILDREN REFERRED TO NAL	SCHOOL	CHILDREN REFERRED TO NAL
Alice Springs	Yuendumu	20	Yuendumu	5
	Santa Teresa	8	Santa Teresa	7
	Hermannsburg	8	Hermannsburg	7
	Maryvale	1	Maryvale	7
	Willowra	1	Willowra	4
	Amoonguna	3	Amoonguna	4
	Stirling	1	Stirling	2
	Ti Tree	5	Ti Tree	7
	Napperby	4	Napperby	2
	Finke	2	Jay Creek	1
	Neutral Junction	5	Finke	2
	Yipirinya, (Alice Springs)	3	Docker River	2
			Haasts Bluff	2
			Papunya	7
			Uluru/Yulara	2
			Mt Ebenezer	12
		Nyirripi	7	
		Mt Allan	4	
		Lake Nash	3	
		Kintore	14	
	Total:	<u>61</u>	Total:	<u>101</u>

TOTAL REFERRALS TO NAL, OVER NORTHERN TERRITORY: 170 Aboriginal Children with Bilateral Hearing Losses, from 32 Schools

202 Aboriginal Children with Bilateral Hearing Losses, from 41 Schools

14 February 1989

71. Excisions by Department of Transport and Works

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

How much money did your department spend on new excisions in the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88 and how much money has been allocated for excisions for the 1988-89 financial year.

ANSWER

My department has only had carriage of works providing access to pastoral leases from late 1987. In the 1986-87 financial year the work was the responsibility of the Department of Community Development through the Office of Local Government.

During the subsequent period, my department had the following programs -

1987-88	Capital Works Program	\$ 99 000
1988-89	Capital Works Program	\$140 000
1988-89	Design List A	\$550 000

72. Water Exploration and Reticulation on New Excisions

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. How much money did the Power and Water Authority spend in the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88 on -
 - (a) water exploration; and
 - (b) reticulation on new excisions.
2. How much money has been allocated for expenditure in the 1988-89 financial year on -
 - (a) water exploration; and
 - (b) reticulation on new excisions.
3. When will water exploration commence on the following excision areas: Aileron, Coniston, Pine Hill, Mount Cavenagh, Central Mount Wedge, Newhaven, Kirkimbie and Limbunya.
4. Why did it take 2 years for water exploration to be carried out for the Karrynjarra Community on Central Mount Wedge Station after the community had been advised by the Department of Lands and Housing in July 1986 that drilling would occur.

ANSWER

1. (a) 1986-87 PAWA was not in existence, however the Water Resources Division of the Department of Mines and Energy carried out investigation drilling and bore construction to the value of approximately \$200 000.

1987-88 expenditure \$104 120.

- (b) 1986-87 PAWA was not in existence.

1987-88 expenditure \$127 276.

2. (a) Program allocation \$360 000.

- (b) Nil.

3. Aileron

A successful bore has been constructed with a potable supply estimated at 3 L/s from initial air lifting tests.

- (b) Coniston

Alternative sites have been recommended for negotiation.

- (c) Pine Hill

Alternative sites have been recommended for negotiation.

- (d) Mount Cavenagh

Unsuccessful drilling was carried out in October 1988 intercepting only seepage water high in both nitrates and Total Dissolved Solids. An alternative area has been recommended for negotiation.

- (e) Central Mount Wedge

Unsuccessful drilling was carried out in October 1988 on both the proposed excision areas. Alternative sites have been recommended for negotiation.

- (f) Newhaven

Unsuccessful drilling was carried out in October 1988 intercepting only saline supplies. Alternative sites have been recommended, however, the likelihood of obtaining a potable supply at other than the area adjacent to the homestead is very low.

- (g) Kirkimbie

Drilling has been programmed for July-August 1989.

- (h) Limbunya

Drilling has been programmed for July-August 1989.

4. The proposed 2 areas for excision were advised to the Power and Water Authority (PAWA) on 28 October 1987. Funding for bore drilling was programmed on the 1987-88 Capital Works Program. Due to delays in resolution of the responsibility for funding investigative drilling between the Territory and federal governments and the availability of the private contractor's drilling rig, drilling was not carried out until early October 1988. This resulted in a delay of 12 months from the time PAWA was advised of the agreement on the proposed excision sites until the unsuccessful drilling was carried out.

16 May 1989

74. Cigarette Advertising on Government Buses

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. When does the current contract for advertising on Darwin buses run out.
2. Will the government undertake a review of its policy of advertising cigarettes on buses before that time.

ANSWER

1. 30 June 1990 although provision exists for an optional extension period of a further 12 months.
2. Yes.

75. Katherine Government Centre

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In relation to the Katherine Government Centre -

- (a) what is the annual rental;
- (b) what was the previous annual rental of office accommodation for those public servants now accommodated in the Government Centre;
- (c) what has happened to those government buildings previously occupied by public servants now in the Government Centre; and
- (d) what was the cost of renovations and extensions to those buildings referred to in (c).

ANSWER

- (a) \$700 128 excluding fit-out costs.
- (b) \$83 640.

(c) The NT government owned buildings vacated by departments on relocation to the centre are being used as follows:

- Health Centre; St John Ambulance will continue to occupy these premises. Various community and government health support agencies will occupy the remainder of the building under the administration of the Department of Health and Community Services.
- Area Office (ex Transport and Works) - Giles Street.

The NT Conservation Commission is occupying portion of these premises on relocation from leased premises, thus achieving a rental saving of some \$45 000 per annum; additional space in the building may be required by the Conservation Commission shortly pending approvals for new initiatives.

It is intended that an existing stand alone building on the site be used as a sobering-up shelter, for which town planning approval has been obtained.

- Hospital (demountable); this facility is in the process of being recommissioned to accommodate Health and Community Services staff development unit and the hospital library.
- Giles/First Street premises.

The former Welfare Office building is vacant pending the development of a new courts complex on the existing law courts site. It is intended that this building will be used as an interim court house in the medium term.

A proposal for the long term use of this site is to establish a public park.

The demountable previously used by the Office of Local Government has been removed to Kalkaringi for use by the Daguragu Community Local Government.

(d) The cost of renovations and extensions to government-owned buildings referred to in (c) is rightly a matter for the Transport and Works portfolio but the Department of Transport and Works has advised that some \$361 784 has been expended on such works since 1984-85. However, of this amount, only \$45 680 has been spent since 1985-86, limited to essential building items only.

79.

Rural Dental Health Unit

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Which central Australian communities were visited by the Rural Dental Health Unit from 1 January 1988 till 31 December 1988.

ANSWER

RURAL DENTAL SERVICES 1988
COMMUNITY VISITS/DATE, LENGTH

Alcoota	-	March 1 day
Ali Curung	-	March 2 days, July 5 days
Ammaroo	-	March 2 days
Amoonguna	-	September 5 days
Docker River	-	April 3 days
Desert Bore	-	September 1 day
Elliott	-	February 2 days, July 5 days
Finke	-	May 4 days, July 5 days
Haasts Bluff	-	February 2 days, October 2 days
Harts Pange	-	February 2 days
Hermannsburg	-	March 3 days
Jay Creek	-	July 2 days
Kintore	-	March 5 days
Maryvale	-	March 2 days
Mbungbara	-	September 1 day
McClaren Creek	-	September 1 day
Mt Allen	-	September 3 days
Mt Barkly	-	September 1 day
Mt Liebig	-	October 2 days
Napperby	-	March 3 days
Neutral Junction	-	May 3 days
Ngkarlalanima	-	September 3 days
Nyirripi	-	September 2 days
Papunya	-	April 2 days
Rockhampton Downs	-	September 2 days
Santa Teresa	-	February 4 days, April 2 days, August 5 days
Stirling	-	May 2 days
South Barkly	-	October 12 days
Ti Tree	-	February 4 days, September 4 days
Utopia	-	March 2 days, April 5 days
Willowra	-	April 2 days, August 4 days
Yirara	-	February 3 days, April 10 days
Yuendumu	-	July 7 days, August 8 days, September 3 days, October 8 days

81. Myxomatosis

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. What is the general level of myxomatosis resistance in the Northern Territory.
2. Is it still economic to spread myxomatosis. If no, what other methods are being utilised to stop the spread of rabbits in the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

1. There is a moderate level of resistance to the original strain of myxomatosis in Northern Territory rabbits. Resistance to the Lausanne strain is minimal. Recent rains have resulted in active spread of myxomatosis by mosquitoes in the Northern Territory.
2. Yes. The principal additional method of control is deep ripping of rabbit warrens by landholders using crawler trailers. The Conservation Commission uses fumigation as an additional method on its holdings. Fumigation requires training for safe utilisation.

Vertebrate pests are the responsibility of the Conservation Commission and as such this matter may have been better referred to the Minister for Conservation.

84. Welfare Home at Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

With respect to extensions to the property at 29 Forrest Crescent, Alice Springs -

1. What type and number of additional rooms were added in the extensions.
2. Who was the principal contractor.
3. What was the cost of the work.
4. For what purpose will the property be used in the immediate future.

ANSWER

1. Extensions were made to enable staff employed at the facility some privacy when rostered on sleepovers. The extensions consisted of 2 bedrooms, ensuite and lounge.
2. The principal contractor was Kermit the Carpenter, 7 Hele Crescent, Alice Springs.
3. The cost of the work was \$74 128.05.

4. Forrest Crescent will be devolved to St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service in the immediate future. St Mary's will be operating Forrest Crescent as a residential facility for adolescent children with behavioural/emotional difficulties.

85. Contraception

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. What is the law regarding the supply of contraceptive pills to girls under the age of consent.
2. What legal rights do parents have, if any, to be consulted by a doctor before he provides contraception to girls under the age of consent.

ANSWER

1. There is no Northern Territory statutory regulation of the supply of contraceptive pills to girls under the age of consent. I am also not aware of any decision of a Territory court on the issue. The honourable member is however referred to the English decision in Gillick v The West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority and the Department of Health and Social Security (1986) AC 112. The honourable member is otherwise reminded of standing order 112 of the Legislative Assembly. Any further comment would involve me giving a legal opinion.
2. There is no Northern Territory statutory pronouncement upon the legal rights of parents in this situation. The honourable member is again referred to the decision in the Gillick case. To comment otherwise would be to provide a legal opinion.

BTEC

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

I preface my question by noting the Chief Minister's refusal so far to appoint a judicial inquiry into BTEC in the Northern Territory. Given the mounting public concern right around Australia, given that he has now had 4 weeks to review police investigations and Crown Law opinions, and given that he has had possession of the relevant departmental files to which he has denied me access, has he reconsidered his position and will he now take the obvious course of setting up a judicial inquiry to carry out a full investigation into the operation of BTEC in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the decision that I took when this matter was first raised by the honourable member stands. There are no grounds for an inquiry. During the course of this sitting day, I propose to make a ministerial statement on the subject which I am sure will clarify all the relevant matters for the honourable member.

Stuart Auto Museum

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Is the minister aware of speculation surrounding the future of the Stuart Auto Museum in Alice Springs and, if so, can he inform the Assembly what steps the government has taken to ensure this important collection of historic automobiles and other objects remains on public display in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The government is aware of questions surrounding the future ownership and operation of the Stuart Auto Museum in Alice Springs and we are certainly concerned about them. In addition to containing various items of the Territory's pioneering history, the museum is the Territory's only motoring museum. As well as being an important historical record, the museum is also recognised as an important part of the Alice Springs tourist industry. For these reasons, I am very pleased to be able to inform honourable members that the Territory government has successfully negotiated an agreement to buy the museum complex for \$1.2m. The museum complex is comprised of the museum, which includes 18 motor vehicles and memorabilia associated with transport and communications, a souvenir shop, a bistro, a restaurant bar, a caravan park and a 3-bedroom residence. There is also ample vehicle and coach parking facilities.

In future, the complex will operate under the auspices of the Museums and Art Galleries Board. I believe that it will represent a significant commitment by the Territory government to the Alice Springs tourist industry. This action will also ensure that an important record of our pioneering history is preserved in its entirety. I should also point out that it is intended that the existing displays be expanded by the incorporation of appropriate displays of transport, communications and technology, including the magic spark collection which is already held by the Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences.

It is also intended, at this stage, to lease the restaurant and caravan park to private operators. As a result of the decision by the government, the Museums and Art Galleries Board will have to increase its staffing in the southern region by 3 positions: a technical officer to maintain the collections and provide display maintenance for all museums within the southern region and 2 attendants to maintain adequate security and operate the souvenir shop at the Stuart Auto Museum.

I should point out also that it has been public knowledge that the Tangentyere Council was looking at the possibility of purchasing the establishment for the location of a club. The government is certainly in favour of the establishment of a social club for Aboriginal people in the Alice Springs area. I have directed my department to ensure that it does everything it can to locate or identify a suitable site or area for the establishment of such a club. There has been some land identified in the past which has proved to be unsuitable. However, I can assure honourable members that the government will be continuing to do its very best to endeavour to find a suitable location for such premises.

BTEC

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I remind the Attorney-General that his government has stated that certain prosecutions relating to BTEC, prosecutions recommended by the Commissioner of Police, did not go ahead on Crown Law advice. Is the minister aware that both the Commissioner of Police and the head of his department advised me, at my first briefing, that the relevant Crown Law advice could not be found? Is he further aware that, during the following week, the commissioner advised my secretary that there was still no sign of that advice? Is he aware that I was informed at my second briefing, last Friday, and again this morning by the Chief Minister's press secretary, Peter Murphy, that attempts to locate the advice had come to nothing? I ask the Attorney-General when it was lost. How did it come to be lost from both police and Crown Law files and by whom was it lost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have never heard a more ridiculous question. When was it lost? I can assure the honourable member that it cannot be located. In terms of the assertions of the member for Stuart, which are ridiculous in the extreme, I would like to advise honourable members that Hon John Kerin asked the same questions of the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister has given a written reply to the honourable minister and I will quote from that letter: 'Upon consideration of the matter by the Senior Crown Prosecutor and the then Crown Counsel, in consultation with senior police officers, it was concluded that no prosecution should proceed'.

Mr Smith: Where is the written evidence?

Mr MANZIE: 'The decision, which followed from detailed consideration of the evidence, took into account the following: (1) although prima facie evidence existed, there was very little chance of a successful prosecution; (2) there was almost a complete lack of corroboration of Crown witness testimony and the case pivoted upon the credibility of such witnesses; and ...'

Mr Smith: Good news of a judicial inquiry.

Mr MANZIE: '... (3) none of the 5 complainant pastoralists considered they had suffered any loss and did not wish to pursue the matter'.

Mr Ede: BTEC suffered the loss.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, we have had a few crazy interjections by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Smith: That is right.

Mr MANZIE: How do we know? I have been advised by the people concerned, and I can assure you ...

Mr Smith: Right. Why don't you get them to advise you where the opinion is?

Mr MANZIE: Any inference or insinuation by you that somehow or other those professional people behaved in an unprofessional manner ...

Mr Smith: Where is the opinions?

Mr MANZIE: ... will not be tolerated by me and I think it will not be tolerated by the professional people in the department or any other professional person. The insinuation you are making is that, somehow or other, the advice that has been given to me is incorrect. I refute that and I stand by the advice that has been provided to John Kerin, by the Chief Minister ...

Mr Smith: I bet you cannot find it.

Mr MANZIE: ... and by my department. Regardless of whether the file can be located, the personnel involved are still present and the advice remains the same. Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to table the letter that was written by the Chief Minister to John Kerin, which actually contains details of my answer.

The member for Stuart can make any accusation he likes, which he does all the time, but he must be very careful that he does not cast aspersions on professional staff of the Department of Law. I certainly will not sit here and let him do that.

Sanderson High School Newsletter

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The government has introduced a new assessment package for students in Year 10. This was criticised recently in the latest newsletter issued by the Sanderson High School Council. Has the minister seen the school council newsletter and what is his reaction to it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am aware of a scurrilous document which is being circulated at present. I make it quite clear at the outset of my answer that the government will not reopen the debate as to whether or not we will continue with our external assessment package.

We have gone through a very lengthy process. I do not need to remind honourable members and members of the public that we have gone through a lengthy process of developing that particular direction. The process started in June 1987. The decision has been taken, based on the recommendations put forward by the Board of Studies, which carried out extensive surveys in relation to this issue, that we will have a 70% component which is school-assessed and externally-moderated, and a 30% component of external common instruments of assessment or, to dispense with the jargon, examinations. That has been decided by the government and that is the direction in which we are moving.

It is disappointing to note that Sanderson has taken this particular attitude. Originally, I had thought that the council was interested and sincere in its efforts to obtain information about certain aspects of the assessment package that was being proposed, particularly in relation to the vertical timetabling program which it has set up at the school. In fact, I asked the Chairman of the Board of Studies to attend a meeting with the council to talk about the issues and to address those particular problems.

As far as the effects of the package proposed by the government on the vertical timetable is concerned, the department is talking with the Principal of Sanderson High School to try to resolve some of the concerns. After reading this particular document, of which I have a copy, as I am sure other honourable members have, I am most concerned. It appears to be part of a campaign to try to have the government reverse its decision in relation to the assessment package that we are putting in place. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that that will not happen. What is being promoted here is a scare campaign to try to have parents and students believe that, if we go through this process, students are going to be disadvantaged in some way. That is a load of nonsense and parents should not be frightened into believing it.

The document to which the honourable member refers is entitled 'Exams: The Threat to the Sanderson High School Program'. On the bottom of the front page are the words: 'An important message to all parents from the Sanderson High School Council'. When one starts reading the document itself, a major concern is its use of scare tactics. It starts off by saying: 'Members of your school council are parents too. We sat for external exams when we were children'. It then says, and this is underlined: 'We are opposed to external exams for Year 10 students because we know about their impact on the Sanderson High School program'. If one reads further, one sees that it really is nonsense. Without even waiting to be informed about it, the council has asked a whole series of questions. These questions are going to be addressed. There are answers to all of those questions. Indeed, the member for Stuart has written ...

Mr Ede: Gunna.

Mr HARRIS: It is not 'gunna'. During the course of these sittings, answers will be given.

The circular contains the words: 'We will lose'. This statement has been made by the council, a group of responsible men and women, including teachers. Under the words, 'We will lose', the circular refers to 'our program of developing self-esteem, success and excellence'. Goodness me, Mr Speaker! There will not be any reduction in the school's ability to proceed to develop programs along those lines. The circular also refers to losing the flexibility of individual programs at all levels in all subjects. The Year 10 examinations will not affect to any great extent the flexibility of

individual programs that are on offer at the Sanderson High School. In respect of the flexibility to extend very capable students and to assist low achievers, I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that there will be no impact in that particular area. The school council is saying that the result will be one goal at one point in time for all students irrespective of their ability. Honourable members who took part in the debate will realise that that is not the case at all. In respect of mathematics, 3 levels will be tested.

The circular talks about a concept of mass-produced factory product rather than the individual student's achievement. Again that is a nonsense. Every teacher is aware of individual differences in relation to students. That will continue to be the case. It will always be the case and has always been the case. There are differences and teachers are very much aware of that.

The circular also refers to a pass/fail mentality. Again, we have not mentioned that aspect at all. A grading system is being introduced. It contains a range of gradings from A to E. There is an assessment package at 70% and a 30% examination component which will be graded.

There is also a reference to student disillusionment and possible discipline problems. Goodness me, that is fantasy! Testing of one sort or another is carried out now. It has been carried out for many years and, if students are not being informed as to whether they are achieving, I would be most concerned and I am sure parents would be most concerned. Testing has been happening and there is no doubt about that.

I have made it very clear that the government is introducing the package. It went through a consultation process over a number of years and that process has involved every sector of the community. A number of questions have been asked in relation to the implementation and an issues statement was made by the council. I will be answering those questions in adjournment debates during these sittings and I hope that honourable members will listen. The government has a responsibility not only to strive continually to raise the standards of literacy and numeracy, but also to increase public confidence in results and qualifications. That needs to be made very clear. People are reading a lot of nonsense into this exercise. They are being stirred up by a number of people who have very strong views and who expressed their views during the course of the consultation process.

I will be quite happy to have the Chairman of the Board of Studies, Dr Harry Payne, speak with any member of this Assembly or to any groups in relation to the implementation. However, I make it quite clear that the government has taken a decision after a correct process of discussion with the community. I leave the Sanderson High School Council with this thought. The council should seriously consider whether a campaign against a properly arrived at decision might get out of hand and harm the school. We should be concerned about the students. The campaign could encourage divisiveness, inflame feelings, lead to disrespect for authority and set a poor example in terms of even-handedness. An excellent climate such as that created at Sanderson can be a fragile thing.

Upgrading of Stuart and Barkly Highways

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question refers to those sections of the Stuart Highway and the Barkly Highway to the north, south and east of Tennant Creek that have yet to be upgraded to the same standard as the rest of the highway. Are these sections

of Stuart Highway included in the bicentennial road program upgrading? If they are, has the Territory government been funded for the work? If the government has not been funded for the work, does it anticipate that funds will be made available to upgrade these areas of the highway? They are fast becoming a hazard because of their narrowness, the state of the road surface and the state of the edges of the road.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for the information of honourable members, Australian bicentennial road funding no longer exists. It was terminated earlier this year with the introduction of a new program called the Australian Centenary Road Program. We have now gone back 100 years in road funding in this nation. When it introduced the bicentennial roads funding program in 1983-84, the federal government made the commitment that the national highway network would be completed by the Bicentenary. As the member for Barkly quite correctly points out, it is nowhere near completed. Statements made recently by the federal minister in regard to the highway program indicated that only a small section of some 60 km or 100 km remain to be completed. In fact, there is at least that distance on the Stuart and Barkly Highways, not to mention some 300 km on the Victoria Highway between Katherine and Kununurra, the link between the Northern Territory and Western Australia, which remain all but untouched.

The Barkly and the Stuart Highways are fast reaching completion. I forget the exact completion date but I believe that, within 3 more budget years, those 2 highways will be 100% complete. We have had to do a few things in respect of the standards. The honourable member would be aware that, in some of those sections on the shoulders of the Stuart Highway, where we have found it technically appropriate, as an interim measure, we have extended the narrow width by bitumen sealing the shoulders to bring the road up to a reasonable standard.

As for the commitments ahead, the highway program is obviously 100% the responsibility of the federal government, as it has itself declared. It sets the priorities, based normally on the recommendations of the host state. In the case of the Northern Territory, I have some fears following preliminary advice received recently in regard to programming for the forthcoming year, that there may be a shortfall of anything up to \$10m in terms of the amount requested by the Territory government as its fair share of Commonwealth road funding. I say 'as its fair share' because we have seen in this country a concentration of road expenditure into the heavily built-up eastern states. The federal government has turned its back on the progressive development of the more remote areas of Australia. That is quite contrary to its own policy and quite contrary to the interests of the nation.

I would call on members of the opposition to use whatever little influence they have with the federal government, for whatever little term it may remain in office, to get a fairer share of the fuel tax collection, some billions of dollars per annum, of which only some 20%-odd is returned to the road program. We talk about fuel prices in this country and the opposition makes great mileage about poor service stations which may have been charging up to 9¢ total operating margin on fuel per litre, as against southern margins of 5¢. That is an argument that the service stations would need to take up, but I say that is chickenfeed when we look at the 22¢ per litre that the Australian motorist has to pay ...

random circumstances of daily life. They are caused as a direct result of the veterans' service on behalf of Australia during wartime. I am pleased to be able to inform honourable members that the Territory government agrees with the association in this regard. As a result, Cabinet decided that, from 2 May, disability pensions received by war veterans would no longer be included in the calculation of their rents.

I would like to point out that the amount of money involved is not very great. I think it will only cost the commission about \$25 000 a year in rent forgone. Although the amounts are very small, I am sure that honourable members will all agree that they will mean a great deal to individual pensioners. I know that I speak for all my colleagues when I say that the Territory government is very happy to recognise, in this way, the sacrifices made by veterans in the service of our country.

BTEC

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer him to his answer to my previous questions in which he stated that all the major players in Crown Law are still present. Will he confirm that the only written advice was a handwritten note by a senior Crown Law officer, one Mr Tony Cavit, who in fact is no longer with us?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm that all the major players except one are still with us.

Members interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: I find this juvenile.

Mr Smith: Well, why don't you apologise for misleading the House?

Mr MANZIE: I think the listening audience would also find the behaviour juvenile. It is pretty easy to understand. The major players in the Department of Law are still here. The advice given to me in the letter which I tabled stands. There is an inference that some handwritten advice is missing. If it is missing, we do not even know if it existed. Maybe the honourable member knows and maybe he has it. That would be interesting to find out.

Mr SMITH: So you have never had handwritten advice?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I find it pretty hard to talk when there is a running commentary from the Leader of the Opposition. He does not like to hear anything which may interfere with his version of events. The members of the Department of Law who were present when this matter was assessed still work for the Department of Law. Their advice remains unchanged. I am sure that honourable members will hear more about this when the Chief Minister makes a statement later today.

Mr Coulter: What are you suggesting anyway?

Mr MANZIE: Exactly. There seems to be some suggestion that something has been done incorrectly. It is incumbent on the member for Stuart to stand up and say what he means instead of trying to imply that all is not well, that

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister was asked a fairly specific question about the progress of the highway redevelopment work in and around Tennant Creek. He is now getting into a philosophical dissertation on the question of excises. I cannot see that there is a connection.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I ask the minister to relate his reply more closely to the question.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, my point is very simple: to build highways, a federal government responsibility, dollars are needed. The federal ALP government collects 22¢ per litre as fuel tax. Of that, it returns 6¢ per litre to the road user. The arithmetic is very simple. If the federal government increased payments on the road system, as it ought morally to do, from that lousy 6¢ per litre, we would be able to accelerate the program on the Stuart Highway and the Barkly Highway and eventually meet the federal government's 1983 commitment to complete the national highway system, not only in the Barkly region but throughout the Northern Territory. I again call on members opposite, who claim to have an interest in the Northern Territory and its development, to go to Canberra and talk some sense to the federal Minister for Transport and Communications and the federal Minister for Finance.

Housing Commission Rates for War Veterans

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Could he advise the House of the outcome of the request from the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Soldiers Association that disability pensions received by war veterans not be treated as income for the purposes of fixing Housing Commission rates?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all public housing authorities in Australia operate rental rebate schemes which are designed to reduce the rent payable by low-income earners to an acceptable level. The Northern Territory is no different from the rest of Australia in this regard, with the exception that our rental subsidy schemes are generally more generous than elsewhere.

In simple terms, the Territory's rental rebate scheme involves the use of a formula to calculate the rent payable from the tenant's gross weekly income. Some allowances which are paid for purposes other than to meet the general cost of living - such as family allowances, home nursing allowance and Legacy allowances - are excluded from the calculation of income. Some Veterans Affairs pensioners receive an amount in addition to their basic service pension for injuries or disabilities received during periods of service. This additional amount in the disability pension ranges from between \$8 to \$231 a week, depending on the severity of the disability. To date, the Housing Commission has not exempted that amount from its calculations of rent. Indeed, to our knowledge, only New South Wales and Tasmania do so.

The Territory President of the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Soldiers Association recently asked the Territory government to review the situation regarding the assessment of income. The association argued that the disability pension is not paid to assist with the general cost of living but to compensate veterans for the disabilities they suffer and to enable them to live relatively normal lives. The association also points out that the disabilities suffered by veterans are not caused by individual choice or by

something shonky is going on or that something has been said which is untrue. If the honourable member wants to make such assertions, let him rise to his feet and make them. Let him put his mouth where his inferences are. Let him have the intestinal fortitude to say what he means instead of grubbing around trying to cast aspersions on people who are still employed by the government, on government members and, indeed, on all people involved in this matter. If he does not have the guts to get up and be specific, he should be quiet. If he has the guts, let him get on his feet and cast his aspersions. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that every one of them can be answered and will be answered in some detail, as will be seen later today.

Mr Speaker, the behaviour of the member of Stuart over the last few weeks has been most cowardly. He is aware of all the details in this matter. He has had full briefings. He had a barrister present who, I am sure, would have given him advice. Perhaps he will tell us, later in the day, exactly what that advice was. His behaviour has been mischievous and incorrect. The community should be aware of the way in which he behaves and of his past record. Mr Speaker, remember what he said over the last few weeks because, today, he will be forced to eat those words.

Northern Territory University

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, several years ago, the Northern Territory government made a decision to locate the university at Palmerston. In the last few weeks, there have been some mumblings to the effect that the Northern Territory government has reconsidered that decision. Is the Minister of Education able to confirm that?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, all I can say to the honourable member is that the government has made a decision in relation to the siting of the Northern Territory University. That decision was taken by Cabinet at Jabiru on 9 May 1989. I will be indicating that decision to honourable members by way of a statement in the Assembly.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is the minister in a position to report progress on the flood mitigation of the Todd River system?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to do so at this time. I am expecting a further feasibility study to be on my desk within days. I have said many times during my discussions with custodians of sacred sites in areas that have been proposed for potential flood mitigation purposes that I would not make public the content of those discussions. I have held my own counsel on those issues for in excess of 12 months and I will continue to do so until a satisfactory resolution has been found. Immediately we come up with the solution to all the issues that have been raised, I will make that known to the House.

Manton Dam Public Recreation Facility

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, there is considerable public interest in the conversion of Manton Dam into a public recreation facility. Is the minister able to advise the House when this facility will be opened to the public?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly I am aware of the high level of public interest in the facility as well as the misconception that I intend to re-enact scenes from an old Tarzan film as part of the Manton Dam public opening ceremony. I must regretfully disassociate myself from any comparison with Johnny Weissmuller. I do not intend swimming the width of Manton Dam grappling barehanded with man-eating crocodiles despite the willingness of the media to put me to such a test. Indeed, there could be a whole range of other people who would be anxious to see me do that as well.

Mr Speaker, I understand that the Chief Minister, the member for Ludmilla and myself will be participating in water-skiing at the dam on the opening day. We will have to do a bit of practice to ensure that we are able to stay up for long enough. However, at no stage have I said that I would swim across the Manton Dam.

Mr Tipiloura: Why not?

Mr COULTER: I do not think that it would prove much except that I cannot swim across Manton Dam, Stanley. That is one of the reasons.

There are no salt-water crocodiles in Manton Dam, according to expert advice from the Conservation Commission, which has been monitoring crocodile activity in the dam for the past 2 years, and according to the crocodile farm, which has the contract to catch and transfer freshwater crocodiles. I am told that there are 2 very large freshwater crocodiles which are about 11 feet in length. These crocodiles have become very clever at disappearing from traps and spotlights. They could be called the bushrangers of Manton Dam because they have become very clever and adept at avoiding the contractors who are trying to catch them.

The Manton Dam public recreation facility will be opened on 22 June. As I said, the Chief Minister and I will be attending the opening day and we both intend to indulge in the dam's primary attraction - water-skiing - although we are a bit rusty in that regard. I understand that the Chief Minister undertook his apprenticeship in water-skiing at the Mindil Beach. When he was a young fellow, I understand that the skiers were towed by cars which drove along the beach. They could not afford boats. Skiing was only possible at certain times of the day. I do not know how the Chief Minister performs in deep water but we will see.

The facility is designed particularly to be used for power boating. The member for Koolpinyah asked about the Shoobridges. We have had that debate. It has been pointed out on many occasions that Lake Bennett was not suitable for powerboating. In fact, powerboating was damaging the wall at Lake Bennett. We should not deny that there is a substantial number of power boats. Indeed, the Australian Skiing Classic was held here just recently. There is considerable interest in the sport and I believe that providing the Manton Dam facility for these people will enhance their sport so that it will

grow and prosper at a proper inland facility. Mr Speaker, I look forward to seeing you at the official opening, together with the Chief Minister and the member for Ludmilla.

Funding of King Cobra Rod and Custom Club

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Does the Chief Minister's reported personal release of some \$235 000 of taxpayers' money to the King Cobra Rod and Custom Club represent his brand of fiscal responsibility? Specifically, does this largesse represent his government's priority ahead of school libraries and child-care centres? Mr Speaker, I further ask whether this decision to distribute quite generous amounts of taxpayers' money was prompted by the Chief Minister's well-known interest in hot rods?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, since self-government the Northern Territory government has unashamedly assisted many sporting and cultural organisations throughout the Northern Territory and continues to do so. From memory, I think the amount of this assistance exceeds \$1.7m a year. That funding is used to assist various organisations, not only to obtain and improve their premises but also to send sporting people interstate, to bring coaches up from down south and so on. We believe that it is a responsible Northern Territory government policy. It has operated very successfully for many years and has allowed Territory sports people to achieve standards which allow them to compete nationally. In assisting organisations, our policy has been to have each sport in the Northern Territory achieve for itself, over a period of time, a facility of national standard. As I have said, we have spent many millions of dollars in this regard. In some cases, grants were made and in other cases loans were made to various organisations, usually on concessional terms.

Over the past couple of years, as a result of the downturn in the Northern Territory economy, assisted to a fair degree by the federal government's \$250m chop over the last 3 years and the effect of that on our economy and population, a number of sporting and cultural organisations have found themselves in financial difficulty in terms of repaying government loans which have built assets for the entire Northern Territory community. The government has made a decision that a range of these loans will be written off. Naturally, we have been advising the respective organisations whose memberships, in every case, have made substantial contributions far in excess of any contributions made by the Northern Territory government. We are proud of our record of assistance to develop the social infrastructure to make this a better place to live. I confirm that the loan referred to by the honourable member was written off, along with many others involving not only sporting organisations but cultural and ethnic organisations.

Electricity Charges

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister will recall his pronouncements on electricity charges in recent months. Is he aware that the Nhulunbuy Corporation has announced that it is lifting its electricity charges by 10.8%? Does an increase of that magnitude fall within parameters which the government finds acceptable?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as someone who has been a member of this House for a considerable period, the Leader of the Opposition should know that the question would more appropriately be directed to the honourable member who is responsible for electricity generation in the Northern Territory.

Mr Smith: You are the man who has been making all the statements about electricity charges.

Mr PERRON: The statements that I have made on the subject recently relate to a federal subsidy to the Northern Territory.

Expo in Hong Kong

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In October this year, there will be a Northern Territory Expo in Hong Kong to promote the Northern Territory and the Trade Development Zone. Is the honourable minister able to advise the House whether the business community of the Northern Territory is supporting that expo?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, last evening, I attended a function at the Trade Development Zone at which industry groups offered their support for the Trade Development Zone and, in particular, the planned expo in Hong Kong later this year. When I was in Hong Kong 2 weeks ago, I had the opportunity to announce the proposed expo on prime time radio. We received considerable coverage during that interview. The excitement in Hong Kong has reached fever pitch and people are eagerly waiting for the Northern Territorians to turn up there. Part of the expo, of course, will be the crab-tying competition. We intend to take the world crab-tying champions from the Northern Territory to Hong Kong. That announcement created quite a lot of excitement there.

The response from industry representatives last night was also very heartening. About 50 business organisations responded to requests for expressions of interest in the 2 expos and attended a briefing at the Trade Development Zone. I say '2 expos' because it is also planned to have an expo at Shenzhen which is the economic development zone in China itself. It is anticipated that there will be about 20 stands featuring the Territory's private sector at the Hong Kong Expo and perhaps slightly less at Shenzhen. These expos will be among the most important trade and promotional events ever mounted by the Northern Territory. As a matter of perspective, it is forecast that 30 000 people a day will pass through the Territory's Hong Kong Expo and 50 000 a day at the weekend. This is several leagues above any previous Territory trade event, except perhaps the World Expo in Brisbane last year. Organisation for the 2 expos is now in full swing, as it needs to be.

The logistics are of giant proportions. For example, the Northern Territory University is keen to establish a vigorous presence at both expos. Any honourable member with experience in Asia will know that there is a high level of interest in Australian tertiary education facilities. Normally one might expect the university to take with it a box of brochures. In this case, make that dozens of boxes. More than 250 000 copies of each brochure will need to be produced.

Organisation of the expos is being conducted jointly by a committee, including private sector expertise in Darwin and the Trade Development Zone's representatives in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Expo will be held at the New World Centre in Kowloon from 1 November to 5 November and the Shenzhen Expo from 8 November to 12 November. Most Territory government departments and authorities will participate in conjunction with the private sector. On display will be the Territory's lifestyle, its investment and trade opportunities and its potential. I announced the expos in Hong Kong earlier this month. The announcement received good coverage in the Hong Kong media and already considerable interest has been generated.

The Hong Kong Expo, in particular, has to be viewed in a wider context. It will not necessarily be about writing Territory business deals on the spot. Rather, it will be pitched at lifting the profile of the Territory as an attractive place for Asian investment and relocation of Hong Kong business. The organisers are looking at more than just instant gratification. The Shenzhen Expo is planned along more direct lines. Shenzhen provincial authorities have welcomed the event and have given assurances that representatives of most Chinese provincial governments will attend following the annual Canton Trade Fair. These authorities are interested in trading links and opportunities with the Territory and, on early indications, will be keen to talk immediate business.

Mr Speaker, the design team that put together the Territory's highly commended exhibition at the Brisbane World Expo has the task of putting together the Territory's expo in Hong Kong and China. It will be informative, entertaining and purposely different from run-of-the-mill trade exhibitions. At the same time, seminars and conferences will be held specifically dealing with Territory trade and business opportunities. More details will be revealed as the organising committee gears itself up, but I am confident that these 2 expos will prove to be highly significant events of great importance to the Territory's economic future.

Electricity Package from Federal Government

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware of a statement this morning made by the federal member, Mr Snowdon, and Senator Collins, which indicates that the federal government has agreed to the following electricity package for the Northern Territory: a recurrent grant of \$40m for 1989-90, with grants to be phased out over the following 3 years? The amounts payable will be \$30m for 1990-91, \$20m for 1991-92 and \$10m for 1993-94. Is he further aware that a key feature of the package is the decision to waive from 1 July the Northern Territory's electricity debt to the Commonwealth currently standing at \$39.9m and, in addition, that the first subsidy payment of \$40m will be made as a single payment before 1 July this year rather than as instalments during the year? Further, is he aware that the federal government has also decided to permit the Northern Territory to fund the Power and Water Authority's remaining operating deficits through special additions to its global borrowing limits and does he join this side of the House in welcoming that announcement?

ANSWER

Certainly, Mr Speaker, I am aware of this morning's radio interview with Senator Collins, in which he spoke of the tremendous amount of work which he and Mr Warren Snowdon had put into achieving the Cabinet decision which was announced yesterday. I am glad that he said that because it matches the press release issued some 2 weeks ago, on 28 April 1989, which stated that Chief Minister Marshall Perron and federal Treasurer Paul Keating had reached agreement on the future of the Northern Territory electricity subsidies. It is good to see that that agreement has not been overturned by Mr Collins and Mr Snowdon.

The electricity subsidy is welcomed. Bob Collins said on radio this morning that it is unique in Australia. In fact it is not. Special purpose payments are now made to Western Australia because it cannot take all the gas from the North-west Shelf and those payments have exceeded \$90m per year for almost 3 years. Honourable members will be aware, of course, that the debt which we took over was close to \$50m. I think the amount which has been written off actually relates to Stokes Hill Power Station. I thought that the debt on Stokes Hill Power Station was somewhere in the vicinity of \$36m. Of course, we have been paying that off at about the rate of \$6m a year and honourable members would be aware that we closed that station down some 2 years ago. It was therefore only just that the Commonwealth should write off the debt on the Stokes Hill Power Station, thus ending the sorry saga of a facility which contained the wrong equipment. No doubt the member for Barkly has had a few sleepless nights because of the power station, among other things. I am sure that he will be glad to see that the debt has been written off. It ends the saga of Stokes Hill.

I am running through the figures and the likely results of yesterday's Cabinet decision. Let us hope that we can get more gas up the pipeline and more projects into the Northern Territory so that we can at least hold electricity prices. Honourable members would be aware that we have not raised electricity prices in the Northern Territory since October 1986. In fact, we have not raised them since Ian Tuxworth was the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. That is how long we have been able to hold down electricity prices. The last time they were raised was in October 1986 and we would like at least to maintain the current levels. The way to do that is, of course, to

establish more projects using gas from the pipeline. That is exactly what I am trying to do at the moment.

We on this side of the House join with the opposition in congratulating the officers of the federal Departments of Primary Industry and Energy and Treasury on their negotiating skills as well as our own Treasury officers who led the negotiations over a long period of time. These things do not just happen after a Cabinet decision and Senator Collins would be well aware of that. Negotiations have been continuing in relation to the electricity subsidy for almost 12 months, ably led by the Under Treasurer, Neil Conn, who has made many trips to Canberra to speak with federal Treasury officials. It is a job well done. The cost of electricity is crippling to the Northern Territory and I would like to congratulate all those people who were involved in negotiating the deal at the coalface, particularly the officers of the federal Treasury and the Northern Territory Treasury who have worked so hard on this matter over a 12-month period.

Nightcliff High School - Grounds Maintenance Contract

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I remind the honourable minister that, during the last sittings, questions were raised in respect of possible conflicts of interest in relation to the letting of a grounds maintenance contract at the Nightcliff High School. The minister undertook then to have the matter fully investigated by the Department of Education. I ask the minister whether that investigation has been carried out. Are any results available? If so, could the honourable minister advise this House of the current situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nightcliff for his question. The issue he raised was of great concern. Following his comments during an adjournment debate, I decided that it was necessary for the secretary of the department to carry out a full investigation. That investigation has now been completed and the conclusions are as follows:

- (1) There is no direct documentary evidence as to whether Mr Perrin was financially interested in the contract.
- (2) The minutes of the meetings of the council reveal that Mr Perrin did not disclose the financial interest in the contract at any meeting of the council.
- (3) Mr Perrin made a statement after a meeting of the council on 28 or 29 January 1988 which indicated that he knew that Territory Garden Services, the contractor, would be amalgamated with Darwin Irrigation Suppliers - his employer - and that he knew that at the time of that meeting and prior to the execution of the contract. It is considered that it would have been prudent for him to have made a statement to that effect during the meeting, as his failure to do so has occasioned the concern which was expressed by Mr Hatton.
- (4) There is no evidence that Mr Perrin was financially interested, directly or indirectly, in the negotiations, execution or implementation of the contract. It is considered that a financial interest in a contract involves the receipt of

personal pecuniary profit or reward which arises from the making of a contract, and which would not have been received if the contract had not been made. It is not considered that Mr Perrin had a financial interest in the contract by virtue of being an employee of Darwin Irrigation Supplies in the absence of any evidence as to his salary or emoluments before and after the execution of the contract or the amalgamation of the businesses.

Mr Smith: What about the recommendations to tighten up the system? Are you going to read those out?

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, there is definitely a need to tighten up the system.

Mr Smith: Thank you.

Mr HARRIS: It is very important that people who are actively involved in the consideration of contracts to carry out work on behalf of school councils declare any interest which they may have in such work. As a result of the situation which I have been discussing, I have asked the Department of Education to consider the drafting of regulations. If necessary, we will amend the act to ensure that councillors are required to disclose their interests and so that failure to disclose a financial interest in a contract being negotiated by a council would invoke a penalty. I think that will resolve this whole matter.

BTEC

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is the minister aware of 2 separate Queen's Counsel opinions that elements of the Stock Diseases Act of the Northern Territory, the BTEC act, are unconstitutional? Is he aware that such an opinion, if upheld by the courts, would leave the government facing a bill of approximately \$45m for compensation to pastoralists? I ask the minister what he has done to protect the Territory taxpayer from this eventuality.

ANSWER

No, Mr Speaker.

BTEC

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

During the BTEC debate yesterday, both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart threatened to table a police report into BTEC and, further to that, claimed that the federal government had appointed a special investigator to come to the Northern Territory to investigate the operation of BTEC here. Is the minister able to confirm whether or not the federal government has appointed such an investigator?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The member for Stuart made a statement to that effect yesterday. It was very emotive and dramatic stuff, and I quote from page 79 of the Daily Hansard of Tuesday 16 May: 'It is my understanding that there is an investigator on his

way to the Northern Territory, if he has not already arrived, to examine areas that the federal people are not satisfied with'. That is typical of the false presentation that we have grown to expect from the member for Stuart and the emotionalism that he has been using to present his arguments in relation to BTEC during the last few months.

This is a fine illustration of where the member for Stuart gets his information from and how inept the opposition is in pursuing the facts. I suspect that the information was gained from the ABC. The opposition and the ABC seem to be working in cahoots in this matter. I wonder if the ABC is a second arm of the ALP. On the 1 pm 8DDD FM news, broadcast on 10 May, a news item said:

The office of the federal primary industry minister in Canberra is gearing up for an escalating controversy surrounding the disease eradication program BTEC in the Territory. Larry Anderson reports that the minister, John Kerin, has appointed a special investigator from his Parliament House office to monitor the latest series of allegations involving rorts in the program. Anderson, the spokesman for the primary industry minister, John Kerin, said the federal government is anticipating that the allegations of fraudulent activity would hit the headlines around the nation next week after the Territory's Assembly sittings. He also said that the minister reaffirmed his commitment to cooperate in any judicial inquiry. The ABC understands that the shadow primary industry minister, Brian Ede, is preparing to name people in parliament investigated by police in 1984 who were allegedly involved in a series of rorts.

I think that is where the honourable members of the opposition get their information from. I went a little further than that. I made some inquiries and found that the federal minister has not appointed an officer of his own to monitor the BTEC program in the Northern Territory. As one would expect, officers of the federal department are maintaining a watching brief on events, and that is only to be expected. It is natural that they should take such action but no special investigator has been appointed from the minister's office. It is a load of rubbish and typical of the information that has been put forward by honourable members opposite and, of course, the ABC.

Let us look at the facts. Yesterday's allegations from the members opposite also stated that there had been no audit of the BTEC program in the Northern Territory. As I indicated in my response, that was incorrect. The Auditor-General has undertaken investigations into BTEC on an annual basis. As part of the federal government's continuing monitoring of BTEC, not only in the Northern Territory but throughout Australia, there is a process of continuing review. I will provide some advice for honourable members opposite because they might learn something from it.

As part of the supervision of BTEC nationally, an officer of the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy visits every state and the Territory each year to investigate specific areas of the campaign. That officer is presently in the Northern Territory reviewing the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries' BTEC files to which he has full access. I hope the staff of the ABC are listening to this because I would like them to record a few facts and the other side of the story.

Advice to date is that the officer is happy with the Northern Territory BTEC asset register and no problems are expected with perusal of the type D loan procedures. The officer presently undertaking the review is the same

person who has conducted these reviews over a number of years. As a result, he has obtained an intimate working knowledge of the department's BTEC program and, during the years that he has been visiting, has not recommended anything other than finetuning - minor recommendations which have been promptly acted on. This officer reports to senior officers in the federal Department of Primary Industries and Energy.

Given the concern that the member for Stuart has expressed in relation to this matter, it is worth while describing the hierarchy which oversees the BTEC program, not only in the Territory but throughout the states. In each state and the Territory, there is a BTEC committee overseeing the operations of the relevant departments. That BTEC committee answers to the National BTEC Committee which answers to the Animal Health Committee which, in turn, answers to the Australian Agricultural Council. The Australian Agricultural Council is chaired by no less a person than John Kerin, the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy. There is more than adequate provision for the overseeing of BTEC programs, not only in the Northern Territory but throughout Australia, by those national committees which are outside of the control of the Northern Territory.

I would also remind honourable members that the BTEC program in the Northern Territory has passed with flying colours in court cases and investigations by the Ombudsman in relation to its activities during the past year. It has come out with very favourable reports and has been supported strongly by both the judiciary and the Ombudsman.

The member for Stuart has threatened to table the report, thereby naming people mentioned in it. I believe that would be an act of gross indecency. People who are mentioned by the member for Stuart, if he does it selectively or in any other way, will be found guilty by the judgment of the member for Stuart and no one else. They have been fully investigated by the police and it has been found that there was insufficient evidence for any action to proceed. It is worthy of note that both Senator Bob Collins and the federal minister, Hon John Kerin, consider that the report should not be tabled and that it would be improper to do so in any parliament. That is their view. Mr Speaker, I think that speaks for itself.

Yulara Airstrip

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

There has been considerable publicity regarding a proposal by Australian Airlines to extend the airstrip area at Yulara to cope with larger jets. Many Alice Springs small businesses are concerned about the proposal. Can the minister give an assurance that the strip will not be extended?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Flynn is well aware that Australian Airlines has prepared, at its own expense, a report advocating some improvements and an extension to the Yulara strip. Might I say from the outset that, in the longer term as the demand on Yulara increases, it will be necessary to improve all the facilities. The first stage of those improvements is on the current program. It involves an extension of the terminal building and some additional hard-stand areas for the general aviation sector. These days, many light aircraft are operating in and out of Yulara, bringing visitors and also making flights around the Olgas and Ayers Rock itself. Whilst extensions to the strip are not on the government's current program, there will be a demand

for them in the long term. Growth in tourism at Yulara has been outstanding and reflects the very positive promotion by the Tourist Commission and by the Yulara Corporation in selling their wares.

The government is interested in hearing the views of the Alice Springs people, as it always has been. We do not run about scaremongering. I note that, in one of his press releases, the member for Barkly promoted the notion that the government had decided already to extend the Yulara strip. Like so many other statements that come from that quarter, that is not true. The government's last publicly stated position was put about a year ago. It was that we did not envisage, at that stage, that Yulara would be extended to 737 standard for approximately 3 years. That is still our view.

However, we are aware of a growing demand within Alice Springs itself. I am very keen to hear the views of businesses in Alice Springs because, in spite of the claims of the member for Flynn that businesses in Alice Springs are opposed to the extension of the Yulara airstrip, the feedback I am getting is that very few people are commenting adversely about the potential in the long term. In fact, I understand that the people of Alice Springs are more than happy to stand on their own. They are developing a great tourism marketplace of their own in Alice Springs. There is a view held in many quarters that there would be an advantage to the Alice Springs tourism industry if people were able to fly direct to Ayers Rock and come back via Alice Springs instead of having to stop when travelling in each direction. This government, of course, is about balanced decision-making. We want to hear what the industry in Alice Springs and at Yulara has to say and, in due course, we will come to a decision on what our future program will be.

BTEC

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The honourable minister will recall that, in the debate last night and in a letter to the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, 3 reasons were given for not proceeding against Mr Donald Hoar, or Mr Q as I called him last night, even though it was agreed that there was a prima facie case against him. Would the minister now confirm to this House that witnesses could have been subpoenaed to give evidence and that the major reason Mr Hoar was not prosecuted for his carcass reduction activities at Victoria Valley Abattoir was that it was known that he would fight through every court and use every avenue of appeal and, as a result, the case would have cost a lot of money?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I repeat what I said yesterday. The reasons for the advice were in the letter that I tabled. It was pretty simple and I do not think it is worth while repeating here. What we have to consider is the speculation that has been created in the media about the so-called lost file and the suggestion that there was some impropriety in advice given in relation to prosecution. The unfortunate aspect of the speculation is, of course, that it implies that the government does not know what that advice was or, if we do, that we do not want to reveal what it was.

I can state unequivocally that neither of those scenarios is correct. The government is aware of what the advice was. We are more than happy to say what it was and the majority of personnel who were involved in considering the file are still employed by the Department of Law.

Mr Smith: Today it is the 'majority of personnel'. Yesterday it was all of them.

Mr MANZIE: The Leader of the Opposition does not like to hear the correct information.

Mr Smith: I like to hear it at the first attempt, not the third.

Mr MANZIE: It was said quite clearly yesterday but the Leader of the Opposition was not in the House, which is pretty usual. If he stayed here and listened to the content of debates, he would understand what was going on. I am referring to the debate on BTEC yesterday, when these matters were very clearly and concisely stated. It would possibly be to his advantage to remain in the House when matters of ...

Mr Smith: You said that the personnel involved are still present ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the manners of the Leader of the Opposition are appalling. I have noticed no improvement over a number of years. There is a lot of room for improvement and hopefully we will see some in the future.

The Department of Law considered the file in 1984 and, in consultation with senior police officers, decided that no prosecution should proceed. The decision not to proceed was reached only after detailed consideration of the evidence. As the Chief Minister has informed the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Hon John Kerin, it was based on 3 main points. Firstly, although prima facie evidence existed, there was very little chance of a successful prosecution. Secondly, there was almost a complete lack of corroboration of Crown witnesses' testimony. The case pivoted on the credibility of such witnesses. Thirdly, none of the 5 complainant pastoralists considered that he had suffered any loss and none wished to proceed with the matter.

That is the advice and those are the 3 points on which it was based. There has been no change. The advice is still valid today. It is as valid today as it was in August 1984. Nothing has been revealed, as a result of what the member for Stuart so pretentiously refers to as his investigation, which casts doubt on what took place. It is worth considering who was involved in giving that advice. Much has been made in the media of the fact that a former magistrate, Mr Tony Cavit, who was then Crown Counsel, has left the Territory. However, members opposite have conveniently forgotten the fact that Mr Cavit did not consider the file in isolation. It was also assessed by the Crown Prosecutor, Mr Jack Karczewski, our Senior Crown Prosecutor, Mr Ray Minahan, and the present Secretary of the Department of Law, Mr Peter Conran, who were aware of the decision. The Chief Inspector in charge of the case, who is now the Commissioner of Police, also considered the file. All 4 of those officers are still employed by the government and they maintain that the advice was as I have outlined, and that it was correct.

I am deeply concerned about attempts by the member for Stuart to imply that there was something wrong about the fact that a prosecution did not proceed, never mind the fact that he has been alleging multi-million dollar fraud whereas the amount involved was actually just over \$4000. Members on this side of the House are used to his capacity for exaggeration and that sort of discrepancy is about par for the member for Stuart.

What I object to most strenuously is the slur that he has cast on the integrity and the capability of officers of my department. There can only be 3 interpretations of what the member for Stuart is saying and everyone should be aware of that. The interpretations are that the officers involved were professionally incompetent, that the officers involved bowed to pressure from political sources or that the officers involved bowed to outside pressure. Those are the only 3 scenarios. The matter was investigated. The results of the investigation went to Crown Law and advice was given. As a result of that advice, in 2 cases, there was no prosecution. The remainder of the cases were found to be totally without foundation. Remember that the allegation is that somehow there was a shonk. The only basis for that is that the officers involved were professionally incompetent, bowed to political pressure or bowed to outside pressure. There is no other way that the allegations from the member for Stuart can possibly be interpreted. Without exception, they are totally defamatory of the officers involved.

I have spoken to the officers involved and they flatly reject any suggestion that any of those scenarios occurred. They are more than willing to say just that to any member of this House, even the member for Stuart who, in my opinion, has so grossly insulted them. Unlike the member for Stuart, the honesty, integrity and professional ability of these officers is not in question. I challenge the member for Stuart to put up or shut up. He must unequivocally state his version of what occurred when the file was considered by the Department of Law. If he is not prepared to do so, he must retract his allegations and apologise to the officers involved. If the member for Stuart is going to persist with these allegations that something was wrong with the advice not to prosecute, I challenge him again to stop shovelling in this coward's castle and to have the guts to repeat his allegations outside this House.

The officers involved have nothing to hide. They know they did an honest and professional job and they are fed up to the back teeth with the garbage, the slur and the innuendo against their reputations which the member for Stuart has been spreading. I doubt very much if the member for Stuart will talk to any of these people simply because I do not believe he would have the courage to look them in the face. If he does not have the intestinal fortitude to talk to these people and retract his allegations, then let him make his allegations outside this Assembly. That would at least give those officers a fair chance to sue him out of existence. If he is unable or is unwilling to follow an honourable course, he will stand condemned before this House as a coward and a liar.

Air Traffic Control

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, last year in this Assembly, I raised with the Minister for Transport and Works on several occasions the issue of the air traffic control facilities in the Darwin and Alice Springs area being relocated to the Adelaide region. What is the current situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am well aware of the member for Ludmilla's interest in aviation. Of course, his electorate adjoins the airport and I am sure he is lobbied continually by constituents, not only by airport personnel but by RAAF people, over a broad range of aviation issues. From all reports, the civil aviation authorities are still intent on proceeding with this

rationalisation program, as they call it, utilising AUSSAT technology and bringing all of the various stations around Australia to 2 central points. It is intended that the Darwin and Alice Springs offices will be closed and the personnel there will be returned to Adelaide.

Given modern technology, it sounds all very fine to move all those 150 families back to Adelaide. However, the point is that they are being moved back to Adelaide. What the outcome of this rationalised program will be has me beat. The federal minister has not yet stated what the net economic value in this move is. As is recognised by officers of the civil aviation authorities, there are some down sides to the move. They are very concerned about some of the technical problems and the potential for outages as a result of storms, lightning strikes etc. They have outlined those concerns to the department and I believe they have not been properly addressed to date. There are many other issues which pertain to safety and a proper standard of service on the ground in Darwin, Alice Springs and Gove for the many people who travel by light aircraft. The great majority of people in the rural and remote areas rely entirely on light aircraft for their survival.

I understand that the member for MacDonnell is the second member of this Assembly to obtain his flying licence although I think he thought at one stage that he was the first. The question is whether I would fly with him. I am aware of a report to the Darwin Aero Club concerning the unserviceability of an aircraft. Perhaps I should not go into that. I think I will stick to flying by myself.

Mr Bell: Malicious slander.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I am prepared to acknowledge that it may be malicious slander. One of the first things I was told when I was flying was that the first thing you do is to turn on the fuel.

Mr Speaker, to return to my point, there is a very genuine concern among light aircraft ...

Mr Bell: I will give you an explanation later.

Mr FINCH: ... users about problems on bush airstrips, particularly during the wet season. Sometimes outages occur and local knowledge of what is happening on the ground is very important for the pilot and, of course, the passengers. In a place like Adelaide, there is only a hi-tech communication system which does not allow communication with pilots as they come in from their flights and as they are going out. It is important to brief pilots with some local knowledge which is useful in an emergency. When there is an emergency, search and rescue procedures will be directed from Adelaide. I would hate to be sitting in the middle of the desert or maybe even at sea in those circumstances. I am well aware of the concerns of some operators in the growing offshore petroleum industry about search and rescue being controlled from Adelaide without the benefit of local knowledge and face-to-face contact. For example, if BHP has a problem with a chopper or an aircraft going down, it is necessary to make decisions pretty well on the spot. At such times, the trust developed in a person who is known personally at the other end of the phone or who stands across the counter is critical.

It is not simply the loss of the 150 families from the Northern Territory that I am concerned about. I am also concerned about the lack of evidence that there is a cost saving to the federal government and the very genuine concern of pilots and, I would hope, their passengers, that remote control is

in no way the best option as far as safety and search and rescue procedures are concerned.

Mr Speaker, I implore members of this House, including my flying compatriot from the opposite benches, to lobby the federal government with regard to ...

Mr Bell: Why don't you introduce a statement about the rationalisation, Fred? This is itsy-bitsy stuff, it really is.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I am well aware of the sensitivities of the defenders of federal government policy, but I implore them to read Hansard and contemplate the impact of this decision on the Territory's future. I ask that we get together to bring about some action to prevent this appalling move to centralise.

Hepatitis B

Mr COLLINS to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Why did the Territory not take part in the Hepatitis B Awareness Week? How bad is the disease? What groups in the community are most at risk, how available is vaccine for hepatitis, and does the government intend to work towards a program for total immunisation of the whole community?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Hepatitis B Awareness Week was a promotional activity of the pharmaceutical company Smith and Kline. It did not consult with or elicit the support or involvement of the Department of Health and Community Services. It promoted Hepatitis B vaccination as essential for everyone. The message that everyone is at risk is not entirely supported, at this stage, by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

This morning, I received a letter from Merck, Sharp and Dohme and the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, which expresses some concerns about the implementation of the Hepatitis B Awareness Week campaign. Some media reports suggest that everybody is at risk and requires immediate vaccination, which could unnecessarily worry members of the lay public. It would be unfortunate indeed if this deflected attention away from efforts at prevention in high-risk groups. The Territory's position at present is that Hepatitis B vaccination is an important part of prevention for members of high-risk groups or those whose occupations place them at risk.

With regard to the honourable member's second question relating to how bad the disease is, studies in Australia and other countries indicate that adults affected with Hepatitis B may or may not experience signs and symptoms of illness. The majority will recover completely. However, some patients do not eliminate the virus and, as a result, can develop a chronic illness. 1% to 2% of patients can develop serious sequela such as cirrhosis or liver cancer.

As to what groups in the community are at risk, the answer is health-care workers, South-east Asians, Aborigines, intravenous drug users, sexually-active homosexual males, persons indigenous to Oceania, a regular sexual partner or partners of and persons residing with an individual with chronic Hepatitis B. How available is the vaccine? The vaccine is readily available in Australia. A complete vaccination series consists of 3 separate injections administered over 6 months. It is essential to have the complete vaccination course to ensure immunity.

Does the government intend to work towards a total community immunisation plan? Since February 1988, all infants of mothers who were in a high-risk group received Hepatitis B vaccine at birth. Hepatitis B vaccination is available to persons in high-risk groups or persons whose occupation puts them at risk of infection. Gradually, more groups are being defined or are requesting vaccination; for example, the lifesavers in Southern Australia. I would presume that lifesavers in New South Wales would also be on the list. 1465 persons residing throughout the Territory, whose occupations put them at risk, have been tested and vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

Offshore Supply Base in Darwin

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The government is known to be interested in the establishment of an offshore supply base in Darwin to meet the growing needs of the offshore oil industry and to provide Territory business with greater access to that market and, in that respect, the honourable minister recently held discussions with Singapore Offshore Petroleum Services. Can he advise on the progress of these discussions and whether an offshore supply base will be developed in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Jingili for his question. Honourable members will be as excited as I am about the hydrocarbon potential of the Northern Territory and the amount of activity that is occurring on and offshore in the Northern Territory. To add to that, I understand from Senator Cook that the Indonesian minister will be visiting Australia in July. Senator Cook announced at the APEA Conference in Hobart recently that the Timor Gap question may be resolved as early as December this year. He is on record as saying also that an estimate of the quantity of oil in that region could be as high as 7 billion barrels.

If all those things happen, we are really in for an oil boom in the Northern Territory. We wish Senator Cook well, together with Senator Evans, who will be involved in the negotiation of that agreement with the Indonesian government. It highlights the need to bring to Darwin such onshore facilities as will enable it to be a major regional base for offshore drilling activities.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that an offshore supply base will be developed in Darwin. However, I am unable at this stage to announce full details about the location and all the participants. Certainly Singapore Offshore Petroleum Services, which operates a large offshore base in Singapore, is very keen to become involved. It has indicated that it will be sending a draft heads of agreement to the Territory government by the end of this month. It is envisaged that Singapore Offshore Petroleum Services would lease the facility, employing local people and forming a joint venture with at least 1 Territory company.

Advance discussions have been held with a number of companies but it would be premature at this stage to name them. Singapore Offshore Petroleum Services has visited Darwin twice to examine likely sites and detailed investigation work has been carried out at East Arm in conjunction with local contractors. As well, the Department of Transport and Works was commissioned to design an interim facility at Stokes Hill and other possible sites are also under consideration.

It is now a matter of reaching agreement with the various companies wanting to participate in such a facility. I anticipate resolution in the next couple of months. There is no question that it will happen and there is likewise no question that it is needed. Offshore oil exploration and well development continues at record pace in the Timor Sea. BHP Petroleum is spending more than \$6m a week in the Timor Sea and Santos will be spending a similar amount once it starts its Darwin operation in July. In fact, I think that its drilling program will cost something like \$265m over the work period. At least 15 new wells are scheduled this year, and a further 16 next year.

Mr Speaker, just to bring the Northern Territory's hydrocarbon and mineral wealth into perspective, let me advise honourable members that my own personal goal for the Territory's development of its natural resources next year is development worth \$1700m. We believe it will top around about \$1500m this financial year, which is roughly equivalent to the value of the entire Australian wheat crop. That is not a bad effort for 150 000 Territorians, 1% of Australia's population, who are providing about 10% of Australia's export earnings. I am very proud indeed of the industry. There is huge potential for Territory businesses to be further involved in supplying it. This was first detailed at a government-sponsored seminar in May last year. Local involvement will be maximised through an offshore supply base and one of my highest priorities is to bring that facility into operation as soon as possible.

Giles House

Mr BELL to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I draw the minister's attention to the fact that a person with a prior conviction for assault has been employed at the juvenile detention centre at Giles House in Alice Springs. I ask the minister how the employment of this officer occurred and what guarantee he can give that such a situation will not arise in the future?

ANSWER

I will have to take that question on notice. I will provide an answer during the course of these sittings.

Yirara College

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In last night's adjournment debate, the member for Stuart raised the question of Yirara College. I would be very pleased if the Minister for Education could explain to the House the situation regarding Yirara College.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during the member for Stuart's speech last night, I interjected to invite him to ask me a question in relation to Yirara because I think the situation there needs to be spelt out very clearly. It is important to reiterate government policy in relation to that school. There are a number of people who would prefer to see Yirara operating differently and, obviously, the member for Stuart is one of them. I suggest to the honourable member that he talk with his Commonwealth counterpart, who would have a different view.

We are moving in the direction of giving equity to Aboriginal students and Aborigines in general. Yirara College is a government school and, as such, the council and others must work to strict government guidelines. Our policy has not changed. Yirara College will continue to play a vital role in the provision of Aboriginal education. It will also continue to be a college offering the link between the schooling provided in Aboriginal communities and schooling provided in Alice Springs. That was the original intention of Yirara College.

Mr Ede: You talk of JSSC.

Mr HARRIS: Yirara was established for a specific purpose. It is not a mainstream school. It should be pointed out that there are special units at Alice Springs High School which are able to cater to the need to come to grips with the real cultural differences that exist. Those special units are in operation. On this side of the House, we believe in integration not segregation. That needs to be made very clear. The previous Minister for Education made his views on that issue very clear in a debate in this House. We also acknowledge that the Aboriginal people believe that their qualifications should be equal to everyone else's.

Mr Ede: You know what they want. JSSC.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart does not realise that you must have awards and certificates that are not only of high standing but are seen to be of high standing in the community. That is a major concern and I wish he would wake up to that. The post-primary certificate that was offered does not relate to anything. It had no real meaning. We were moving towards ensuring that the awards or certificates offered at Yirara were accredited and nationally registered. Its courses are similar to those on offer in some other states and students who do not wish to pursue the academic stream are able to take those courses.

The exercise carried out recently at Yirara caused some concern but, unfortunately, it was not allowed to get on with the job. The intention was to utilise the existing Yirara courses which were documented in 1986 and accredited by the NT Board of Studies in 1987. The purpose of the TAFE accreditation of these courses is to provide a credible educational pathway for secondary students which is an alternative to the academically-oriented Junior Secondary Studies Certificate. The net result will be the provision of an educational program that is credible for both employment and further education purposes and practically useful.

The Yirara College courses were selected for accreditation because the task should have been relatively simple, the principal requirement being a re-presentation to satisfy TAFEAC requirements and a further consultative process to establish academically credible courses. A group went there to carry out this process and to change the accreditation from a post-primary certificate into something that is acceptable and seen to be acceptable throughout the community and, indeed, throughout Australia.

Once accredited, the certificate in secondary studies courses will be a potentially valuable alternative to the JSSC, both for the less academically inclined students of junior secondary education age and for students who need or desire heavy emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy. The accreditation proposal requires parental and community support.

Unfortunately, at a meeting of parents and community representatives, the issue of offering JSSC at Yirara dominated and the real purpose of the meeting was lost. This was a disappointment.

A course advisory committee, comprising representatives from parents and communities, college staff, Aboriginal interests, private enterprise, the Alice Springs College of TAFE, the NT Open College, the secondary college, FEPPi, the Department of Education and the Department of Employment, Education and Training, was formed to re-present the courses for accreditation. That was its specific task. This particular group, or some members of it, attempted to commence work on 2 occasions but, on both of those occasions, Aboriginal members refused to participate unless the JSSC issue was given priority consideration.

Needless to say, that course advisory committee is no longer operational. There has been a breakdown. We will pursue the matter of accrediting those courses but we are looking at a different way of doing it. Two teams, comprised of 2 or 3 appropriate personnel, will be established and will be thoroughly briefed on this issue. They will visit Yirara's feeder communities to explain the policy of government and to clarify the respective roles of Yirara College and the Alice Springs High School. The school at Yirara College will continue to utilise its existing courses without modification and will again be instructed that it shall not purport to offer the full Junior Secondary Studies Certificate.

During the course of my review into Aboriginal education, I am specifically raising the issue of secondary educational opportunities in relation to both Yirara and Kormilda Colleges. It is important that, when we are looking at providing jobs for the Aboriginal people who go through our school system, they are able to study courses that can equip them for those jobs. We, on this side of the House, will be continuing our efforts to ensure that the Aboriginal people are not patronised and that they are able to take courses of study which have full accreditation and are nationally registered. We will also be looking at integrating Aboriginal students from Yirara College into the existing high school at Alice Springs. That will continue and the Junior Secondary Studies Certificate will be issued through the Alice Springs High School.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Upgrading of Stuart and Barkly Highways

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I would like to provide a very brief supplementary answer to a question raised by the member for Barkly yesterday. He asked about the program for the Stuart and Barkly highways in his region. In terms of allocations for both highways this current year, an amount of \$6.2m is already being spent, together with \$2.5m of maintenance to keep the road in good order. Over the period of the next 3 budgets, I understand that work to bring those highways to national standard will be completed at a cost of \$27.7m. Funding of those works, of course, will be subject to the federal budget. I mentioned yesterday that advice from the federal Minister for Transport and Communications has indicated that our 5-year overall road network program is to be cut by some \$18m. We are still awaiting advice from federal officers. They were due to come to see us before 12 May but that has not happened yet. We wait with bated breath to see whether the federal government will in fact meet its commitment to the north so that we can complete this long-awaited highway program.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Is it a fact that officers of his department in Katherine were aware in 1983 that kill figures logged by Victoria Valley Beef Abattoir were suspect? Is it also a fact that orders were issued to the meat inspector at the abattoir to establish and maintain an independent set of figures for slaughter weights? Can he confirm, as I was told during my police briefing, that his department did not collate those figures with other returns available from the meatworks and pastoralists even though the then District Veterinary Officer Katherine had written to his headquarters - and I am quoting from the police report - 'indicating that Don Hoar's kill figures were fit only for the waste bin'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter to which the member for Stuart refers has been fully investigated. He has a copy of the first police report into allegations. The answers which he seeks are provided in the second report from the full police investigation. The member for Stuart has received a full police briefing on this matter with his lawyer. He is aware of the answers.

Aviation Costs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, a great deal of concern has been expressed by general aviation operators in the Territory about the cost recovery system put in place following the creation of the Civil Aviation Authority in the Federal Airports Corporation. Given the importance of general aviation to the Territory, particularly in isolated communities, can the minister advise the House of what is being done to address concerns about general aviation costs as a result of this new cost recovery program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can advise the member for Ludmilla that there has certainly been much lobbying, not only by this government but by members of the aviation community and some users of general aviation throughout the Northern Territory. There is no doubt, as I said the other day, that the light aircraft industry is incredibly important to the remote areas, particularly Aboriginal communities, which in many cases have no other transport options.

In September last year, I wrote to the then Minister for Aviation. Bear in mind that we have had 8 or 9 federal ministers responsible for aviation. It is a little difficult to obtain any consistency in responses from the federal government on matters which are of great concern to the Northern Territory, particularly people out in the bush. I received a response this week - some 8 months later. It was a rejection of my proposal that we ought to review the charges in various sectors of the aviation industry.

In particular, I was concerned about double dipping by the federal government in respect of its avgas charges. Some 4.4¢ per litre is charged to light aircraft industries for the use of avgas. On the basis of a brief attached to the minister's response, I believe that some \$24m is raised from that source. Some 2 or 3 years ago, the industry agreed to pay some 3.5¢

per litre on the basis that it would cover landing charges at secondary strips. In the case of Darwin, where there is only one strip, it was to cover landing charges and navigation fees.

Since the federal government has introduced the Federal Airport Corporation to look after the airports and hived off the navigation functions to the Civil Aviation Authority, both organisations charge separate fees. In fact, of the total funds coming from avgas, some \$2.7m goes to CAA and \$2m goes to the Department of Transport and Communications. When the agreement was made 2 or 3 years ago, it was envisaged that the revenue raised from that source would be \$3.5m. It is now \$25m with most of the funds going to CAA. None of them go to cover landing fees.

The FAC will not get any of that surcharge. It will collect its own fees. It has announced some fees recently for landing of light aircraft at Darwin. For example, a Cessna 402, a light aircraft used commonly for charters to Aboriginal communities, will attract almost \$8000 per annum for each aircraft on an RPT service. If it is used for charter work, the fee goes down to about \$1550 per annum. There are additional charges for parking the aircraft. There are also charges for having the aircraft in somebody's hangar while it is being repaired, despite the fact that the hangar is paying a separate lease charge to FAC. We are not talking about double dips; we are talking about triple dips. These figures might seem small to some but the people out in the bush are not exactly silvertails, which is the term the previous federal minister, Peter Morris, used to describe light aircraft users. Most of them are on social welfare payments and those who are not certainly could not be classified as high income earners. They are not the joy fliers. They are people going about their daily business. I think it is appalling that the federal government, which is supposed to show care and compassion for people in remote areas, intends to triple dip on aviation charges.

Once again, I ask the opposition to lend its weight to lobbying on these matters. Not only aero clubs around the Territory, but the aviation industry throughout the Territory, including the likes of Ossie Osgood and MAF, have made representations. The Aboriginal charter companies in Alice Springs lobbied the federal minister only to receive an offhanded slap on the face. The response was that they should not worry and that they would survive somehow. Mr Speaker, this is another sorry saga of the treatment of the aviation industry of the Northern Territory at the hands of the federal government.

Mammograms

Mr TUXWORTH to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I ask this question in the hope that the matter has been considered by the government as a whole and not just by the minister. Could the minister indicate whether the government has considered introducing free mammograms at Northern Territory hospitals and health centres? If the government has considered the matter, why has it not introduced mammograms into Territory health centres and hospitals for Territory women?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the member for Barkly that the government has indeed considered testing of women throughout the Northern Territory. I would like to make a couple of points and I am sure the House will wait with bated breath until next week when the Chief Minister will make a ministerial statement on this subject.

Breast cancer is the major single cause of cancer deaths among women in Australia. The early detection of the cancer is the key to saving lives and minimising the trauma of major surgery. Breast self-examination, carried out properly, is a very useful screening process. Lately, of course, as was demonstrated by the member for Barkly last night in the adjournment debate, there has been increased interest in mammography as a method of screening. At present, that process is not catered for under Medicare. The government is concerned that this is not an option ...

Mr Finch interjecting.

Mr Bell: Oh, shut up Fred.

Mr Finch: Well, it is true.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister and the honourable member for MacDonnell will cease interjecting.

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, the government is concerned that this is not an option for women and is looking now at the possibility of providing free screening for all Territory women. Clearly, an expense would be involved, but this is not the major reason for the government's reticence simply to offer free screening. Radiation from this process is a major concern. Frequent screening could cause a build-up in the soft tissue of a woman's breasts. Of course, it is also imperative that mammograms are not taken of pregnant women. Obviously, if mammography is an effective diagnostic tool, women should have access to it as a backup to breast self-examination and I am pleased to advise that the Chief Minister will be making a statement to the House on this subject next week.

BTEC

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer the honourable minister to the 3 reasons that the Chief Minister has given for his failure to prosecute Donald Hoar. The letter from the Chief Minister to Hon John Kerin gave 3 reasons. These were: (1) although prima facie evidence exists, there was very little chance of a successful prosecution; (2) there was almost a complete lack of corroboration of the testimony of Crown witnesses, and the case pivoted on the credibility of such witnesses; and (3) none of the 5 complainant pastoralists considered that he had suffered any loss and none wished to pursue the matter.

With regard to point (2), does the minister accept that government meat inspectors had evidence to corroborate that of the principal witness? With regard to point (3), does the minister understand that it was BTEC, not the pastoralists, who suffered loss through activities at Victoria Valley Beef Abattoir? Given that these facts remove 2 of the 3 reasons given by the Chief Minister to the House for the government's failure to prosecute, does that leave the government's case resting on a 5-year old recollection of a piece of paper that is nowhere to be found?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, first, the assertion that the Chief Minister or the government failed to prosecute is indicative of the member for Stuart's ignorance regarding the prosecution process. I would like to remind the honourable member here and now that the government does not decide to prosecute.

Mr Smith: Tell Lindy Chamberlain that.

Mr MANZIE: That is a perfect example. The interstate colleagues of the member for Stuart may interfere with the judicial process but here in the Territory the executive is entirely separate from the prosecution process. I can assure the honourable member that the integrity of officers involved in prosecution is such that, if a minister of government or a government member tried to interfere and influence them in their decision-making, that minister or member would be before the courts immediately. The member for Stuart should withdraw his inference. It is totally and utterly abhorrent to me. The community needs to know that governments do not prosecute in the Territory. Evidence stands and falls on the professional integrity of the people involved.

The reasons tendered by the Chief Minister and by myself for not proceeding to prosecution were given on the advice of the appropriate professional people. It is not my role to go into the whys and wherefores of that or to argue the ins and outs of it. It was the advice of professional people. Either the honourable member accepts it as advice from competent people or, as I said yesterday, he implies that those people were incompetent, were influenced by government or were influenced by outside people before they gave their opinion. I can assure the honourable member categorically that my advice is that such influence did not occur.

I will say to the honourable member today, as I said yesterday, that if he wishes to make an issue of this he should go outside his coward's castle. Let him impugn the integrity of those professional people outside this House. If he does that, I guarantee that he will have a judicial inquiry so fast that his feet will not touch the ground. He will be before the court in a number of matters of private litigation. It is ridiculous that this person opposite should insinuate that, somehow or other, governments make up their mind about prosecutions. Any suggestion of that occurring is extremely serious. I can assure all honourable members and the community that the government does not become involved in deciding who is prosecuted and who is not. I repeat that, if it did, the professional integrity of officers in the Department of Law is such that the people who attempted to interfere would find themselves before the courts.

There is one last thing that I would like to say on this matter. The investigations were carried out by competent members of the police force who answered every allegation that the honourable member can raise. He is using a report based on unsubstantiated allegations which were investigated fully by competent members of a competent police force under the control of the then Commissioner of Police, Peter McAulay, who is now the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police. I would like to see someone interfere with the operation of justice through Peter McAulay. As Commissioner of Police, he would pursue his man to the ends of the earth if he thought there was the slightest chance of getting him. His whole approach to policing is based on integrity and he would brook no interference.

The inference the member for Stuart is making is that the investigations were incompetent - and he has not claimed that - or the advice given by officers was incompetent or it was influenced by government. If the honourable member can produce any evidence in addition to anything produced by the investigation, he should go immediately to the police and present that further evidence. If it stands up, I am sure prosecutions will be commenced. That decision has nothing to do with the government. We have an arm whose role is to carry out investigations. An arm of government has the role of

independently assessing whether it will prosecute or not. If the honourable member thinks he has fresh evidence, let him go to the appropriate people. That is the proper course of action. Does he have the intestinal fortitude to stand outside this House and malign officers? Of course not. If he did that, he would end up with a judicial inquiry which he does not want.

Aboriginal Non-government School in Tennant Creek

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is the minister aware of the move to establish an Aboriginal non-government school in Tennant Creek and what is the government's reaction to this proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am somewhat concerned about the proposal to establish an Aboriginal school in Tennant Creek. I am not questioning the intentions of the people who have put forward the proposal but there are very serious implications, not only in relation to funding but also in relation to the impact on existing schools. Schools in Tennant Creek already have spare capacity. The Tennant Creek Primary School has a capacity of 325 and the enrolment is 190. The capacity of the Kargaru school is 530 and its total enrolment at this time is 297. Obviously, there is a considerable capacity for enrolments at those schools.

I believe that the concerns that the people have raised in relation to the education of Aboriginal people in Tennant Creek could perhaps be addressed in another manner, perhaps by setting up a special unit or by talking to the department about ways of making use of the spare enrolment capacity in the existing schools. Normally, the federal government would also be most concerned about this. As honourable members would know, a 2-year lead time is required when a non-government school is to be established. That is a sensible lead time because it enables officers of the Department of Employment, Education and Training to look at the schools in the area to ensure that funds will not be wasted if a new school is established. There is a process which ensures that we move responsibly in the development of our schools. I understand, however, that in this case the Commonwealth has given the proposed Aboriginal school approval for recurrent funding by waiving the 2-year lead time. That is a matter of concern.

I am not denying that there are problems in Aboriginal education. Honourable members would be aware that I have been moving throughout the Territory, looking at the very real problems Aboriginal people are facing. However, I do not consider that the reasons put forward for the establishment of an Aboriginal school in Tennant Creek stand up at this time. The problems in Tennant Creek are similar to those being experienced by many other communities.

I want to make it clear that the government is in favour of the establishment of non-government schools. We have very clear policies in relation to assistance, with interest subsidies and capital repayment assistance. However, we are not in favour of a private school which caters for only one race of people. I make that quite clear. We are looking at integration, not segregation. I want to help the people in Tennant Creek and I believe that we should do so by looking at the capacity we have in existing schools and by establishing special units in those schools to address the problems.

I believe that, if we were to have an Aboriginal school established in Tennant Creek, that would create terrible problems. In fact, it would be totally irresponsible. There is a huge capacity for enrolment in existing schools and I would urge the people who are putting forward this proposal to have discussions with the Department of Education to try to come to grips with the issue in terms of responsibly addressing the issue of providing Aboriginal education in that region.

Needle Exchange Program

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

If the Country Liberal Party government sees itself as an honest, law-abiding government, why has it encouraged the breaking of its own laws for nearly a year? I refer to the government-condoned free needle exchange program for drug addicts which contravenes section 12 of the Criminal Code and section 64 of the Poisonous and Dangerous Drugs Act. If individuals have broken the law in this regard, why haven't they been apprehended and treated as law-breakers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the honourable member knows, the government has a clear intention in relation to the needle exchange program and, in fact, there is a bill before the House which will implement that intention. If the honourable member feels that she can pursue this matter alone, she is free to do so. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that the government has no intention of prosecuting for breaches of a law which is to be changed by a bill before the House. The Minister for Health and Community Services explained to the House that interim procedures had been put in place to enable needle exchange to occur. Many people have a personal abhorrence of the needle exchange concept but, whether we like it or not, the government has made a decision, on the balance of what is best for the community, to proceed with the legislation. That is the situation.

BTEC

Mr HATTON to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I ask the Attorney-General if he is now able to clarify the member for Stuart's claim yesterday that the BTEC scheme may be unconstitutional.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must admit that my answer to the question is not so much a matter of clarifying the member for Stuart's claim as a matter of pointing out that it is yet another furphy in his campaign to destroy the BTEC program. From his performance so far, honourable members would have to agree that this is fairly normal behaviour for the member for Stuart.

Mr Ede: \$45m. Come on, it is a serious matter.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart asked me yesterday if I was aware of the opinions of 2 QCs that the BTEC scheme was unconstitutional and that the Territory government may face a large compensation bill. Obviously, if the BTEC scheme is unconstitutional here, it is also unconstitutional throughout the country. My answer to that question was no and it remains no today.

Mr Ede: It is the Self-Government Act.

Mr MANZIE: I am not aware of such opinions. Mr Speaker, there is presently an action before the courts, Turner versus the NT of Australia and Others, relating to Jinka Station, in which questions have been raised as to whether or not the BTEC program and actions taken under the Stock Diseases Act are unconstitutional. The member for Stuart might like to consider the fact that a decision has yet to be made by the court on the matter and it is therefore sub judice. The member for Stuart has brought a sub judice matter before the Assembly in an attempt to score cheap political points. Mr Speaker, I cannot discuss the details of the case in this forum and the member has acted quite inappropriately in raising it.

I can inform honourable members, especially the member for Stuart, that the Territory government will be vigorously defending the action. As a point of fact, we too have taken advice from senior counsel. It is the opinion of the Solicitor General - and I should point out that he is also a Queen's Counsel - that there appears to be no substance to the allegation of unconstitutionality. I hope that this information will lay the matter to rest, at least as far as this Assembly is concerned, until it has been properly considered by the courts.

BTEC

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The minister has claimed that the police completed a full inquiry into BTEC. Nevertheless, the police themselves have said, and I quote from the first police report: 'The task was made exceedingly difficult in many cases due to inconsistencies, improper filing and general carelessness and lack of collated information'. That relates to files from the Department of Primary Production. In fact, during my first briefing, the Commissioner of Police, Mr Palmer, complained of the same fact.

Mr Coulter: He was the investigating officer. He was the Chief Inspector in charge at the time.

Mr Smith: That is right. He had a very good reason to complain about it. He was in a good position to complain, wasn't he?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr EDE: As I said, the police themselves have complained that the investigation was severely hampered by the chaotic and incomplete state of the DPP files. We now know that that chaos extended to the Crown Law files. My question is: how can the Attorney-General be satisfied with the investigation in view of the police's expressed dissatisfaction with the files vital for their inquiries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has quoted from the first report again and we know it contains unsubstantiated claims and allegations.

Mr Ede: That is not an unsubstantiated allegation.

Mr MANZIE: He has quoted a factual situation. As all members are aware, and as was pointed out in the Chief Minister's statement, the funding for the BTEC program was ...

Mr Smith: This is the sound of a drowning man!

Mr MANZIE: ... suspended while a proper audit was carried out by the appropriate federal officers as well as the Territory officers. There is no secret about that fact. The Leader of the Opposition really behaves in a most childish fashion. He cannot keep his mouth closed. He dribbles away like a little child. It would be interesting if he listened for a while because then he would not have the problems that he has in understanding what is said.

As the Chief Minister pointed out in his statement to the House, which obviously neither the Leader of the Opposition nor his deputy listened to, the problem with the operation of the BTEC was such that the funding was suspended while an entire audit was carried out, new procedures were instituted and the whole of the administration was tidied up. It was tidied up to such an extent that the national BTEC group, when it does its annual audit, actually congratulates the Territory on the way it administers the BTEC program.

Mr Speaker, that sort of thing is a furphy. Again, the member for Stuart has not been able to produce any new evidence to substantiate any of his claims. Everything that he alleges has been totally and completely investigated. Either it has been investigated properly or it has not been investigated properly. If he says it has not been investigated properly, let him produce some new evidence to show that that is the case. At this stage, nobody has suggested that it was not investigated properly.

Mr Ede: The police.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, isn't that marvellous! If he can produce a statement from the police to show us that, at the end of the day, they reckon the bottom line is that it was not a proper investigation, good for him.

Mr Ede: 'The task was made extremely difficult, in many areas, due to inconsistencies, improper filing and ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member asks a question, the least he can do is afford the minister the courtesy of an opportunity to reply.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, obviously, the minister can answer in relation to the details of DPP files, but I point out again that it is obvious that the task was made difficult. It is obvious that the problems with the files were sufficient to lead to a decision to suspend the funding of the campaign while the problems were rectified. Everyone knows that. Who is denying it? What is the matter with the member for Stuart? It is public knowledge. It was clearly stated in the Chief Minister's statement. It is also worth looking at remarks which the Northern Territory Cattleman's Association addressed to the member for member for Stuart in the NT News of 2 November 1988. Regarding his allegations of impropriety, the association said:

It is unfortunate and most regrettable you did not first discuss these matters with this organisation in order that you could be properly briefed. Your actions have placed a cloud over the disease eradication program and momentarily placed in jeopardy interstate industry and government support for that program. It is imperative that you immediately put before the Northern Territory BTEC Management Committee all documentation and evidence in support of the allegations of impropriety and mismanagement in respect of the Territory's disease eradication program. If you are unable to perform this task, we call upon you to publicly withdraw your

allegations on the grounds that: (1) they cannot be supported with factual data; and (2) failure to correct the public perception of BTEC mismanagement will jeopardise the successful conclusion of disease eradication in the Northern Territory.

That was published in November 1988 and I am sure the Cattlemen's Association is still waiting, as is the whole community, for some form of fresh evidence.

The member opposite has been talking about allegations that were made. He knows there was an investigation. He knows the investigation was conducted by the police. He knows it was conducted in parallel with the financial management and audit reviews initiated by the Commonwealth, and he knows it was all reviewed by the federal Attorney-General's Department and by the federal police. He knows the federal minister's office. He knows that whole investigation ended with 2 possible problems involved and that the Crown Law advice was not to proceed with a prosecution.

Mr Speaker, I say once again, if there is any fresh evidence that would enable a prosecution to commence, let the member for Stuart take it to the appropriate authorities so that the appropriate action can be taken. If he has nothing further to add, for goodness sake, he should think about the people of the Territory, the disease eradication program and the industry, because he is doing nobody any good. His allegations reflect on either the integrity of police officers or the integrity of Crown Law officers. These are senior officers and professional people. His inferences are outrageous. If he cannot come up with anything factual and anything to substantiate his claims, I appeal, not to the better nature of the member for Stuart because it does not exist, but to the Leader of the Opposition. I ask him to think about what is going on. I ask him to think about innocent people. In our community, people are presumed innocent until proven guilty. I ask him to think about the damage that is being done and to direct the member for Stuart to make his allegations specific and, if he has any concrete information to back them, to take it to the proper authorities. If the member for Stuart has nothing except the muck that he has been digging up continuously for the last 6 months, for goodness sake, let the Leader of the Opposition do the right thing and act like a decent citizen and say to the member for Stuart: 'Stop making your stupid allegations until you get something factual'.

Mr Coulter: Why do you think he flick passed it to the member for Stuart?

Mr MANZIE: Yes, that would be right.

AIDS Patients at Alice Springs Hospital

Mr COLLINS to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

How many AIDS patients are being treated in Alice Springs Hospital? Are staff advised that these patients have AIDS so that they can take the extra care that is necessary?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, like the member for Sadadeen, I am aware of some of the rumours that seem to float around the community from time to time. The bush telegraph in Alice Springs, like that in every other community in the Territory, is pretty good. Despite the rumour that there are 6 AIDS patients in Alice Springs Hospital at the moment, I am able to say categorically that

no AIDS patients are being treated in that hospital. In response to the second part of the honourable member's question, I am able to inform him that staff are advised of AIDS patients on a need-to-know basis.

Master Media Contract

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, an item on last night's 7.30 Report stated that, on 3 January, the Secretary of the Country Liberal Party, Mr John Hare, wrote to the Managing Director of Mattingly Woollard Cawrse Advertising (NT) asking the agency to submit an application for the CLP account and stating that it would receive favourable consideration and, I think, Mr Hare's endorsement. Subsequently, on 21 February, 6 weeks later, the government announced that the multi-million dollar government advertising account had been awarded to Mattingly Woollard Cawrse. Can the minister see the obvious risk of a conflict of interest arising if the same agency is in charge of both the government's account and that of the political party in government? Will the minister assure the House that the agency handling the government account does not also handle the account of any political party?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the Leader of the Opposition's question on notice. I am sure that the restrictive trade practices that he suggests we implement would not go down very well with his federal colleagues. I could talk about that issue at some length, but I will not bore the House. I will provide him with an answer later.

BTEC

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Mr Speaker, during debate in the House on 16 May 1989, the Leader of the Opposition stated that the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association did not share the concerns of the ALP on the subject of BTEC. Since then, the member for Stuart has named the person mentioned in police reports. Can the minister advise the House of the present attitude of the Buffalo Industry Council to BTEC and to the naming of people in this Chamber?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the Attorney-General has just indicated, the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association wrote to the Leader of the Opposition on 10 October 1988 on matters relating to BTEC. The concluding paragraph of that letter said: 'We remain, as always, available to meet with you and/or your colleagues and representatives to discuss matters of importance to the Territory's beef cattle pastoral industry, the majority of which we represent'.

It is interesting to note that it took some months for either the Leader of the Opposition or his deputy to take up that offer and find out what the industry's view is in relation to the BTEC program. It is also worthy of note that neither the Leader of the Opposition nor his deputy has accepted my offer to go to my department to have a full briefing in relation to BTEC and the operations of the department so that they might avail themselves of the facts and learn a little of what is going on.

On 16 May, in response to an interjection from myself asking whether he had been to the Cattlemen's Association, the Leader of the Opposition said: 'As you ask me, I will tell you what they said. They said that their major concern was to get in place a viable cattle industry in the Northern Territory. They said that they did not share our concerns'. The concerns of the opposition, the ALP, and its policy on rural affairs are not recognised by the major pastoral association in the Northern Territory. 'They do not share our concerns'. That was after the Cattlemen's Association had waited 7 or 8 months for the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow spokesman on primary industry to speak to it.

The Leader of the Opposition has made references to the Buffalo Industry Council being concerned about the destruction of the industry and he has stated that the opposition seeks to ensure that we will have a viable buffalo industry in the future. I would like to inform honourable members of some information that has been received from the Buffalo Industry Council. I will refer to excerpts from a policy document that was passed unanimously at an extraordinary general meeting of the Buffalo Industry Council on Friday 12 May.

The document includes procedures and policy of the Buffalo Industry Council. It clearly indicates that the Buffalo Industry Council accepts the Morrell Report which describes the problems facing the industry in a clear and concise way. I commend both the Buffalo Industry Council and the officers of my department who, over the last few months, have spent considerable time together endeavouring to put in place a mechanism to help the buffalo industry through the BTEC program and to ensure that we have a viable buffalo industry after 1992.

Procedures outlined by the Buffalo Industry Council include the gamma interferon test which is currently being trialed. The council states: 'Gamma interferon tests are to be trialed on buffalo in controlled herds as well as feral de-stockers as the stress situation is different between these 2 and it is understood stress is a critical factor in this test'. That factor was brought out in the Morrell Report, as I recall. It is an indicator that both the department and the industry have the ability to get together and address the concerns of the industry.

Item 8 of the document states that the president of the BIC should attend meetings of the Northern Territory BTEC Committee as an official observer. I have no hesitation in approving such a request. I think it would considerably assist liaison between the BTEC Committee in the Northern Territory and the Buffalo Industry Council.

Mr Speaker, item 1 of the council's policy states that 'the BIC supports the national BTEC program and the impending-free target date of 1992 provided that it can be demonstrated that there will be a viable buffalo industry post-1992'. I emphasise that the BIC supports the target date of 1992.

Item 2, referring to properties without existing deferrals, states that 'bush destocking be deferred on infected properties until the 28 September 1989 where a genuine commitment to testing and the aims of the national BTEC can be demonstrated'. That point has been agreed to by officers of the department and people in the industry and, of course, it is a matter that is open to negotiation. If pastoralists do not wish to meet that 28 September date and wish to enhance their program by getting it through earlier, they have the option to do so.

Item 5 of the policy reads: 'Every effort must be made to retain the monitored negative status of buffalo wherever such status occurs. This includes fencing and monitoring the herds involved'.

Item 13 says that 'the industry supports the formation of a joint buffalo industry NT government working party on buffalo to include the Buffalo Industry Council, NT government, federal RTEC and ANPWS, to ensure that the disease TB is eliminated. The NT government must include animal production officers with experience and knowledge of good buffalo husbandry practices'. The industry group has virtually been formed.

Those points clearly illustrate the degree of cooperation between the department and the Buffalo Industry Council. They clearly show just how out of touch the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition spokesman for primary industry and fisheries, the member for Stuart, are in relation to the buffalo industry and the pastoral industry generally in the Northern Territory.

On the question of naming people in this House, as the member for Stuart did yesterday, I think that that is a deplorable action to take. These names, as he has clearly illustrated this morning ...

Mr Smith: Tell Alan Perrin that.

Mr REED: I am coming to that shortly. The names were mentioned in a preliminary police report. They were mentioned in allegations that were subsequently investigated thoroughly by Commonwealth and Territory authorities, as the member for Stuart is aware. I quote from a letter of 5 May from Mr John Kerin, the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, to the Chief Minister: 'The police investigations were conducted by the Northern Territory government in parallel with financial management and audit reviews initiated by the Commonwealth'. The concerns held by the member for Stuart are not held by the federal minister.

Mr Ede: Rubbish.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, over the last few weeks, we have heard some disgraceful comments from the member for Stuart. He has made unfounded allegations. In particular, he has made suggestions about people who were mentioned in the report containing allegations which were not substantiated in the second police report. He has suggested that the people mentioned in the report are big fish and prominent members of the CLP. The line-up now includes the member for Stuart. He has adopted the disgraceful practice of naming people and he now has to tell us the rest. He has to tell us who the big fish are. Yesterday, he named Mr Hoar. Is he a big fish? Are the other people that the member for Stuart intends to name big fish? What about the prominent members of the CLP? Are the people who are to be named prominent members of the CLP?

The member for Stuart has to come out with all the facts. He has made allegations about big fish. He has alleged that they are prominent members of the CLP. When he names people in the shelter of this House and does not have the guts to name them outside it, he has to give us the facts. When he names people, he has to give us the rest of the information. He cannot continue to hide behind the shelter that is provided by this House.

Mr Speaker, I have a special request to the member for Stuart. Last week, he attended another police briefing in relation to this matter. On that occasion, he chose to take his lawyer with him. I ask the member for Stuart

to table the advice that his legal adviser has provided to him in relation to this matter. Let us see what his lawyer has said to him. Let us get to the bottom of it all now rather than dragging it out for 5 or 6 days. Let him come up with the facts now. If he has written advice from his lawyer in relation to these matters, let us see it. The member for Stuart is clearly in the line-up now. He has to have the guts to come up with the facts. He has to tell us who the big fish are. He has to tell us who the prominent members of the CLP named in the reports are. When he names people, he has to give us all of the facts because they are the allegations which he himself has made and which have not been tested. If he does not do so, he will be branded as a coward and a liar forever. That is the clear implication which the member for Stuart faces. He now has the opportunity to clear his name.

The Leader of the Opposition interjected earlier in reference to a debate last night about Mr Alan Perrin. I took particular interest in that debate last night. The Leader of the Opposition was very upset. He accused the government of making a political attack, of selective use of documents and all sorts of things.

Mr Smith: Yes, I did.

Mr REED: He did not realise that what the opposition has been doing for the last 6 months exactly parallels what he accused the Minister for Education of doing in last night's debate.

Mr Smith: There is a basic difference.

Mr REED: It was the most gross case of doubletalk that one could come across. The Leader of the Opposition stood here and said that an investigation had been undertaken and Mr Perrin must now be cleared.

Mr Smith: That is right. He was.

Mr REED: The Leader of the Opposition failed to say that, as the Minister for Education explained, processes had been put in place subsequent to the investigation. Mr Speaker, exactly the same thing happened with BTEC.

The member for Stuart referred to files in the department. The review took into account the fact that the processes had to be upgraded. That is what happened. Exactly the same criteria apply to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition last night. He cannot have it both ways. He cannot use that argument in the case of Alan Perrin in one instance and ignore what the member for Stuart is doing in relation to BTEC. The actions are in direct conflict. I again challenge the member for Stuart to come up with the facts or to be branded as a coward and a liar forever.

Family Planning Clinics

Mr COLLINS to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I ask this question on behalf of a couple of very concerned parents. What right in law do family planning clinics have to put 14-year-old girls on the contraceptive pill without their parents' consent or knowledge?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, firstly let me state that family planning clinics are not staffed by public servants. Of course, doctors employed at these clinics are

bound by the usual ethics of their profession. Whether or not doctors prescribe the pill to young ladies without parental consent or knowledge is entirely up to the doctors concerned. Whilst the Department of Health and Community Services contributes to the funding of the clinics, they certainly are not in a position to dictate to medical practitioners how they should go about their work.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Master Media Contract

Mr COULTER (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in response to the Leader of the Opposition's question regarding the master media contract, I have been advised by the general secretary of the CLP that the management committee of the CLP has not appointed Mattingly Woollard Cawrse as its advertising agency. Mattingly Woollard Cawrse was successful several months ago in securing, through competitive tender, the Northern Territory government's master media contract. This is designed to create cost-saving efficiencies in media buying and hence savings to the taxpayer. The agency's contractual relationship with the government is not, and never will be, contingent on any other business relationship that the agency has or may enter into.

I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper. In doing so, could we send a cheerio to Donald Dale in the hospital. Once again, we hope he gets well soon.

Members: Hear, hear!

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Giles House

Mr POOLE (A/Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer a question that was asked by the member for MacDonnell yesterday with regard to recruitment of staff for Giles House. The suggestion by the member for MacDonnell that a person with a prior criminal conviction was employed at Giles House is not correct. Clearly, the member has received false information.

Let me say, however, that a person was employed as a casual worker in Giles House in February and was later found to have had a case against him proven without any conviction being recorded. Prior to that person commencing duties, the police had been requested to perform a check for any record of prior conviction. The person's previous supervisor was contacted for a recommendation and advised that a police check had not discovered prior convictions. The person was highly recommended by his previous employer who comes from a reputable Alice Springs organisation. An interstate fingerprint check initially indicated clearance. It was later found that, while a conviction had not been recorded against the person for a charge laid in 1982, the offence had been proven and the person was placed on a 12-month good behaviour bond. Due to the circumstances of the offence, the person's casual employment - and I stress the word 'casual' - was terminated on 20 April 1989.

Procedures will not be changed but action has been taken to arrange for speedy name checks with the police. It is often necessary to do that when there are sudden staff shortages and casual staff need to be employed. Certainly, no permanent staff are employed until all checks are fully completed.

Beatrice Hill Rehabilitation Project

Mr SMITH to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Does the minister accept that the go-slow unit at Beatrice Hill Rehabilitation Project is a throwback to convict days and is a completely inhumane facility and will he today order that it be demolished forthwith?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not accept the comments of the Leader of the Opposition at all. I think that he is quite aware, or should be aware, that the minister will be returning to work on Monday. I have asked for a full report from the department. I suggest that one of the first things the minister will do when he returns to work is to investigate the allegations regarding Beatrice Hill and study the report requested from the department.

Berrimah Road Intersection

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Some of my constituents have commercial operations near the Berrimah crossroads. The increase in traffic in that area during the last 6 months has been such that they have drawn it to the attention of the Darwin City Council.

Mr Coulter: I blame the Trade Development Zone.

Mr FIRMIN: Yes, it is too good. It is going so well.

Has the minister's department arrived at a solution to the problems and has it requested the Darwin City Council to rearrange the parking under its control to alleviate the potentially dangerous situation that has developed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the fact that the Berrimah Road Stuart Highway intersection is somewhat congested is all good news. As the minister responsible for the Trade Development Zone will acknowledge, much of that good news is that things are starting to happen in that region. This is not only a result of the additional activities through the zone itself. The Berrimah light industrial area contains a large number of operators who, over the last 6 months, have become increasingly busy. I spent a day or so down there in the last 3 or 4 months visiting various businesses and the response from most of them was: 'It is great to see you, but I am a little busy'.

As a result, there has been a fair bit of pressure of traffic at the intersection of the Stuart Highway and Berrimah Road. During the last 3 months, various people have made representations in relation to the traffic congestion. Officers of the department have a long-term plan for the major upgrading of that intersection and we envisage that it will be on the program during the next few years. That is a major upgrading exercise which will cater not only for the industrial area but also the traffic between Palmerston, the northern suburbs and the city.

The immediate solution is that, at a cost of approximately \$100 000, we will be introducing a left turn out of Berrimah Road to the Stuart Highway, heading towards the city. That will be a controlled left turn, giving much

greater access to traffic coming around that corner. Because of potential conflicts from other traffic directions, it is not possible to implement a turn left at any time arrangement. However, I am led to believe that the solution will alleviate a great deal of the congestion.

One of the honourable member's constituents, who has a shop adjacent to the intersection, has had considerable trouble with traffic backing up in front of his property. Much of that problem will be eliminated by this left turn. At the same time, there is a need for some work to be done on his car-parking area. An inspection by Darwin City Council and Transport and Works officers indicated that much of the work that had been done previously resulted in further problems. The proprietor of the shop is looking for some reversal of the parking situation - nose-in parking as opposed to nose-out parking - and there is a need to remove a section of footpath in front of his shop to provide sufficient space. There is a need for some 'Keep Clear' or 'No Standing' signs. All that is the responsibility of the city council. Officers of the Department of Transport and Works are more than happy to provide technical advice to the city council in regard to those matters. We will be monitoring the situation and the council's response over the next few weeks to ensure that the good news story of the Berrimah area does not result in disadvantage to the proprietor of the shop adjacent to the intersection, Mr Yuen.

Beatrice Hill Rehabilitation Project

Mr SMITH to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer the minister to my previous question and his response, which was a blatant cop-out. Will he at least provide a guarantee that nobody will be placed in the go-slow area at Beatrice Hill until the minister, who I am sure will be prepared to make a decision, returns to work?

ANSWER

I will not provide that guarantee to the Leader of the Opposition. I do not think it is my role to interfere in the administration of Beatrice Hill.

Mr Smith: What is the point in being a minister?

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, I will wait ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr POOLE: I will wait for advice from the department before I consider the subject and, if there is a decision to be made, I will make that decision.

Uluru - Returns to Aboriginal People

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

This question could equally be directed to the Minister for Tourism. In asking it, I trust that the member for MacDonnell will refrain from his compulsion to interject in a matter that deals with his own electorate.

Is the minister aware that the Central Land Council has commissioned a study by 2 economists from the University of Sydney into the financial returns

available to Aboriginal people at Uluru from the tourist boom of recent years? Is he further aware that, according to southern newspaper reports, the Northern Territory government is being apportioned blame for those returns not being at the level expected by Aboriginal people? Does the minister accept the premise that Uluru traditional owners have somehow been diddled out of their rightful returns through actions and policies of the Northern Territory government at Yulara?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer is no. I most certainly do not accept that view. It is outrageous that such a proposition can be put forward. As all honourable members and most Territorians will know, the Uluru traditional owners flatly rejected any association with the Territory government in connection with Uluru arrangements. Our position was, and still is, that the federal government rode roughshod in 1985 over Territory interests in dealing directly with Uluru traditional owners and vesting ownership of Uluru with the traditional owners. All Territory efforts to participate were rejected out of hand. The traditional owners decided to go exclusively with Commonwealth administration and to make all their arrangements with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Included in the total rejection package was an offer by the Territory to set up a Yulara entrance station in 1984 to act as an information centre for Yulara visitors and as a collection point for fees set by the traditional owners. They did not want to know about it and we were told, in firm terms, to keep our noses out of their business. That is exactly what we were told. Now it seems that the Central Land Council is complaining that the traditional owners are not getting their fair share from the visitors at Uluru and Yulara. It is claimed that many visitors are evading paying Aboriginal fees. The traditional owners, advised by the Central Land Council, made their own bed and now they must lie in it. We told them at the time that we could do it better than the ANPWS, but they chose not to accept our views.

I can say, however, that there were some members of the Mutitjulu community who wanted the Conservation Commission there. I happened to be Minister for Conservation for 14 days at the time, and they were very proud of the uniform which the Conservation Commission people were to wear. They were extremely proud of the eagle badge which was to be worn on their sleeves and it would appear today ...

Mr Bell: Oh, come on.

Mr COULTER: They were. That came from them. The honourable member opposite may like to go and ask them.

Mr Ede: You are still handing out candies.

Mr COULTER: They have been given the green shirts of the ANPWS and they want to swap them because they are being diddled. They were done in the eye. This is a laughing matter for members opposite. It is good to see the member for MacDonnell in hysterics about it. I will send the Mutitjulu people a copy of this question and answer so that they can ask him some questions about it. He might like to address them about the extent to which they have been done in the eye by the ANPWS and the federal government and how they are stuck with them because of the advice which the Central Land Council gave them, which was to stay away from the Territory government.

It is good to see that common sense has prevailed in the Katherine Gorge area and that the people there have come up with a good deal. Maybe, just maybe, we had to have the example of Uluru so that people could understand. That provides an example of the Commonwealth model operating in the Territory and how it compares with the way the Territory government works through the Conservation Commission. All is not lost in this fiasco. People can see how the Commonwealth has got at the Mutitjulu people at Uluru with its many promises. We told them what would happen. The Commonwealth promised us that \$70m would be spent on development in Kakadu and all we got was 3 barbecue plates. We told the Mutitjulu people: 'Don't trust this mob because they are not men of their word'. They replied that they had the opposite advice from the Central Land Council. We said: 'All right, do it your way'. The Central Land Council has now commissioned a study to find out how it has been shot in the neck. Its members are all surprised. They were told from the very outset that that is what would happen.

I wonder how much advice the Mutitjulu people received from the member for MacDonnell in terms of which way to go, in terms of the Northern Territory or the Commonwealth model. It would not be difficult to check the Hansard to see what contribution the member for MacDonnell made in terms of his advice to the Mutitjulu community. I will be doing that in due course and it may be the subject of a speech in an adjournment debate.

Mr Bell: I will have a chance to talk about it too.

Mr COULTER: It is outrageous that the Central Land Council seeks to blame the Territory's success with the Yulara resort, which is not even in the national park, for the less than satisfactory circumstances it is complaining about. The Territory has made a success out of Yulara in the face of continued opposition from the Central Land Council and without any cooperation whatsoever from it. If the traditional owners are dissatisfied, they must deal directly with the Commonwealth and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. We have no part in Uluru National Park arrangements, at the specific request of the traditional owners. If they want to ditch those arrangements and renegotiate terms with the Territory government, I can assure them of much more satisfactory terms and a better deal.

The member for MacDonnell might like to take that information back to his electorate and try again to get it right for the people whom he represents. That is our offer to them. To say that the Territory government has done anything to disadvantage the Mutitjulu people is a total falsehood which we reject outright. We offer the opportunity for those people to come back and speak to us again and to get it right this time. As we have proven in the case of the Jawoyn people, we can get it right.

Comics Distributed in Aboriginal Communities

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The minister is no doubt well aware of an article in Bushranger which alleges that some comics of a rather disturbing nature are being circulated in Aboriginal communities. Would the minister confirm whether such comics exist and, if they do, will he advise whether they have been printed or distributed by staff of schools under his control. If so, what action will he take against people who have been involved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Indeed, there is such a document circulating throughout the Aboriginal communities and it is a disgrace. I am sure that honourable members would also agree that it is a disgrace. I wish to take this opportunity to distance the government and, in particular, our school system from this publication. I am holding up a copy of the comic that is being distributed widely throughout Aboriginal schools. On the back, it says: 'Black Australia is one. Who are you to question our heritage when you yourselves are descendants of whores, convicts and others? There is no white Australia'. I will read out some of this nonsense:

IT'S ABORIGINAL! - WE HAVE SURVIVED

° So tell me who put this comic together?

Aboriginal people, of course!!

° True, you mean by themselves, not funded!

Yeh, I sure do, just goes to show, we can do anything!

° Looks great, who was involved?

Well, Kathy Kum-Sing took it on to get around a bit, you know how it is, here, there and everywhere. She talked to a few Kooris who then yarned to some others who in turn let some Murri mob know, you know, Vine stuff!

° Yeh, sure do! Listen, how about Aboriginal organisations - were they contacted?

Yeh, Kum-Sing said she talked to people from the AECG, ABC, Radio Redfern, Gullama, Murrawina (Redfern), Gujaga, Blackbooks, AMS, ALS, TUCAR, Dance Theatre, Tranby, some land councils, and I guess a few others.

° Well, I reckon it's just too Deadly and you mob should be proud of yourselves!

Gee, thanks bud, enjoy reading it, and let other blackfullas know too, it's free for us - \$2 for Gubbas!!

Mr Speaker, I understand that this load of nonsense is funded entirely through donations. Words such as 'koori' are foreign to us in the Northern Territory. It sounds like Michael Mansell and his crowd from the other states ...

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Do you support this sort of nonsense? I am surprised.

It says: 'This comic was funded entirely through donations and it proves that Kooris can do it the way they want, without the burden of losing control through funding. Streetwize Comics is owed lots and lots of special thanks for their total support throughout the whole project'. We are told that: 'Streetwize Youth Rights Comics is a Redfern Legal Centre Publishing Ltd project in conjunction with Marrickville Legal Centre and the Legal Aid

Commission of New South Wales'. It goes on: 'Eric Aarons and Spot Press are also owed a heap of thanks for their belief in Kooris and the project. Special thanks to all those contributors who also made this comic possible'.

A list of groups which assisted is attached and it makes very interesting reading. The groups include the Barkly Aboriginal Language Centre, the Australian Coalition of Disarmament and Peace, the Electrical Trades Union of Australia (WA Branch), the Feminist Bookshop, Midnight Oil, NSW Teachers Federation, People for Nuclear Disarmament (Balmain), Tennant Creek Peace Group, Jo Vallentine (Western Australian Senator for Nuclear Disarmament), the WA branch of ACOA, and so on. A range of other groups and individuals have also contributed to this disgraceful document.

In answer to the honourable member's question, it appears that the comic itself has had wide distribution and most Aboriginal schools have received copies. Can I say that there has been some violent reaction on the part of some teachers. For example, Finke received some 30 to 40 copies of this document and the head teacher immediately burned the lot. At Ti Tree, copies were confiscated by the principal and kept in his office. The department is still investigating the situation in other schools. It is about 3 or 4 weeks since the comic was circulated.

Mr Speaker, I can assure you that the general response from schools is that the teachers were very concerned and appalled by the contents of this comic. The normal 'Streetwise' comic holds little interest for Aboriginal students as it is directed at urban and city teenagers. The comic is a disgraceful publication and I am sure that all honourable members of this Assembly would be totally opposed to its contents. I emphasise, once again, that the government distances itself totally from such a document and all of those who are distributing such comics or information here in the Northern Territory. I wish they would keep their garbage to themselves and to the territories or states they come from and keep out of the Northern Territory, because we do not want any of that nonsense here. I can assure all honourable members that I will be making sure that that publication is not able to be used in the schools and does not go into the schools.

Members: Hear, hear!

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Given that the honourable minister has now had 5 weeks to examine files and documents, he will have recognised that Mr A of Station B, in my speech last Tuesday, was in fact Mr Warriner of Newcastle Waters Station.

Mr Perron: What a hero!

Mr Hatton: Gutless wonder.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Nightcliff will withdraw that remark.

Mr HATTON: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr EDE: I now ask the honourable minister if he can confirm that approval for the BTEC program on Newcastle Waters was rammed through in the face of solid opposition from all the BTEC staff and, as a result, a program that was estimated originally to cost \$42 000 over 2 years had run up costs of \$1.2m

by mid-1984, an overrun in excess of \$0.75m. Would the honourable minister advise why the program was pushed through in the face of such opposition?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have told the member for Stuart on a number of occasions that the matters which he is raising have been fully investigated. He has copies of both the first police report in which allegations were made and the second police report which fully investigated those allegations and found that there were no grounds for prosecution. I have knowledge of the matters that the member for Stuart raises and I cannot provide him with any further assistance in the muck-raking he is engaged in.

Year 10 Assessment Package

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is the minister aware of the motions passed at the COGSO meeting in Alice Springs last weekend on the subject of the Year 10 Assessment package and does the minister intend to reconsider his decision to introduce that package later this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the motion passed by COGSO at the recent conference and I make it clear, as honourable members are aware, that the decision to introduce the assessment package was taken following extensive consultation. The decision will remain. It is very disappointing to note that some people are putting a great deal of energy into an effort to reopen the debate on the Year 10 Assessment package. I listened with interest this morning to comments made on radio by the President of COGSO, Richard Creswick. I was disappointed that, firstly, he failed to acknowledge the very lengthy process of consultation on this issue since 1987 and, secondly, that he failed to acknowledge that the actual external testing component really only relates to 30% of the English and mathematics assessment. The main point that needs to be stressed is that the decision was reached in a correct manner. No one can deny that. I can recall the 1986 split into junior and senior high schools when the same thing applied. The government took the decision to introduce secondary colleges after lengthy consultations and, a few months later, everyone started to really kick and scratch.

It is also interesting to note that, in his comments this morning, the President of COGSO mentioned that the secretary of the department, Mr Geoff Spring, addressed the conference, together with Dr Harry Payne who is the Chairman of the Board of Studies. I make the comment here that officers of the department are responsible for implementing government policy. Their role is not to discuss the philosophy of whether an approach is appropriate or not. The government has made its decision in relation to policy and the department is implementing that policy. Officers of the department will continue to provide information in relation to the procedures and processes to be followed in relation to implementation. I again urge members to take the opportunity, if they have queries, to contact myself or the department to arrange a briefing.

Mr Speaker, the other point that the President of COGSO did not mention was that the President of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, Mike Bradley, also addressed the conference and, after giving me a considerable spray, promoted his campaign for a review of the decision to

introduce the external assessment package. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that that will not occur. It is also interesting to note that, during the course of this morning's interview, Mr Creswick mentioned that several motions were put forward relating to the Year 10 assessment package. There were 2 motions relating to that issue. The first ...

Mr Ede: There were 3.

Mr HARRIS: Well, I have 2 here. Perhaps, during the adjournment debate or at some other time, the honourable member can inform me of any others.

The council asked the Minister for Education to reverse the government's decision to introduce external examinations in mathematics and English for Year 10 students in 1989. Secondly - and I am totally disgusted by this, as were the parents at that particular meeting - a motion was moved that the council should advise parents of students in Year 10 to take steps to frustrate the attempts of the Department of Education to introduce external examinations in mathematics and English. COGSO was to provide specific advice on action for parents to take. Goodness me! Who was to inform them on how they would frustrate government? Mr Speaker, is it any wonder that I am most concerned about the operations of COGSO at present?

Mr Ede: Hang on. The motion was defeated.

Mr HARRIS: It was defeated and so it should have been. It should not have come up. I think the member for Stuart is missing the point and so is the Leader of the Opposition. If he wants to be seen as a leader of government at some stage, he should listen to what I am saying and take those points up.

It is interesting to note that the person who moved that particular motion is one of the people who is actively trying to stir up trouble at Sanderson. Fortunately, as the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart have mentioned, the parents at the meeting were concerned and said: 'Look, we are not in this business. This organisation is not for that sort of thing'. I totally support their views in that regard.

We are now talking about the process and procedures to be followed. The decision has been taken and I make that very clear. Because a load of nonsense is being spread around at the moment, I have written to all councils along these lines:

During recent weeks, there have been misleading comments regarding government policy on Year 10 assessment. You would be aware the decision to introduce the new Year 10 assessment package was made only after an extensive consultation process which began back in 1987. That decision to introduce a system of assessment recommended by the Northern Territory Board of Studies stands.

In order to clarify the process of implementation to be followed by the Department of Education, I have asked the Chairman of the Board of Studies, Dr Harry Payne, to arrange to meet your council to clarify any matters regarding the testing process. I emphasise that school programs will not be disrupted. No students will be disadvantaged. The existing moderation process will not be threatened and the school year will not be shortened.

This is a serious matter and I view it with great concern. The incorrect information being distributed by various groups and individuals could disrupt the work of students. During the next few weeks, I will be circulating an information paper to all parents to clarify this point. If, after receiving this pamphlet, you have any further questions, please contact the Department of Education or Dr Harry Payne on 89 6020.

Yours sincerely,
Tom Harris.

Mr Speaker, together with those letters, I will be enclosing a copy of the Year 10 external assessment regulation booklet. I will be giving the same package to all honourable members so that they will be able to get right across this issue. The external assessment regulation booklet gives all the details about assessors, confidentiality, conflict of interest, research, control of information, country participation by students out in the bush, grade determinations for recording on the JSSC, special provisions for impairment and misadventure and a range of other matters. They are all covered in the booklet, which has already been distributed to the principals of high schools, secondary colleges area schools and other management groups.

I will also be sending out the format of the external assessment papers in English and the format of external assessment papers in mathematics. In addition, I will also be circulating special provisions in Year 10 external assessment. All of that information is available and a great deal of work has been done by the department. I wish to thank all people who have been involved, particularly the members of the Board of Studies. It has been a very difficult exercise and it is not being made any easier by people who are carrying on with a load of nonsense about how the decision will disrupt the whole system.

Mr Speaker, I make it very clear that the decision was taken after extensive consultation. The government has made that decision. I also emphasise the point that the exams will be appropriate for all students and they will test only those items ...

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Just sit down and listen instead of spreading all this nonsense.

Students will be tested only on those items which they have in fact studied. I make that very clear. The reason for September being the scheduled time for the examinations is to allow sufficient time for the gathering of all the information so that it can be provided to students for their use at the end of the year. The way people are carrying on at the present time is a load of nonsense.

I know that there are people who are philosophically opposed to external examinations and assessment. I reiterate that we have had a great deal of support from parents, industry and others. I repeat that the examinations will not disadvantage anyone. In fact, I believe that they will advantage many people. The decision has been taken and I urge all honourable members who have queries to take up my offer to have a full briefing with the Chairman of the Board of Studies, Dr Harry Payne, and to stop all this nonsense. Otherwise, the only ones to be disadvantaged will be the students.

Duties of Public Service Commissioner

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Does the Public Service Commissioner have the responsibility of reporting to parliament his activities as described under section 14(2) of the Public Service Act? For the minister's benefit, section 14(2) of the Public Service Act refers to the Public Service Commissioner's responsibility for 'the efficient and effective management of non-human resources within the public service'.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer to that question must necessarily be very similar to the answer I gave to the same question at about this time last year. I suppose there is something that prompts the member for Nhulunbuy to ask this question at about this time every year. In fact, the responsibility for the management of both human and non-human resources is delegated to chief executive officers, as it has been for many years. Indeed, that is what occurs in most public services and most governments throughout this country.

Mr Leo: Well, you are in breach of your own legislation.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, there is no breach of the Public Service Act. I have been through this ad nauseam with the honourable member in the past. If he can come up with something which indicates that the Public Service Commissioner is not performing his designated task, I would be happy to talk to him about it at some time. I point out, however, that we have delegated authority in our public service. The responsibility for 'non-human resources', to use the phrase used by the member for Nhulunbuy, is in the hands of chief executive officers.

Trade Development Zone

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, all members will be aware of the recent advertising campaign conducted on behalf of the Trade Development Zone. Can he advise the House of the rationale behind that campaign and whether or not it was considered to be successful?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. He has indeed raised an interesting topic. Honourable members will be aware that, at the last sittings, the Trade Development Zone certainly was not the flavour of the moment. Censure motions were moved. The member for Barkly suggested that, in relation to the Trade Development Zone, and in particular its consultant K.K. Yeung, large amounts of money were being misappropriated. We had arguments about when an audit was not an audit and all sorts of other pedantic rubbish. The Leader of the Opposition has been a critic of the Trade Development Zone for a long period of time but, all of a sudden, there was dead silence from the benches opposite. People move out of the room at the very mention of the Trade Development Zone. He wants to distance himself from it at 100 miles an hour and he is probably just passing through Katherine at the moment.

The Leader of the Opposition has acted for some considerable time as if it was certain knowledge that the Trade Development Zone was a political liability for the government and a political asset for himself. As in many other matters, his political judgment is faulty. He may well have realised that himself by now. The Labor Party conducted a public opinion poll this year and it is likely that the Trade Development Zone issues were canvassed in that poll - they certainly should have been. The Leader of the Opposition's polls, of course, are a matter for him, just as our polls are a matter for us.

However, for the benefit of honourable members, I will table the results of a survey of 400 people in the Darwin area conducted by the national advertising company, Mattingly Woollard Cawrse.

Mr Leo: Who paid for it, Barry?

Mr COULTER: This survey was conducted on 5 April and 6 April.

I thank the member for Nhulunbuy for his interest. I know that he is leaving us; he could not get preselection for his seat. I know that he is very pedantic about costs. Soon he will be off to Queensland and we thank him for his presence. The fact is that the truth costs and you have to go out and find it. The real answers are in the truth. If he is prepared to sit there and listen ...

Mr Leo: Table it.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, it was part of the advertising campaign that was recently conducted. It was the follow-up to determine the success or otherwise of that campaign. That would be normal with any advertising campaign to see if it was effective or whether we had wasted our money.

Mr Leo: Publicly funded.

Mr COULTER: Publicly funded, Mr Speaker. I intend to table the document so that the member opposite can read it thoroughly. He might like to pass it to the Leader of the Opposition who has just returned and who will see in it another reason why Brian might get up in 2 months' time. The member for Nhulunbuy might add a postscript: 'P.S. I will not be voting'.

The survey was conducted on 5 and 6 April purely to test the reaction to the Trade Development Zone advertising campaign. It contains some very interesting data. 'Question 1: Did you see the Trade Development Zone commercial on television?' The answer is that 73% of the people had seen it. 'Question 2: Did you hear the TDZ commercial on the radio?' 61% of the people said they had. 'Question 3: Do you think you should be told about the Trade Development Zone?' Remember that the Leader of the Opposition requested that we remove the commercial because it was politicising the Trade Development Zone. The member for Barkly said that it was disgraceful and he used phrases like 'down the gurgler'. It will be no surprise to this side of the House that the people whom he represents did not agree with him.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Despite the fact that some members present might not want to hear the reply of the minister, I am certain that people in the public gallery and those residents of Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Darwin and Katherine who listen to the radio broadcast and contact my office would like to hear this minister's response and, indeed, the response of all ministers to questions. I ask all members to listen in silence.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, 82% of these 400 people said that they should be told about the Trade Development Zone. They wanted to know more about the Trade Development Zone. 10% said no and 8% said they did not have an opinion on the matter. 'Question 4: What did the commercial say to you - the TDZ is good for Darwin, the TDZ is not good for Darwin, or it does not matter?' The answer was that it was good for Darwin. 78% of them said that it was good for Darwin.

Mr Speaker, I draw the close attention of the Leader of the Opposition to this question. 'Question 5: Do you think that the Trade Development Zone has had a fair go?' 35% of the people said yes and 65% said that it had not had a fair go.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, he can make as many interjections as he likes because I have always said that the success of the Trade Development Zone would be another nail in his coffin. Unfortunately, it appears that those nails are going in at an alarming rate.

I repeat that 65% of the people interviewed did not believe the Trade Development Zone had received a fair go. 'Question 6: Would you like to know more about the Trade Development Zone?' 61% of the people said yes and 28% said that they would not. 'Question 7: What were the commercials about?' 48% said jobs and 18% said that they were about money spent in Darwin. The people agree that the TDZ is about jobs, which is what we have always said.

The man who was much maligned by the Leader of the Opposition was none other than Ray McHenry. He has suffered from personal attacks and being named in this House by the Leader of the Opposition. Just as our judge, the member for Stuart, today named Mr Warriner as a villain in our neighbourhood, Mr McHenry has been named by the Leader of the Opposition. 18% of the people said that the commercial was about Ray McHenry. I am grateful that Ray McHenry is the man that he is. I returned recently from a trip to Asia with Mr McHenry. Many Asian people think the Trade Development Zone and the Northern Territory is about Ray McHenry. I am proud to travel with that man as he goes about his job of providing jobs for the Northern Territory. It is interesting to note that our unemployment rate of 4.9% is the lowest in Australia. We will have problems next year. We will embark on a campaign to lift our population by 5% in order to overcome such problems as an inability to find a large enough work force for the zone. It is a problem that we relish and we will solve it by recruiting people to the Northern Territory. However, we need an industrial base to enable us to do that. We cannot go on building houses for the sake of building houses. We need a viable industrial base and the Trade Development Zone is the key to that.

Our survey, of course, does not have the status of a Morgan Gallup Poll. I stress, however, that it was conducted by a private company and not by the government. The government had no prior knowledge that it would be conducted. It certainly indicates general trends and it indicates that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Barkly have been barking up the wrong tree. I think that tree has been subjected to a number of other indignities by the member for Barkly.

The Trade Development Zone is not wet in spite of what the member for Barkly has tried to do to it. It will be a success story that he will regret forever and a day. It is no wonder that the Leader of the Opposition is being questioned and judged by his colleagues. He got it wrong. I have been

telling him and his colleagues for 18 months that their campaign against the TDZ has been misplaced. The opposition has only 2 courses open to it in this matter: either it comes onside with the government and helps to promote the zone, its obvious benefits to the Territory and its rapidly increasing work force or it continues to snipe from the sidelines and suffers the inevitable electoral backlash. Better still, the opposition could just shut up about it and leave the Trade Development Zone to the experts.

Strip Shows on Licensed Premises

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TOURISM

I ask the minister about the hoteliers' self-imposed code of ethics in relation to strip shows in hotels. How is the code working? Have there been any infringements and, if so, what is the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission doing about them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, with regard to the rules and regulations regarding strip shows, the government has taken strong action through the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. In response to media comment and comments made in this House during the last sittings, the commission took the decision on 13 February 1989 to submit to me a set of guidelines which were to be incorporated as part of the licensee's licence conditions.

The guidelines were prepared in 2 parts. Signage is to be displayed and the format of media advertising is to be agreed on. That is to say, where an establishment advertises a strip show, there must be a warning that the show might offend. There is a set of conditions under which shows are to be conducted. They are much the same as the conditions talked about previously in this House and they include specific references to the standards which are to be adhered to by establishments. For example, the shows must not be held in public bars. They have to be in areas that are closed off. There must be signage displayed on all doors that lead into the area warning people that the show might offend them. People then have the choice of entering or not. There is to be no audience participation. The entertainers are not allowed to touch members of the audience in any way. Various other matters are included in the conditions, as I believe the honourable member is aware.

At the end of the day, these terms and conditions mean that, if the commission receives complaints from the general public and those complaints are substantiated, the licensee will forfeit his licence. Certainly, the commission intends to enforce those conditions most rigidly. At the moment, no complaints have come through to me about the breaking of these rules and regulations by any establishment. We are determined to ensure that performances of this sort are conducted in a regulated manner. We will ensure that the industry plays its part by keeping in line with what could be called current moral standards.

Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer to Order of the Day No 1 on the Notice Paper, the Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill. I ask the honourable minister to advise the House on how he intends to proceed with the amendments to the bill.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I seek your direction in respect of questions about a bill that is before the House today.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Speaker, I will rephrase the question. Is the honourable minister able to tell me how he intends to proceed with the amendments to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill, Serial 146?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, on Friday, I gave written advice to members opposite on how the government intended to proceed with the amendments to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill. In short, I intended to consolidate a number of proposed amendments into a freshly drafted bill. I then intended to move the suspension of standing orders to withdraw the present bill and replace it with the amended version. My intention in taking this course of action was to clarify the government's objectives in relation to amendments to the legislation and to allow a thorough and effective debate. Unfortunately, my proposal to deal with the bill in this manner has become, in itself, an issue of debate. In fact, the member for MacDonnell even wrote to me, asking me not to proceed with the course of moving the suspension of standing orders. I believe that this will only serve to cloud the more important issues relating to the bill which are to be considered by this parliament. Accordingly, I would like to advise honourable members that it is my intention to proceed with the bill presently before the House and, as a result of consultation with a range of Aboriginal communities and organisations since last October, I will be introducing a number of amendments during the committee stage of the bill later this week.

Mr Bell: You are joking!

Mr MANZIE: I intend to circulate the amendments to honourable members ...

Mr Bell: That was a wasted weekend on my part, wasn't it? Good grief!

Mr MANZIE: ... along with a copy of the consolidated bill. I expect the second reading to take place today.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper. I also table the document I referred to earlier in responding to the question from the member for Karama regarding the Trade Development Zone.

Legislation on Containers

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Will the government again consider the possibility of introducing deposit legislation on containers, along the lines of that in South Australia, as a means of keeping the Territory tidy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question should probably be directed to the Minister for Health and Community Services. I can say, however, that my understanding is that, as a matter of government policy, there are no proposals before us or being drawn up to introduce legislation along the lines suggested by the honourable member.

Effect of Rains on Territory Roads

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is the minister able to advise the House concerning the extent of damage caused to Territory roads by the recent rains?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some early reports on damage to roads in central Australia indicated that our total repair bill might be \$3m or \$5m. The latest information from the department puts the total damage bill in the last 6 months in central Australia and in the Top End, where we have had an extensive wet season, at \$10.4m. That is a horrendous amount of money to find out of a limited road budget. Naturally enough, the Northern Territory government will be aiming to obtain the maximum possible return from the Commonwealth State Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements.

The damage has been so extensive that, in central Australia, we have utilised every available contractor and item of hire plant to start work on the repairs. It is anticipated that we will be able to complete only approximately half of those repairs this financial year. That means there will be some \$4m of repairs to be completed next financial year and, as a result, the return to the Northern Territory government from the federal scheme is likely to be less than half of the amount required. The necessity of finding an additional \$5m out of an extremely tight budget heightens our concern about road infrastructure and funding of road infrastructure from the federal government out of its 22.5¢ per litre fuel levy. The presumption on which most of the funding has occurred is that our existing road network is already in a satisfactory and adequate state. That is quite clearly not the case.

As the member for MacDonnell pointed out last night, in his electorate and other electorates people are still waiting for their roads to be brought up to a reasonable standard that would minimise outages as a result of flooding. The honourable member referred to the situation at Kulgera where tourists, freight forwarders and coaches were stranded for some considerable time. Local people in that area report that they have not seen a flood in Karinga Creek for 57 years.

Mr Bell: 25 years.

Mr FINCH: The honourable member says 25 years. I think he is probably not discriminating between relative sizes of floods.

The honourable member made great play about the technical feasibility of building a bridge over that creek. He said that a railway bridge had been constructed across that creek. He uses the term 'creek' fairly loosely. Obviously, in that area, the defining of creek beds and flows of rainfall is very difficult. The railway bridge was not constructed over what turned out to be the principal flow of the creek. In fact, it was some 100 m or 200 m off line. It is all very well for the honourable member to try to simplify these technically complex matters.

The department is looking at appropriate levels of flood protection on our main arterial roads and on some secondary roads. It is all a matter of balancing priorities. From memory, the total vote for works in the Top End and the Centre is \$10.4m, with \$8.6m for works in the Centre. That is a horrendous amount of money out of a capital works program which is normally in the order of \$40m.

Mr Speaker, I pay a great deal of credit to staff of the Department of Transport and Works who were on the job right from the start, moving equipment down by rail from Alice Springs. I understand that some of the fellows went for 48 hours or more without sleep trying to get the roads reopened. Thoughtless behaviour by some transport operators, who have driven on closed roads, has led to an aggravation of the damage. The honourable member made great play about roads being declared closed when they should have been open. It is a very vexed question. What may appear to be a perfectly trafficable road in a technical sense may not be so in a practical sense because of the saturation of the sub-grade. On the Yulara road and the Stuart Highway, a great deal of damage is done by coaches and trucks proceeding beyond 'road closed' signs. We are now examining the option of cost recovery in instances in which people deliberately and maliciously damage public assets. It is a matter of great seriousness.

I can assure honourable members that the matter of flood damage in central Australia is still very prominent. I commend the efforts not only of the Department of Transport and Works but the Minister for Tourism who, in his capacity as minister assisting the Chief Minister on central Australian affairs, moved quickly to ensure that tourists were assisted in evacuation either by rail or, in the case of some people at Yulara, by air, and ensured that people were inconvenienced to the minimum extent possible.

Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill

Mr LANHUPUY to CHIEF MINISTER

Given that the Chief Minister knows that Aborigines from all over the Northern Territory are now moving towards this Legislative Assembly, and given that they will demand of the Chief Minister full consultation on matters now before this House, what arrangements has he made to consult with them when they arrive and, if the Chief Minister has not made those arrangements, will he give this House full assurance that he will consult with them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of rumours and press reports that a large number of Aborigines have been encouraged to come to Darwin at this very time in order to participate in some sort of rally today. The sad part about it all, of

course, is that they appear to have been persuaded to come here by a couple of lies. That is most unfortunate because, if ever there was an area in which we wanted people to understand the situation clearly, it would be in communications between ourselves and Aborigines. It is a shame that various parties involved in this matter are trying to whip up emotional feeling on a false basis. I am sure that much more will be said about that during the next few days, both in the media and in this House.

I think that it is unfortunate that this action is being taken, although that is not because I believe that we will doubtless see something of a circus in the street as demonstrations proceed. I accept that as part of the democratic process in a free country where people can use many peaceful means to lobby to get their point across. The unfortunate aspect of this matter is that people who are participating in the protest have not been given the facts about the government's proposals in relation to the protection of sacred sites. They are coming here on the basis of a bunch of lies which have been peddled to them, and I am sure that they will be given that message during their stay here.

It is a fact that the protection of Aboriginal law and tradition depends significantly on European law. The present law governing these matters in the Northern Territory is the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act and, as honourable members are aware, what we are proposing will significantly improve that act. That view has not been put to Aborigines ...

Mr Lanhupuy: Are you going to tell them that when they come?

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, if the opportunity arises, I will address the group.

Mr Smith: Why don't you make an opportunity?

Mr PERRON: I will tell people the facts as I see them.

Freight Costs in the Northern Territory

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to continuing comment and debate about the relatively high cost of living in the Northern Territory and the contribution of freight costs and taxes to that cost. Can the minister outline the extent to which taxes and government charges contribute to freight costs in the Northern Territory and advise the House of what the Northern Territory government is doing to address this matter and achieve some alleviation of the cost disadvantages suffered by Northern Territory consumers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently the Department of Transport and Works and a consultant prepared a submission to the Commission on Interstate Registration Charges. The report and review carried out by the department and its consultant covered a wider range of matters than simply registration charges. We felt that there were many components of the freight costing system which needed to be highlighted and, in fact, the report identified some extremely alarming statistics. For example, federal charges and taxes of one sort or another comprise 25% of the cost of operating a road train. When one appreciates that the federal government taxes those taxes, by applying a sales tax to goods on the supermarket shelves which have already been subject to the tax on road freight, one appreciates that the costs are even more horrendous.

More than a third of the total cost of transporting freight from interstate is made up of federal or Territory taxes and charges. I mention Territory charges deliberately because, when Northern Territory taxing and charging systems are measured against those of the federal government, there is a great disparity. Some of those charges are very well hidden by the federal government. They take the form of import levies and other charges on components and vehicles, not simply the registration system.

It is a well-known fact that Territory registration charges for motor vehicles are much lower than those which apply interstate or under the federal system. From memory, by comparison, a truck bringing goods up the Stuart Highway would suffer a federal or interstate registration fee of \$3500 to \$4500 compared with Territory registration fees of \$500 or \$600. That is the result of a deliberate policy adopted by this government, which is interested in seeing development of the north and wants charges on residents and developers to be reasonable. We need to be looking more closely at what the federal government system is.

The average cost per tonne of freight transported by road train from Brisbane to Darwin is something like \$305 all up. Of that \$305, \$113 is made up of federal and Territory charges. Some 92% of that \$113 comprises federal government charges and taxes. The other 8% represents Territory registration fees and the Territory fuel levy. I mention that deliberately, because when we look at the return to road funding from the horrendous amount charged by the federal government, we see that only 6% of the total charges associated with transport and freight goes back into the road system. On the other hand, Territory spending on the road system is 3½ times what it collects through transport and freight charges. The 2 contributions are worlds apart. Given such a disparity, I question the truthfulness of the federal government's claims that it is interested in the development of remote areas, the development of Australia's natural resources, and the welfare of people in remote areas, Aboriginal communities and communities up and down the Track. This report reveals a great deal and we will be participating in a national campaign to address this irresponsible attitude of the federal government.

State Square Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The government has consistently stated the State Square project would be developed through a fixed price arrangement. In fact, in answer to a similar question on 23 November 1988, the minister advised that a fixed price would be arrived at within 2 to 3 months. In other words, a fixed price should have been arrived at in February or early March. Has the government arrived at a fixed price? If so, what is it? If not, why not, and when will we see a fixed price?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I outlined to the House in November last, the methodology used to arrive at a fixed price was that the project manager's fee was based on a percentage of all of the subcontract packages. The same applied in the case of the on-site construction manager.

Mr Smith: So it was not a fixed price.

Mr FINCH: If the honourable member would like to wait, as he is unaccustomed to doing, I will clearly explain how the fixed price is arrived at.

Mr Speaker, my recollection is that the project manager's fee is 3.75% and the construction manager's fee is 3.3% of the value of the packages. Those packages are mainly being put out to local contractors. Only where materials or equipment are not available locally will packages even be offered to people outside the Territory. To date, of course, we have seen every package go to a Territory-based company. Tenders on those subcontract packages are assessed by a project control group in terms of their localisation and the validity of dollar amounts, to ensure that they are within the budget. To date, there have been difficulties with some of the packages, particularly in the case of precast concrete. The explanations for the difficulties are very plausible.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr FINCH: If the Leader of the Opposition would like to open his ears instead of his mouth, I will explain.

The government's advisers proposed that the structure should consist of a combination of in situ concrete, steel and precast concrete, not necessarily because that was the most economic and appropriate approach but because it provided the best balance to suit local contractors. This project, as I keep emphasising, is all about local jobs.

The first stage of the building has now been totally priced, that comprising the basement up to the ground floor level. Approximately half of the prices for the balance of the building have been received. The remaining few have been delayed because of complexities and are expected within a very short period. When all of those subcontract prices are received, they will be measured against the budget. To date, they are coming in marginally under budget, which is very encouraging. When all of those subcontract prices are added up and the percentages of the project manager and the construction manager are added, that will represent the fixed price.

Mr Smith: Oh. A fixed price that ...

Mr FINCH: If the Leader of the Opposition would like to open his ears, he would recognise that there is no other way of ensuring the maximisation of local content, local labour and local supplies. Under a fixed price system based on a set of drawings done 6 months ago, there is no way of achieving that ...

Mr Smith: That is not what you were telling us then.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, this system has not been changed since day 1. In his announcement of the fixed price system, the Chief Minister indicated the same thing. When we add up the final prices on each of those packages, that becomes the fixed price of the contract. There is no further room for the project manager - who, as I have emphasised, is only on 3.7% - to take any more from the construction packages. He will not get 1¢ more.

Mr Speaker, you cannot have it both ways in the contract world. I dare say that the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues do not understand the real world of construction and contract. In this case, the government has adopted a most appropriate strategy which, as I have said, is working extremely well. I was horrified to hear the member for Barkly suggest the other day that we should stop work right now, leave the hole in the ground and turn our backs on those hundreds of Territorians who are working on site or working in supplies offices and concrete plants, those hundreds of Territorians who are beginning to believe that they might be able to survive

this slump because they are able to see a future for themselves and their kids. They believe that they are now able to retain their homes and continue to live in the Northern Territory. Shame on the member for Barkly.

Mr Tuxworth: Do not blame me.

Mr FINCH: He would walk over the bodies of those contractors, those good, honest, hard-working Territorians. I can tell you that he has not won a single friend in the Winnellie area.

Mr Tuxworth interjecting.

Mr FINCH: His only friend will be Jamie Robertson, the President of the Trades and Labor Council. I am wondering where Jamie Robertson will end up in this whole mess, holding hands with the member for Barkly. What a double!

Mr Tuxworth: You lot voted with the Labor Party last night.

Mr FINCH: I am wondering how Jamie Robertson will get on when some of the unions which represent the workers on site take up their petition.

Mr Tuxworth: Tell everybody what the cost of the project is. Tell them what the debt is. Let me see the plans. When are we going to call a tender?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have been fairly tolerant with the member for Barkly. Due courtesy demands that the minister's final remarks be heard in silence.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it is amazing to see that, after Jamie Robertson's visit to Moscow, there is a regeneration in his communism and he has taken up a partner in crime in the form of member for Barkly.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will withdraw that reference.

Mr FINCH: My humble apology. I withdraw, Mr Speaker. Since Jamie Robertson came back with his enthusiasm for communism rejuvenated, he has taken up a strange partnership with the member for Barkly. There is no doubt in my mind that both of them will get their comeuppance in regard to State Square because the workers involved are now beginning to be able to feed their families and pay their bills. They are not interested in this nonsensical stop-go, 'walk over the bodies of workers' approach. Let me say that the nonsense put out by the member for Barkly will be put to rest.

Mr Tuxworth: Well, tell us how much. What is the price? That is pretty simple.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Barkly did not listen. I do not intend to repeat myself. In regard to his claims about drawings, of course the drawings have been done ...

Mr Tuxworth: Made up as we go along. That's right.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Barkly consistently displays the vacuum between his ears. If he would sit back and open those ears - and that should not be too difficult - he might learn something. If he does not want to listen now, I suggest that he be given this small information brochure on State Square which is currently being distributed. In fact, he may be able, at his leisure, to read the truth about State Square and dispel many of the

nonsensical myths that have been put about by himself and his colleagues on the opposition bench. I call it coalition in opposition. That is what it is all about. He may be able to advise his constituents of the real value and the real intention of State Square.

There are now procedures in relation to the second stage of the project. The fast track development process which has been used for the first stage, the Supreme Court, will not be used. For the second stage, drawings will be totally completed in Darwin. With the exception of approximately 3 people, these drawings will be produced by Territory draftsmen, architects and engineers. People are coming from all over the Territory to work on this project. Even an Alice Springs contractor is among them. The normal process will be used and timing will be far more flexible. I am sure that all Territorians, particularly workers in the construction and consulting industries, will reap the benefits. They will be absolutely delighted that this government is ignoring the nonsensical call of the member for Barkly and ...

Mr Tuxworth: Yes, it is going to spend money even though we do not have much. Well done! Just spend away.

Mr FINCH: ...his colleague returned from Moscow.

Beatrice Hill Rehabilitation Project

Mr FIRMIN to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In question time yesterday, the minister indicated that he had requested a report on conditions at the Beatrice Hill Rehabilitation Project as well as complaints mentioned in Monday night's 7.30 Report on ABC television, which centred on so-called inhumane treatment meted out to a prisoner. I understand that the minister has now received the report and I ask him whether the allegations can be sustained. I also ask him to comment on conditions at Beatrice Hill.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have received an interim report from Correctional Services on this matter. The complaints and allegations were investigated by a senior officer, a superintendent with more than 20 years experience in correctional institutions throughout Australia. Monday night's 7.30 Report on ABC television broadcast a series of allegations made by an ex-prisoner now calling himself 'Mr Patt'. Mr Speaker, that is not his name. The man claimed that he had been refused medical treatment, that he had suffered inhumane conditions, and that he had been held in a dog box awash with raw sewage for 36 hours before being sent to hospital for an operation on his kidneys.

The interim report shows that prison staff have been able to confirm that this person was an inmate in the Territory system during 1988 and 1989. He was released earlier this month. The report contains important information which I am sure the ABC was not aware of. I would like to run through this. On reflection, I am sure that the ABC would have treated the original allegations made by this former prisoner differently if it had been aware of all the relevant facts. Certainly, the Leader of the Opposition might have allowed his appropriate shadow minister to take the public running on it if he had known a little more about the matter.

The 2 cells at the Beatrice Hill Rehabilitation Project, referred to as the 'go slow' in the ABC TV report, are known as the segregation unit. They are the only single-cell accommodation at Beatrice Hill.

Mr Smith: Single-cell accommodation?

Mr POOLE: Keep going because you will talk yourself in deeper.

They are used in a range of circumstances in which a prisoner needs to be held separately from other inmates. That covers occasions when individuals might require protection - and, in many instances, prisoners have asked to be placed in single-cell accommodation - as well as instances when a person requires close supervision and care, or when an individual is held in isolation as a disciplinary measure. The cells are of cement concrete block construction. They have a thick, reinforced concrete ceiling covered by galvanised iron and a concrete floor. In the light of allegations that prisoners had virtually to crawl into these cells, their dimensions are interesting. The interior height is well over 2.1 m, more than 7 ft. The width is 2.5 m or 4 ft 6 in. The depth is 3.6 m which is 11 ft and each cell actually contains a 6-ft bed. Inmates are not forced to sleep as suggested by the report. Prisoners are supplied with adequate supplies of mosquito coils, to deter mosquitoes. In the past, flywire screens proved vulnerable to constant damage and misuse. Allegations such as those made on the 7.30 Report have not been made before. The following detail outlines the true circumstances behind the incident used as the basis for the ex-prisoner's complaint.

On 1 February this year, the prisoner referred to was placed in 1 of the segregation unit cells after he had complained of stomach pains and asked to see a doctor. He was in no obvious pain nor was his condition regarded as serious or an emergency. A prison officer, skilled in first aid and emergency medical care, was assigned to supervise him. The prisoner in the unit was checked every half hour overnight, and this is normal procedure with medical complaints. The following day, he was taken to the Royal Darwin Hospital where he was examined. He remained in the hospital, under observation, overnight. Doctors determined that he did not require any medical treatment and, on 6 February, he was returned to Beatrice Hill where he recommenced work.

This prisoner who, I repeat, provided a false name to the ABC's film crew, also failed to provide his full prison medical history. The official record presents a very different perspective on the care and treatment this prisoner was able to take advantage of while he was in custody. The prisoner first arrived at Beatrice Hill in early December 1988. On 16 December, he complained about a sore, possibly arthritic toe, on his right foot. He claimed the pain prevented him taking part in normal work duties at the prison farm. He was taken to the Royal Darwin Hospital where the allegedly injured foot was x-rayed. No injury was detected and no treatment was required.

On 29 December, he complained of pains in the stomach and kidney which also prevented him from undertaking normal work duties. He claimed to have a history of renal colic before arriving in the Northern Territory and suggested that the pain was associated with kidney stones. Again, he was transported to the Royal Darwin Hospital for an x-ray examination. Again, doctors could find no ailment requiring treatment. Doctors recommended that he come back in 6 months for another checkup of his possible renal condition and he was returned to Beatrice Hill. On 11 January, he again reported that he was unfit for work because of a corn on his right little toe. A nursing sister at Beatrice Hill examined and treated this debilitating injury.

On 19 January, the prisoner complained once more of intermittent pains in his stomach which prevented his attending to his work duties. Arrangements were made for another visit to Royal Darwin Hospital on 24 January but the hospital deferred this examination report for a short time because of overcrowding. On 1 February, the prisoner again complained of stomach pains sufficient to stop him carrying out his work duties. An escort could not be arranged until the following day, and he was held overnight in the segregation unit where officers could keep a regular half-hourly check on his health and well-being without disturbing other prisoners in the dormitory accommodation. He was admitted to the Royal Darwin Hospital on the following day and underwent a standard examination for kidney stones. No kidney stones could be detected and he required no further medical treatment. He rejoined his work-mates at Beatrice Hill 3 days later.

On 22 February, he discovered some pain in one eye which he claimed was severe enough to prevent him working. The visiting medical officer recommended that he be taken to hospital for specialist examination. An examination at Royal Darwin Hospital could detect no physical cause for the alleged eye pain. The specialist found that the prisoner suffered some small measure of short-sightedness but deemed that this affliction was not sufficiently serious to prevent his return to work.

Despite the claims which he made on the ABC 7.30 Report, the prisoner did not require or undergo any medical treatment for kidney problems whilst in the care of Northern Territory Correctional Services. However, as this short medical history of an individual indicates, all prisoners receive a very high level of medical and health care from prison officers during their time in custody in the Northern Territory. The factual situation contrasts sharply with claims of inhumane treatment made by the ex-prisoner and backed up so readily by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Smith: I would have thought that the go-slow unit was pretty inhumane.

Mr POOLE: The man regularly claimed to have indeterminate pains during his incarceration which prevented his participation in the Beatrice Hill rehabilitative work program for at least 4 days of every fortnight during his stay at the prison farm. Apparently, he chose not to tell the ABC current affairs team how this pain defied the best efforts of nurses, doctors and specialists to determine any physical cause, except when it manifested itself in a corn on the little toe of his right foot.

If the ABC's current affairs team had been aware of the efforts concentrated on easing this fellow's alleged suffering, borne out by his medical records, I am sure that its approach would have been different. The dimensions of the cells in the segregation unit compare more than favourably with single-cell accommodation in prisons anywhere else in Australia. Quite possibly, the ABC's current affairs team was not aware of that.

Mr Smith: What about the temperature, the humidity and the mosquitoes?

Mr POOLE: Mr Speaker, on behalf of the minister, I extend an invitation to either the ABC or the Leader of the Opposition, who have demonstrated such inspired concern for the welfare of Northern Territory prisoners this week, to seek a briefing from the minister's office to ensure that they have their facts right.

As far as the cleanliness of any prison cell in the Northern Territory is concerned, inmates under prison officer supervision are required to clean all

accommodation on a daily basis. In situations in which portable toilets are used, they are emptied and cleaned on a daily basis. Where a prisoner is too ill to perform this work, it is done by other prisoners.

The report indicated that the claims made by this prisoner about water and raw sewage on the floor of the cell were untrue. It also indicated that his claims about 14 prisoners held in the segregation unit were false. Unfortunately, the ABC current affairs team failed to verify with the department the truth of any of the claims made by this former prisoner before broadcasting the story. Nor did the team apparently determine that their main source of information was a man who had come into the care of the Northern Territory custodial system after having been convicted on a range of 39 counts of false pretences and making false statements. It is likely that the ABC did not uncover this information during its research on the program.

On the basis of the facts that have been presented here today, I can advise honourable members that the segregation unit at Beatrice Hill will remain in operation for the time being.

Mr Smith: For how long?

Mr POOLE: I am very confident that the Northern Territory's prison officers, despite the lack of trust displayed in them by the Leader of the Opposition ...

Mr Smith: Are you going to put in place proper solitary confinement accommodation?

Mr POOLE: ... and in spite of poorly researched TV programs, will continue to perform in a very professional manner what is probably one of the hardest jobs in our community. Those people work under very trying conditions and have been doing so for many years. I commend the efforts of the prison wardens in the Northern Territory who are doing a very good job, sometimes with the dregs of our society.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Mr Speaker, the honourable minister would be aware that Mr Warriner of Newcastle Waters attempted to settle his BTEC over-claim by offering \$25 000 after the initial corruption allegations were made. Will the honourable minister confirm that an additional \$26 000 to cover outstanding over-claims had to be sequestered from other amounts owed to Newcastle Waters? Was this amount secured in the face of threats of legal action by Mr Warriner against BTEC and its staff? If so, why were Mr Warriner's actions described as voluntary and why was that false description used in order to justify dropping all charges?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his very dramatic presentation of the question. Once again, his inference is that the BTEC program has been a dismal failure. We have heard it all before from the member for Stuart. During the last couple of years, the member for Stuart and other members opposite have oscillated all over the place in relation to the BTEC program. They have supported it at one moment and totally opposed it the next. There is no better example of that than some of the comments made by

the member for Stuart. Page 1566 of the Hansard of Wednesday 30 November 1988 records him as saying that the 1992 deadline for BTEC should come to an end.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister obviously has no intention of answering the question. He is referring to a debate in this House which occurred quite some time ago. I asked the minister very specific questions regarding the contents of reports which are in his hands. He is referring to debates in this House which took place quite some time ago and which have no bearing whatsoever on the subject of the question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr REED: It is curious to look at that statement by the member for Stuart - stop the BTEC program - in the context of the ALP policy on primary industry at that time. The policy was to 'actively promote and inject further funds to assist BTEC'. I refer to that because it illustrates how the opposition oscillates, not only on this issue but on a range of other issues, and fails to concentrate on the real issues. The program has been a success. We are aware of the fact that it has had its problems. Again today, we heard the member for Stuart raising a series of allegations made by a person and which were investigated subsequently by the police and by officers of the Commonwealth government.

The outcome of those investigations was that there was no action that could be taken in relation to the matters referred to by the member for Stuart. Following those investigations, mechanisms and procedures were put in place so that the campaign was run to the satisfaction of both the Northern Territory government and the Commonwealth government. That is what has happened since those reports were brought down. The answers to the honourable member's question lie in the second police report of which he has a copy.

Mr Ede: They do not.

Penalties for Juvenile Offenders

Mr SETTER to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In cases where juveniles are charged and convicted with offences such as break and enter, stealing, vandalism, assault and car stealing, can he advise the range of penalties commonly applied by the courts and do these include community service orders?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. In cases where juveniles are charged and convicted of such offences as breaking and entering, stealing, vandalism, assault and car theft, there is a range of penalties commonly applied by the courts. These include, firstly, no further trouble orders, which adjourn the matter for a period not exceeding 6 months. If, during that period, the juvenile does not commit a further offence, he or she is discharged without penalty. Secondly, the juvenile can be discharged without penalty. Thirdly, a community service order can be imposed, with conditions relating to the place of residence, associates, supervision and participation in a project or program or any other conditions the court thinks fit. There is also detention and imprisonment. Juveniles attaining the age of 15 years can be sentenced to terms of imprisonment. They can also suffer a suspended sentence of detention or imprisonment. Normally, juveniles are not sentenced to imprisonment. Currently, there is one only juvenile on remand at

Berrimah Prison. There are, however, 43 juveniles currently detained in detention centres in the Northern Territory.

Further to that, I had the pleasure of having a look around Giles House some 12 days ago, as did the member for MacDonnell. An interesting change in patterns is occurring. More and more interstate juveniles - I guess you could call them street children - are currently coming to the attention of the courts of the Northern Territory. In talking to some of the people who work in detention centres and a couple of the juveniles, I was disturbed to learn of the lack of support these young people get from the community, particularly from their own family groups. I was told that, during a 15-month period, there were less than 15 visits to inmates of Giles House. Between Christmas and the day of my visit, only 8 visits had been made to the 20 or so juveniles detained there. That is a shocking indictment of our society and it is a problem that we must look at.

The community service order is very commonly used as a sentencing alternative in the juvenile courts in the Northern Territory. Of course, probation is also commonly applied by the courts to juvenile offenders.

Territory Wildlife Park

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is the honourable minister able to tell me when the Territory Wildlife Park will be opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is probably an appropriate time for me to answer a question such as this because it enables me again to sing the praises of what is occurring with the Territory Wildlife Park. It will be a magnificent facility. I thank the honourable member for her question. I am sure that she keeps in close contact, not only with the people who are working to develop the park, but with the progress of the development itself. It will certainly be an absolutely magnificent venue which will be recognised throughout the world. At this stage, I have firm advice from officers that the opening will be on 1 October.

Members interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the member for Barkly is certainly a very rude person. I am sure that radio listeners will agree with me after hearing his antics this morning. One would think that, after his period here, the member would have learned how to behave himself in the House. Obviously, he is a very slow learner. We can only hope that his manners improve.

As I was saying, Mr Speaker, this is a most worthy project. I certainly hope that the projected opening date of 1 October can be met. However, if shortcuts were required to meet that deadline, they would not be taken. The park will be properly completed before it is opened. The quality of the premises is paramount and if ...

Mr Coulter: And the care of the animals.

Mr MANZIE: Yes, the care of the animals and the whole structure. If shortcuts needed to be taken to meet a deadline and those shortcuts would be detrimental to the park, I would certainly recommend that they not be taken.

The member for Koolpinyah says that it is 4 months late. Given that the project has taken a number of years, is a world first in many respects and has many unique problems to overcome, a 4-month delay is not a bad effort. The finished result will be magnificent. All Territorians will certainly appreciate it. I certainly will give all encouragement to the people involved to ensure that high standards are maintained and also provide all mechanisms to enable the progress towards the opening to be carried out as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

Solicitor General

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer the Attorney-General to the numerous applications between 1976 and 1986 by or on behalf of the late Stan Brown for the exercise of a Crown prerogative of mercy in respect of what Mr Brown believed to be a wrongful conviction for cattle duffing as long ago as 1926. Is it a fact that the Solicitor General who provided advice to the Attorney-General's predecessor, namely the member for Fannie Bay, had previously acted on Mr Brown's behalf before he held the office of Solicitor General?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no knowledge whatsoever of the innuendo that has been suggested. I can only say that I will examine the matter again and provide the information to the honourable member. To my knowledge, there has been no change in the circumstances which existed when Hon Paul Everingham was the Attorney-General or when the present Chief Minister was Attorney-General, and I do not expect that there will be any change.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Duties of Public Service Commissioner

Mr McCARTHY (Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government): Mr Speaker, I rise to clarify an answer that I gave to what was essentially a misleading question from the member for Nhulunbuy yesterday.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I am quite sure my question was not misleading. I require the minister to withdraw the word 'misleading'. It implies a lie in the question. In fact, no lie was intended in the question. It was quite open and quite honest.

Mr SPEAKER: Does the honourable minister wish to speak to the point of order?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, Mr Speaker. While I accept that the member for Nhulunbuy may not have desired to mislead me through the framing of his question ...

Mr Leo: Or this House.

Mr McCARTHY: ... that is what happened.

Mr LEO: I have not misled this House, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order, and I would ask the minister to withdraw that reference.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the word 'misleading'.

Mr Speaker, I believe that the question put to me yesterday was inappropriate in terms of the answer that I now find was sought by the member for Nhulunbuy. In my view, it is stretching a pretty long bow to suggest that section 14(2) deals with non-human resources only. Section 14(2) says:

The commissioner shall take such action as he thinks necessary to ensure that all transactions by each department and prescribed authority involving public moneys are accountably made within the budget approved for the department or prescribed authority by the Legislative Assembly out of moneys appropriated, or out of moneys that the Legislative Assembly estimates will be appropriated, for the purposes of the government of the Territory.

The section deals solely with the financial transactions and was inserted in the act to cover the activities of the Internal Audit Bureau. Originally the bureau was attached to the commissioner's office but it has now been attached to the Department of the Chief Minister for several years, since October 1985 in fact.

Section 16A of the act provides:

The minister may, in writing, direct an employee to take any action or step that the commissioner may take by virtue of section 14(2) or (3) and, on being so directed, the employee shall take that action or step in accordance with the direction and has, in relation thereto, all the powers and obligations of the commissioner under sections 15 and 16 and the power of the commissioner under section 60(10) to give directions as if he were the commissioner.

The Secretary of the Department of the Chief Minister has been directed in accordance with that section. The upshot of all this is that the Public Service Commissioner no longer has any responsibility at all under section 14(2) as that responsibility has been effectively transferred to the Secretary of the Department of the Chief Minister. For this reason, I would contend that the member for Nhulunbuy's question was based on a misconception.

The member for Nhulunbuy has been making an issue of this for 2 years. Last year, through the Public Accounts Committee, he questioned the then Public Service Commissioner in some detail. He also questioned the present Public Service Commissioner in some detail and was provided with this answer when he did so. The Public Service Commissioner does retain a responsibility to report under sections 14(1) and 14(3) and, because of the policy of delegation which I referred to yesterday, the Public Service Commissioner will be reporting on the effectiveness and efficiency with which CEOs have been exercising those delegations. He will make that report to me later this year.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, I seek your clarification on a matter. In fact, I raise it as a point of order. Again, as he has done in the past, the minister has referred to matters raised and indeed questions asked and answers given within a committee of this House, the Public Accounts Committee. That committee has still not reported to this House on any of those matters that have been raised or the answers given. I do not know where the minister is getting his information. I certainly treat the information that is derived from sessions of the Public Accounts Committee as privileged information. I want to know where the minister got that information. If I am not satisfied with his response, I will have to move that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee because it is the second time that this has occurred.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, the member for Nhulunbuy well knows that this matter was discussed in the House last year. It was reported to me both from inside and outside the committee that the member for Nhulunbuy was pursuing this issue. Obviously, he will pursue it to his retirement on the Gold Coast.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Gardens Park Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Given that Mr Luke Butler has failed in his bid to undertake the Gardens Park development, given that Mr George Milatos has established his inability to put a development deal together, given Mr Butler's claim that Mr Milatos has inflated the price of his pastoral land from \$420 000 to \$2.2m because of its connection with the Crown land block, will the minister now not make future development on the Crown land contingent on the purchase of Mr Milatos' property and, secondly, will he put any proposal for development of that piece of Crown land to open tender so as to ensure Territorians obtain the best deal possible?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, isn't it marvellous that the Leader of the Opposition is now the champion of Mr Butler. It is funny how the world goes round and round. The Leader of the Opposition is fully aware of the direct sales scheme. I can assure honourable members that I will not be deviating from the principles underlying the direct sales scheme. If a person shows interest in an area and the government considers that it meets the criteria, an offer is made under the rules set down by the direct sales scheme. If that offer is met, the process goes forward. If the offer is not met or if it lapses, it can be withdrawn, bringing the process to an end.

The gardens block has been zoned by the Planning Authority to include both the market blocks and the Gardens Park site. The Planning Authority has approved a development on that site. Mr Butler was interested in that development but I am advised that he has withdrawn his application to purchase. The next step will be for me to make an assessment as to what we do next. I can advise honourable members that I believe there are further applications for direct sale. If we decide as a government that it is in our best interests to make an offer to the next person on the direct sale list, that will occur. If it is decided that our interests appear to be best served by doing something else, so be it.

I can assure honourable members that the rules of the direct sale scheme will be adhered to. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to suggest that I contravene the Planning Authority's approvals or bend the rules in some way, that is fine. I can assure honourable members, however, that I will not be doing that. As far as Mr Butler is concerned ...

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition is suffering again. He does not want to listen to the facts. All he wants to do is make comments. That is fine. He can make as many comments as he likes, but I reiterate that I certainly do not intend to break the rules. His method of operation may be to bend rules and break rules. That does not concern me. However, I suppose it should concern the community because it shows what his attitude is. He is always ready and willing to accuse the government of incorrect dealings. He criticises us when we act properly and follow the rules but he is the one with the problem. He needs to take a look at his own personal values in terms of how he believes government should approach things. The community needs to be made aware of his attitudes because, every 3 or 4 years, he stands up and says: 'I am the alternative government. Elect me.'

You can trust me'. He has shown, however, that what he would do is bend the rules to suit himself. If there is a need to change the operation of the direct sale scheme rules, that will be done. At this stage, the government does not consider that to be necessary ...

Mr Smith: We are talking about private land. How does that apply to the direct land sale scheme?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, there we go! How does it apply?

Mr Smith: Yes, tell us.

Mr MANZIE: If he listened, he would understand.

Mr Smith: You are not giving me an answer that I can understand.

Mr Hatton: Read the landowner rules, read them for a change.

MR MANZIE: Mr Speaker, at the last sittings, the Leader of the Opposition asked me a question about the direct sale scheme. I provided him with a copy of all the rules and regulations regarding the direct sale scheme. He could have obtained it at the public counter of the Department of Lands and Housing although he obviously did not want to do that. Clearly, he has not read them.

One of the criteria for the direct sale scheme is the purchase of an adjoining block for the purpose of carrying out a significant project. The Planning Authority has given approval for a certain development to occur. That development was considered to be good in terms of providing construction activity and jobs, as well as being an asset for the tourist industry. It is fine for somebody who has just arrived in this part of the world to suggest that we should change the rules. Of course, I do not have to accept that. I certainly hope the Leader of the Opposition does not accept it.

One of the other requirements which apply under the scheme is that the developer, in this case Mr Butler, provide evidence of financial capacity to carry out the work proposed. No member of government received any evidence of that financial capacity. I certainly do not consider anything in the offer as having been accepted. I intend to ensure that taxpayers' assets are protected.

Mr Smith: Milatos' assets are being protected too.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition just cannot understand. I wish he would do a little homework and read what was given to him - the criteria for the direct sale scheme. What a person charges for a block is his own business. The operation of a socialist-type government is that it would like to control everything except the rules.

The Planning Authority approved a certain proposal. Mr Butler came into this project with his eyes open. He knew what it was about. He has now changed his mind and that is fine. To suggest that the government has something to do with that, as the Leader of the Opposition is doing, is patently ridiculous. He has become the champion of Luke Butler. He has become the champion of a person who came to this town and was going to fix everything. He is now saying that the government has interfered with his process. Possibly we have because we have set guidelines for the direct sale scheme. Those will be adhered to. I will not change those rules regardless of any suggestion by the Leader of the Opposition. I will not be placing price controls on any land that is available for sale.

As I said, there is a process to go through. I will be going through that process. I will be assessing where we go next and whether it is appropriate for us to accept any application for a direct sale, and then making any offers that proceed from that. I certainly do not intend to deviate from the procedures laid down.

Motor Vehicle Encumbrance Systems

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WOPKS

In recent years, there have been a number of well-publicised cases in which Territorians who bought motor vehicles in good faith have had those vehicles repossessed because debts owed by previous owners of the vehicles were still outstanding. What is being done to protect Territorians from finding themselves in this situation in the future?

Mr Bell: We have asked that for the last 3 years.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell suggests that nothing has happened for the last 3 years. Of course, he is totally incorrect. Honourable members are well aware, of course, that he is always wrong in these matters. Never have I heard him to be correct in any matter that he has brought before the House in my 5 short years as a member.

As honourable members will recall, my previous advice has been that there were considerable difficulties in negotiations with the organisations responsible for motor vehicle encumbrance systems interstate. The first problem was in establishing the most appropriate scheme for the Northern Territory and the second was coming to appropriate arrangements with the relevant government. A number of schemes were looked at including that which operates in Victoria and even some stand-alone schemes. It was found that a stand-alone scheme for the Territory would be neither the most efficient system nor the most cost-effective.

In the end, a year or more ago, the New South Wales scheme was identified as being the most appropriate. Unfortunately, though understandably, with some 9000 inquiries per day in New South Wales, that scheme had reached saturation point. Extensions to the computer system were required before additional work could be dealt with and it has taken some time for those extensions to be put in place. At the same time, New South Wales was considering the possibility of privatising the system.

I am able to advise, however, that the requisite decisions have now been made and that I recently received advice from Mr Peacocke, the Minister for Consumer Affairs in the Greiner government in New South Wales, that he is more than delighted to accommodate the Northern Territory in the New South Wales scheme. That is excellent. Indeed, I would see the New South Wales scheme extending to become a national system in due course. I was successful at the last Transport Ministers Conference in having all state and Commonwealth ministers agree that it is in everyone's interest to work towards a national system.

At present, the New South Wales people are running seminars within the Northern Territory. They ran seminars 2 days ago in Alice Springs. The purpose of these seminars is to make people in the industry aware of what the encumbrance system is all about and what sort of data will need to be

collected. During the ensuing months, industry will be able to start collecting and collating data so that, later in the year when I put the appropriate legislation before the House, we ought to be in a position to commence at the earliest possible time. I emphasise 'earliest possible time' regardless of the member for MacDonnell's distress.

Certainly, the government has been aware of the need for this system. We have worked as expeditiously and constructively as possible to put it in place. I trust that it will be in place by early 1990 and that it will enable members of the public, potential purchasers and car sales people to have access to a database to enable them to determine whether particular vehicles are subject to any financial encumbrances. Naturally, finance companies which fail to register with the system will have to carry the bag themselves instead of the poor old customer.

The vehicle identification number system which was recently introduced in the Motor Vehicles Amendment Act passed in this House has already been adopted nationally. I recently noticed in the newspaper a call by a sector of the community for the introduction of such a system. It is already in place, Mr Speaker. From now on, all new motor vehicles will have to carry a special identification number in 5 positions on the vehicle. A specialised series of numbers will identify that the vehicle belongs to a set so that people cannot replace engines or other parts of a car to defraud the public, as occurred in a recent Queensland stolen vehicle saga. This government has been moving deliberately and constructively to ensure that purchasers of motor vehicles have the best possible opportunity to get a fair deal.

Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to a statement the Chief Minister made on air this morning about sacred sites. The Chief Minister said that, if custodians said a site was a site, that was all there was to it. It was a site. I ask the minister what protection the wider community has against bogus custodians and bogus sites?

ANSWER

Mr Bell: That happens often, doesn't it, Denis?

Mr Collins: We do not know, Neil.

Mr Bell: Go home, you dill.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will resume his seat.

The member for MacDonnell is ad libbing after each question is asked. I ask that he extend to other members the same kind of courtesy that he would like extended to himself, and that he withdraw that reference to the member for Sadadeen.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I unreservedly withdraw any reference to the mental capacity of the honourable member for Sadadeen.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for MacDonnell will withdraw that reference without any smart ad libbing.

Mr BELL: I withdraw unreservedly.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I thought that the answer to that question was clearly explained in the second-reading debate. However, I will say again that it is quite clear that the new proposed bill ...

Mr Smith: Isn't this a matter before the House?

Mr MANZIE: It is a matter before the House, but the new bill does provide a mechanism for the registration of sacred sites which involves Aboriginal custodians, through the processes of the proposed authority.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I ask for your ruling. This matter is before the House and is to be the subject of a substantial debate today.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Standing orders were reviewed in 1984 and that particular standing order was removed.

Mr Leo: So we can continue to debate bills in question time? Ludicrous!

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, under the amended legislation, the minister will have no role in deciding what is or what is not a sacred site. I have been quite clear about this. Of course, the facts of the situation contrast with what the Northern and Central Land Councils have been telling Aboriginal people. Those people are being caused a great deal of unnecessary distress and that will continue until they realise that the operation of the legislation is such that what they have been told will not occur or, secondly, until the personnel of the land councils tell them the truth.

Registration of sites will be left entirely in the hands of an Aboriginal-dominated authority which will make such decisions in consultation with the custodians of the sites in question. The processes are such that the legislation will ensure that the owner of the land on which a site is located is advised of the application for registration and invited to make representations to the authority regarding it. Should the landowner claim that the registration will affect him adversely, the authority has to advise him to apply for an avoidance certificate or authority certification to resolve questions regarding the use of the land. The applicant then goes through the processes outlined, including those which relate to the resolution of conflict.

A site is a site and nobody can change that. However, the legislation allows owners or developers of land to apply for a site avoidance certificate. There are processes which apply in the case of work that could be done on or around a sacred site. Those processes involve discussions with guardians, assessments by the authority and recommendations in relation to site avoidance procedures. If those procedures cannot be resolved, the matter can be referred to the minister, who may require the authority to go through that process again. At the end of the day, the minister makes the final decision to resolve the conflict, bearing in mind, of course, that the minister cannot make any decision which will contravene federal legislation. Under those circumstances, people have the right to appeal to the federal minister or the right to take appropriate action in the courts.

As the honourable member pointed out quite clearly, the registration of sacred sites is a process in which the minister has no involvement whatsoever. The Chairman of the Northern Land Council knows this very well. He has been

at meetings, over a number of months, where it has been clearly explained, and I certainly hope that he will be responsible and inform Aboriginal people that what he has been telling them is totally incorrect. It is causing them great concern and the sooner he does it, the far easier it will be to resolve the sort of conflict he is creating in the community.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

The minister will be well aware of his own comments in this House yesterday about the relationship between Mr Warriner of Newcastle Waters and the member for Barkly. Given that the member for Barkly was the Minister for Primary Production from 1 December 1982 and throughout the balance of the period covered by the police reports, I ask him what further information he is prepared to provide to this House to support his implication that the member for Barkly and Mr Warriner had a special relationship.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is ludicrous. I will attempt to bring some sort of reason back into the discussion. I simply suggested yesterday that I did not know whether or not Mr Warriner was in fact a member of the CLP until I checked yesterday. I found that he was a member of the Tennant Creek branch and that he had joined it in 1985, having been introduced, as I understand it, by the member for Barkly. I said that the friendship between the honourable member and Mr Warriner went back over some time and that I had thought that Mr Warriner was a member of the National Party. That is all I said.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will withdraw that reference.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I withdraw any reference imputing any motives to any member of this House or otherwise.

Business Employment Census

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Speaker, my question refers to the unemployment census that has been circulated recently. A number of my constituents have advised me that they have received a census form from the Department of Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government and I have in fact received one of those forms myself. Apart from what is obvious from the questions asked on the form, can the minister tell the Assembly why his department would embark on such a wide-ranging census of Territory business?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the census to which the honourable member refers is not in fact an unemployment census but a business employment census. It has been distributed to all businesses in the Northern Territory that are on our records. We have sought to distribute that census form as widely as possible. The purpose, of course, is to gain information about the shape of the present work force and future work force requirements.

When the Department of Labour, Administrative and Local Government was formed, we inherited a range of employment initiatives, mainly the apprenticeship system, which has been in place in the Northern Territory for some time, and the school leaver program which has been greatly modified. These programs, of course, were designed to respond to the demands of industry for people to be trained. It became very obvious to me that, rather than responding to needs on a day-to-day basis or a year-to-year basis, we really needed to know what our requirements would be 5 or 10 years in the future so that we could now start training the people who would be required in 5 years time. As honourable members will know, it takes 4 to 5 years to train an apprentice. Of course, that system is changing and I very strongly support the change to competency-based training and shorter terms of training, the types of training which industry training committees are now providing to people in the Northern Territory and throughout Australia. The fact is, however, that we really need to look well into the future to know what our needs will be.

We sent out well over 8000 census forms to businesses around the Territory and we were expecting a response rate akin to the ABS response rate which, I understand, is less than 50%. In fact, Mr Speaker, to date we have had a return rate of in excess of 90% of the census forms, which is very pleasing. It indicates to me that industry sees the need for this census. The directions we will obtain from the census will put us in a good position to recognise the needs in the future. Because we need to look beyond training needs in terms of direct employment, we have asked in the census form for ideas about what types of material are purchased by companies and where they are purchased from because, obviously, we have to look beyond the particular industries sending in the forms. We have to consider where materials are coming from so that we can respond to the training needs in the manufacturing area as well.

I believe that the initiative of the Department of Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government in seeking this information is a good one. The Territory clearly needs the information and, hopefully, it will be updated on a 2-yearly basis. Obviously, things will change. We are seeing dynamic growth in the Territory. With developments in the Trade Development Zone and at the airport, and with future developments in respect of the railway and the port, needs will change on an annual basis if not on a monthly basis. As a consequence, we will update that information every 2 years and we will be in a position, for the first time, to identify the ongoing needs for training in the Northern Territory.

Disappearance of Norman Lawson

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the minister offer any comfort to Henry Lawson and his wife Val after what would have been the nineteenth birthday of their son Norman last week? As we all know, Norman disappeared from Kakadu National Park. Has the minister any discretion which would allow him to seek a coronial inquest into Norman's disappearance given that the police think he was taken by a crocodile and his parents believe he was murdered?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is indeed an awkward and sensitive matter. I have met with the Lawsons to discuss the matter with them. I have also held discussions with the Commissioner of Police on the matter. The honourable

member said that the police believe that the missing person 'was taken by a crocodile'. I do not believe that that is so. The police do not know what happened to this person who is officially listed as a missing person. I appreciate that the parents of the boy are firmly of the belief that he is dead and was murdered.

I have discussed with the Commissioner of Police whether or not we can refer the entire matter to the coroner, with all the available evidence, and ask him to inquire into the matter so that he can make a ruling. Whilst I am uncertain about the terminology that I should be using, I can say that that matter was investigated. I am informed that the matter cannot be referred to the coroner under the law as it stands at present. To answer the honourable member's question, I am unable to refer it to the coroner. I can assure him that I would be pleased to do so in an effort to have this matter cleared up. I understand that that cannot be done. It is not a matter of will.

Year 10 Examinations

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can the minister clarify the situation regarding the Year 10 external examinations? The editorial in the Northern Territory News of 24 May 1989 stated that the external component would be worth 50% of the final assessment for Year 10 students. This conflicts with previous advice given by the minister. Could he clarify the matter for the benefit of this House?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question because the point does need clarification. The actual percentage that appeared in the editorial was incorrect. The external examination component in relation to English and mathematics, as all honourable members and the public would be aware, is 30% and not 50%. There are some members of this Assembly and many in the community who would prefer it to be 100%. I want to make it very clear that the percentage of 30% for English and mathematics has been accepted by the government. It was a recommendation that was put forward by the NT Board of Studies and the government has accepted it. The decision has been made. I make that very clear, although I thought I had done so previously in this Assembly. We should all now be talking about, or looking at, the implementation process that will be followed. We should stop carrying on in the way that we have been because the only ones who will be disadvantaged are the students.

Mr Speaker, in line with a commitment that I have given to the Legislative Assembly, I would like to inform honourable members that a briefing will be made available to them.

Mr Ede: Come on. You were going to make a statement.

Mr HARRIS: Just sit down and listen.

Mr Ede: All right. But don't you back off.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, there will be a briefing, which was originally for one member of the Assembly, tomorrow at 10 am. If other members are able to attend that briefing session to ask questions in relation to the implementation process, Dr Harry Payne, the Chairman of the Board of Studies, will be available. That briefing will take place in the Legislative Assembly

precincts. If honourable members are unable to attend because of the short notice, their electorate secretaries may attend. If further briefings are required, I will make the necessary arrangements so that members will have the opportunity to have the Chairman of the Board of Studies answer any questions in relation to the implementation process. It is not a matter of debating, Mr Speaker, and again the member for Stuart is starting to raise the issue of whether or not there should be external examinations.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: I make it very clear here that there were 2 years of consultation and discussion before we arrived at that decision.

Mr Ede: They said 'common assessment task' not 'external examination'.

Mr HARRIS: The member for Stuart should be ashamed of himself. He knows the process. We are going back over old issues. A similar thing occurred in the case of the secondary college split. I remember that, after we made the decision following a long period of consultation, people came back and started up the debate again.

Mr Speaker, the government has gone through an extensive consultation process. The government has no intention of climbing back from the decision that it has taken. I would urge people in the community to ensure that they now start to look at the implementation process. I again make it clear that there is a lot of misinformation going around in the community. No student will be tested on areas which he or she has not covered. I make that very clear.

Mr Speaker, I again urge honourable members to take up my offer in relation to briefings. As I have indicated to honourable members, the Year 10 external assessment regulation booklet and other information will be made available at the briefing. I wish people would realise that there is nothing underhand in what has been proposed. It is not a stupid process. It is responsible. I wish the member for Stuart would wake up to the fact that we need to take account of what industry is saying and what parents are saying.

Mr Ede: The parents are against it.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, that comment is very interesting. I can assure you that many parents do not agree with what he is saying.

Mr Ede: Your own secretary tabled those figures at COGS0.

Gunn Point Prison Farm

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ACTING MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

In view of the extensive development planned for the Gunn Point and Shoal Bay area, are there plans to move the Gunn Point Prison Farm? If it is to stay where it is, given that the area around it has already been encroached on, will the area around the farm become smaller and smaller?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is no intention at this time to move the prison farm. Obviously, in the longer term, as the area develops, it will have to be moved. We will have to determine a suitable location. The answer is that the prison farm will be moved in the long term but not in the short term.

Proposed Alice Springs Bus Service

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The member for Flynn recently expressed some concern regarding the proposed Alice Springs bus service. Is the Minister for Transport and Works able to give the House a report on the state of that particular service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been waiting for a fortnight to hear from the member for Flynn despite a number of suggestions to him that he ought to follow up on his fairly outrageous article in the NT News of 29 April when he rather shamefully promoted, as only members of the opposition or crossbenches can do, the notion of the Berrimah Line.

Mr Floreani: With absolute truth.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I suggest that the member for Flynn's definitions of 'absolute' and 'truth' need some inquiry, particularly in terms of his allegations regarding communications and correspondence between myself and the Alice Springs Town Council and, of course, my officers and council officers, regarding implementation of the bus service. Of course, the honourable member is in rather an awkward position because it seems that he is advised by a council alderman who is a kindred spirit.

Mr Tuxworth: Wash your mouth out.

Mr FINCH: I would understand from that interjection by the member for Barkly that perhaps there is some substance to rumours regarding one Alderman Kennedy. That, however, is a matter for another day. Let me say, however, that the argument being put by the honourable member is identical to that promoted by Alderman Kennedy, who is the chairman of the relevant subcommittee of the council. That argument is that the very first communication in relation to bus services came from the council to the NT government. That is totally untrue.

As for 'absolute truth', if the honourable member had responded to my recorded telephone message of Saturday the 29th and taken the trouble to reply to my call, I could have enlightened him as to the actual chronology of communications between council and government. It seems, however, that the member for Flynn is extremely shy when it comes to direct communication. I am well aware that, following the same article, the Minister for Mines and Energy also made a number of attempts to contact him. The problem was that he was not at home and he was not in his electorate office. Mr Speaker, what is the member for Flynn doing for his electorate?

Mr Speaker, the story of the Alice Springs bus service is fairly simple. On 31 January, Cabinet made a decision to fully fund the operational costs of an Alice Springs bus service. In fairness to the people of Alice Springs, let me enlighten them as to what that really means. Whilst that figure may only be in the order of \$200 000 per annum, on a passenger kilometre basis that amount is dramatically greater than that which applies in the only other urban bus system that operates in the Northern Territory - in Darwin. The decision was deliberately taken by this government following strong representation from members of the Alice Springs Town Council but, more importantly, from the member for Araluen. The conditions of the offer were outlined in detail on that same day to members of the Alice Springs Town Council. Whilst I

acknowledge that that was not a formal council meeting, the details of the decision were relayed to the council in writing 2 weeks later.

Mr Floreani: You didn't send any correspondence.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Flynn would not know what correspondence has occurred between us. All he had to do was ask, but he would not know.

In addition, a meeting was held in Darwin at which officers of the department outlined all the details to Alderman Kennedy and the Town Clerk. At that meeting, the council representatives expressed the desire to formalise a set of contract documents in their own format. The department agreed to that provided that they complied with the general basic criteria of the Cabinet decision. What did the Alice Springs Town Council do at the behest of 1 of those 2 people? It came back with an outrageous penny-pinching demand on this government. I was outraged, not only because of the penny-pinching attitude but because of the delays that I could foresee resulting from that procrastination.

All of the negotiations have been in the hands of officers of the Department of Transport and Works who now have an agreement with the Alice Springs Town Council. They have agreed to a request from the council that the implementation of the scheme be deferred to 1 August. The reason is that the council is concerned that it might not have the few thousand dollars that are required to help implement the system.

The honourable member talks about the Berrimah Line. Let it be known that the only line that exists in the Northern Territory in regard to funding ought to be called the Kulgera Line. I say that with respect to the member for MacDonnell. I hope that he does not have too many residents south of Kulgera. This government is about fair treatment of all Territorians. When you look at the capital works program on a per capita basis, the people of Alice Springs received 50% more in the budget this year for capital works, maintenance and other works programs than did the people in Darwin. The figures speak for themselves. The claims made by the opposition and members on the crossbenches at the time of the Flynn by-election about expenditure for central Australia were wrong. The figures prove that Alice Springs receives 50% more on a per capita basis than Darwin. The promotion of this Berrimah Line by members of the opposition is nothing more than shameful and divisive.

CLP Submission to Remuneration Tribunal

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I remind the Chief Minister of the size of urban electorates in the Northern Territory. They are commonly referred to outside the Northern Territory as pocket handkerchief electorates. Each of us who has an urban electorate knows that we can walk around it in half a day and cycle across it in an hour. I remind the Chief Minister also that he is currently tackling severe problems in the economy and balancing whether we should increase taxes and charges or cut services or whether we can get away with doing neither. In that context, can the minister confirm that the Country Liberal Party submission to the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal asked that government vehicles be provided to backbench members of parliament in urban electorates?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that it is appropriate in this House for information in regard to such a submission to be released. I am somewhat unclear on the matter of our submission. The matter was handled by other members of the parliamentary wing because the Chief Minister has plenty of other things that he is paid to do.

Mr Coulter: Tell us what is in yours.

Mr Smith: By all means. I am happy to table it.

Mr PERRON: If the honourable member wishes to table the ALP submission, he can go for his life.

Section 155 of the Criminal Code

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The minister will be aware of concerns which have been expressed to me by people undertaking occupational safety and first-aid courses. Those concerns focus on the fact that, on completion of those courses, they become liable to the provisions of section 155 of the Criminal Code. Can the minister advise whether the Work Health Authority is seeking clarification of an individual's responsibility and liability in relation to section 155 of the Criminal Code?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Karama brought to my notice his concerns in this matter. I understand that representatives of the Work Health Authority, in providing training for St John Ambulance, have drawn to the attention of attendees of those courses the fact that section 155 of the Criminal Code provides fairly severe penalties if people who could reasonably be expected to provide help to somebody injured in an accident do not do so. Frankly, that is a very reasonable position to take. If you are providing training to people, it should be made quite clear to those people that there are penalties for not providing treatment at a scene of an accident. I understand also that St John Ambulance provides that sort of information to its own trainees. It is similar to the sort of information that the Public Service Commissioner would give to public servants in respect of the penalties for releasing confidential material without authorisation. Certainly, the Public Service Commissioner makes all public servants aware of their responsibilities under the Criminal Code.

I believe that the concern that the member for Karama had was that members of the Work Health Authority may have cast some doubt on whether that provision is a reasonable one. In fact, on investigating that, I have found that there is no substance to the claim that any member of the Work Health Authority has cast any sort of doubt on the reasonableness of that provision of the Criminal Code.

As I understand, to date, there have been no instances of people being taken to court for passing an accident. Of course, it would be difficult to ascertain whether a person had unreasonably bypassed an accident and not provided treatment. I am assured that members of the Work Health Authority are in fact doing their duty reasonably in providing that information to trainees attending any courses that they deliver. I would certainly support them in their efforts in that regard.

Private Medical Practitioner for Groote Eylandt

Mr LANHUPUY to ACTING MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I ask the honourable minister whether the department received any suitable applications following the advertisement for a full-time private doctor at Groote Eylandt? Has a doctor been appointed and what financial package, if any, has been offered?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government had an agreement with Gemco that there would be 2 medical officers based at Groote Eylandt - a departmental officer grade 2, and a general practitioner. We encountered problems because the locum general practitioner was involved in a single vehicle accident and was taken to Royal Darwin Hospital because of a depressed skull fracture. Apparently, he was to return to Groote Eylandt. In such circumstances, we offered a replacement medical officer to stand in and provide health services. I understand that the remaining officer will continue to see the injured doctor's general practice clients.

On 27 February, we advertised for doctors to provide the necessary services in the area. We ran the advertisement again on 1 April and on 8 April in an effort to secure someone to fill the position on a full-time basis. I believe that there were a number of applications and 5 phone inquiries were received from within Australia. The position was also advertised in New Zealand but no inquiries came from there. Information was forwarded to 5 medical officers and, up to 24 April, no written applications had been received. Follow-up phone calls have been made to the people who showed initial interest, without any success.

Mr Norman, the secretary of the department, was contacted, and Dr John Edgar visited Groote Eylandt on 4 May to assess the situation. Interim arrangements are in place to provide medical officers up until August 1989 and, of course, consideration will be given to recruiting an additional departmental medical officer to fill the position at Alyangula full-time if a general practitioner cannot be allocated to the area.

Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In directing this question to the minister, I refer to the legislation before the House. He would be aware that it is possible for the existing Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority to set itself up under the federal act and continue to be involved in the administration of sacred sites in the Northern Territory with the support of the 2 land councils. Is it legally possible that that could happen? Has the minister investigated that possibility and, secondly, has he the capacity to stop another organisation from becoming involved in the administration of sacred sites in the Northern Territory when his proposed legislation passes through this House?

Mr SPEAKER: Part of the question asked by the honourable member of the Minister for Lands and Housing sought a legal opinion. I do not believe that that part of the question should be answered by the minister.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously it slipped the mind of the member for Barkly that there is a standing order which prohibits me from giving an opinion.

Mr Tuxworth: I did not ask you for an opinion.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, in relation to the formation of an incorporated association, I think everyone is aware that anyone at any time can go through the processes of forming an association. Those are the facts, and there is nothing wrong with that. There are a number of associations in the Territory, incorporated under federal legislation and under Territory legislation.

The honourable member has had the proposed bill long enough to be able to look through it, and I presume he would have done so. There is a clause which points out the powers of prosecution under the act. I think it is in section 30 in the consolidated bill. I think section 39 refers to it, and I will read it out: 'A prosecution for an offence against this act or the regulations shall not be brought except by the authority'. That is pretty plain.

It is worth while noting that, if any organisation collects information from custodians relevant to any site in relation to Aboriginal areas, if that information is correct, that is fine. It can do no harm because the processes under the proposed bill involve the custodians and involve obtaining information from the appropriate people. There are mechanisms to ensure that that information is tested and that there is a determination of what the area concerned is about. If appropriate people are organised by someone else as well, it can only reinforce that process. If they are not the appropriate people, their opinions do not matter because the custodians are the only ones who can give the advice.

A second authority would be limited in terms of prosecution and therefore there will be no effects on anyone in that respect. Any association will have the same powers as any individual in relation to the ability to take out writs in the court and to do things. Under the legislation before the House, there is no ability for 2 sacred sites authorities to operate. The federal government is able to look at the options available to it and to act accordingly. Honourable members are aware that we cannot prevent the Commonwealth exercising its power in this respect. If it wishes to act, it can do so and neither the Territory nor any state can prevent that.

Under the provisions of the proposed bill, only 1 group has the ability to operate in terms of prosecutions under the act. I am not concerned about any organisation which will promote the involvement of custodians because, as I said, we have no problem with that. That would reinforce what is going on. If the wrong people are involved in trying to promote a bogus sacred site, it would not matter. It would contravene what the custodians of the area say and therefore it would be neither here nor there.

The member for Barkly is peddling the notion that, dear oh dear, we are going to set up 2 bureaucracies and 2 of this and 2 of that. The notion has no basis except the fact that anyone can form an organisation at any time. It would be possible for 10 sacred sites authorities to be formed. We would certainly not be paying for them and they would not have the power to prosecute under this act. As the Chief Minister pointed out, this legislation is the most comprehensive in Australia. It is designed specifically to protect sites but it is also designed to allow maximum consultation with the

appropriate people to allow work to be carried out around and on sacred sites. I think that the honourable member should really have a look at the issues in detail before he tries to create a widespread impression that there will be more disasters with regard to sacred sites and ...

Mr Tuxworth: If we have 2 authorities, there will be.

Mr MANZIE: We can have 10 authorities or 20. Anyone can form an incorporated association. I hope the honourable member is not suggesting that we should change the law to prevent that occurring. Mr Speaker, only 1 group has the power to prosecute under the legislation. The federal act is there and ...

Mr Tuxworth interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the member for Barkly lives in fairyland. It is a bit of a shame because, since he has become a bitter man in politics, he has not formally contributed anything positive to our community. He certainly likes to jump on the bandwagon to try to get a headline. Mr Speaker, I ask him to look at what can occur in the world today. We do not have the power to stop people forming incorporated associations.

The people of Tennant Creek and the people of Elliott can form associations. People can form associations to play tennis. They do not set the rules for tennis but they control the game in their own area. There is nothing we can do about that and I hope that the honourable member is not suggesting that we should try. Another sacred sites authority could be formed now or at some time in the future, but it will have no powers under this legislation. People who want the protection of this legislation will have to operate through the authority set up under it. Anybody can act under the federal act but, Mr Speaker, it certainly does not have the ability of this legislation to protect and involve custodians.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, in asking that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper, may I point out to honourable members that there have been 5 questions from the government and 5 from the opposition. On this side of the House, we have been under instructions to sit down for the last 15 minutes which just goes to show the effectiveness of the opposition and the issues in which it is interested.

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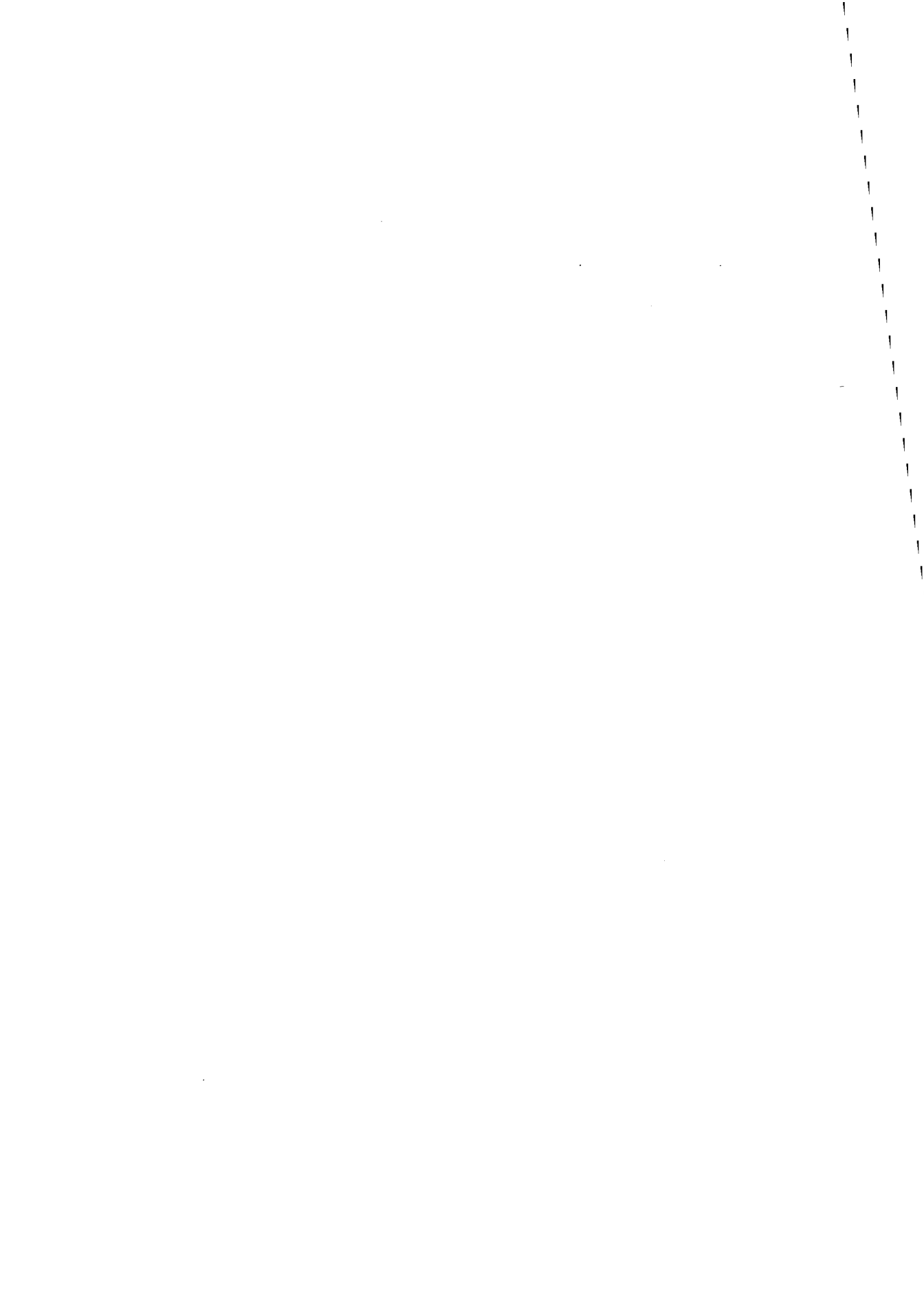
PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

14 February 1989

70. Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Has Henry and Walker, or companies or a consortium associated with Henry and Walker, been given development rights to Myilly Point. If so -

- (a) what are the terms and conditions of those development rights;
- (b) how long does Henry and Walker have exclusive rights over the land;
- (c) what is the value of the covenants placed on the land; and
- (d) what value has been placed on the land.

16 May 1989

87. BTEC Payments to Mr Dunbar

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In the 'Letters to the Editor' section of the Sunday Territorian dated 23 April 1989 you stated that Mr B. Dunbar 'has received more than \$500 000 of BTEC funds to assist him in fulfilling the scope of his agreed program, as well as \$130 000 in low-interest BTEC loans'.

What were the -

- (a) various purposes under which these amounts were provided;
- (b) exact amounts involved;
- (c) works required from Mr Dunbar in respect of each of (a) and (b) above;

- (d) full details of the extent of the works carried out in respect of each of the above by Mr Dunbar as at 23 April 1989; and
- (e) details of outstanding works or moneys on behalf of Mr Dunbar or the Northern Territory government.

22 August 1989

90. Loans Converted to Grants

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Which organisations have, in the past 12 months, had loans from the Northern Territory government changed to grants.

In each case, what was the amount.

91. Consultancy - Ms M. Gaither

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Did the former Minister for Community Welfare (Mr B. Coulter) recruit a Canadian consultant Ms Marilyn Gaither to the Northern Territory. If so -

1. On whose advice was Ms Gaither employed by the Northern Territory Government.
2. What were the terms of reference given to Ms Gaither, upon the commencement of her consultancy.
3. What were the conditions of her contract.
4. How much was she paid during the period of the consultancy.
5. What written reports did she provide to the minister/government.
6. What action did the government take upon receipt of the reports.
7. What programs have been established as a result of the consultant's recommendations.

92. Liquor Licences

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What were, by type, the number of liquor licences extant as at 31 December 1988 for each year since the Liquor Commission was established in 1979 in -
 - (a) Darwin;

- (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region.
2. Are holders of Special Licences required to provide a return detailing sales under the Special Licence.
3. How many applications for new liquor licences have been -
- (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,
- by the commission in each year since its establishment.
4. How many applications for renewal of liquor licences have been rejected by the commission in each year since its establishment.
5. In each year since the Liquor Commission was established, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
- (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected.
6. How many applications for -
- (a) new licences;
 - (b) licence renewal; and
 - (c) changes to licence conditions,
- were opposed by commercial or community interest. Of the opposed proposals how many were ultimately granted, in each year since the commission was established.
7. What was the volume of beer, wine and spirits respectively sold in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs; .
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) the balance of the Northern region; and

- (f) the balance of the Southern region,
for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
8. What has been the annual amount collected by the Northern Territory government in liquor licence and related licence fees since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
9. What was the wholesale value of beer, wine and spirits respectively purchased by licensees in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
10. How many liquor licences have been suspended or cancelled for breaches of licence conditions in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979 and what were their reasons for the suspension or cancellations.
11. How many prosecutions of licensees were -
- (a) commenced; and
 - (b) successful,
- for the offences of serving alcohol to minors or to intoxicated persons in each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.

12. What was the per capita consumption by Territory residents of beer, wine and spirits respectively in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.

93. Brucellosis and Tuberculosis - Administration

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. (a) How much was spent in the Northern Territory on each of the following heads of BTEC expenditure for the 5 years 1983-84 to 1987-88 -
- (i) Type A - Operational;
 - (ii) Type B - Compensation, De-stocking, Reactors;
 - (iii) Type C - Mustering subsidy;
 - (iv) Type D - Property Improvement Loans;
 - (v) Type E - Re-stocking freight rebate; and
- (b) the percentage of each expenditure head, spent on the following where applicable -
- (i) Salaries, wages and allowances;
 - (ii) Unmusterables;
 - (iii) Private veterinary services;
 - (iv) Equipment and materials;
 - (v) Travel and subsistence;
 - (vi) Vehicle running costs;
 - (vii) Abattoir Brucellosis sampling and ear tags;
 - (viii) Surveys; and
 - (ix) Helicopter charter.

2. With regard to cattle compulsorily de-stocked from Balbarini Station since 1 January 1989 -
 - (a) what was the average value per beast set by the valuation process;
 - (b) what was the average price per beast obtained at sale;
 - (c) who paid for removal costs etc; and
 - (d) what proportion of these cattle were purchased by Balbarini Station following de-stocks on Seven Emu and Manaangoora Stations.
3. Has the Northern Territory government in each or any year since 1985 issued publicly a marketing plan which identified -
 - (a) each property;
 - (b) cattle numbers to be de-stocked; and
 - (c) timing of de-stocking operations before the commencement of each meatworks season to ensure that turnoff is scheduled as far as possible with likely market demand.
4. Are those marketing plans reviewed at the end of each season to assess the degree of compliance with the plan, and if so, would the Minister supply copies of both the marketing report and the compliance review.
5. What has been the turnover rate of staff in the following professions or groups since 1982-83 financial year -
 - (a) Veterinary Officers;
 - (b) Stock Inspectors; and
 - (c) Animal Industry division overall.
6. What have been the changes in method and rates of compensation paid under BTEC for various classes of de-stock since the end of the 1982-83 financial year.
7. Are pastoral producers entitled to receive further assistance under BTEC where they have knowingly re-stocked with diseased cattle. If so -
 - (a) what is the extent of that assistance and its limitations; and
 - (b) if not, when did the practice cease.
8. Does the Northern Territory compile, prior to each operating season, a summary document based upon the Approved Property Program for each participating property and premises, detailing all of the planned operating activities for that year and the number of cattle to be tested for both

Brucellosis and Tuberculosis, the number to be destroyed on the property either as untruckable or unmusterable, as well as detailed cost estimates. If so -

- (a) is a quarterly report prepared detailing actual activity undertaken on a property by property basis;
- (b) is a summary of achieved activity by property detailing physical data and cost prepared at the end of each season comparing actual with planned achievement; and
- (c) what were the results for each of the past 6 seasons.

**95. Treasury Employee, Costs of Disciplinary
Action Incurred by Government**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

An employee of the NT Treasury has been subject to the following Public Service action since September 1988 -

- ° On or about 6 September 1988 - Disciplinary action commenced in accordance with section 53 of Public Service Act. This action was not proceeded with
- ° On or about 5 October 1988 - NCOM Controller recommended the employee be terminated
- ° On or about 13 October 1988 - Under Treasurer recommended to PSC that action be taken under section 49 of the act to retire employee on inefficiency grounds
 - Employee suspended from duty on full pay
- ° On or about 14 October 1988 - PSC writes to employee advising section 49 action proposed. Asks for comment
- ° On or about 19-30 October 1988 - Submissions made by union on employee's behalf
- ° On or about 31 October 1988 - Employee's services terminated
- ° On or about 31 October 1988 - Appeal lodged under Public Service Regulation 18

- On or about 1 December 1988
 - On or about 19 December 1988
- Appeal tribunal formed
- 1st tribunal hearing
- Tribunal advised PSC that -
 - Treasury has inappropriately used discipline process and recommended they review their procedures
 - employee referred to CMO
- On or about 23 December 1988
- 2nd tribunal hearing
- On or about 29 December 1988
- 3rd tribunal hearing
- On or about 10 January 1989
- PSC sought clarification from tribunal on a number of matters
- On or about 12 January 1989
- CMO examination gave employee clean bill of health
- On or about 20 January 1989
- Tribunal responds
- On or about late January 1989
- Tribunal reports to PSC -
 - allegations against employee presented in a biased misleading way
 - there were serious defects in procedures followed
 - the employee was denied natural justice
 - DOLAS negligent in advice given to Treasury on case
 - recommended officer be redeployed to another department for 3 months

- ° On or about 27 January 1989 - PSC ignores recommendation and advice and terminates employee
- ° On or about 30 January 1989 - Union, on behalf of officer, lodges claim on PSC seeking reinstatement and payment of \$250 000 compensation for unfair dismissal
- ° On or about early February 1989 - Dispute notification lodged
- ° On or about 16 February 1989 - Dispute before Commissioner Cross in Sydney. PSC engaged QC
- ° On or about 6 March 1989 - Further Commission hearing with QC
- ° On or about 26 June 1989 - Commissioner hands down decision awarding ACOA jurisdiction on reinstatement
- ° On or about 17 July 1989 - At date of this question, the Public Service Commission has appealed to Full Bench of Industrial Relation Commission

How much money has been spent by the Department of Labour and Administrative Services and the Northern Territory Treasury in the following areas since September 1988 in presenting the matter -

- (a) salary and allowances of the employee during suspension;
- (b) salary and administration costs of all NTPS employees involved;
- (c) Appeal Tribunal costs;
- (d) legal costs including Queens Counsel (QC) fees; and
- (e) air fares, travel and accommodation costs for senior staff in his department.

96. Tourism Marketing Duty

Mr EDE to TREASURER

1. How much has been collected in Tourism Marketing Duty to date.
2. What percentage of the possible collectable amount does this represent.
3. How much has it cost the government, directly and indirectly, to collect the tax.

97. Emergency Evacuations from Titjikala (Maryvale) and Atitjere (Harts Range)

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many evacuations from each of these communities were made during the years 1986-87 and 1987-88.
2. What means was employed for these evacuations.
3. In how many of these evacuations were private vehicles from the community used.
4. At what rate were the owners of these vehicles reimbursed.

98. Aboriginal Housing Program Administrative Procedures

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

What are the terms of reference of the Review of Administrative Procedures - Aboriginal Housing Program which was alluded to at page 11 of the Northern Territory Government Gazette, No. 19 of 17 May 1989.

99. Computer Software Contracts

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What are the details of computer software referred to as reference QSA 2894 on page 12 of the Northern Territory Government Gazette, No. G19 dated 17 May 1989.

14 February 1989

73. Excisions on Special Purposes Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many excision titles have been negotiated under the current guidelines.
2. How many excision titles have been registered; when were each of these registered; and when were each of these agreements reached with each pastoral lessee.
3. When were excision agreements reached on the following pastoral leases: Amburla, Anningie, Atartinga, Derry Downs, Hodgson Downs, Humbert River, Jervois, Koolpinyah, Lake Nash, Loves Creek, Manbulloo, Middleton Ponds (Tempe Downs), Mistake Creek, Mount Riddock, Napperby, Newhaven, Tobermorey and St Vidgeon.
4. Was the area on Maude Creek Pastoral lease negotiated under the current excision guidelines. If so when; or if not, under what process was the area negotiated.
5. How many Special Purposes Leases have been converted to fee simple and what is the name of these excisions.
6. How many and which excisions are currently being prevented from being registered because of caveats placed over the leases.
7. How many excision titles are being held up because the applicant group is awaiting incorporation and what is the name of these excision groups.
8. Has your department formulated long term funding programs in relation to new excisions.

ANSWER

1. As at 24 April 1989 the situation with applications for excisions of community living areas from pastoral leases was as follows -
 - (a) Expressions of interest with no details, 132 (refer to Attachment C). No negotiations have commenced as the applicants, or agencies acting on their behalf, have not lodged requisite supporting details.
 - (b) Applications 66 (refer to Attachment C). Limited details have been provided for 32 applications and negotiations commenced with pastoralists in respect of 34.
 - (c) Applications, Negotiations complete - 12 (refer to Attachment C).
 - (d) Applications, offers made - 2 (refer to Attachment C).

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

- (e) Applications, offers accepted - 11 (refer to Attachment C).
- (f) Titles Registered - 21 (refer to Attachment C).
- (g) Applications rejected - 3 (refer to Attachment C).
2. Refer to Attachment A for list indicating when registration occurred and agreements reached. Negotiations are complete and title should issue in the near future for the following 7 living areas -
- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Keep River National Park | (2) |
| Alroy Downs | |
| Elsy | (3) |
| Aileron | |
- The process of incorporation, seeking mortgage approvals, lifting of caveats on title all lengthen the process. Although several living areas were negotiated prior to the excisions program many have been finalised by the Department of Lands and Housing as part of that program.
3. See Attachment B. Middleton Ponds/Tempe Downs (Ukaka).
4. The living area at Maude Creek was negotiated as settlement in part of the Jawoyn (Katherine Gorge) Land Claim in order that the adjacent land owner could retain his interest in the grazing licence area subject to claim. The then Land Excisions Branch of the Department of Lands carried out and followed up on the necessary land administration procedures in order to have the title to the living area registered.
5. Six (6) -
- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| Neutral Junction | Tara |
| Stirling | Willora |
| Murray Downs | Imangara |
| Alcoota | Engawala |
| Maryvale | Titjikala |
| Urapunga | Rittaranga |
6. Two (2) -
- Hodgson Downs
Koolpinyah (Humpty Doo)
7. Two (2) -
- Humbert River
Hodgson River
8. As coordinator of excisions, my department does not fund work directly. The departments involved with water drilling, access and general improvements have each formulated long term funding programs.

The N.T. Cattlemen's Association has advised the government that it is now refusing to negotiate over excisions until the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs carries out the undertaking given by his predecessor to prevent land claims to stock routes and stock reserves.

This undertaking was part of the agreement between the Commonwealth and Territory governments and the Cattlemen's Association at the commencement of the excisions program. The Department of Lands and Housing is actively pursuing the excisions program where individual pastoralists are willing to enter negotiations.

ATTACHMENT A

2. <u>Location</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Agreement Reached</u>
Anningie	NT Por 1951	10/03/87	7 November 1983
Auvergne	NT Por 2982	11/03/87	9 May 1983
Atartinga	NT Por 2096	24/07/86	16 May 1986
Bing Bong	NT Por 2432	27/08/86	9 March 1981
	NT Por 2433	27/08/86	9 March 1981
Finniss Range	S1879 Hd Hart	22/05/86	22 May 1986
Jervois	NT Por 2957	20/05/86	6 June 1985
Kings Canyon	NT Por 2426	31/10/85	20 March 1985
	NT Por 2425	31/10/85	
	NT Por 2424	31/10/85	
Lake Nash	NT Por 1949	09/06/88	3 July 1983
Legune	NT Por 3046	29/06/88	25 July 1985
Loves Creek	NT Por 2417	07/07/86	21 August 1985
Maude Creek	NT Por 2641	13/09/85	16 February 1983
Mt Skinner	NT Por 2138	07/07/86	6 September 1981
Rockhampton Downs	NT Por 2439	29/09/86	20 June 1985
Tobermorey	NT Por 2868	26/08/86	29 January 1985
Roper Valley	NT Por 3278	20/07/87	PRE 1985
Mistake Creek	NT Por 3543	12/12/88	17 March 1988
Koolpinyah (Tree Point)	Sect 3104 H/Bagot	09/12/88	17 July 1985

ATTACHMENT B

3.

Agreement Reached

Amburla	13 May 1983
Anningie	7 November 1983
Atartinga	16 May 1986
Derry Downs	6 June 1985
Hodgson Downs	12 March 1984
Humbert River	12 November 1985
Jervois	6 June 1985
Koolpinyah	NT acquired land from P/L
Lake Nash	3 July 1983
Loves Creek	21 August 1985
Manbulloo	11 September 1985
Middleton Ponds (Tempe Downs)	30 August 1985
Mistake Creek	28 May 1985
Mount Riddock	8 July 1985
Napperby	1985 (Registered sub-lease)
Newhaven	4 November 1985
Tobermorey	29 January 1985
St Vidgeon	14 December 1987

EXCISIONS PROGRAM - PROGRESS at 18/04/891.(a) Expressions of Interest - No details (132)

Ambalindum (4)	Kurundi (2)
Ammaroo	Lorella
Amungee Mungee	Mallapunyah Springs
Angus Downs (3)	Manners Creek
Annaburroo	Marrakai
Annitowa	Marqua
Arapunya	Maryfield
Argadargada	Mary River
Austral Downs	Maryvale
Avon Downs	McDonald Downs
Balbirini	Middleton Ponds
Ban Ban Springs	Milton Park
Banka Banka	Mistake Creek
Benmara	Moroak
Billengarra	Mt Bundy
Birrimba	Mt Denison (4)
Boggy Hole (National Park)	Mt Doreen (2)
Bond Springs	Mt Drummond
Bonrook	Mt Ebenezer
Broadmere	Mungabroom
Brunchilly	Murray Downs
Bullita (Prop. Gregory Nat Park)	Nathan River
Bullo River	Owen Springs
Bunda (Subd. of Inverway)	Palmer Valley
Bundy R (cons. with Mt Swan)	Phillip Creek
Burrumurra	Point Stuart
Bushy Park	Prices Springs
Camfield	Pungalina
Camp Creek	Ringwood
Cattle Creek	Riveren
Claravale	Rocklands
Creswell Downs	Seven Emu
Delney	Shenandoah
Derry Downs	Singleton
Derwent	Spirit Hills
Dneiper	Spring Creek
Dorisvale	Stirling (2)
Douglas	Sunday Creek
Dry River	Suplejack
Dungowan	Tandyidgee
East Mathison	Tanumbirini
Elizabeth Downs	Tempe Downs (2)
Elkedra (3)	Tennant Creek
Erldunda	Telegraph Station T/C
Eva Downs	The Garden (4)
Fish River	Tipperary
Florina	Todd River
Forster	Undoolya
Georgina Downs	Walhallow

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Goondoloo
Gorrie
Greenbank
Hayfield
Helen Springs
Hidden Valley
Horseshoe Bend
Idracowra
Innesvale
Jindara
Kalala
Kiana
Killarney
Kingson

Waterhouse
Wave Hill
Wildman River

(b) Applications - Some Negotiations (32)

Alexandria (4)
Allambi
Anthony Lagoon
Auvergen
Beetaloo
Bushy Park
Curtain Springs
Deep Well
Henbury
Indiana
Jinka
Kurundi
Lilla Creek
Loves Creek
Lucy Creek
Mainoru

Manangoora
Maryvale
Mountain Valley
Murraraji
New Crown
Ooratippra
Orange Creek
Singleton
Tanami Downs
Tawallah
VRD (Pigeon Hole)
Wollogorang
Yambah

(b) Applications - Negotiations proceeding (34)

Ammaroo
Andado
Batchelor
Bauhinia
Brunette Downs
Calvert Hills
Central Mount Wedge
Coniston
Derry Downs
Elliott
Glen Helen
Hamilton Downs
Koolpinyah (Humpty Doo)
McArthur River (2)

Mount Cavanagh
Mulga Park
Napperby
Newhaevn
Newry
Nutwood Downs
Pine Hill
Powell Creek
Roper Valley (2)
South West Island
Victory Downs
Waterloo
West Mathison
Willeroo

ATTACHMENT C

(c) Applications - Negotiations Complete (12)

Alcoota
Hodgson River
Humbert River
Inverway
Kirkimbie
Limbunya
Mount Swan
St Vidgeon (2)
Umbeara
Gregory (2)

(d) Applications - Offers Made (2)

Alroy Downs
Fitzroy

(e) Applications - Offers Accepted (11)

Aileron
Amburla
Atartinga
Elsy
Epenarra
Hodgson Downs
Keep River (National Park) (2)
Manbulloo
Tempe Downs
Waterloo

(f) Titles Registered (21)

Anningie	Legune
Auvergne (Bulla)	Loves Creek
Atartinga	Maude Creek
Bing Bong (2)	Mistake Creek
Finniss Range (Hd Hart)	Mt Riddock (Harts Range)
Jervois	Mt Skinner
Kings Canyon (3)	Rockhampton Downs
Koolpinyah (Tree Point)	Roper Valley
Lake Nash	Tobermorey

(g) Applications Rejected (3)

Banka Banka
VRD (Jimaruk)
Dalmore Downs

16 May 1989

76. **Grants and \$1-for-\$1 Subsidies to Schools**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What was the amount of money provided by the NT government to each school for the financial years 1983-84 through to and including 1988-89 for -
 - (a) grants as a total amount and on a per student basis; and
 - (b) \$1-for-\$1 subsidy.
2. What are the criteria applicable to the granting of \$1-for-\$1 subsidies to NT government schools.

ANSWER

See following page.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question 76.

1. (a) Set out below are details of per capita rates paid for the financial years 1983-84 through to and including 1988-89 based on category of school -

<u>Financial Year</u>	<u>Pre \$/Pupil</u>	<u>Primary \$/Pupil</u>	<u>Secondary \$/Pupil</u>
1983-84	8.64	48.15	93.80
1984-85	9.07	50.56	98.49
1985-86	10.00	56.00	109.00
1986-87	10.82	60.60	117.94

		<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Junior Enrolled</u>	<u>Senior Enrolled</u>
1987-88	11.00	70 (0- 20)	120 (0-130)	130 (0-200)
		60 (21-100)	110 (131-200)	110 (201+)
		55 (101-300)	95 (201+)	
		45 (301+)		

Secondary Aged Pupils Enrolled at Predominately Aboriginal Schools/Community Education Centres

\$95/Pupil

		<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Junior Enrolled</u>	<u>Senior Enrolled</u>
1988-89	12.00	75 (0- 20)	129 (0-130)	139 (0-200)
		65 (21-100)	118 (131-200)	118 (201+)
		59 (101-300)	102 (201+)	
		49 (301+)		

Secondary Aged Pupils Enrolled at Predominately Aboriginal Schools/Community Education Centres

\$129/Pupil

- (b) As per Schedule on following 9 pages.

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

NORTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Adelaide River	0	1700	0	0	0	1500
Alawa Preschool	0	0	500	3000	1000	
Alawa Primary	3000	0	5000	5000	6000	
Alyangula Area	0	1015	6800	5000	6000	
Alyangula Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	6000
Amanbidgi Community	500	0	700	300	0	2000
Angurugu Community	5378	0	0	5000	5700	6000
Angurugu Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	6000
Anula Preschool	750	1000	1200	1000	6000	6000
Anula Primary	3000	3000	3000	5000	10000	6000
Bagot Preschool	0	0	500	300	500	
Barunga Community	0	2700	3480	1750	7500	4000
Batchelor Preschool	0	0	1500	500	800	2000
Batchelor Area	0	1000	1500	5000	6000	6000
Belyuen Community	0	0	0	0	0	
Berrimah Preschool	1000	500	0	2000	2000	2000
Berrimah Primary	3000	1000	4000	0	0	
Berry Springs Preschool	0	0	5000	0	5000	
Berry Springs Primary	0	3000	7000	5000	5000	6000
Beswick Community	0	610	0	2000	1000	1000
Bulla Camp	0	0	0	500	500	500
Bulman Community	0	0	2450	1000	5000	6000
Casuarina Secondary College	4000	4000	5000	5000	10000	
Clyde Fenton Preschool	1238	750	1000	1500	4500	5900
Clyde Fenton Primary	0	4200	4400	5000	6000	6000
Computer Education Centre	0	0	0	3774	0	0
Darwin High	6750	6540	5250	5000	15102	6000
Darwin Preschool (Peel St)	0	0	0	0	0	0

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

NORTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Darwin Primary	3000	0	0	0	0	0
Deafness Association of the NT	1090	0	0	0	0	0
Douglas-Daly	2100	0	1500	1000	1500	1500
Dripstone High	5000	4306	7050	5000	8600	6000
Driver High	0	0	2500	5000	6000	6000
Driver Preschool	0	0	2000	3000	3000	3000
Driver Primary	0	0	3000	5000	9265	6000
Ganjarani	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gapuwiyak Community	0	2850	3500	5000	5000	
Gochan-Jiny-Jirra	0	5000	0	0	9000	700
Gray Preschool	650	0	1000	0	0	6000
Gray Primary	2787	2925	4500	3125	9200	6000
Harry Giese Centre	4000	0	0	0	0	0
Henbury Avenue Special	10000	5000	8000	5000	10000	6000
Hodgson River	0	1000	1000	1000	2000	2500
Howard Springs Preschool	1680	0	4000	1500	6000	5500
Howard Springs Primary	3000	3000	3000	5000	6000	6000
Humpty Doo Preschool	3000	3000	3000	3000	6000	2500
Humpty Doo Primary	3000	10000	4000	5000	6000	6000
Jabiru Preschool	0	2500	0	4000	10000	6000
Jabiru Area	3000	5485	4000	4000	10000	6000
Jilkmingga	0	0	0	0	440	1000
Jingili Preschool	340	1300	1000	500	4000	2000
Jingili Primary	3000	4000	4000	4500	6000	6000
Kalkaringi Community	791	1959	1500	5000	3541	4500
Karama Preschool	3000	3000	4000	3000	6000	
Karama Primary	4500	4500	4000	3000	6000	
Katherine High	5198	2000	2000	5000	6000	

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

NORTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Katherine House	250	0	454	3000	0	
Katherine School of the Air	5000	7000	3000	5000	7096	6000
Katherine South Preschool	300	1000	694	700	3000	2000
Katherine South Primary	4000	4000	3800	5000	6000	6000
Katherine Trans Preschool	700	500	300	500	0	
Killarney	0	0	250	400	0	
Kintore St Special	0	0	0	0	0	1000
Kormilda College	2000	2350	2500	2500	0	
Lajamanu Community	349	4000	1300	4000	2500	
Larrakeyah Preschool	0	1000	1500	1100	1100	1500
Larrakeyah Primary	3000	2000	3500	2500	10000	6000
Leanyer Preschool	5000	6150	4000	5000	10000	6000
Leanyer Primary	5000	7550	4000	5000	10000	6000
Ludmilla/Maranga Preschool	223	330	437	634	1200	4500
Ludmilla Primary	7390	6000	8000	5000	10000	6000
Ludmilla Special	3000	12000	4000	5000	6000	
MacFarlane Preschool	0	0	0	0	2650	2216
MacFarlane Primary	0	0	0	5000	6000	6000
Malak House	0	0	0	0	0	1000
Malak Preschool	1500	1000	1500	2500	4000	4500
Malak Primary	9000	9000	6000	5000	6000	6000
Mamaruni	0	2006	2785	0	1700	4000
Maningrida Preschool	0	3000	3000	0	0	
Maningrida Primary	0	3000	4000	5000	13000	6000
Mataranka Primary	0	0	0	675	2500	1500
Middle Point	1500	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Milikapiti Preschool	250	0	0	0	0	0
Milikapiti	0	1508	0	5000	0	

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

NORTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Milingimbi Community	6250	4065	2500	5000	6000	9000
Millner Preschool	900	940	710	1000	1000	2000
Millner Primary	2000	4040	3058	5000	6000	6000
Minyerri	0	0	249	2100	3330	750
Moil Preschool	1000	2350	2250	1200	6000	1000
Moil Primary	2500	3650	3750	5000	6000	6000
Moulden Park Preschool	0	0	0	0	2000	6000
Moulden Park Primary	0	0	0	4000	6000	6000
Mountain Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mudginberri	0	0	0	0	0	0
NT School Sports Association	0	0	0	0	80000	
NT Secondary Correspondence	0	0	0	0	0	
Nakara Preschool	1110	4000	4000	5000	8000	6000
Nakara Primary	3478	3835	4500	5000	8000	6000
Nabarlek	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ngukurr Community	0	300	0	0	0	
Nhulunbuy High	5000	4000	8000	5000	5000	6000
Nhulunbuy Preschool	0	2500	3000	3000	4000	4000
Nhulunbuy Primary	4400	6000	5000	3000	8000	6000
Nightcliff Preschool	0	750	1000	2000	4000	3000
Nightcliff Primary	8927	2625	4000	4000	10000	6000
Nightcliff High	7500	5010	7475	5000	6000	6000
Numbulwar Community	298	1002	1000	0	0	2500
Nutwood Downs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oenpelli Community	1500	5000	0	0	12000	8000
Oenpelli Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	1000
Palumpa	0	0	0	0	0	
Parap Preschool	1500	2000	2500	4000	4000	4000

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

NORTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Parap Primary	4000	7000	7000	5000	12500	6000
Peppimenarti Community	0	0	0	1760	0	900
Pigeon Hole	0	0	500	3000	1500	3500
Pine Creek Preschool	0	0	2000	2500	0	
Pine Creek Primary	2950	3100	3850	5000	5000	6000
Point Stuart	1000	0	0	1000	1500	
Pularumpi Preschool	1500	4000	0	0	0	
Pularumpi Community	3500	4000	5000	5000	6000	6000
RAAF Preschool	1500	600	500	300	1500	1500
Ramingining Preschool	0	0	0	3000	0	5000
Ramingining Community	0	1946	900	0	5000	5000
Rapid Creek Preschool	100	650	0	200	614	750
Rapid Creek Primary	2100	3264	4396	5700	8064	6450
Roper Valley	0	1000	0	0	0	
Sanderson High	0	4000	4000	5000	6000	6000
Sanderson Preschool	0	3000	2000	2000	6000	6000
Sanderson Primary	0	3000	3000	5000	11000	6000
Shepherdson College	3393	5000	4000	5000	15000	6000
Shepherdson Outstations	0	0	0	0	0	6000
Shepherdson Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	6000
Stuart Park Preschool	0	937	0	0	4000	
Stuart Park Primary	3000	4586	4000	5000	6000	6000
Taminmin High	4000	5000	10544	5000	15294	12000
Thunder Rock (Cobourg)	0	0	0	0	1000	
Timber Creek Primary	0	0	400	0	425	500
Tindal Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	6000
Tipperary	2400	1000	74	0	3600	4000
Tiwi Preschool	4000	1500	2000	2000	0	1500

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

NORTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Tiwi Primary	5500	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000
Umbakumba Community	1577	3200	3500	5000	6000	6000
Umbakumba Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	2000
Urapunga	800	0	0	0	200	
Victoria River Downs	0	0	4000	5000	2500	0
Wagaman Preschool	0	601	500	600	3000	3000
Wagaman Primary	0	3000	5000	5000	6000	6000
Wanguri Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	
Wanguri Primary	7500	5533	2700	5000	6000	6000
Warruwi	3500	0	1500	1500	1000	1500
Woolianna	2000	0	0	0	0	0
Wulagi Preschool	0	4000	4000	5000	6000	6000
Wulagi Primary	3000	7250	5500	5000	6000	6000
Yarralin	0	550	730	4000	4000	4000
Yirrkala Community	8000	3500	1296	5000	7500	6000
Yirrkala Outstations	0	0	0	0	0	3000
Yirrkala Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	1500
TOTAL - NORTHERN REGION - GOVT SCHOOLS	247897	305518	323732	375618	695421	503666

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

SOUTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Acacia Hill Special	0	0	0	0	0	6000
Alexandria Downs	100	0	162	3100	215	1000
Ali Curung	0	0	0	0	0	
Alice Springs High	16697	8615	7382	4000	9000	6000
Alice Springs School of the Air	12000	5479	7382	4000	12000	6000
Alice Springs Special	1500	0	1250	8172	5996	
Ammaroo	0	0	2500	0	0	4815
Amoonguna	474	0	225	500	0	500
Anzac Hill High	0	0	0	4300	8293	12000
Areyonga	916	744	1300	2058	615	
Banka Banka	0	250	0	0	0	
Borrooloola	1600	1600	2580	0	3000	
Bradshaw Preschool	0	0	0	0	0	
Bradshaw Primary	5303	12000	7582	4000	7839	6000
Braitling Primary	5260	4250	4115	4380	6000	6000
Brunette Downs	9110	2000	1400	3500	500	3000
Charles Creek	0	0	0	0	0	
Docker River	6750	210	3000	0	0	
East Barkly Schools Association	0	700	900	2000	1400	6000
Elliott	0	1000	0	0	4000	6000
Epenarra	0	0	0	1000	5500	500
Finke	2400	2975	2800	3100	8000	6000
Ganjarani	0	2500	1500	0	1500	500
Giles House	0	0	0	0	1594	
Gillen Primary	5400	4000	8282	5415	6000	6000
Gillen Preschool	0	1800	0	0	3000	
Haasts Bluff	450	1500	4900	0	0	1000
Harts Range	0	0	0	0	0	

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

SOUTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Hermannsburg	0	0	0	0	6000	
Ida Stanley Preschool	0	1000	1000	1500	2500	1769
Iwupataka	0	0	0	0	0	
Jay Creek	300	2600	0	0	0	
Kargaru Preschool	0	1902	0	0	0	6000
Kargaru Primary	0	1150	2150	4000	16200	1250
Kempe Street	0	0	0	0	0	
Kintore (Walungurru)	0	0	4000	4000	6000	
Kunuyunka	0	0	0	0	650	
Lake Nash	425	1000	3960	8000	3000	
M'Bunghara	0	0	0	0	0	
Mallapunyah	0	0	0	0	0	3500
Maryvale	0	0	0	0	300	
Mt Allen	0	0	0	0	2250	
Mt Barkly	0	0	0	0	0	
Mt Ebenezer	735	430	500	0	0	
Mt Liebig	0	0	0	0	6000	
Murray Downs	300	0	0	0	0	535
Napperby	2500	0	0	0	0	5000
Nathalie Gorey Preschool	326	1000	378	750	0	
Neutral Junction	712	1718	0	0	0	
Newcastle Waters	0	0	500	1150	2000	5000
Ngurydiji	0	0	0	0	0	
Ntarria	0	0	1350	1800	0	2985
Nyirripi	0	0	240	600	950	5000
Papunya	0	5027	1750	4000	6302	
Pulardi	0	0	0	0	0	3586
Robinson River	0	0	0	1500	600	1450

\$1-for-\$1 GRANTS

\$1-for-\$1 FINANCIAL SUBSIDY SCHEME

SOUTHERN REGION - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Rockhampton Downs	2000	0	0	0	0	600
Rona Glynn Preschool	0	0	456	0	850	1200
Ross Park Primary	3633	4900	8282	6000	8000	6000
Sadadeen Secondary College	7851	3258	5686	8000	11500	14500
Sadadeen Primary	3825	4000	4000	3356	8000	6000
Soapy Bore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stirling	1034	600	2500	1500	0	1500
Tennant Creek High	1675	2690	2600	4000	6000	6000
Tennant Creek Preschool	0	0	0	2450	1600	1000
Tennant Creek Primary	0	2150	4000	6000	6000	600
Teppa Hill Preschool	0	0	0	665	0	0
Ti Tree	250	1000	1100	4000	0	0
Traeger Park Primary	0	1100	870	4000	6000	6000
Umpangara	1409	4000	4000	0	0	0
Utopia	0	2000	1000	4000	0	0
Wallace Rock Hole	0	0	0	529	0	0
Warrabri	5000	0	0	0	0	0
Warrego School	1586	500	0	2250	5500	3000
Warrego Preschool	500	0	0	0	0	0
Willowra	700	2000	900	2300	0	0
Yirara College	7642	3057	0	425	2561	8400
Yuendumu	3000	2284	3332	4000	4150	6000
Yulara	3300	0	5414	6000	2000	0
TOTAL - SOUTHERN REGION - GOVT SCHOOLS	116663	98989	117228	136300	199365	174190

2. The criteria applicable to the granting of \$1-for-\$1 subsidies is as follows -

(a) Purpose

Subsidies will apply to fundraising activities for approved educational activities.

(b) Eligibility

Eligible bodies are school councils, parent-teacher organisations, preschool committees of both government/non-government schools and boarding establishments.

(c) Allocation of Funds

Although schools may make application for a grant up to the limit of their fundraising ability, the initial subsidy will be for a maximum of \$6000.

(d) Eligible Fundraising

All normal school-community fundraising activities are acceptable with the exception of school fees and departmental allocations.

(e) Applications

Applications may be made in anticipation of funds being raised. An acquittance to show how both subsidy and matching funds have been spent must be submitted as close as possible to the end of June in the relevant financial year.

77. Cost of Student Education

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What is the total cost on a per student basis of providing primary and secondary education in -

- (a) urban; and
- (b) rural schools in each region of the Territory.

ANSWER

During 1987-88, per student direct school costs were -

Primary	Urban	\$2600
	Non-urban	\$4300
Secondary	Urban	\$4400 (all secondary schools are urban)

Costs are not available by region.

78. 1988 School Examination Results

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What were the PES and SSABSA results for 1988 of Territory students involved in these courses on a school-by-school basis both public and private, and subject-by-subject in each discipline. From these results -

- (a) how many students started the course;
- (b) how many students pulled out of the course before the final examination or testing;
- (c) how many students finished the course;
- (d) how many students passed the course;
- (e) what was the pass mark as a percentage of the highest possible mark; and
- (f) what was the percentage of passes in the subject.

NOTE: If the word 'pass' is meaningless please choose the most suitable term, with explanation, in parts (d), (e) and (f).

ANSWER

1. It is not NT Department of Education or Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australian practice to make public information about the Year 12 results which enables comparisons to be drawn between students, schools or the government/non-government systems.

This approach is common to all states and territories, the major reason being that a school with a small enrolment is not a valid statistical sample. Such comparisons could be severely misinterpreted.

- (a) In 1988, 1191 students applied for assessment in one or more Year 12 subjects.

Subjects with significant enrolments were -

Publicly Examined Subjects (PES)

English	493
Biology	332
Maths 1S	283
Chemistry	228
Physics	209
Geography	168
Economics	197
Legal Studies	117

School Assessed Subjects (SAS)

English	369
Applied Maths	256

- (b) 70 students withdrew officially or did not register a score in one or more subjects.

Withdrawals

English (SAS)	28
English (PES)	9
Maths I (PES)	5
Maths II (PES)	5
Economics (PES)	5
18 Subjects	Less than 5 each

- (c) 1166 students completed a course of study in one or more subjects.

- (d) SSABSA does not set a pass mark.

The indicator for overall performance for NT students is the average of the percentage of students in each subject where a 'C' Grade or better was achieved.

A 'C' Grade is defined as 'Competent Achievement'. In 1988, this figure for NT students was 72%.

- (e) SSABSA does not set a pass mark.

Assessment procedures are determined by SSABSA and are outlined in the SSABSA Annual Report. This report gives details of how grades are determined from marks awarded. The 1988 report will be available in May 1989.

- (f) A grade distribution by subject is completed each year for the SSABSA Annual Report.

As mentioned before, publication of the 1988 Annual Report will not occur until May 1989.

80. Mathematics Teachers

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

- How many maths classes in the Northern Territory Secondary Education Sector are being taught by teachers who are qualified in the area of mathematics and trained to teach the subject.
- What proportion of mathematics classes does this represent at each year level of secondary schooling.

ANSWER

See tables on following 2 pages.

MATHEMATICS SURVEY

TABLE 1

Number of Total Maths Classes at Junior and Senior Level in NT Government Secondary Schools, Area Schools and Colleges

School Years	No. of Classes	No. of Teachers Involved	No. Qualified to Teach Maths	No. Trained To Teach Maths	Proportion of Classes Taught by Qualified Maths Teachers	Proportion of Classes Taught by Trained Maths Teachers	Other Remarks
a) Junior Secondary							
8-10	190	139	115	100	82.73%	71.94%	1. It should be noted that many teachers not specifically 'qualified' or 'trained' to teach Maths, have many years of experience - see accompanying table.
b) Senior Secondary							
11-12	150	129	108	105	83.72%	81.39%	2. Many 'non-Maths' teachers are nevertheless Science teachers, with a number being very experienced Science teachers.

MATHEMATICS SURVEY

TABLE 2

Proportion of Qualified and Trained Maths Teachers at each year level of Secondary Schooling

School Years	No. of Classes	No. of Teachers Involved	No. Qualified to Teach Maths	No. Trained To Teach Maths	Proportion of Classes Taught by Qualified Maths Teachers	Proportion of Classes Taught by Trained Maths Teachers
Year 8	51	42	36	29	85.71%	69.04%
Year 9	47	40	34	31	85%	77.5%
Year 10	48	42	37	32	88.09%	76.19%
Years 8-10 Anzac Hill & Sanderson (Vertically structured)	44	15	8	8	53.55%	53.33%
Year 11	96	84	69	61	82.14%	72.61%
Year 12	54	45	39	44	86.66%	97.77%
Pre-Voc TAFE (Sadadeen)	3	3	1	1		

82. Liquor Act Offences

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many complaints have been received by the Liquor Commission concerning breaches of the Liquor Act in relation to serving alcohol to people who are -
 - (a) intoxicated; or
 - (b) under age,each year for the last 5 years.
2. How many of these complaints resulted in -
 - (a) legal action being taken against the licensee;
 - (b) convictions; and
 - (c) forfeiture of liquor licences.

ANSWER

1. (a) Nil.
(b) 3.
2. (a) Licensee placed on notice until renewal time.
(b) Nil.
(c) Nil.

83. Primary School Students' Costs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What was the average expenditure per student for primary schools in -
 - (a) the 5 largest urban centres; and
 - (b) the balance of the Territory,for each of the last 3 school years.
2. What was the expenditure per student of providing schooling in outstation schools during each of the last 3 school years.
3. What is the retention rate through to Year 12 for students who received their primary education in schools outside the 5 major urban centres of the Territory.
4. How many compulsory school-age children in the Northern Territory attend school less than 50% of the time.

5. What is the percentage of Aboriginal students entering the Northern Territory education system at or before Year 8 who complete Year 12.
6. What is the percentage of non-Aboriginal students entering the Northern Territory education system at or before Year 8 who complete Year 12.

ANSWER

1. The average expenditure per student for primary schools is -

	1987-88 \$	1988-89 \$
Urban	2600	2700
Non-urban	4300	5100

Figures for 1986-87 are in a different budget format and ledger structure and would not be comparable.

2. Approximate expenditure on outstation students, dependent on location and size, ranges from -

1987-88 \$	1988-89 \$
5300 - 6800	6100 - 7600

Costs for outstation students are included in the home school's budget and are not maintained separately.

3. Unable to provide as individual students move between regions and between urban/rural schools.
4. Unable to provide. This would require an examination of every separate school student's attendance records.
5. 8.2%.
6. 66.7%.

86. Reserved Judgments of Supreme Court

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What are the titles of any actions in which judgment has been reserved by a judge of the Supreme Court and where that judgment has not been delivered within 12 months of it being reserved.

ANSWER

I am advised that there is only 1 existing action in which an NT Supreme Court judgment has not been delivered within 12 months of that judgment being reserved, namely -

A.T.I. Management v Fong (reserved on 30 October 1987)

22 August 1989

88. Buy-back of Land from Developers in Katherine

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The Department of Lands and Housing Annual Report for the year 1987-88 refers to a buy-back of land from developers in Katherine at page 33.

1. Which lots of land were bought back from developers.
2. When were these lots bought back.
3. For how much was each lot bought.
4. On what basis was the buy-back price negotiated for the lots.

ANSWER

1. Detached dwelling (R1) lots from Katherine East Stage 3 -
 - (a) 60 lots - Nos 2640-2649, 2651-2673, 2675-2676, 2739, 2741-2743, 2747-2749, 2751, 2754, 2766-2770, 2893-2895, 2897-2904 Town of Katherine;
 - (b) 1 lot - No. 2597 Town of Katherine; and
 - (c) 10 lots - Nos 2677-2678, 2731-2738 Town of Katherine.
2. (a) August 1987;
(b) September 1987; and
(c) December 1987.
3. All lots were purchased for \$17 000 each.
4. Henry and Walker Contracting Pty Ltd was the successful applicant for the Crown Lease for the subdivisional development of Katherine East Stage 3.

A condition of the development lease is that the buy-back price is fixed by the government at \$17 000.

**89. Buffalo Industry Assistance Scheme
Loans**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. What are the names of the successful applicants for loans/grants under the Buffalo Industry Assistance Scheme.
2. How many of these applicants have drawn down the maximum loan/grant applicable to this scheme.

ANSWER

See table on following 2 pages.

BUFFALO INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE SCHEME, LOANS

APPROVED LOAN APPLICANTS	PROPERTY NAME	AMOUNT APPROVED	AMOUNT DRAWN	COMMENTS
S. & B. Baldwin Nominees P/L	Arnhem Station	\$ 75 000	\$ 75 000	Reverts to a grant in 1992 if technical criteria achieved.
Mt Ringwood Partnership	Ban Ban Springs	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
B. & F. Doyle	Camp Creek Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
Garibaldi Pastoral Co. P/L	Garibaldi Station	\$ 70 000	\$ 70 000	" " "
Kerlin Pty Ltd	Kerlin Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
T.R. & K.V. Halse	Marrakai Springs	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
Mary River Cattle Co.	Mary River Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
G. & V. Michell	Maude Creek Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
Textern Pty Ltd	Middle Creek Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
Carabao Exporters	Opium Creek Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
Carmor Plains Station P/L	Carmor Plains Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
Marrakai Pastoral Co. P/L	Marrakai Station	\$100 000	\$100 000	" " "
Mt Goyder Pastoral Co.	Annaburroo Station	\$ 70 000		Owner has now declined loan due to inability to offer suitable security.

BUFFALO INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE SCHEME, LOANS

APPROVED LOAN APPLICANTS	PROPERTY NAME	AMOUNT APPROVED	AMOUNT DRAWN	COMMENTS
Mr J. Harrower	Mainoru Station	\$100 000		Finalisation delayed pending resolution of security arrangements.
A.N. & S.N. Fisher	Swim Creek Station	\$100 000		Awaiting return of documentation from applicant.
K.J. Carrick Pty Ltd	Urapunga	\$100 000		Awaiting return of documentation from applicant.

94.

Bed Tax

Mr EDE to TREASURER

1. How much has been collected in Bed Tax to date.
2. What percentage of the possible collectable amount does this represent.
3. How much has it cost the government directly and indirectly to collect the tax.

ANSWER

1. The Northern Territory government does not impose a Bed Tax.
2. Not applicable.
3. Not applicable.

Wanguri By-election

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Did the Chief Minister state, in a newspaper column on 30 August: 'Wanguri electors have a simple question to ask in next Saturday's by-election and I ask them only to answer it honestly'. Did he then go on to say: 'The question is this. Do they endorse or dislike what the CLP government has achieved for the Territory since 1978?' My question is this: were the electors of Wanguri honest in their answer this Saturday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition means last Saturday. Can I simply state that, obviously, democracy was at work. We have a very fair electoral system in the Northern Territory and this government stands by that system and supports it thoroughly. The electors of Wanguri made their choice following a campaign which, by and large, I saw as fairly waged from all quarters. The message given to the Northern Territory government will be heeded. We lost a significant amount of the support which we had previously in that electorate and, no doubt, all political parties will be carrying out much analysis of the election results during future months. I am sure that we, in the CLP and the government, will learn much from the result and adjust our policies and performance accordingly.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the ALP on apparently picking up the seat. Of course, the poll has not been declared as yet, but everyone expects that ALP numbers in this Assembly will increase from 6 to 7. I congratulate the party on its campaign and its success.

Wanguri By-election

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister advise the House whether the Northern Territory Electoral Office has received any complaints in relation to the proliferation of political signs and political touts, including myself, at the polling booths in Wanguri last Saturday? The scene at the booths resembled some sort of political Armageddon. If any complaints have been received, what was their nature and what action does the Chief Minister propose to take in relation to them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there was considerable comment about the state of the entrances to both polling booths on election day in Wanguri and I understand that there has also been some media comment on the subject. Naturally enough, I spent some time at both polling booths and I described the scene as 'political pollution'. No party or candidate was free of blame for what was essentially an overenthusiastic assault on the sensibilities of constituents. I am sure that many constituents felt that they were running a physical gauntlet of politicians, posters and representatives.

I am advised by the Electoral Office that no formal complaints have been received although a number of electors commented to polling officials about the situation. I spoke with a prominent member of the ALP outside a polling booth and we both agreed that it would be nice to do something to prevent such situations recurring, without being specific about what action might effect that.

I propose to have the Electoral Office examine options to limit the proliferation of election material and candidates' representatives who are seemingly harrassing voters outside polling places on polling day. It is not possible to determine exactly what might be done because, clearly, any action taken in this regard will involve an amendment to the Electoral Act. I do, however, seek the views of members opposite and any members of the community, on whether there is a problem and, if so, what solutions might be most appropriate.

Alice Springs Casino

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

My question relates to the wisdom and propriety of ministerial decisions on matters arising at the Alice Springs casino. This question specifically concerns a situation which occurred in 1987 when the responsible minister was the former Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Hanrahan. Can the minister confirm that, in 1987, 40 new poker machines were installed in the Alice Springs casino without the required police investigation into the company supplying the machines? Can he also confirm that the poker machines were in place several months before the required police investigation was completed, and that that gross irregularity was permitted only because of commercial considerations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is not correct in saying that poker machines were installed in the Alice Springs casino without ministerial consent.

Mr Smith: I said that they were installed without a police investigation.

Mr POOLE: Let me tell you the facts.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to obtain a bit of political mileage from this but I can assure him that the facts do not tally with what has been presented on the 7.30 Report.

The Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission was advised, in a letter dated 21 January 1987, that the Alice Springs casino operator sought approval to purchase 40 slot machines from IGT Australia Pty Ltd. In accordance with approved procedures, the commission obtained test machines and submitted them to its expert programming and electronics consultant. In parallel with the technical assessment of the machine, an application from IGT was referred routinely to the Northern Territory Police Force for a determination of the status of the company itself. The police discovered that IGT had an identical application under investigation by New South Wales licensing police and requested their New South Wales colleagues to advise them of the result. The Northern Territory police were unwilling to compromise the New South Wales decision by resolving the Territory application before a decision of the Licensing Court of New South Wales was handed down. In a letter dated 27 March 1987, the Police Commissioner advised the minister responsible for racing, gaming and liquor that a delay of unknown length would be incurred. At this time, no existing slot machine manufacturers were approved to supply to Northern Territory casinos.

On 18 June 1987, the commission advised the minister that the delay in processing the application was having a negative effect on both casino operations. The commissioner recommended that the minister give consent for

the purchase of 40 machines from IGT by the Alice Springs operator, notwithstanding the delay in police clearance, on the condition that an unfavourable police report would result in the machines being withdrawn. Consent subject to this condition was communicated by the minister of the day to the Alice Springs casino on 27 June 1987. The Alice Springs Casino Control Branch was notified and the notification was recorded in the day book. Follow-up documentation giving formal written consent was dated 14 July 1987.

The 40 machines arrived in Alice Springs on 14 July 1987. Routine Casino Control Branch machine verification and testing procedures were completed and the machines were given final approval for operation from this date. Police clearance of IGT was finally submitted to the minister following the favourable decision ...

Mr Smith: What date?

Mr POOLE: ... of the Licensing Court of New South Wales and no further action was necessary.

Mr Smith: What was the date?

Mr POOLE: I do not have the date but I am happy to supply it.

Mr Smith: You have every other date but you do not have the most important one.

Mr POOLE: I will supply you with the date.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will have a chance to ask additional questions. The minister will be heard in silence.

Mr POOLE: In this matter, no breach of ministerial directions and no impropriety has occurred. Although unusual, the action of the minister in consenting to the purchase of gaming machines prior to police clearance of the company was adequately justified by the circumstances prevailing at the time and, in fact, it was a decision for the minister alone. At no stage did the operator act without the knowledge of the minister, the commission or the Northern Territory Police Force.

Offshore Oil Exploration Facilities

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

According to media reports, plans for the establishment of locally-based service facilities to support offshore exploration activities in the Timor Sea have been shelved and such development will not occur. Can he advise whether these reports are accurate or whether he stands by his previous statements that such facilities will be established?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nightcliff for his question. He will recall that, during the May sittings, I expressed no doubt about the development of offshore supply facilities in Darwin. Despite subsequent media reports that the project had been scrapped, I remain without doubt today that a permanent supply base servicing offshore oil activities will be established.

In recent months, considerable interest has been expressed in such facilities by a number of major companies. Marubeni Australia, a subsidiary of the Marubeni Corporation in Japan, has a definite proposal for the development of a storage depot for supply of drill piping. Gearhart United, a prominent American company involved in complete oilfields servicing, is most interested in setting up a machine shop for pipe preparation in an investment close to \$1m. Baroid Australia, another well-known international oil industry servicing company, has decided to establish storage facilities for the supply of drilling mud and other associated requirements. These companies have expressed a definite interest in setting up facilities in Darwin immediately. A number of other potential participants have made preliminary inquiries before making firm investment decisions. This welcome activity certainly justifies the establishment of a permanent offshore supply base in Darwin and our planning proposals on such a project are proceeding.

In the meantime, to accommodate the needs of companies wanting immediate facilities, the government has made arrangements for temporary space to be made available within the Darwin port area. This will allow temporary service facilities to get under way with the intention of relocation to the permanent supply base when it is operational.

Hundreds of millions of dollars will be spent on Timor Sea exploration in the next 3 years. That effort will grow even further when the Timor Gap region opens up for exploration and will further enhance the opportunities for Darwin to gain substantial income and business opportunities as the major supply base for the region. I had discussions in Jakarta with my Indonesian counterpart about the role Darwin should play in this exciting oil exploration activity and I can report that he is supportive. Indonesia sees merit, at least in the first instance, in using Darwin infrastructure to supply oil exploration on the Indonesian side of the Timor Gap rather than Indonesia building its own base elsewhere. Officers from the Indonesian Department of Mines and Energy will visit Darwin later this year to assess our facilities in that context.

You can see, Mr Speaker, that the offshore supply base project has not been axed. In fact, it is alive and well and I remain firmly committed to the establishment of the base which will secure many millions of dollars worth of business for Darwin. I will be only too pleased to identify any detractors from that line of thought at the official opening of such a base in the very near future.

Child-care Centre Employees - Registration Scheme

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

My questions relate to the honourable minister's knowledge that 2 and perhaps 3 people convicted of child abuse have worked in the Territory's child-care system. Does the minister accept his responsibility for the proper protection of children, parents and workers in the system? Does he accept that the findings of his own government's report recommended that a child-care worker registration scheme be established? Is he able to confirm that that recommendation has been ignored for 3 years? Finally, how much longer does the honourable minister intend to refuse this basic protection to the people of the Territory and what scale of offence will it take to push him and his dilatory government to act in this important matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that little speech contained a whole range of questions and, during the delivery of them, I began to lose track of those which had been asked at the beginning. The questions seemed to focus upon whether or not I accepted responsibility for the welfare of children in child-care centres in the Northern Territory. Indeed, as a government, we do accept responsibility for establishing systems in which people can work so that children in our child-care centres are protected from bad practices in any regard.

There has been a great deal of debate, prior to the recent by-election, about whether the Northern Territory government should institute a system in which the histories of people applying for employment in child-care centres would be checked against national police records in order to show convictions recorded for any criminal activity. The government's stance has been that child-care centres are in the hands of government-approved directors who have a range of responsibilities, under their licences, to look after the children in their care and responsibility. Of course, their responsibilities extend far beyond the selection and monitoring of staff. Their responsibilities extend to the very nature of the establishments they run, including physical conditions, food and so on. We must ensure that such matters are properly administered in the interests of children in our society.

Honourable members opposite argued strongly that the way to ensure that no person likely to cause harm to children was employed in a child-care centre was simply to check whether prospective employees had previous convictions. The government has argued that that is not the case and that protections need to go far beyond simply employing people who have no convictions at all. A very good example was cited in this context, and it demonstrates that reliance on checks of previous criminal records has its limitations. It concerns a recent case in a southern state in which 4 persons, who were supposedly well-known in the area of entertaining children, were charged with a series of sexual offences against those children. The charges were thrown out of court as a result of a technicality. It is quite possible that, even if there was a system which automatically checked for criminal records, such people could come to the Northern Territory and gain employment in child-care centres. No convictions would appear on their records.

The fact is that the responsibility for checking staff rests entirely with the directors of child-care centres. It is not an onerous task and I believe that most of them accept that responsibility. If they wish to check the police records of applicants for positions, they are free to do so. There is a small charge. Indeed, I have even offered to waive the charge if any of them want to put it to me that it is somehow an unreasonable burden.

Last Thursday, 17 August, all licensed child-care operators were invited to a meeting to discuss their responsibilities for staff selection and ways in which the government might be able to help. Some 40 people attended and I am told that the task force report referred to by the member for MacDonnell barely rated a mention. The meeting certainly did not pass any motions calling for the government to do anything which was highlighted in that report. Indeed, there is a strong view amongst child-care operators that the government's involvement in child-care centres should go absolutely no further than it goes at present.

Mr Smith: There was a strong feeling at that meeting for some form of registration.

Mr PERRON: Members opposite seem to be proposing that, before any person is employed in a child-care centre in the Northern Territory, that person's name should be submitted to the government, not only for police checks but for comprehensive checks on past employment and on referees before he or she can be employed. I can assure honourable members opposite that that will create very severe inconvenience to child-care centres in the Northern Territory. I am advised that they want a system whereby they can pick up casual workers on the odd occasion when someone does not turn up for work or they are suddenly rushed with additional children and the requirements of their licence demand that they have a certain ratio of qualified staff to the numbers of children in their establishments. They want the flexibility, I understand, to be able to make judgments themselves on whether staff are appropriate to be employed.

It is quite clear in my mind that a manager of a child-care centre could make a different assessment in different situations. For example, if an 18- or 20-year-old girl from the local area applied for part-time work at a child-care centre, the manager of the centre could clearly check out to his or her satisfaction whether the prospective employee was an appropriate person to have the responsibility of caring for children. If, on the other hand, the person applying for work was a male from interstate who had been resident in the Territory for only a short period of time, I suspect that the child-care manager, in the course of exercising his or her responsibilities, would go to very considerable trouble to check not only that the person did not have any past criminal record in regard to offences against children, but that the person's previous employment record was satisfactory. Those checks would probably involve not only the previous employer but the previous several employers, and would perhaps involve the checking of references provided by the applicant.

If honourable members opposite advocate the establishment of a government bureaucracy to carry out all that sort of work on behalf of child-care centre operators, I believe they are not acting in accordance with the interests and wishes of child-care centre operators themselves and that they are proposing something which would be no more than a great deal more bureaucracy. If they want to extend the theory, why don't we apply such checks in the case of every person who is in charge of a youth group, or groups of cubs, scouts guides or marching girls, or in the case of people who take children on school bush camps? Why don't we have their police records checked? What about schoolteachers, who are also in charge of many young children? Perhaps we should check that none of these people has a criminal record. The member for MacDonnell really is pushing a cause for which he does not have strong support, even in the industry which he purports to represent.

Arts Specialisation in Schools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

At a seminar on school improvement plans conducted by the Council of Government Schools Organisations at Katherine earlier this month, mention was made of a proposal to encourage schools to specialise in particular areas of the arts. Parents at the meeting were asked to provide feedback to the government on the proposal. Can the minister give details of the proposed scheme and indicate when it will be introduced?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I believe that members should be informed on this matter. COGSO and other groups

publicise various meetings at which certain aspects of education are to be discussed. The honourable member mentioned one which related to the discussion of school improvement plans.

In July 1989, I opened the first congress of the International Society for Education Through the Arts. I am happy to provide honourable members with a copy of the speech that I delivered on that occasion. I spoke about the need to provide students with the prospect of artistic opportunities on the local scene, and the need for students to be able to recognise opportunities for a career in the arts and to be able to pursue those opportunities in the Northern Territory. The government is looking at placing a greater importance on the arts, particularly the performing arts, and I will be making a statement on that subject during the course of these sittings.

Gunn Point Subdivision

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In view of the strong and well-reasoned objections to the government's plan to subdivide 34 blocks on the cliff top and down to the beach in the subdivision at Gunn Point, has the minister seen the light in a conservation sense and will he disallow the cliff top part of the Gunn Point subdivision? I am aware that a recommendation to that effect has gone to the minister from the Planning Authority.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as far as the proposed development is concerned, the normal provisions relating to environmental impact studies and investigations will occur. In relation to the proposal to the Planning Authority, I advise the honourable member that any request for subdivision along the cliff top has been withdrawn from the application while appropriate environmental investigation work is carried out. That is fit and proper and in accordance with the normal process. The suggestion that the government intends to override that process should be struck from people's minds. It has never occurred and it will not occur. The process will occur through the normal channels. The recommendations from the Planning Authority will be received and any decisions I make will certainly take the appropriate processes into account.

The present applications regarding planning approvals do not include the area along the cliff top, which has been the subject of great contention and some very misinformed statements and claims in some quarters.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You know it is not misinformed.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah cannot resist commenting but she is the person who stated that 10 000 people would be living in the area and that it would be part of the larger precincts of Darwin. Those claims are all incorrect. She has also claimed that the government is going to ignore totally any environmental impact, which is again incorrect. All she has managed to do is to alarm people.

However, I can assure the member for Koolpinyah and all other members of the community who may have taken heed of some of the more extreme statements she has made, that that area along the cliff top is presently being investigated in terms of the environmental impact of the entire proposed subdivision. Until such time as that process is completed, the matter will not be put before the Planning Authority.

Local Government - Non-release of Federal Funds

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The local government councils are expressing concern that they have not yet received their Grants Commission allocations. In previous years, the funds were available no later than mid-August. Why have local government organisations not received their rightful entitlements yet?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as usual the Northern Territory Grants Commission has made recommendations to me for the distribution of Commonwealth grants under the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Act. Those recommendations have been made according to criteria agreed to by the Commonwealth minister and myself. I forwarded those recommendations to the Commonwealth minister in late July, which was certainly within an appropriate time frame. As yet, however, even though I understand that one of the states was late in submitting its recommendations, the minister has not agreed to the distribution of Commonwealth funds in the Northern Territory. As a consequence, local government in the Northern Territory is being held to ransom for funds.

I contacted the Commonwealth minister on 2 occasions last week. In speaking to the minister, it was very obvious that she was not satisfied that the criteria which we previously agreed upon have provided the answers which she sought. The Morton Report, which was undertaken for the Commonwealth, was supposed to provide answers. It would appear that the social engineering agenda of the Commonwealth has not been able to be met. The recommendations of the Grants Commission, made under the methodology approved by the Commonwealth minister and myself, did not provide the answers she expected. She said to me: 'This has not done what Morton told us it would do'. As a consequence, obviously, she would change the criteria for distribution of funds in the Northern Territory. That is not acceptable to me and it is not acceptable to the Northern Territory government. We have agreed on methodology and we have recommended the distribution of federal funds on the basis of that methodology.

Fortunately for many of the local government bodies in the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory government distributes other funds - and it is the only state or territory government in Australia that does so. We are able to keep at least non-municipal local government bodies afloat with our funds, which are distributed by the Northern Territory according to the same criteria as those agreed to by the Commonwealth and myself.

The Commonwealth is now interfering with matters which are the rightful responsibility of the Northern Territory and is questioning the integrity of the Northern Territory Grants Commission. That is not acceptable and it will not be tolerated. I will not let the matter lie. I will be taking further action. The Commonwealth minister promised me a reply by yesterday. It has not arrived. Morton was sent to the Territory to talk to our officers and he discussed the situation with them yesterday. He could not say that there was anything wrong with what we had done. In fact, the minister agreed with me that our methodology was correct. Indeed, everything was correct except, in the minister's estimation, the answers. She was not prepared to accept the answers, which she had attempted but failed to engineer.

Mr Speaker, I am not happy with the response of Morton yesterday. He simply mouthed a lot of platitudes and did not provide any light which would

enable the funds to be distributed to local governing bodies in the Northern Territory. The matter cannot be left to lie and, unless I get a response in the very near future, I will be approaching the Chief Minister to take the matter up with the Prime Minister.

Teacher Shortages

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

When major teacher shortages were evident earlier this year, the minister's response was to promise a review of salary packages and special allowances. Yet, 6 months later, teacher shortages are stretching the system to breaking point. Will the minister accept that the failure to provide additional benefits has exacerbated the situation, and could he advise teachers of the Northern Territory and potential recruits when some relief can be expected?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart would be well aware that salary structures are an industrial matter and, in fact, we are locked into the industrial relations process in relation to them. The teachers know that and honourable members know it. We have tried to ensure that we are able to provide incentives for our teachers. Members will shortly be hearing the budget brought down by the Treasurer and, during the course of that speech, they will hear some interesting comments in relation to this matter.

I will say that we are frequently frustrated in our efforts to obtain better salary packages for teachers because of the industrial process we have to go through. I am aware that, not only in the Northern Territory but throughout Australia, there are problems in relation to teachers' salaries. I acknowledge that the salaries are not at a suitable level. There is, however, a process in place and teachers have to go through that process in respect of salary adjustments.

I have made it very clear in the past that we are looking at introducing a system which utilises bonuses. We are also looking at the possibility of zoning certain areas in order to encourage first-year local teachers to become involved in the teaching profession. At present, first-year teachers are sent into the bush areas and many people are not cut out for that type of work in that environment. Of course, if experienced teachers are to be encouraged to remain in bush areas, they need to be offered appropriate rewards. The government is examining the whole issue of teacher salary structures. Teachers are very aware of the industrial processes, including award restructuring, and the issue is being addressed in the appropriate manner.

Federal Capital Works Program - Effect on the Northern Territory

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can the minister advise the House of the effects of the federal budget on the Northern Territory, especially in relation to the capital works program, and how this year's capital works program compares with those of previous years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, when I was a young fellow and times were pretty tough, a common birthday party trick was to wrap up a brick, a rock, or a very small present in numerous layers of paper in order to make it look impressive and colourful. The joke was on the recipient. As far as the federal budget is concerned, after a great deal of unwrapping I have finally found the brick.

Desperate people adopt desperate means and the federal government is illustrating that through the proliferation of nicely presented announcements it has been making about financial packages. The Leader of the Opposition may well yawn. Yesterday the federal government announced an \$80m program to support sport in Australia.

Mr Smith: Good, isn't it?

Mr FINCH: It forgot to mention that the money would be spent over 5 years. Then there is the wonderful environmental package, which involves expenditure of \$1000m. Of course, that money is to be spent over 10 years. It does not add up to anything like the amount spent by the previous coalition government. It is simply trickery in the packaging of figures.

The federal member, Warren Snowdon, and his colleague Senator Collins, used the same sort of trickery in the Wanguri by-election. In press statements and in a circular distributed to electors in Wanguri, they said: 'What we promise, we deliver'. The question is when? I want to look at some of the specifics which lie behind the blatant tactics of those federal ALP members. They know the difference between programs and actual expenditure. They talk about the allocation of funds. Allocations mean dollars. It does not mean 5- or 10-year programs. The business community and the general public want to know how much will actually be spent. They do not want to hear about airy-fairy 10-year programs that may or may not eventuate. The federal ALP government will not be in office in 1 year's time, let alone during a further 10. Its audacity in making commitments for such long periods is outrageous to say the least.

Let me cover 3 specific items. The federal members have talked about some \$460m of programmed expenditure, \$370m-odd if the airport redevelopments are excluded. But how much cash is to be spent in the next year? We have not been able to find out exactly, Mr Speaker. However, the most generous estimate would put the amount at \$50m. That is \$50m out of \$460m. The government has not only included work for the next 5 years on various projects, including Tindal and the army base, but has deliberately carried out some extra trickery. It has included, for example, stage 1 of Tindal.

Mr Leo: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister knows full well that he cannot reflect on the integrity of members of other Houses. I have let him go a few times, Mr Speaker, but I believe that he should not be allowed to continue to accuse members of another House of trickery or dishonest behaviour.

Mr SPEAKER: I advise the minister to be very careful in his references to members either in this place or in other parliaments.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I understand the sensitivity of the members opposite. Of course, what I am reflecting upon is the way in which the federal government's financial packages are put to us. I have deliberately avoided phrases like 'lie' and 'con' because I am well aware that such phraseology would get me into strife.

However, let me come to what is a gross misleading of the Australian public, a gross misleading of Territorians and a gross misleading of the electors in Wanguri. I will explain that gross misleading very carefully for honourable members opposite. When people talk about spending \$460m on capital works - and I use their words not mine - and the amount to be spent in the forthcoming year is really only \$50m at the very most, that has to be termed, at the very least, trickery.

Let me talk about last year's expenditure in terms of money spent. It took us a while to find out from the federal government what it proposed to spend. It was like extracting hen's teeth. What it proposed to spend last year was \$52.3m cash out of a \$100m program, which approximates to what one would normally consider to be the right sort of balance in capital works terms. In the end, however, what did it spend? \$39.2m! That means that \$13.1m disappeared, about 25% of the proposed expenditure. Mr Speaker, I put it to you that it was snaffled out of Territorians' pockets to use in welfare programs elsewhere. That is an outrage. It is an outrage because our federal ALP representatives have not accounted for it. Last year, not once but numerous times, they were asked where the cutbacks in defence were and where the cutbacks on Coonawarra were. They were asked to explain but they said not a word. This year's financial statements, however, contain the evidence. More than \$13m has gone.

My final point relates to roads. The Northern Territory's federal ALP members made big waves about the \$38.5m capital works program for roads in the Northern Territory. What they forgot to tell Territorians is that that \$38.5m represents a \$0.5m reduction in actual dollars and a 7% to 8% reduction in real terms. We might have been able to cop that if the federal minister had not yesterday put out a press release in which he announced that funding on an Australia-wide basis had gone up by nearly 10% or \$120m. The nature of the Territory's road system is such that normally we would expect to receive approximately \$2m out of such an increase, but what did we receive? A \$0.5m cut.

What are our federal ALP representatives doing as they walk the corridors in Canberra? They always say that they are the only ones people can trust to gain benefits for the Territory. I think it is time they stopped going to Canberra.

Mr Speaker, let me give you another fact in relation to that \$38.5m. The federal government has direct responsibility for the national highway system and, in the Territory, that system has to be funded from that amount. Three years ago, this Territory received \$30m in capital works for highways. This year it is \$20m, although the Victoria Highway is nowhere near finished. We had hoped to have the Stuart Highway and the Barkly Highway finished within 2 years. We have to keep maintaining roads at a reasonable level and we have to keep using funds for roads maintenance. Because of the constraints imposed through the federal budget, the Stuart Highway and the Barkly Highway will not be finished until 1998. That is totally unacceptable to this government and totally unacceptable to Territorians. The federal members did not mention that during the Wanguri by-election campaign. Their approach does not necessarily involve what I would call lies, but it certainly involves trickery.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In recent times I have not noticed any reports on the progress of flood mitigation measures for the Todd. Has the minister anything to report on progress in this matter, which is of interest to the town of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member for Sadadeen. Indeed, the member for Braitling has raised this issue with me on numerous occasions. I believe that both honourable members will shortly be very pleased. I do not wish to pre-empt the Treasurer's budget speech, which he intends to deliver in 5 minutes time, but I advise the honourable member that the matter he is concerned about will be handled by the Treasurer in the context of the budget.

Nhulunbuy Wharf

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he yet able to assure me and my constituents that the publicly-owned general cargo wharf at Nhulunbuy is able to be used by all shipping companies wishing to use the facility under fair and equitable circumstances or is the Nhulunbuy wharf, in fact, still operated virtually as a publicly-owned private monopoly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Nhulunbuy knows very well that the facility at Gove is owned and operated by Perkins Shipping. He is well aware that some government funds were used towards construction of the wharf. I emphasise the words 'towards construction'. We did not construct it. The honourable member is also aware that shipping companies are able to obtain access. I am sure that the honourable member is well aware that there is considerable argument at present about the amount being charged for the use of the facility. Rights of access and rates for some government vessels and for fishing boats are written into the agreements with Perkins. In relation to cargo vessels, I have had assurances from Perkins Shipping that it is more than happy to negotiate reasonable and appropriate rates with all other parties who wish to use the facilities. I would trust that that will happen.

Telecom Services to Aboriginal Communities

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT:

When will the Northern Territory government's legal action against Telecom on behalf of Aboriginal communities be brought to court or, alternatively, has Telecom undertaken to provide essential communications services for those communities, as it is bound to do under its charter?

Mr Bell: On your capital works program too, Barry.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I heard an interjection from the member for MacDonnell about capital works. I think he should treat the question a little more seriously

given that the member for Stuart, in particular, has mentioned in this Assembly the need for better telephone communications within his electorate. It surprises me to see the mirth of the member for MacDonnell when a serious question that is obviously very important to his constituents is raised in this Assembly. However, I am learning to live with the member for MacDonnell and the way he approaches things.

It is regrettable that the Northern Territory government has been forced to take legal action to bring Telecom to the point of doing what it is supposed to do. The matter is complex but I will try to make it simple for the purposes of my response to the honourable member's question. Particularly for the member for MacDonnell, I will make it as simple as I possibly can.

There are 13 remote communities which lack decent communication services and Telecom is obliged to provide those services. Telecom has been aware of this for years and our efforts to secure any sort of appropriate timetable for the delivery of services have come to nought. There are not many occasions when I find myself in total agreement with the Central Land Council and the Northern Land Council but, on this issue, I can say that we are united.

The communities are due to be served by the Digital Radio Concentrator System or DRCS. The Territory government accepts that this cannot be delivered immediately, but wants Telecom to provide interim satellite telecommunication to the communities until that occurs. Telecom, however, has offered specific communities telecommunication services via its ITERRA satellite services, but at a price greater than that which should be applicable to remote area communities. Telecom is offering a service at a cost appropriate to a commercial concern such as a substantial goldmining operation. This is much greater than the price which is gazetted under section 11(6) of Telecom's act for services to remote area communities.

In the case of Ngukurr, Telecom installed the ITERRA service and then charged the community at the greatly increased rate. On the instructions of the Ngukurr Community Council, the Territory government is now seeking to recover from Telecom about \$37 000 which we judge the community has been overcharged. This matter has been set down for a Federal Court hearing on 15 September.

Separate from the action the government has now started, there are further legal proceedings against Telecom on behalf of 13 other communities. For the benefit of honourable members, the communities are Warruwi, Minjilang, Numbulwar, Bulman, Papunya, Kintore, Mt Liebig, Gapuwiyak, Docker River, Utopia, Lajamanu, Mount Allan, and Willowra. This follows a written response from Telecom that it would connect telecommunication services to those communities only at the higher commercial rate - in other words, under the same arrangements as at Ngukurr.

On 27 July, I received a curious letter from the Central Land Council, suggesting that the Territory government should stop its legal actions and itself pay for part of the cost of the interim services. I do not know who the Central Land Council thinks it is representing on this matter. Certainly, it cannot be the Aboriginal communities mentioned because they fully agree with the Territory government's action on their behalf. It is interesting that the land councils were set up to represent the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory and yet, on the one issue on which they can stand up and fight, on the representation which I have received from these people, the land councils have ducked their responsibilities.

Mr Firmin: Apologists for the bloody ALP.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ludmilla will withdraw that remark.

Mr Firmin: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, it is also alarming to receive a suggestion that the people of the Territory should pay for what Telecom is obliged to provide under its charter. It is not as though Telecom is strapped for cash. Last year, Telecom's profit was just on \$800m, more than half the entire Northern Territory budget. The cost to Telecom of providing decent and appropriate services to all the communities that I have mentioned would be in the range of \$1.2m.

In this matter, Telecom is clearly not meeting its obligations. The Territory government has undertaken legal action on behalf of the communities in good faith and only after discussions and negotiations led us nowhere. It is shameful that legal proceedings have to be brought to bear to bring this massive organisation to account and to force it to do what it was set up to do: to provide a service to Australians.

Once again, I express my absolute disbelief at the way in which this question was considered a joke by the member for MacDonnell, who should be representing his constituents in the manner in which the member for Stuart represents his. Even in his maiden speech, the member for Stuart mentioned the lack of telecommunications in his electorate and I wish that the member for MacDonnell would treat the matter as seriously as does the member for Stuart.

Doctor's Gully Property - Transfer of Title

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I refer to the transfer of title of the Treasurer's Doctor's Gully property, dated 28 June 1989. Did he inform the media at the time that the transfer was to take advantage of the difference between Commonwealth personal tax and company tax rates? As Treasurer, was he not aware of a further advantage - that is, that he intended to raise duties in this budget on precisely this sort of transaction from 4% to 5% and has he thus, through inside knowledge, saved himself and his company more than \$5000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the honourable member's question on notice. I do not think that, at any stage, I informed the media of the purposes of the action, as he implied. I will have to check the transcripts and I will be happy to respond to his question later during these sittings.

Reconstruction of Darwin and Alice Springs Airports

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

This question may be a little untimely. However, I have been asking it consistently for the last 7 months. What progress has the FAC made on reconstruction works at the Alice Springs and Darwin Airports?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is correct that the member for Casuarina has been asking questions about this matter for quite some time and so have the citizens of the Northern Territory. There is some good news. I understand that contracts for some works have been let or are about to be let for the completion of some of the interim facilities which were commenced back in 1984-85, such as the water tower, for which tenders close on 24 August. The partially completed water tower remains in place as a token of the discontinuation of the project by the federal government in 1985. A couple of other minor ancillary projects are also proceeding and I am pleased to acknowledge the commitment by the FAC in that regard.

Honourable members would be aware that, about 3 weeks ago, the federal Public Works Committee came to Darwin to appraise the project and to assess once again whether the extent of work and the value was in the best interests of the taxpayer. Of course, this flies in the face of the so-called commercialisation of the Federal Airports Commission which was to take the matter out of the federal government's direct control. We are well aware, however, that that is another charade and that the FAC is totally answerable to the federal government, the minister and the bureaucratic processes. It cannot even engage people on a higher level than that agreed to by the federal government, if any expertise or whatever is needed.

I put it to Senator Collins and Warren Snowdon some 18 months ago that the project would be delayed by bureaucratic red tape associated with the FAC in its attempts to get on with the job, and that problem has still not been addressed. As I understand it, all of the matters which have arisen as a result of last minute concerns raised by the airline companies have not been resolved. I understand that the airline companies are very concerned about the rates which they may have to pay. The general aviation industry is also

concerned about the rates that they may have to pay for the use of facilities which have been put in place by the taxpayer over a period of decades. Those concerns relate to potential increases of 3 to 4 times the current rate up to 7 times the current rate. Those rates are not just a matter of concern to the companies involved but will eventually be the concern of all users of the facilities.

Those questions should have been asked when Senator Collins and the federal member, Warren Snowdon, made their announcement on 19 August 1988. The ironic coincidence is that that is the same date, though 12 months later, as last Saturday's by-election. In their circular to Wanguri electors, those 2 federal representatives again claimed: 'What we promise, we deliver'. Once again, I ask when? In their circular, Senator Collins and Mr Snowdon claimed that construction of the new airport terminals 'is now under way'. It is not. On 19 August last year, the 2 federal representatives stated that a transfer would occur within a month - that was, by the end of October - and that construction would commence by the end of that year. That date was then revised to April this year and, later, to November this year.

Operators in the general aviation area in Darwin have expressed some concern that the lease has not yet been transferred to the FAC. I am pleased to pass on assurances that that will not affect the construction program. However, at least 3 operators are concerned that their subleases have been held up causing delays in extending their facilities.

As far as the commencement of construction is concerned, we were all aware that, in the case of a big project like this, some period of time would be required for design development and the calling of tenders. Originally, we were given to believe that tenders would be called in July for a design construction package. Those tenders still have not been called. I am assured that that is probably almost entirely due to the fact that the FAC has not been able to come to full agreement with the airlines, who will be the major users, and that those tenders might go out some time in the near future. In my humble view, that will not by any means allow commencement of the project by November, as re-promised by the federal members. It really is time for them to come clean and to answer a simple question: is the federal government's red tape and bureaucratic control of the FAC the cause of part of the delay?

Territorians have had enough. We waited a long time for the federal coalition to announce in 1983 that the project would proceed, and we have waited 5 years since early 1985 when Peter Morris announced that he would have a 6-month review. People are still asking the question, and I will continue to ask it. We need some positive answers, not hollow promises. There are 2 ALP federal politicians who, to use their words, 'put their necks on the line' on 19 August 1988 ...

Mr Dondas: Collins will not do it. He wants to become a minister. He will not rock the boat.

Mr FINCH: ... and this electorate will keep them to that commitment. It will be necks for sure.

Doctor's Gully Property - Transfer of Title

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Basically, I will repeat the second half of my earlier question, which the Treasurer did not attempt to answer.

Was the Treasurer not aware, at the time he transferred title of his Doctor's Gully property, that he intended to raise duties in this budget on precisely that sort of transaction from 4% to 5%, with the effect of increasing the amount of duty that would have to be paid?

ANSWER

The answer is no. I was not aware of what the Northern Territory Cabinet would decide as far as revenue options for the Territory budget were concerned. At the time of making the decision, I was acting on advice from my accountant, received earlier this year, that my wife and I should establish a company structure to run the financial affairs of the business that we own. His advice was that the appropriate course was to have the new arrangements come into effect for the financial year commencing 1 July this year and, indeed, that is what we did. Those actions were commenced ...

Mr Ede: Doctor's Gully smells to heaven.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: ... prior to budget deliberations. If the honourable members opposite are implying that a member of the government, particularly a Cabinet member, in fact is unable to continue his personal affairs because of his role as a Cabinet member, then ...

Mr Smith: There is a pretty fair conflict of interest.

Mr Coulter: Bring on a substantive motion for a censure motion. Go on. Do it now!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I reject any implication by the opposition that I was aware that the Territory Cabinet would take an option to increase stamp duty on higher value properties in this particular budget at the time these decisions were made by my family in consultation with my accountant.

Federal Funding of Aboriginal Organisations

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I read in the media this week that the honourable minister had written to the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs expressing concern about funding for Aboriginal organisations. Would the minister please explain the concerns that led him to write such a letter and inform the House whether he has received any response?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. As members would be aware, the federal government has established a range of community organisations over the years in relation to Aboriginal people. I could refer, for example, to Tangentyere, Jurnkurakurr or Kalano, which have been directly

funded by the Commonwealth government for many years. They also receive substantial funds from the Northern Territory government. Members would be very much aware that, a few years ago, the ADC unilaterally withdrew its funding from Tangentyere in Alice Springs. As a consequence, the Northern Territory government, through the Department of Community Development, was forced to pick up the tab in that year and following years for basically the whole of its operations, whether or not they were local government operations which were being funded by the Department of Community Development in other cases. The Office of Local government is now picking up the tab for Tangentyere, essentially in toto.

We thought at first that the action of the federal government in unilaterally withdrawing funds from Aboriginal organisations was perhaps an aberration which was just occurring in 1 or 2 cases. However, a clear pattern is now emerging in which the federal government establishes community organisations for Aboriginal people, funds them for a short time and then withdraws funding without notice, without consulting the Northern Territory government and without consulting the Aboriginal people, in the expectation that the Northern Territory government will pick up the tab through the Office of Local Government.

As I said, this occurred with Tangentyere a few years ago and it has now happened with Jurnkurakurr. Honourable members have heard about the problems being faced by Jurnkurakurr because the federal government has withdrawn funding, expecting the Northern Territory government to meet the shortfall immediately. This government recognises its responsibility to Aboriginal people and is prepared to support Aboriginal people. I would defy anyone here to indicate that the funding provided to the Northern Territory Aboriginal people is insignificant. The funding provided by the Office of Local Government for Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations outstrips federal government funding time and time again.

When we look at the funding patterns in terms of the role of the Office of Local Government and the role of the federal government, we see that the federal government provides approximately \$6m spread across all local governing bodies in the Northern Territory, including municipal councils and Aboriginal organisations and councils. The Northern Territory government contributes 3 times that amount for the same purpose, and it is the only state or territory in Australia to do so. The fact is that, this year, the people of the Jurnkurakurr outstation organisation have lost federal government support. We are expected to pick up the tab. The Kalano organisation in Katherine has also been told that the federal government will no longer provide funding. The federal government has determined that funding of these organisations falls within the local government responsibilities of the Northern Territory government. We know that many of the functions performed by those organisations are not the responsibility of local government. There was no consultation. We heard about the funding cut to Kalano when its representatives came to us and said: 'This is what the federal government has said. Here is the letter. It is not going to give us any money'.

In February, I wrote to Hon Gerry Hand, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra, and I have not yet had a reply. I have written again this week. Hopefully, I will get a response from the honourable minister this time. The facts are that, without any consultation with the Northern Territory government and without any consultation with Aboriginal people, the federal government, through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, is gradually withdrawing funding from Aboriginal people and expecting the Northern Territory to pick up the tab. That is not occurring in relation to local

government alone. I can also cite education, health, and transport and works. On basically every issue that you wish to think of, Mr Speaker, we are being asked to pick up the tab.

That is fine. We recognise our responsibility. However, we are not receiving the funds to enable us to carry it out. In the past, a sum of money was provided to the Northern Territory government to pick up local government responsibility for 50 councils. There are now 400 or 500 such councils but no additional funding has been provided. The federal government picked up the tab initially and then withdrew without providing any extra dollars to us. It is expecting us to pick up the tab from the very small sum which it provides - \$6m a year for local government right across the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory is already disadvantaged in comparison with the states in that regard but we are being asked to pick up the tab.

Two-thirds of untied funds to Aboriginal councils currently come from Northern Territory government coffers. One-third of total local government funds across municipal, community and other local governing bodies come from the federal government. That is simply not adequate. I certainly hope that the federal minister will respond to my letter on this occasion and that he will not continue to treat Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory in this cavalier fashion.

Alice Springs Casino

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for TOURISM

The ABC 7.30 Report last week made several serious allegations regarding the Alice Springs casino, in particular, that security surveillance by casino inspectors was interfered with, that money was laundered to the extent of \$80 000 per month and that chips were purchased with rubber cheques. These allegations are very serious. Will the minister advise whether the allegations are true or not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question because, at last, we are in a position to address matters which have been raised continually in the media without anybody really standing up and asking the questions.

Let me go back to the start of these allegations. Les Rochester of the 7.30 Report approached me on 26 July asking me to accept an interview on the subject of allegations about cheque cashing facilities at the Alice Springs casino. The allegations related to incorrect procedures being adopted by the casino in relation to cheque cashing facilities. The reporter concerned did the interview with me. He had in his possession a number of photostat copies of government inspector day-book entries. These photocopies were made by a former government casino inspector whilst he was in the employ of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission, one Mr Michael Cafe. The photocopies were made at 6 am on 12 December 1988, whilst Mr Cafe was on sick leave. Mr Cafe obtained entry using his ID card, via the security staff of the casino, and spent some 40 minutes in that office. He left carrying his own personal possessions and papers. Later that morning, Mr Cafe came into the office and resigned. I understand that he was, or had been, the secretary of the Territory Nationals in Alice Springs. The photocopied documents were passed on to Mr Rochester, who thought that they warranted investigation.

I would now like to deal as clearly as I can with the problems as perceived by Mr Rochester. I will deal first with the cheque cashing procedures. At the Alice Springs casino on 24 December 1988, a client cashed a \$15 000 cheque. Subsequently, on 2 January 1988, he cashed a \$5000 cheque, making a total of \$20 000 cashed. As members would possibly be aware, there is a written ministerial direction to casino managements, one of a number of such directions, requiring that any cheque presented through the cashier's cage must be cashed within 10 days. On 6 January 1988, the customer asked the casino not to bank the cheque as to do so would embarrass him and the bank would probably return the cheque.

On 23 March, the Alice Springs casino made application to the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission to amend the presentation period. I stress that the casino was already in breach of the 10-day banking rule. This was considered by the commission and the casino has advised verbally that its application had been denied. On 7 April, a written instruction was issued to that effect. On 20 May, the customer paid the casino \$3000 to reduce the outstanding amount of \$20 000 to \$17 000. A new cheque for \$17 000 was written.

Mr Smith: By whom?

Mr POOLE: By the client. In other words, he said that he wanted to reduce the \$20 000 by paying \$3000 cash. He also wrote a new cheque for \$17 000. At this point, I received a visit from the government casino inspector in my Alice Springs electoral office. He informed me that the Alice Springs casino was not complying with ministerial directions with regard to the banking of outstanding cheques. I immediately telephoned the Chairman of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and instituted an audit. The audit was done ...

Mr Smith: Four months after, the minister is advised. Righto.

Mr POOLE: I beg your pardon?

Mr Smith: Four months after the cheque bounced, you were advised. Right? Fine.

Mr POOLE: The audit was done. I was not even the minister at the time the whole episode originally started, I believe. However, that is irrelevant.

The audit was done on 24 May and a written instruction was given to the casino to bank the cheque. On 25 May, the cheque for \$17 000 was banked. On 7 June, the cheque was returned marked 'refer to drawer'. It should be pointed out that casino taxes are paid on the basis of gross profit, and no distinction is made between cash or cheques. No deductions from gross profit are permitted whether or not cheques are honoured by the bank. At this point, the cheque became a commercial debt of the casino. I understand that this outstanding amount of \$17 000 has been reduced by \$2000, and the debt currently stands at \$15 000.

The operators of the Alice Springs casino were requested to show cause why their casino manager licence should not be terminated. Their response ...

Mr Ede: When?

Mr POOLE: Immediately after the audit was done.

Their response was to plead for mitigation as no material gain was obtained, and their interest was purely to protect the reputation of a client. The commission discussed this matter at 2 commission meetings, I believe and, as a result, a severe warning was issued on 24 January 1988 that any further repetition of such behaviour would result in the casino manager losing his licence. The operators of the casino were also warned that their licence would be placed in jeopardy if deliberate breaches of ministerial directions were permitted.

On 4 November 1988, the casino manager brought to the attention of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission the fact that a cheque had been cashed for the same client. This also was clearly contrary to ministerial directions. The relevant direction clearly states: 'Cheque cashing facilities cannot be offered to any client who currently has outstanding debts incurred by "refer to drawer" cheques'. On investigation, I believe it was discovered that 2 cheques totalling \$4000 had been cashed with the money being accepted for play. Interestingly, the duty casino inspector on this occasion was one Michael Cafe. It was his responsibility to ensure that this did not happen. Because of the involvement of the inspector and the fact that the casino manager had declared the incident, the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission decided to take no further action other than to reiterate its previous warning. It did so in a letter which said:

You would be well advised to note my caution to your casino manager and be aware that this commission intends to extend no further leniency to him in the event of any future procedural violation.

Advice was also given in relation to the responsibility of the operator under clause 4.3(d) of the Alice Springs Casino Operators Agreement. I should add that, to this date, no further violation has been noted.

During the course of the interview for the 7.30 Report - and I stress that that took place on 26 July - it was put to me by the reporter that there were a number of other matters that warranted investigation with regard to casino operations. In fact, he had embarked on a trip to Alice Springs with a 7.30 Report team to conduct his own investigations and had met with closed doors and no-comment responses. He asked me specifically about the matter I have just dealt with in respect of cheque cashing facilities. He asked about the poker machine question raised by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. He asked about a possible cover-up of a blackjack game in Alice Springs and about the procedure employed for checking out security officers. I informed him directly that I had no knowledge of the matters which he had raised and that I would have them investigated. I immediately instituted an internal report by the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and requested the minister responsible for police, the Chief Minister, to ask the NT Police Force to investigate the allegations.

I have received an internal report and I am quite happy to deal with the various aspects of that report. It was quite apparent that, apart from the procedural matter concerning the cashing of cheques, which had already been handled by the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission, there was no substance to any of the other claims. I was filmed on, I think, a Wednesday or Thursday. I invited the reporter to attend my office so he could be aware of the results of my investigation. I produced the report and went through it with him on condition that there be no notation of any names. That was because allegations of this sort can bring to light the names of all sorts of people who have done absolutely nothing wrong. I went through the report with the interviewer and dealt with all the specific items which he had raised.

It is worthy of note that a number of the allegations that he made to me on camera in the initial interview were not even run when the 7.30 Report went to air. It is also interesting to note that, when the ABC decided to run the program some 3½ weeks after the interview was conducted, virtually no mention was made of my having gone through the report with the interviewer to address all the specific items which had been raised. The program was run 2 nights before the Wanguri by-election. In fact, if my memory is correct, the program even covered the results of opinion polls on the Wanguri by-election. I have asked the Managing Director of the ABC, Mr David Hill, to investigate the actions of the 7.30 Report and the reporter concerned under a particular section of the ABC Act which relates to political bias. Certainly, research was not done properly because the report was factually incorrect. The timing of its release was, in my opinion, most questionable. I have asked Mr Hill, under section 82 of the ABC Act, to take action to ensure that my questions are properly investigated and answered.

From time to time, we will always receive allegations concerning activities such as money laundering. On this occasion, the 7.30 Report raised the allegation itself. The allegation was not attributed to the former government casino inspector. It came out of the blue, but I presume it must have been something that he had suggested. The Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission investigated that particular question, as did the police.

I am told that the interim police report says: 'It appears that the allegation has been made by a dissatisfied employee and there is no evidence to suggest that the gentleman referred to actually laundered any money'. The Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission report quite clearly indicates that, far from coming to Alice Springs casino every month and laundering \$80 000, this particular gentleman has been to the Alice Springs casino in November 1988 on 1 occasion and gambled 3 times. He is a Chinese gentleman. Of the total amount of money that he cashed for casino chips and played with, he lost \$6300. He was not paid by cheque and therefore he is either a Chinese launderer or maybe an Irish launderer because he certainly was not making any money out of his activity.

Mr Ede: That is not what laundering is about.

Mr POOLE: I know exactly what laundering is about. I am quite happy to debate laundering with you. There is no evidence of laundering. Certainly, there were no winners cheques issued by the Alice Springs casino during the months of October and November at that time.

I am satisfied that what we have is a disgruntled employee attempting to create a few problems for his former employers and for the casino. His attempt is misguided because everything is being investigated by the casino inspectorate, the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and the Northern Territory Police. When the Chief Minister receives those police reports, no doubt they will be discussed further.

Port of Darwin - Emergency Procedures

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to some serious allegations made in the media yesterday by the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. Can he advise the House whether the emergency procedures for the Port of Darwin are adequate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is important to say at the outset that the Port of Darwin has an appropriate evacuation plan in case of all emergencies but, in particular, with regard to nuclear accident emergencies. I was alarmed to hear last Friday, on the eve of the by-election, a statement from Senator Maguire that 'the Port of Darwin did not have any evacuation plan'. That statement was totally incorrect. In fact, not only do we have a plan, but we have a very well developed plan that has resulted from cooperation and involvement of all parties involved - the unions and the TLC, who contributed much of the plan, the Darwin Port Authority, port users and the federal agencies.

I am still astounded by some of the statements made by Senator Maguire, and he made another yesterday morning. He ought to be adopting a far more responsible approach. He crows that he wants this to be a matter of consultation with the Northern Territory government. The first thing that he ought to do when he is about to make an outrageous statement on the eve of a by-election is to contact the appropriate Northern Territory minister with an outline of his concerns. Certainly, there has been a fair bit of confusion, not only in the honourable Senator's mind but in the minds of the local Trades and Labor Council secretary and myself in terms of just what the report of the Senate committee was driving at. Jamie Robertson thought that the matter raised concerned the remote location where ships identified as having radioactivity leaks would be taken. That, however, is not the case. In relation to the 3 remote anchorages, the Senator said yesterday morning that the furthest one was perfect, not only in terms of distance but, more appropriately, in terms of prevailing wind directions.

We have to put this matter in perspective. A very comprehensive plan is in place. It takes effect when a ship receives approval from the federal government or one of its committees to enter the Port of Darwin. All users of the port are then notified, together with the unions, the police and the NT Emergency Service. Additional supplementary notices are issued. This is all in accordance with a very well developed emergency and safety procedure document.

To claim that we do not have such a plan is nonsense. A plan was developed following the adoption of interim procedures in 1984. Those procedures were adjusted and amended in August 1988. This was done mainly at the instigation of the unions and I give them credit for that. I am happy to table a copy of that plan, which I have here in my hand. Despite the Senator's allegations, it is a public document. We distributed it to some 60 appropriate people including port users, union members and all and sundry. The procedures are described in a general sense on 25 noticeboards in the port area. They are in 3 languages, particularly to help personnel from the overseas fishing vessels which frequently use the port.

There has been 1 trial evacuation since the plan was brought down. We learnt some lessons from that and, in fact, a second trial is now overdue. It will occur when the union and the stevedoring companies identify an appropriate time, which will be when there is a large number of workers and a large number of ships on site. That is what is required for a decent exercise. Every week, the siren is tested.

The Senator referred to a 2.2 km evacuation zone requirement. That is nonsense and the Senator knows it. The first immediate automatic zone for evacuation is 600 m. It does not include any of the CBD at all. The

procedures then involve not only evacuation of personnel from the port area but movement of the offending ship from its berth. Providing that there is not an extremely severe leak combined with the worst possible wind conditions and a delay of several hours, there is no panic to evacuate any area beyond the 600 m automatic zone.

We have to get the risks into perspective. If there is a problem, we have in place probably the best plan in Australia for emergency service procedures in evacuating personnel from the general danger region which, I believe, is the region covered in the Emergency Service Plan. Members will have seen recent television announcements concerning the notification of non-cyclone warning systems, which are part of the very comprehensive, workable and regularly trialed procedures in Darwin. Because of our cyclone exposure, these procedures are better than those used anywhere else in the country.

We have been subjected to a heap of scaremongering nonsense ...

Mr Hatton: A few days before a by-election.

Mr FINCH: ... which, coincidentally, has occurred a couple of days before a by-election. The Territory government has a most appropriate plan in place. If constructive suggestions evolve over a period of time, we will of course listen to them. We listened to the unions and other port users last year and we are about acting in a responsible manner. The Senator needs to take a leaf out of our book instead of crying from Canberra. I believe he did not even come here to check on whether there was a plan in place and to ask what is occurring. He did not telephone and say: 'I have a problem'. He did not consult. His actions are in accord with the track record of the so-called consultative government of Bob Hawke.

Doctor's Gully Property - Transfer of Title

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

I have before me a photocopy of the front page of the NT News of Wednesday 14 June. The front page article, which appears under the by-line of Frank Alcorta, is headed 'Tough Cuts to follow Cobourg'. It states that Mr Perron was on the eve of his departure for budget discussions at Cobourg. I understand that those discussions took place on 15 and 16 June. I want to read 2 relevant paragraphs. The first reads as follows: 'The NT Public Service faces tough cuts and there will be increases in some taxes and charges'. And the third last paragraph: 'Mr Perron did not reveal details about the precise nature of the increases in taxes and charges, but it is widely expected the main burden will fall on alcohol, tobacco, stamp duty and payroll tax'.

Mr Perron: Well? A little bit of journalistic speculation.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, that took place ...

Mr Perron: He was wrong on payroll tax, wasn't he?

Mr SMITH: That meeting took place 2 weeks before the transfer of the Treasurer's Doctor's Gully property, and I ask my question again: was he not aware at the time that he transferred the Doctor's Gully property that his government intended to raise duties on precisely that kind of transaction?

Mr COULTER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Leader of the Opposition would be well aware of standing order 121. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to question the character ...

Mr Smith: I am asking a question.

Mr COULTER: ... of the Chief Minister and the motives of the Chief Minister, let him move a substantive motion. Instead of this rumour and innuendo, let us have a substantive motion. Let the Leader of the Opposition move to censure the Chief Minister and we will see how his argument stacks up, Mr Speaker. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, let me read standing order 121:

Questions shall not be asked which reflect on or are critical of the character or conduct of those persons whose conduct may only be challenged on a substantive motion. Any questions critical of the character or conduct of other persons must be asked in writing.

We are happy to have this debate. We are not running away from it. A lot of innuendo, rumour and journalistic licence is being quoted here. The last part of the second paragraph read by the Leader of the Opposition is not a quote from the Chief Minister, not at all.

Mr Smith: That is right.

Mr COULTER: It is wrong in regard to payroll tax, Mr Speaker ...

Mr Perron: And liquor taxes.

Mr COULTER: ... and liquor taxes.

Mr Speaker, I ask the Leader of the Opposition either to bring on a substantive motion or to refrain from asking these questions.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, the opposition will decide on its tactics, not the government.

Mr Coulter: You will ask questions in the manner that standing orders dictate.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I have simply asked a question which requires some information that the honourable Treasurer possesses.

Mr Leo: There is no reflection at all.

Mr Coulter: Well, that is good. You are not reflecting on the Treasurer. Is that correct?

Mr Leo: That is right.

Mr Coulter: That is good. As long as we have that out before we get into it.

Mr Smith: We shall now decide what we do next.

Mr Coulter: That is good, as long as you are not reflecting on the Treasurer. That is the point that I am trying to make.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members are unable to ask questions in such a way that they may or can reflect on a member. However, I believe that, at this stage at least, the Leader of the Opposition is seeking information and, as such, there is no point of order.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I have finished my question.

ANSWER

Following that debate, Mr Speaker, from my recollection of the question put to me, the answer was no.

Mr Bell: You had better be careful. You would not want to be misleading the House.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will again remind honourable members that they are not the only ones interested in the questions or the answers. Members in the public gallery and those people outside listening to the radio broadcasts are also interested. I ask, out of courtesy to those people and other members, that interjections cease.

Visit of Federal Minister for Education

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Recently, it was recorded in the Tennant Creek Times that the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Hon John Dawkins, had visited the Territory and accompanied the Minister for Education on his visits to Aboriginal communities. Can the minister advise us on the outcome of these visits with the federal minister, Mr Dawkins?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I expected a question from the opposition in relation to the visit by the federal Minister for Education, Hon John Dawkins, but unfortunately it has not been asked so far.

The visit of Mr Dawkins was intended really to allow him to see how I am conducting my review into Aboriginal education. I think that it was a very successful exercise, and I am sure that John Dawkins has a better understanding of the problems confronting us in the Northern Territory, particularly some of the serious problems in Aboriginal communities. I believe that also he has a better understanding of the potential for taxpayers' dollars to be wasted in many of those communities.

It is very important that we have a good relationship with the Commonwealth government. It puts many millions of dollars into assisting the provision of services and facilities in the Territory, such as education facilities. In fact, I had hoped that Hon John Dawkins would have the opportunity to open one of those facilities, and I refer to the Mutitjulu School which was completed following the expenditure of a considerable amount of federal government money. Unfortunately, through the intervention of Warren Snowdon, that opening was not able to take place.

I note the fact that the Yuendumu Sports were being held on that particular weekend. Even so, a small ceremony could have taken place to open

the Mutitjulu School, but let us forget that for the moment. The reality is that that community would not even allow the minister to visit it to look at the facility. I find that very difficult to accept. We respected the wishes of the community council but I will say here that I think it is disgraceful that a minister of the Crown, particularly a federal minister, was unable to visit that community to look at that particular facility. The exercise was simply to show him where the taxpayers' dollars are going and what was being built as a result of that expenditure.

As I said, I am disappointed. I do not know what Warren Snowdon is worried about. Is he worried that the Commonwealth government may get on with the Northern Territory government? I think it is time that he stopped this nonsense. John Dawkins came to the Territory at my request. As a result, he had the opportunity to attend the Yuendumu Sports. I was to take him to the sports on Saturday morning, but we were to be there for only an hour and a half and the organisers wanted us to be there longer. For that reason, he came down later and took part in the sports on Sunday.

It is very important that we have a good relationship with the Commonwealth and that our federal ministerial counterparts come to the Territory to see where the dollars are being spent and how we are going about addressing some of the problems. John Dawkin's trip included visits to Finke, Tennant Creek and Ngukurr. I also took him to Kormilda College to see the work being done there. Finally, we went to Oenpelli and he took a jet from there to Yuendumu.

I close by saying that we need to have good relationships with the Commonwealth government in relation to this. I have tried very hard and I am very pleased that John Dawkins came to the Northern Territory at my request. I believe that, as a result of that, he now has a better understanding of the problems ...

Mr Ede: A better understanding of how you conduct ...

Mr HARRIS: ... that we have in the Northern Territory.

You will note in the future what you have just said because he does have a better understanding. You will note that some of the directions that he takes will reflect that understanding.

I am very pleased to inform members that I believe that the visit was successful and beneficial for the minister. I hope that he is able to visit the Territory again and, indeed, to open the Mutitjulu School at some later stage. I hope that the federal member for the Territory, Warren Snowdon, does not try to intervene again and have a community reach a stage of requesting ministers not to visit it.

Compensation for Chamberlains

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In the absence of the Attorney-General, I direct my question to the Minister for Mines and Energy. It concerns a matter which, I am sure, is of interest and concern to all Territorians and, indeed, many Australians. Is he able to give any information regarding the Chamberlain compensation case?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the question on notice. I am not sure whether the Attorney-General will be present tomorrow. However, I will relay the question to him.

Doctor's Gully Property - Transfer of Title

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Hansard shows that, during yesterday's question time, he was asked if he was aware at the time of his Doctor's Gully transaction that he intended to raise the rate of duty on such transactions in his budget. Hansard shows that the Chief Minister's reply to the question was no. However, in his personal explanation some hours later, he told this House that he was aware of his intention to raise the duty and, as Treasurer, proceeded with his personal transactions regardless.

Does the Chief Minister understand that these admissions, on their own, establish beyond any dispute the case for his resignation? Will he now make good the \$5750 lost to Consolidated Revenue and will he now resign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is obviously taking whatever opportunities he can find to try to get further media coverage on this matter. I advised the Assembly yesterday that decisions taken, to transfer the title of a property belonging to myself to a company, were taken months before any deliberations on this year's Northern Territory budget.

I am very proud of my record as Treasurer of the Northern Territory. If I had wanted to blemish that record by fiddling the books in some way, I would obviously have recommended to Cabinet, in considering the available tax options, that we not touch stamp duty. That would have avoided any possibility of criticism being directed at me and it would have eliminated any possibility of a debate such as this. Indeed, I could have gone further. I could have argued that, in the interests of business in the Northern Territory, we should perhaps reduce stamp duty. I could then have deferred the transaction that I was proposing at that time, in order to save a bit more money.

An enormous amount of trust is placed in one as Treasurer of the Northern Territory, as it is placed on all ministers of the Northern Territory government. We adhere to that trust very firmly. As I say, I am proud of my record in handling the financial affairs of the Northern Territory. I have no reason whatsoever to feel a shadow of guilt in relation to this matter. I made the decision months earlier - I say 'months' - before we realised that the federal government would propose a cut to the Northern Territory budget which was twice that made to the states and which would necessitate Cabinet considering a tax options paper in the middle of June.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table a statutory declaration from my accountant. Honourable members will see that it demonstrates that, as long ago as December last year, this matter was discussed with him. Instructions were given in January 1989 when the decision was taken.

Leave granted.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition has nothing more substantial to do with the House's time, particularly given that the Northern Territory budget has been brought down recently and he has received a fair bit of criticism over his initial reaction to it, that is a terrible shame. It is a shame that the population of the Northern Territory has to tolerate this waste of the Assembly's time.

Land Tax

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

The Leader of the Opposition has said publicly that he would favour the imposition of a land tax in the Territory as an alternative to some other taxes. Does the Treasurer have any information about how a land tax would apply and whether it has been considered as a tax form in the Northern Territory?

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! That question is based on an untruth. I have not said that. I have said that a land tax would be considered by the opposition. I have certainly not said that a land tax would be adopted by the opposition.

Mr Dondas: You said you would favour the imposition ...

Mr Smith: I have not said that.

Mr Dondas: The term that I used was 'in favour of'.

Mr Smith: I have not said that. This is pretty desperate stuff, isn't it?

Mr Setter: It is a fine line.

Mr Coulter: There is no point of order anyway.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I advise the Leader of Government Business that I will rule on whether there is a point of order or not. There is no point of order.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly in speaking on the 7.30 Report a couple of nights ago, the Leader of the Opposition did indeed indicate that the Labor Party, if it ever assumed office in the Territory, would consider the imposition of a land tax in the Northern Territory to raise revenue. He said a couple of other things which were fairly amazing. He said he would have reduced public service expenditure by \$10m this year. In addition, he announced recently that the ALP would be very keen to introduce a \$30m scheme to assist shaky businesses in the Northern Territory.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will take the opportunity, when he replies to the budget today, to address some of the questions that I am sure Territorians are interested in. In his considerations of a land tax for the Northern Territory, a tax specifically rejected by the Northern Territory government in the 11 years since self-government, it would be helpful if he advised Territorians of some of the criteria which would be applied in its implementation. Would it apply to all Territorians, thereby creating the inequity of having double taxation on residential properties in municipal areas which, of course, already pay local government rates? Would he exempt residential properties and impose a higher level of impost on commercial properties in the Northern Territory, thereby making the burden carried by productive people in the community even heavier than it is today? It is important that the shadow spokesman on economic affairs in this Assembly clearly advise the community of the sort of criteria he intends to apply in this area.

He has also made an amazing statement about a \$10m cut to public service expenditure which he would have imposed this year. He has an obligation to address that very question in his reply today. Where would he reduce expenditure? We must bear in mind that we are now in the fifth year of savage cuts by the federal government to the Northern Territory's budget and the public service departments have been screwed down very savagely year after year. He tells us now there is \$10m-worth of savings there. I would like to know, and so would others, where he would find that \$10m? Would he take it from education or health services? Would he take it from the TDZ and stop it building the factories which people require to create some jobs? Would he take it from the Tourist Commission which is promoting the Territory and trying to bring tourists here, if we can only keep the aeroplanes flying? Perhaps he could take it from the police or correctional services. Would he take it from the arts or sport and recreation? He should tell us where he would make the cuts. Who are the public servants who would have lost their jobs in the \$10m cut which he believes should have been made in this year's budget?

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will tell us this morning about where the \$30m will come from to prop up non-commercial business, as announced in his recent economic policy. We are fascinated to know where the money would come from. There may be an opportunity that we have overlooked and, as Treasurer, I would be most interested in hearing where the dollars could be found. Perhaps he thinks that he could get it by adopting the Territory Nationals' 21-point plan and selling off Yulara and the Sheratons. I can assure him that, if he were to terminate those financial arrangements, he would face a debt much larger than \$30m. He knows, as does the Leader of the Territory Nationals, that such a notion is an absolute nonsense.

Mr Tuxworth: That is a load of hogwash, and you know it. You are locked into debt you cannot afford to pay.

Mr Coulter: The last time electricity charges went up was when Ian Tuxworth was Chief Minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Doctor's Gully Property - Transfer of Title

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

In light of the Chief Minister's previous response in which he refused to resign and refused to pay back \$5750, will the Deputy Chief Minister advise the Chief Minister of his responsibilities to the parliament and to the community, and will he, if not for the good of the parliament then for the survival of his own party, advise the Chief Minister to resign?

No answer given.

Mr Smith: You are not prepared to get up and support him, are you?

Mr Coulter: What a lot of nonsense.

Mr Smith: You are not prepared to get up and support him.

Mr Coulter: Why don't you wake up to yourself?

Mr Smith: Good one, Barry.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Have you got anything constructive to say today, anything at all?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Anzac Hill Flagpoles Illumination

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

By way of preamble, I appreciate the late invitation to the opening ceremony in relation to the lighted flagpoles on Anzac Hill but, even at this late stage, would it not be worth considering inviting the whole town of Alice Springs by means of a few radio advertisements? The flagpoles are a significant gift from the government and from the people of the Territory to the RSL to honour those who gave their lives in various wars. The opening ceremony is a significant event and I believe that it needs to be more widely canvassed.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was pleased indeed to agree to a proposal put to me by the RSL in Alice Springs some months ago. It involved the placing of 2 floodlit flagpoles on top of Anzac Hill, that very prominent lookout in Alice Springs. Those poles would fly the Territory and Australian flags in much the same way as occurs in Darwin at present. I apologise to the honourable member that, as a result of an oversight, an invitation was not extended to him to the opening, which I understand will be held tomorrow evening. Unfortunately, I will not be able to get to Alice Springs to perform that duty myself and I understand that you, Sir, will be performing that duty on my behalf.

Unfortunately, I am unaware of the details of the ceremony and who has been invited. I understood that a group of relevant people had been invited and I am prepared to have a look at what arrangements have been made. If I think there is a need for change, I will certainly issue some instructions during the course of today.

Alice Springs Casino

Mr HATTON to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Last night, on the ABC television news, an allegation was made that a cheque, additional to those mentioned by the minister in the House during yesterday's question time, was cashed contrary to ministerial directions. An entry in the government inspector's logbook of 30 October, purporting to support that allegation, was shown on television. Can the minister confirm whether the allegation was correct or not and, if it was correct, can he advise what action was taken?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am getting fed up with this constant trial by the ABC. Once again, ABC research is wildly inaccurate and unprofessional. Once again, I have had to write to the Managing Director of the ABC requesting him to investigate the reporting of yet another unfounded allegation. I believe that the ABC, through its public funding, is trying to destroy the credibility of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and the Alice Springs casino.

Yesterday in question time, I gave a clear and accurate description of a series of events relating to an incident that occurred on 29 October, when a client at the casino cashed cheques to the value of \$6000 and, at the end of gaming, redeemed \$2000 of that amount. I stated that \$4000 was banked and cleared.

The amateur detectives of the ABC 7.30 Report, who have already produced at least 2 poorly researched and unprofessional items, one relating to the prison farm at Beatrice Hill and the other relating to a series of allegations against the Alice Springs casino, have done it again. They have compounded their action by clearly displaying a stolen document on television. I believe that they are trying to justify their original report. However, they failed to point out a number of things to viewers and I quote their words:

Mr Poole said he had no knowledge of any others prior to that date. The 4 cheques Mr Poole referred to do show up in the government inspector's logbook of 30 October. So does one more written 2 days earlier by the same patron for \$4000.

If the researcher had bothered to read the logbook, specifically the entry which has the number 430 on the page, he would have seen quite clearly, in the left hand column, a date which reads 30/10/88 and a time of 20.45 which of course is 8.45 pm. Under the heading of 'Cheques', there is a list of cheques which includes the patron's cheques of \$4000. The very next entry, which is separated by a ruled line after the cheque summary, is clearly marked 20.50, which is 5 minutes after the previous entry. That entry reads: 'Further to above entry, tonight's count produces 4 cheque credits for the patron, 2 x \$2000 and 2 x \$1000'. Despite this entry, the ABC reporter inferred that these were separate transactions. In fact, they refer to the same transaction. The ABC reporter, reading from an illegally obtained document, has again misinformed the public.

I stated clearly in question time yesterday that the patron had cashed \$4000 whilst gaming, which started on the evening of 29 October and continued into the early morning of 30 October. Those entries were written up by the government inspector on duty at that time, who was the secretary of the Territory Nationals in Alice Springs, Michael Cafe.

Government casino control records for the period 28 October through to 30 October, clearly and unquestionably show that, regardless of the date written in the logbook of the cheques, the casino operator accepted those cheques on 29 October. What I cannot understand is why the reporters have decided to set up the ABC as a de facto opposition, particularly when I have given them the opportunity to ask myself and the Chairman of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission whatever questions they need to ask and have said we will explain anything they do not understand. The casino industry is a specialised industry. The casino inspectors are trained to oversee and investigate that industry. I do not expect an ABC reporter to be able to interpret a government casino inspector's logbook, but I am quite happy to answer any questions on anything that is written on the documents which the ABC obtained illegally.

The ABC may be assured that I will not let the matter rest. The wider community expects it to act responsibly. In a letter to my press secretary, the ABC Director of Television states: 'A key element of ABC editorial guidelines is that the ABC has a duty to report the discussion with all its contradictions provided there is a reasonable and adequately researched basis for the story in the first place'. It is obvious to me that the ABC's strict

editorial guidelines, which apparently attempt to ensure that balance is generally satisfied, have again not been followed. Again, I have taken action under section 82 of the ABC Act to have this report investigated.

Doctor's Gully Property - Transfer of Title

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Is it true that on a previous occasion, as Acting Chief Minister, the present Chief Minister attacked a member of this House for his use of travel allowance and did that member describe his actions as not illegal but morally wrong? Is it true that, as Acting Chief Minister, the present Chief Minister issued an ultimatum to that member that he must repay the sum contested? Was that member the member for Barkly, another former CLP Chief Minister? I ask the Chief Minister whether he will now apply to himself the same high standards he then demanded of the member for Barkly.

No answer given.

Electricity Rates

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I ask this question of the minister in his capacity as minister with responsibility for the Power and Water Authority.

Is he aware that, in many cases, commercial electricity rates paid by builders using electric power when building homes on rural blocks have subsequently been charged to the occupants of those homes, who continue to pay those commercial rates unknowingly? What will the minister do about this situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if the member for Koolpinyah would like to give me more details, I will investigate the matter. Is she talking about a builder who uses a buzz-saw from a domestic power source in the construction of another building?

Mrs Padgham-Purich: No. The builder builds a home and the occupier of that home subsequently continues to be charged commercial rates.

Mr Coulter: I will certainly investigate the honourable member's claim and respond to her question during the course of these sittings.

Local Government - Non-release of Federal Funds

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This question follows a question which the minister answered on Tuesday. It concerned the refusal of the federal Minister for Local Government to release funds to Northern Territory local government bodies. Can the minister advise if any progress has been made in helping those councils obtain their funds? If not, is there anything the minister can do to provide relief to local government councils in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, I must inform honourable members that I do not yet have an answer from the federal Minister for Local Government in relation to the release of federal funds to local government in the Northern Territory. I will reiterate some of what I said the other day because I think it is important.

The Grants Commission has provided to me, as it is obliged to do, its figures for the distribution of federal local government funds this year. Those figures were forwarded to the federal minister to allow her to release the funds. I might say here that the federal minister has no other role in this matter. Once the criteria for release of dollars are met, she has no other role but to ensure that the Grants Commission has recommended distribution of funds in accordance with the guidelines agreed between the federal minister and myself. I can affirm that the Grants Commission has done so and that the federal minister agrees that it has done so. However, there has still been no release of those funds to councils in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, funds for councils in the Northern Territory are distributed on the basis of horizontal equalisation. The agreed criteria have been met and, although the federal minister agrees that that is the case, she is not prepared to release the funds. I can only assume that she will not release those funds because the application of the criteria has not led to the situation which she wanted. She believed that there would be a greater flow of funds to smaller councils than has occurred. She has no role to play in that. It is up to the Grants Commission and the Northern Territory government.

I say again that the \$6m-odd that is provided by the federal government to local government in the Northern Territory each year is spread across all local governments. It is distributed to municipal governments, community governments and other local governing bodies which are funded as local government organisations. At present, those governments and organisations require that \$6m in order to continue their efforts for their communities.

I think it is worth saying again that the Northern Territory is the only state or territory government that provides untied funds to any local governing body. We provide in the order of \$11m compared with the federal government's \$6m. Those funds are for the use of community government and other local governing bodies only. They are not distributed to municipal governments. They are to help community government councils and small Aboriginal councils, which members opposite purport to represent. The federal minister is not prepared to provide funds to those councils because the federal government's attempts at social engineering have not paid dividends.

Several courses of action are open to us. We are working on a number of fronts at present, one of which is a legal front. Another option, which is quite practical and which I have in fact taken, is to instruct the Office of Local Government immediately to release the second quarter Territory funds to those councils, that is, some 6 weeks before their release is due. I have done that so that the councils which members opposite purport to represent can continue to function. That shows the determination and the reasonableness of the Northern Territory government. It contrasts sharply with the approach of the federal minister in playing her social games.

As I said the other day, I will not wear this sort of treatment from the Commonwealth government. Last year, the people of Australia and the people of the Northern Territory made it quite clear to the federal government that local government is the responsibility of state and territory governments. That is not denied. The federal minister does not deny that we have stuck by the rules in all this, but she says that she is not releasing the money. I am convinced that it is the federal minister rather than her advisers who has set this game in motion and I am not prepared to wear it. If we are forced to take legal action to have those funds released to Aboriginal communities and other local governing bodies, we will take that legal action.

I think the attitude of the federal minister in this matter is outrageous. It is quite inappropriate for her to hold up funds which have been recommended for distribution under guidelines which she agreed to, simply because those guidelines have not produced the result which she wanted.

Child-care Centre Employees - Registration Scheme

Mr BELL TO MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I direct my questions to the Chief Minister in his capacity as Acting Minister for Health and Community Services. The questions relate to answers he gave earlier this week.

On Tuesday, the Chief Minister referred to a meeting of child-care centre directors held at Malak Child-care Centre on 17 August. Mr Speaker, you will recall, and I am sure the Chief Minister will recall, and the Hansard shows in any case, that the Chief Minister led this House to believe that child-care workers in the Northern Territory did not press for a registration scheme.

My questions without notice are as follows. When the Chief Minister made that statement, was he aware that minutes of that meeting exist? Was the Chief Minister aware that his account of that meeting was untrue? Presumably the Chief Minister was aware that the secretary of his department represented him at that meeting, and I presume that the secretary informed him of the outcome of the meeting. Can the Chief Minister then explain why he misled this parliament?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not believe that I misled the parliament. I would also like to correct the member for MacDonnell. I am not the Acting Minister for Health and Community Services. I am the minister. The member opposite takes great delight in picking up members of this House on the basis that they should be absolutely correct, and I would have expected him to know that.

In referring, as I did earlier this week, to the outcome of the meeting of directors of child-care centres in Darwin, I note the absence of a motion calling for potential employees to be checked out by government. That was the issue which the Leader of the Opposition raised during the week prior to the Wanguri by-election. He stated that the government should establish a system for checking out the bona fides and the suitability of any person who applies for a job in a child-care centre. What particularly interested me was the outcome of the meeting in relation to that suggestion. I am relying again on memory now because I have not read the papers for a few days. However, I understand that the meeting made no call, certainly no unanimous call, for the government to establish a register of potential workers in child-care centres who had been checked out by the government in terms of police records and other employment bona fides.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I do not believe that I misled the House in any way in my reference to that meeting.

Yambah Station

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he advise the Assembly of the position held by the Northern Territory government on the recent events at Yambah Station and their impact upon the excision process in the Territory in general?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is nice to think that, during the course of these sittings, this Assembly is going to consider subjects which have significant impact on the Northern Territory. It is a shame to realise that honourable members opposite, particularly those 2 representing rural electorates in central Australia, have not taken the opportunity by the third day of these sittings to raise the question of Yambah ...

Mr Bell: We have been waiting to find out what you were going to do about it, and the Prime Minister ...

Mr PERRON: Why did you not ask then? No, you are too busy trying to score a few political points across the Chamber.

Mr Bell: I did not have to. It was on the front page of the paper.

Mr Reed: Is that where you get your information?

Mr Bell: You cannot read, Mike.

Mr PERRON: Members opposite are far more interested in a political front page than they are in discussing a subject of great concern to Territorians and one about which we will be hearing a great deal more in the future.

Recent events at Yambah cannot be isolated from the overall issue of Aboriginal community living areas and land claims to public purpose lands. While I can accept in part the frustration felt by Aboriginal groups in what they regard as a legitimate pursuit of living areas, I deplore the recent action in occupying the Yambah lease as unnecessarily provocative.

The Prime Minister and I have had negotiations over the past few months on the whole question of living areas, stock routes and reserves. One of the responsibilities of all governments is to balance the various competing interests, and the Yambah situation is no exception. The Prime Minister, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and myself have all agreed that the Yambah situation is particularly sensitive and complex. It will not be resolved without a concerted and cooperative effort by all parties involved. In the present situation, one of the parties which can contribute to resolution of the situation at Yambah and, indeed, the whole issue of land for living areas, has been driven away from the negotiating table by the federal government's intransigence. The failure of the Commonwealth government to commence the amendments to section 50 of the Land Rights Act, amendments passed by both Houses of the federal parliament in 1987, is a major contributing factor to this unhappy state of affairs.

Honourable members would be aware that the Commonwealth recently proposed to take precipitate action on this issue. It indicated that it intended to add certain areas contained in stock routes and stock reserves to the schedule of the Land Rights Act as Aboriginal land, without any consideration of a hearing in relation to traditional attachment as is required under the provisions of the Land Rights Act. Further, the Commonwealth proposed to establish a Commonwealth tribunal to hear applications for living areas on pastoral leases and recommend compulsory acquisition if necessary. The resulting title would be known as Commonwealth inalienable title. Honourable members are all pretty familiar with that title. If the Commonwealth pursues that course, for the first time in history, the land claim process will be extended to alienated lands in the Northern Territory. Mr Speaker, you can just imagine the reaction of Territorians to that proposition. I propose to make a statement later today on this matter to inform members in further detail concerning the state of negotiations between the Prime Minister and myself.

However, to return to the situation at Yambah, Aboriginal people have a statutory right under Northern Territory law to enter a pastoral lease where they do not ordinarily reside on the land within the meaning of the relevant act. This does not extend to a right of residence. The pastoral lessee in this case, Mr Aaron Gorey, has taken certain legal actions to guard against trespass and to have the occupiers demonstrate that they are in fact acting within the law. Mr Speaker, who can blame him?

There is no easy answer to the Yambah question. Initially, demands were made for 5 or 6 separate living areas on the property. Later, the applicants and their legal advisers, the Central Land Council, refined the proposal to 1 area of around 77 km² to accommodate all groups. As I understand it, the pastoralist was prepared to accede to this request by offering such a living area in the north-east portion of the lease. Unfortunately, it seems that this area has poor ground water potential. The applicant groups, however, want an excision area in the vicinity of Parry Creek, an area which apparently is the heartland of the particular pastoral property. For its part, the government would consider the allocation of funds to locate an adequate water supply on the lease if this would assist a resolution to the Yambah question.

The guidelines for excisions were agreed to a couple of years ago between all parties. They refer to people who reside on pastoral leases, people who resided on pastoral leases in the recent past, or people who can demonstrate forcible removal from a pastoral lease. The land council presented a list of 147 applicants, together with details of their association with the lease. However, a check of the records dating back to 1954 revealed that, in that period, 87 people resided on Yambah at different times. Only 7 of those correlated to the list of applicants that we see today. I mention this mainly to demonstrate that the situation at Yambah is very complex. Indeed, it is far more complex than I have been able to outline here. Sadly, I am not confident of an early resolution to the situation, following advice from the Prime Minister which I received the day before yesterday. I will be elaborating further on that advice in this Assembly later this morning.

Land Tax

Mr DONDAS to TREASURER

Earlier in question time I directed a question without notice to the Treasurer in relation to land tax. The Leader of the Opposition called a point of order in relation to the nature of that question. Therefore, my question to the Treasurer is as follows.

Is he aware of a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition during an ABC radio interview on 22 August? The reporter asked the Leader of the Opposition if he would introduce new taxes if he were the Chief Minister. The Leader of the Opposition said: 'That is one of the options that we obviously have to look at but we are not going to disclose our attitude at this particular stage'. The reporter then asked another question: 'What about land tax?' The Leader of the Opposition replied: 'That is certainly something that has to be seriously looked at. It is something that this government has shied away from. It is something that any government which is serious about extending the tax base has to have a serious look at'.

Is the Treasurer aware of that statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, and is he now in a position to tell us how that tax would apply in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The Leader of the Opposition obviously very much regrets having made the statement at all now because he is trying hard to backtrack. He did use the words that 'it is something that this government has shied away from', indicating quite clearly that the Labor Party is serious about the possibility of a land tax in the Northern Territory. I say to him again that he has a responsibility to advise Territorians in his address on the budget this morning of the sort of criteria he would apply to the application of land tax in the Northern Territory. As a CLP government, we have specifically stayed away from imposing a land tax in the Northern Territory for 11 years. It is a tax that is imposed in some states. We do not believe that it would be equitable to apply it in the Northern Territory.

I am sure that Territorians are very interested in this matter because many of them own land in the Northern Territory. If the ALP is putting itself forward as some sort of alternative government, we want to know exactly what its economic policies are and what it would mean to Territorians if the opposition were putting together this budget today. How would it balance the books - if, indeed, it would try to do so? The Leader of the Opposition has a responsibility to address the question of land tax today in order to clear the matter up.

Katherine Fire Station

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister is aware of grave concerns about risk to life and property resulting from the decision to leave the new Katherine Fire Station unmanned from 5 pm to 9 am. He will be aware that all 9 Katherine auxiliary firemen have petitioned his department to reverse this decision. Has he been informed that the change to using the police will result, in many cases, in delays of 20 minutes in response times? Does he accept his responsibility for the protection of life and property in Katherine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly accept responsibility for the provision of a reasonable level of services to protect the safety of persons and property throughout the Northern Territory. I will take on board the honourable member's concerns in relation to the Katherine Fire Station and examine the matter to see whether I consider the arrangements instituted by the hierarchy of the NT Fire Service to be satisfactory.

Effects of Airlines Dispute

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TOURISM

The minister would be well aware of the discomfort created by the current airlines strike. Many tourists and visitors to the Northern Territory have been considerably inconvenienced by the strike that is in force at the moment. What action has the Northern Territory government taken to assist passengers stranded as a result of the strike?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the effect of the strike is extremely widespread. Northern Territory government tourist bureaus interstate report that the number of cancellations or disruptions to date has not been great. However, the rapidly emerging problem for the Territory's economy is shown by the fact that forward bookings are currently down by about 25%. Obviously, that relates very closely to the general public's insecurity with regard to travelling arrangements.

The indication in the short term is that the airline pilots' strike will have a disastrous impact on the September to October peak, which is a holiday period and normally is fully booked. Australians will obviously take their holidays in places which are readily accessible by surface transport or private vehicle - places that we are normally in strong competition with anyway such as Noosa, Surfers Paradise, northern New South Wales and Thredbo, the ski field area.

The largest tourist operator in the Northern Territory told me about a fortnight ago that this month would have been the biggest month he had ever had in all the years that he has been in business in the Northern Territory. He has been operating since the mid-1950s and carries literally tens of thousands of people per annum. He said yesterday that he is currently operating at about 50% of capacity. Considerable work had been done around the traps to develop what we believed would be our biggest tourist season ever. A number of foreign television companies were to come to the Northern Territory to film parts of the Territory and return to display our beautiful product in their own marketplaces: Nippon TV, Chilean TV and, I believe, a couple of companies from the UK. All those plans have been thrown into disarray.

With regard to people who are stranded, it must be pointed out that there is still coach capacity. There is certainly still accommodation capacity in the Northern Territory. I do not think that anybody will be out on the streets. Of course, the problem is that, when you are on holiday and have budgeted for a certain period at a particular destination and you suddenly find that you cannot get home or have to use alternative means to get home, you will eventually run out of money. I would like the media to publicise as widely as possible the fact that the Alice Springs Tourist Bureau on 521299 and the Darwin Tourist Bureau on 816611 are available 7 days a week to assist anybody who is stranded. If people do not have accommodation or are unable to return home, we ask them to contact the government tourist bureaus. To date, we have been assisting people. In fact, not many bookings have been lost in the Territory except during the last couple of days. Obviously, some of the slack resulting from cancellations has been taken up by other people who have the financial resources to book additional sightseeing tours, having found themselves staying in the Territory for longer than they had expected. Of course, as people run out of money, the position will worsen, assuming that this industrial impasse is not overcome.

If this dispute continues past the weekend, let me make no bones about the fact that the consequences for the industry will be disastrous. I believe the industry was recovering well after suffering earlier this year as a result of the domestic travel depression that was felt Australia-wide. Not only do we stand to lose much of the hard groundwork that has been put in by the Tourist Commission and the tourist bureaus but the industry stands to suffer financial problems at the end of this current peak period, which is normally the one time of year when operators can really obtain a significant return on their investments. Normally this is the time of the year when occupancy rates in hotels and motels are at their peak. At present, occupancy rates are starting to fall rapidly. People are moving out of the more expensive accommodation into lower priced accommodation and eventually they will make the decision to try to get home using any means available to them.

Let me assure Territorians and members of this House that the Northern Territory Tourist Bureau has been ready to assist stranded passengers and will continue do to so. It is open 7 days a week to assist any stranded passengers who need that assistance.

Alice Springs Casino - Police Inquiry Report

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

I address this question to the Chief Minister in his capacity as the minister responsible for the Northern Territory Police Force. Will he make publicly available the NT Police Force inquiry report into the operations of the Alice Springs casino?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently 2 matters were referred to the Territory police in relation to the Alice Springs casino. I have not seen either report and I look forward to receiving them. When that occurs, and if I consider that their contents are appropriate for tabling, I will certainly table them.

Mr Smith: How can the minister have seen the reports if they have not been through you first?

Mr PERRON: The minister is able to receive reports from the police force if ...

Mr Smith: So they do not go through the police minister first? What a funny system you operate!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: I will look into this matter and advise the House further. I was asked whether I would table the reports.

Mr Leo: Would you make them publicly available? I suppose tabling them is the same thing.

Mr PERRON: I have not as yet read the reports and, upon doing so, will make a decision as to whether or not their contents are suitable for tabling. Honourable members would be aware that not every report prepared by the police is suitable for tabling. Until I have looked at these reports, I really cannot make that decision.

Pacific School Games - Government Assistance

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

A press release was issued recently stating that the construction of the international outdoor stadium at Marrara will be completed. I welcome that statement made by the Chief Minister. My question to the Minister for Education is: what assistance will the Northern Territory government provide to assist the conduct of the Pacific School Games in Darwin in 1992?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister's announcement last week was very positive. It is a pity that it did not receive the coverage that it deserved because the Pacific School Games will be the largest sporting event ever held in the Northern Territory. Something like 3000 primary and secondary students will take part in the games, which are the equivalent of an Olympic Games for young people in the region. The 3000 participants will come from 23 countries around the Pacific as well as all the states and territories of Australia.

To give honourable members an idea of the scale of the games, I refer to the Commonwealth Games held in Brisbane, where 1500 athletes from 45 countries competed. At the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games, 1600 competitors from 26 countries competed. The Masters Games, which have been a great success in the Northern Territory, involved something like 2500 competitors. However, these Pacific School Games in 1992 will involve 3000-odd competitors. It is expected that an additional 3000 parents and officials will attend, giving a total of 6000 visitors to Darwin. I do not need to spell out for honourable members the tremendous economic benefits that such an event will have.

During the next 3 years of planning, the government will be giving financial assistance. Announcements about that assistance will be made as time goes by. I might say that the responsibility for organising the games lies with the Australian Sports Council. The Northern Territory School Sports Council will be responsible for ensuring that everything is in place to meet the requirements of the games.

This year's budget makes provision for a synthetic track, which will be constructed by 1992. We will be able to put on a wonderful show here and there will be definite benefits to the Northern Territory and Darwin in particular. The Pacific School Games are of major importance throughout the Pacific region. The scale of the games needs to be emphasised. They will bring 6000 people to Darwin. Last week's announcement was very positive and it is a pity that it did not receive a great deal of media coverage. I would like to wish all the people who will be involved in that exercise well. It will put enormous strain on Brian Deslandes, the Chairman of the NT School Sports Council, and his members, but I am sure that, with government assistance in funds and in kind, they will be able to carry out their duties in a most professional manner.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Alice Springs Casino - Police Inquiry Report

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I wish to clarify an answer I gave earlier in relation to police reports.

I understand that, in fact, an interim report of only a few lines on the subject of allegations of money laundering at the Alice Springs casino did

come into my office and was possibly handed to me during the last couple of days. A copy was given to the minister responsible for racing and gaming, as is quite reasonable. I do not recall seeing that report although it is probably on my desk with many other papers. I understand that it reports briefly on current progress in examining the matter and implies that a further report is coming.

Mr Smith: What about the report into the blackjack table?

Mr PERRON: I have probably received an interim police report on one of the matters which was referred to them recently.

Year 10 Examinations

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer the Minister for Education to allegations that I passed on to him last night which would indicate that the security and integrity of the forthcoming Year 10 examinations have been compromised. Is it true that some students who have been picked for interstate excursions will be allowed to sit the examinations early? Are some of the teachers who are involved in developing the examinations now involved in coaching students for those exams, with a possibility of subconsciously giving their students some advantage? There are allegations that the exams were trialed at Year 11 level at Darwin High. There is also the possibility that the examinations were accessed and copies taken from the Mac computer in the Professional Services Branch.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Stuart for his question. The matter which he raised last night is a very serious one. As I indicated at that time, we were aware that moves were being considered to discredit the Year 10 assessment. There were 3 ways in which that could be done. First, there was a proposal to run a program of civil disobedience. That was floated by COGSO and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. The people involved in that exercise should be ashamed of themselves but I am very pleased to note that it was not persisted with. The second possibility was that papers or information would be leaked, and the honourable member referred to that. As I mentioned, contingency plans are in place to cover that particular situation. The third manner in which the exams could be discredited was to arrange for students to be away from their school during the course of the examination period.

I might say that schools have known for a long time that the exams were to be held at the end of September. Indeed, all schools were notified in March that that was to be the case. Nevertheless, yesterday I received a ministerial seeking approval for overseas travel for a number of students, including some Year 10 students. That is a disappointment. I will come to the answer to the question in a minute but I think it is important that I cover all of this. It is a disappointment when the school concerned knew in March that the examinations were to occur. It should not have involved Year 10 students in that particular excursion and I have not approved that travel.

A number of issues were raised last night by the member for Stuart. The first referred to student exemptions and the possibility that students permitted to sit for the exams early could pass on information to other students. I indicate that some students have received exemptions and I stress that it is not unusual for that to occur. It is a normal practice. There are certain circumstances in which that occurs. These include hospitalisation, correspondence, participation in national competitions and so forth. The small number of students involved will sit for the exams after other students or at the same time. There is therefore no risk to the main body of students.

The second question related to teachers involved in panels setting the examinations whilst continuing to teach Year 10 classes and the possibility that they could subconsciously teach to the test. Mr Speaker, that really impugns the integrity of the teachers involved, who have all signed a declaration.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Just listen to the answers I am giving. All examination systems involve practising teachers in the setting of examinations. It is not uncommon and it is a matter of trusting good people. The other aspect that must be realised is that, in the maths area particularly, the examination covers the entire curriculum. People teaching Year 10 students would be aware that the examinations will be based on the whole curriculum. To answer the question asked by the member for Stuart, there are teachers on the panel which set the examination and those teachers are teaching in the schools.

The third question related to the actual tests being trialed with Year 11 students at Darwin High School. Inquiries with Darwin High School to date have revealed no evidence that this has occurred. I am investigating that matter further because I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that if there is any risk whatsoever of the examination papers being out in the community at this time, a different examination will be set for the end of September.

The fourth question concerned access to a hard disk. I think the honourable member was referring to the fact that, before security was fully in place, there was a possibility that information could have been obtained from the computer. As I mentioned last night, it is a stand-alone computer but, during the period when papers were transferred to soft disk for safe storage, it was possible that information could have been obtained. Again I say that this is a very serious allegation. In fact, the police have been called in to investigate that particular matter.

I mentioned last night, and I need to mention here today again, that contingency plans are in place and, regardless of any campaign which may be launched to discredit the Year 10 assessment package introduced by the government this year, we will ensure that the integrity and confidentiality of examination papers is maintained. I have made that very clear. If the member for Stuart has information, he has the responsibility to provide me with the source of that information ...

Mr Ede: I most certainly will not.

Mr HARRIS: He says that he most certainly will not. He has raised a very serious matter. If he has information which can assist in an investigation of this matter, he should provide it.

Mr Ede: I will provide you with the information but I will not provide you with the names of my sources.

Mr HARRIS: As I have said, the police have been called in to investigate this matter further. I can assure parents that contingency plans are in place so that, if there is any risk at all that the examination papers are out in the community, that matter can be addressed by the board.

Economic Indicators in Alice Springs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I understand that the southern region of his department has just concluded a survey of economic indicators in Alice Springs. Does that survey indicate a positive or negative response for the Alice Springs area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no doubt all honourable members will be pleased to discover that the latest economic indicators point to a distinctly resurgent Alice Springs' economy. The southern region office of the Department of Industries and Development has completed such a survey and, from today, it will be releasing a series of graphs and charts to the Alice Springs community. Those graphs, 20 of them in all, paint an accurate picture of the town's economic state. They will be updated regularly and made available to the public as part of the government's strategy to keep the community informed about changing economic circumstances, thereby providing vital information to the private sector and contributing to economic opportunities.

The information is based on statistics drawn from sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Valuer-General's Office and the Motor Vehicle Registry. Not all of the graphs tell good news, but most of them certainly do, at the very least showing sharp upturns during the past 12 months. I will provide honourable members with some examples.

The average sale price of a detached dwelling has risen from about \$86 000 in 1987-1988 to about \$94 000 in 1988-89. At the same time, the price of residential land has fallen from about \$33 000 to \$23 000. According to the latest figures available, receipts from room nights in Alice Springs hotels and motels have increased sharply, from about \$330 000 to over \$500 000. Telephone service supplies have risen from \$9000 to \$9500.

The volume of freight carried into Alice Springs has fallen slightly, but freight carried out has increased quite sharply. Indications from revenue at Alice Springs Airport indicate that the number of passengers coming through the terminal continues to be very steady - obviously, that was written before the airline pilots' strike. Motor vehicle registrations have bottomed out. In terms of the federal Treasurer's well-known J-curve, numbers fell between 1984-85 and 1987-88, but rose vigorously in 1988-89. The value of horticultural products has increased in spectacular fashion from about \$250 000 in 1986 to over \$1m in 1988. Cattle turn-off numbers have stayed steady and enrolments in schools are on the increase again after a slight fall between 1987 and 1988.

Mr Speaker the graphs are most interesting and I would be pleased to provide copies to interested honourable members on application. I will hand the Leader of the Opposition a copy now. Copies for other members will be made available during the course of the day if they so wish.

The graphs provide the same detail as those provided by the Treasurer in Budget Paper No 6. As I say, they are warts-and-all graphs and indicators. Some are good and some are bad but I am sure that, like yourself Mr Speaker, honourable members will be interested to see that some of the figures which have been quoted about the depressed state of the Alice Springs economy and the Centralian economy generally simply are not accurate. Things are going very well down there. Times are still tight and hard but there are some breakthroughs and these graphs indicate that quite vividly.

Darwin High School

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In asking this question, I remind the minister that Darwin High School is located in his own electorate. Can he confirm that Year 12 students at that

school, now only weeks away from their final examinations, have no qualified French teacher, even though a qualified French teacher was made redundant at this time last year and paid many thousands of dollars in redundancy pay? Can he also confirm that those students have to attend word-processing classes after hours because the school has no teacher available in this area, and a teacher from Casuarina High School has to take the classes? Has the school also been forced to bring a teacher back from medical retirement to teach accounting and is it true that other teacher shortages are so severe that two Band 2 teachers are taking on double teaching loads and at least one teacher who is paid to work part-time is actually working full-time in an attempt to get children through the exams? Given the heroic efforts of the teachers and the damage to the students' future, what excuse is the minister - who is also the local member - offering to parents, students and teachers about this sorry situation?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I advise all honourable members that question time is limited to 1 hour and long questions seeking considerable detail, such as that just asked by the honourable member, as is his right, should more appropriately be placed on notice.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart raised this issue on another occasion. I will say to him initially that he ought to get his facts right because Darwin High School is not in my electorate. Perhaps he ought ...

Mr Ede: I will take you up on that. You don't know.

Mr Dondas: He knows his own electorate.

Mr Ede: He doesn't. I checked.

Mr HARRIS: It is disappointing when teachers leave schools in the middle of the year. Indeed, people who are prepared to do that should give some thought to changing their profession. Most teachers realise that they have a responsibility to the students whom they teach. It is true that teachers have left Darwin High School, at very short notice in some cases, and this has left students in a difficult situation. However, there are teachers within the system who are willing to work extra time to cover those positions and to help those students. I am grateful to those teachers because they are professional in the true sense.

Mr Speaker, it is not possible for me to positively address the issue of teachers leaving in mid-year. Perhaps the Northern Territory Teachers Federation and, indeed, the member for Stuart and others, should endeavour to make it very clear to people entering the teaching profession that there is a need to have a degree of commitment ...

Mr Ede: How about you doing something about their conditions of employment?

Mr HARRIS: Listen here, would you just keep quiet for a moment? You might learn something.

Mr Ede: You have been promising it for 9 months.

Mr HARRIS: I have made it very clear in this Assembly that there are processes which frustrate efforts to improve teaching conditions. I have made that very clear.

Mr Speaker, in the budget speech you will note that we have taken action in relation to incentives. We have introduced a Master Teachers Program, and I will give further details on that in due course. The events at Darwin High School are most unfortunate, but I understand that all classes are being attended to in an appropriate manner at this point in time.

This business about teachers leaving the Territory and teachers not being prepared to come to the Territory is a load of nonsense. We were able to recruit teachers to fill those vacant positions. They, however, were responsible. They would not leave their interstate positions. They would not leave their students at this time of the year. They are staying in their present positions and are quite happy to start working here next year.

Mr Ede: Why don't you look after the teachers we already have?

Mr HARRIS: We can attract teachers to the Territory. Our conditions are good. In fact, Bob Wharton, the former President of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, said that we have a very good system here. Others would agree. We have an excellent system in the Territory and even the current president of the federation agrees on that.

Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is simply trying to make political mileage out of the situation.

Mr Ede: What about those kids who ...

Mr HARRIS: The reality is that teachers who leave at this time of the year should be condemned. They have a responsibility to students. The member for Stuart is also aware that we are trying to get more and more local people involved in the teaching profession and we have plans which will accomplish that. We will continue to work for the betterment of teachers and we will continue to provide better facilities than anywhere else in Australia. Our staffing formulas are as good as, if not better than, anywhere else in the country. I believe that we are looking after our teachers and I can assure the House that we will continue to fight to ensure that incentives are introduced to help our teachers here in the Territory. We will be encouraging more local people to get involved in the teaching profession.

Mr Speaker, I condemn those teachers who have left at this time of the school year.

Mr Ede: I am sure that the kids will be very grateful.

Mr HARRIS: The member for Stuart shouts across the Chamber that it is all very well and what about the students? Can't he hear me? I agree with him. It is disgraceful for teachers to leave in the middle of the year. We have been able to fill those positions temporarily. The member for Stuart is aware of that and the teachers who are assisting are to be thanked for their efforts. They have a professional approach and it is a pity that their former colleagues did not have a similar approach.

Litchfield Park - Upgrading of Roads

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What program for upgrading of roads in Litchfield National Park is provided for in the 1989-90 budget?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the question from the member for Nightcliff, this is currently a matter of serious concern, and not just in a budgetary sense. The Minister for Tourism has spoken quite proudly about the developments in Litchfield National Park, as has the Minister for Conservation. A great deal is happening now in terms of developing facilities in the park. However, the question of the roads is much more important than merely providing access to the park.

I have become increasingly concerned about the number of accidents which have occurred within the park in recent times. During the dry season, heavy amounts of traffic, including many 4-wheel-drive vehicles, have caused damage to the roads to such an extent that serious accidents are occurring. During the weekend before last, for example, there were 3 roll-overs on roads in the park. Those accidents are occurring as a result of a combination of factors. Speed is one, together with the corrugation caused by heavy buses and other large vehicles, and accumulation of dust in some sections of winding road.

In the context of these problems, Cabinet gave more consideration to roads in this park than might otherwise have been given and this year the budget allocation for road upgrading in the park has been increased to some \$4m. The Department of Transport and Works has determined that construction of the Ada Creek crossing will be undertaken this year. Drainage works, formation and gravelling will be carried out in the section of the ring road between the upper Finnis River and Wangi Falls. The sealing of the Windmill Road and selected sections of road between Florence and Wangi Falls are on the current program. In fact, a contract for the majority of that work was let the other day. The plan is to get as much as possible done this year to enable greater access during the wet season although, of course, that will depend upon the intensity of rainfall during the season. Last year, we were unfortunate in having a very early start to the wet season which set back the road program and led to significant road damage.

The forward program for the next 5 years will not see the complete sealing of the road through the park but the road surface will certainly be upgraded to a suitable and safe standard. Most of the lower sections of the ring road will be sealed to provide appropriate access. In the meantime, the department is trying to maintain the road at a reasonable standard. We will be placing some additional warning signs for people who are not used to driving on gravel roads. People need to take special care on these gravel roads as they are becoming corrugated very quickly. There is a need for specific care to ensure that our tourism reputation is not damaged because of injuries to people.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to TREASURER

I refer initially to the Treasurer's budget speech. At page 18, he mentioned that \$800 000 had been allocated for design work on the Alice Springs flood mitigation dam. However, in the document 'Regional Highlights, Alice Springs and Barkly', there is a reference which says: 'Alice Springs flood mitigation dam - construct \$15m'. Would he please set the record straight in relation to this matter? We do not want to do the sort of thing that the federal government does, making big announcements about 5-year projects when the intention is only to carry out a little of the work in the first year.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to clarify the matter, I can advise the honourable member that the budget papers show a cash provision of \$800 000 for this financial year. The reference to a figure of \$15m relates to a program for the dam. It would have been fairly silly for us to put in the budget papers a figure of \$800 000 for the dam. The figure of \$15m is an indication of the size of the project as estimated at present. I hope that it has not led to any confusion.

I certainly do not want to adopt the practice adopted by the federal Treasurer in giving the impression, when announcing projects, that the figures are cash amounts when, in fact, they are program figures. A recent example was the relocation of the cavalry regiment to Darwin. I think the federal government proposes to spend some \$65m on that project. That was the impression given in the budget recently handed down by the federal Treasurer. In fact, that budget contains \$2.5m, with the balance to be spread over a fairly long period of time.

That reminds me of another interesting item in the federal Treasurer's budget speech. He said that, in 1995, pensioners in Australia will no longer be required to pay income tax. I thought it interesting that a government which is in power today and which may well not be in power in 6 months time, makes a commitment in its budget that pensioners will not have to pay tax in 5 years time. I think that is going overboard in terms of commitments to the public - commitments which governments cannot honestly be sure of meeting.

Hong Kong Expo

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Plans for the Northern Territory Resources and Lifestyle Expo in Hong Kong in November are obviously well advanced. Is the minister in a position to advise the House of the level of Territory participation in the expo, both from the public and the private sector?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to do that. I preface my response to the honourable member with the general observation that the Hong Kong Expo at the New World Centre from 1 to 5 November will dwarf any previous trade exhibition mounted by the Northern Territory. I am particularly heartened by the levels of interest and commitment from the private sector. At last count, 26 companies had made commitments to the expo, either as exhibitors or participants in seminars. They range from high-profile companies like Westpac to small exhibitors with specific expertise, such as Territory Ochre which plans to display works by Territory artists.

Most Territory government departments and authorities will have a presence at the expo. The Department of Industries and Development and the Trade Development Zone will obviously have a bigger presence than others, both in terms of displays and seminar participation. Others are contributing to displays but not sending staff. The Commonwealth will also be participating through Austrade and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

Expo organisers are currently working with Commonwealth immigration authorities to establish a mechanism for handling the expected high levels of direct immigration inquiries. Mr Speaker, you will appreciate that, during the past 2 months, Darwin and the Northern Territory have received a high degree

of publicity as desirable areas for relocation and we know, on the basis of interest shown in advance of the exhibition, that the Territory exhibit will be the centre of much attention. Immigration, of course, is not a direct responsibility of the Territory government. It would, however, be unrealistic to go into the expo with the intention of ignoring it. It is too much to expect that Hong Kong people will distinguish between the Territory government and the federal government or be familiar with our federal system. It would also be a dereliction of duty to simply turn away immigration inquiries made in good faith. Expo organisers are therefore in the process, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, of setting up a system to handle immigration questions, at least in the first instance.

Perhaps I should explain to honourable members that the Hong Kong Expo is not simply a government exercise. It is being organised jointly with the Territory private sector and, indeed, the organising committee is comprised largely of private sector representatives. I could talk for some time about how the expo is progressing and what it is likely to achieve. However, in the interests of keeping this response during question time brief, I will conclude by informing honourable members of the intended program of events.

The official opening ceremony on 1 November will be performed by the Chief Minister in association with Hong Kong dignitaries. That night, the Chief Minister will host the official Territory expo dinner at the Hong Kong Sheraton, at which Territory produce will comprise the entire menu. Each day during the expo, an Aboriginal group will perform for visitors. New crocodile skin fashion wear is being produced especially for the expo, and there will be demonstrations by the Territory's male and female world crab tying champions. The seminar program includes coverage of investment opportunities in minerals and energy processing. In addition, general business investment opportunities, Territory professional and freight services, tourism, transport, education, technical and further education and the Northern Territory University will all figure prominently in the expo. There will be assorted hospitality functions and produce-tasting of Territory food, particularly seafood. All in all, given that the whole exhibition part of the expo has been integrated into an attractive and purposeful display of the Territory's resources and lifestyle, it should be a monumental event.

Organisers are catering for about 15 000 visitors a day. Many more than that could turn up, but the display has been designed to accommodate that sort of traffic flow comfortably. If more attend, queues are likely to develop. Should that occur, the organisers have prepared contingency plans to entertain and inform people waiting in queues.

The Hong Kong Expo will lift the profile of the Northern Territory enormously in one of the world's major trading centres. I believe it will be a significant event in the development story of the Northern Territory.

Alice Springs Casino

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TOURISM

I preface the question by asking the minister if he recalls attacking the credibility and professionalism of the ABC 7.30 Report in his investigation of credit betting at the Alice Springs Casino. Does he understand that his credibility and professionalism is now under further scrutiny as a result of statements made to this House? Secondly, does he accept that the documents quoted from in this House have established that he was wrong in stating that a total of 5 cheques from a certain gambler were accepted by the casino? And

thirdly, will he please explain how he failed to get his facts right even before delivering a prepared statement on the matter to this House?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to answer the member for Nhulunbuy's questions. Probably the easiest way to do so is to go through the document tabled in this House last night by the member for Barkly, purporting to be a statement made by one Mr Michael Cafe who, at the time the allegations were raised, was a government casino inspector.

The first point Mr Cafe made was to deny that he had ever supplied the ABC 7.30 Report with documents. I did not suggest that Mr Cafe gave the stolen casino documents to the 7.30 Report. Rather, I believed that they were handed over by the member for Barkly. Mr Cafe gave the documents to Mr Tuxworth.

In paragraph 2 of his statement, Mr Cafe says: 'I deny making the photocopies as alleged on 1 December 1988 at 6 am or any other time'. Mr Speaker, I have read an incident report which states that a casino security officer was approached by Michael Cafe, who was dressed in a T-shirt, shorts and sandals. According to the report, he established his identity with an ID card and asked for the alarm in the casino inspector's office to be isolated. The time was just after 6 am on 12 December 1988. The government casino inspector, Michael Cafe, had been on sick leave from 15 November and, as the security officer was a new employee, he did not know him personally. He therefore checked with his security manager and asked to see Mr Cafe's ID again.

Mr Cafe deliberately contravened a written instruction applying to all commission inspectors by attending the casino whilst off duty and without authorisation. Cafe, according to the security officer, appeared to have other things on his mind and to be upset. The alarm was isolated at 6.13 am and access was given. The report of the security officer states that Cafe was seen in that office reading a large green book. It looked like an incident book of some sort. Cafe vacated the office and the security officer reset the alarm at 6.40. The only large green book in that office, to the Racing and Gaming and Liquor Commission's knowledge, is the government inspectorate logbook.

Mr Cafe says that I accused him of covertly entering the Alice Springs casino on 12 December and that the statement I made was deliberately misleading. He is wrong. He had no right to be in the casino on that occasion. He was on sick leave and he contravened a government inspectorate direction from the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. It is not correct to say that I should be aware that anyone can come or go at any hour of the day or night. It is not correct.

In the fourth paragraph of his statement, Mr Cafe says:

To suggest that the 7.30 Report story was manufactured by me because I was a member of the Northern Territory Nationals is nonsense. The illegal acts and improprieties which I complained to Mr Poole about were carried out over a period of approximately 12 months and I visited Mr Poole on no less than 6 occasions.

Mr Speaker, I do not believe that Mr Cafe made any complaints because he was a member of the Territory Nationals.

In response to his claim that he visited me on 6 occasions, I agree that he did visit me several times. I am not sure exactly how many times he visited me because he had a habit of dropping into my office occasionally, bearing in mind that I was a backbencher at the time and frequently in my electorate office in Alice Springs. I should say that his first visit to me was to ask for my assistance in securing his tenure in a federal government house as, at the time, he was employed as a security guard at Pine Gap. I am not sure of the exact sequence of Mr Cafe's visits and I do not believe that it is particularly relevant. However, on another occasion he came to see me because he was being threatened with suspension or dismissal from the federal guard service at Pine Gap. This was because he had a second job and had not received permission to have other employment.

On yet another occasion when he came to see me in my electorate office, he said that he believed his employers were trying to get rid of him because he had made a number of allegations about improper practices and procedures at the joint defence facility. On that occasion, I spoke to the senior Australian defence official at Pine Gap who told me that the allegations had been investigated by the Federal Police. A police inspector had been flown up from Adelaide and found Mr Cafe's allegations to be unsubstantiated. On another visit to my office, Mr Cafe told me that he had resigned because he felt that pressure had been put on him and that the government wanted him to vacate his house. He felt that that was unfair because his wife was still employed at the base as a security guard although, having been recruited locally, she was technically not entitled to housing. I followed up that request with the base administration and I believe that she was allowed to stay in the house.

The fifth and sixth paragraphs of Mr Cafe's letter basically allege that he showed me various reports and that I made comments about the Chairman of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission, and a security inspector.

Mr Speaker, Mr Cafe alleged that the Alice Springs casino was not handling cheques correctly in terms of the 10-day banking period. As a result, I asked the Chairman of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission to conduct an audit of the casino's safe and to advise me of the results. It was clear from the report, as I have previously indicated to the House, that the correct procedures were not being followed. The casino inspector concerned was counselled and reprimanded. The matter was subsequently discussed by the commissioners of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission, and the gaming manager was asked to show cause why his operator's licence should not be suspended. The commissioners decided to reprimand him and to warn him that any further breaches could result in the loss of his licence. They ordered him to obey ministerial directions.

I recall Mr Cafe advising me of his view that gaming surveillance equipment in the Alice Springs casino was not effective in certain areas of the casino. As a result, I arranged a visit to the casino to inspect the camera system. I must point out to honourable members that a new and far more effective and sophisticated system was installed in the Darwin casino in the last financial year and provision has been made in this year's budget for the installation of a similar system in the Alice Springs casino.

Mr Speaker, I did discuss with Mr Cafe the possibility of giving casino inspectors the additional responsibility of being liquor inspectors. The suggestion, that I showed a lack of faith in the Chairman of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and the senior inspector, is absolutely ludicrous. I deny it.

The sixth paragraph of the Cafe's letter relates to certain sequences in the cashing of cheques. I make the following comment. With regard to the gaming incident on the nights of 29 and 30 October, when further cheques were accepted by the casino, I am satisfied that the casino manager was telling the truth when he admitted his mistake. This is verified by the report covering the incident which I received from the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. I stand by the previous statement I made in this House.

The seventh paragraph concerns my advice to this House that Mr Cafe had written up cheque entries. I acknowledge that I did make a mistake in that respect. He was not the officer who actually wrote up the entries. He was on duty both before and after the time when the cheques were written up.

In his eighth paragraph, Mr Cafe refers to the amount in cheques cashed by a client of the casino on the nights of 29 and 30 October 1988 and states that the amount 'was \$6000 not \$4000 as stated by the minister in parliament'. I have already stated in this House that the total amount in cheques accepted by the casino on the nights of 29 and 30 October was \$4000. I had previously stated that the gambler had purchased a cheque back for \$2000. Mr Speaker, I will be tabling some documentary evidence with regard to that. I am happy to table the casino logbook entry and the cheque credit slips covering those amounts.

Despite what the ABC has continually alleged, there is no additional \$4000. It is purely a total amount from a list of cheques which appears on the document which I have here. Despite the fact that that entry says the date is 28 October, honourable members will see clearly that each form has time clock entries which show when each cheque was handed in.

I should perhaps explain how the cheque cashing facility works. If you have an arrangement to cash a cheque at the casino, you present the cheque at the counter and the casino takes it. You do not receive gambling chips. You receive what are called counter credit slips. You hand these slips in at whatever table you play at and, when the slip is placed in the cash box, you receive the value of the slip in chips. At the end of the evening, when you take your winnings, if any, to the cash desk and hand in your chips, if the total amount of chips is more than the value of the cheque that you have presented that night, the casino will substitute your cheque for the amount of money. In other words, the casino will give your cheque back and take the cash from you. That is standard practice around the world in all casinos.

As I said, there is a date and time clock entry for every cheque received and the issue of credit slips. The cash receipts of 28, 29, 30 and 31 October have been examined in detail. No other cheques were presented by the patron in question.

Mr Smith: How many were there altogether?

Mr POOLE: There were 2 at \$2000 and 2 at \$1000. At the end of the evening, he bought \$2000-worth of value back. There was an original figure of \$6000 and, at the end of the evening, he bought back \$2000 or got back his cheque.

Mr Smith: How many cheques were there?

Mr POOLE: I just told you there are 4 cheques: \$2000, \$2000, \$1000 and \$1000. He bought \$2000-worth of cheques back at the end of the evening.

I refer back to Cafe's comments that the original dishonoured cheques written by the gambler were presented to the casino in exchange for the cheque credits on 24 December 1987. He said: 'According to Mr Poole the casino was asked not to bank the first cheque because it would not be met on presentation. The casino management had already breached the ministerial directions by at least 2 days at that stage'.

Going back to 24 December 1987, the first cheque was for \$15 000. It was dated 24 December. The second cheque for \$5000 was dated 2 January 1988. Therefore, both cheques were within the 10-day period allowed and, as the first cheque had not been dishonoured because it had not been presented at that time, no breach of ministerial directions had occurred. I have no knowledge as to whether or not government casino inspectors received advice of the dates relating to the application for an extension of time over the cheques. I was not even involved with the portfolio at the time because I was a backbencher.

In his tenth paragraph, Mr Cafe says: 'At least 3 offences regarding the passing of valueless cheques had been committed and still the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission and the minister, who had been advised of the situation, allowed ... the casino manager to continue on in the manager's role'. I have told this House that the 2 cheques written, one for \$5000 and one for \$15 000, totalling \$20 000, were replaced by \$3000 cash and a cheque for \$17 000. The \$17 000 cheque was the first cheque that was banked and dishonoured. That cheque was held as a commercial debt which, as I stated previously, has now been reduced to \$15 000. I accepted the decision of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission to warn the casino manager and the casino operators.

In his eleventh paragraph, Mr Cafe says: 'According to Mr Poole, a meeting was held on 24 January 1988 concerning the casino manager's licence. Nothing was made known of these meetings to the government casino inspectors; no notation was made in the daybook at the Alice Springs casino'. I am advised that the commission board held its meeting on 4 November 1988. The report was noted by the commission and no further action was deemed necessary apart from the reiteration of the original warning. Notation of the report has been confirmed by commission board minutes of meetings.

In his twelfth paragraph, Mr Cafe says: 'I refer again to the statement made by the minister where he refers to the casino manager notifying the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission of cheques again being cashed for Mr Heavy Gambler'. He suggests that this never happened. It is possible that the casino manager advised the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission that he had again contravened ministerial directions because he was aware that a report had been made on his actions. However, the fact is that Mr Cafe was negligent in his duty. He should have prevented the transaction occurring, and that was the only reason why the casino manager's licence was not cancelled.

In his thirteenth paragraph, Mr Cafe says: 'Mr Poole was well aware of the fact that Mr Borg had been untruthful ...'. I am not aware of any report by Mr Cafe dated 1 November 1988. I cannot make any comment.

His fourteenth paragraph covers the actual cheques. Let me list the cheques and, hopefully, we can all get it right this time. There was a cheque for \$15 000, dated 24 December 1987. There was a cheque for \$5000, dated 2 January 1988. These cheques were replaced by a \$20 000 cheque, dated 29 March 1988. As confirmed by the reports, the \$20 000 cheque was replaced, after payment of \$3000 cash, by a cheque for \$17 000. This cheque was banked

on 25 May 1988. The \$17 000 cheque was the first cheque which was presented to the bank and subsequently dishonoured. A further \$2000 was paid in cash to reduce this outstanding debt to \$15 000. A new cheque was written by the client and the casino subsequently banked it. It was returned marked 'refer to drawer'. This cheque is now held by the casino as a commercial debt.

Other cheques from this patron were: \$2000, dated 29 October; another \$2000, dated 29 October; \$1000, dated 29 October; and another \$1000, dated 29 October. One of the \$2000 cheques was redeemed at close of play and the rest were banked and cleared. Those are the cheques covered by the heading in the casino inspector's logbook dated 30 October in the sum of \$4000 with a cheque dated 28 October and that is where I believe all the confusion has arisen. Mr Speaker, I table these documents which include the casino credit slips which are clearly time-clock stamped.

It is important to note that the casino operator is required to approach a patron who has dishonoured cheques each time he enters the casino in order to request that the cheques be honoured. The casino operator is certainly permitted to accept cheques and cash from a patron who has a dishonoured cheque outstanding in order for that cheque or that debt to be reduced.

I do not accept that Mr Cafe was persecuted by casino management. I have noted various comments in Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission documents which suggest to me that Mr Cafe's fellow employees, and certainly his supervisors, regarded him as incompetent. In any event, whilst he was under investigation, he made the decision to resign.

In his final paragraph, Mr Cafe says: 'I recall quite clearly the minister telling me that he would not interfere with the running of the commission, irrespective of what happened, and it was obvious nothing was going to change so, when I was approached by Mr Rochester of the 7.30 Report, I volunteered certain information'. I refer honourable members to paragraphs 1 and 2 of Mr Cafe's statement and suggest that he either made photocopies or has an exceptional memory, one which is capable of recalling in detail events which took place almost a year ago. I suggest that the photocopies were supplied to the member for Barkly and that he passed them on to the 7.30 Report. As late as this morning, I was told that Mr Cafe had still not resigned from the Alice Springs Branch of the Territory Nationals and that members of the party regard him, and I quote, as 'a man who was always scheming and causing eyebrows to be raised'.

The ABC has made much of this whole episode. I still find it interesting that the ABC saw fit to show the interview with me more than 3 weeks after it was filmed and some 2 days before the Wanguri by-election, even though I had shown the ABC reporter the results of the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission's investigative report 4 days after the reporter had brought those allegations to my attention.

At the conclusion of the initial interview with the ABC, I immediately requested the Chief Minister to ask the NT Police Force to investigate the allegations made. The same day that I made this request in writing, the Chief Minister sent a written instruction to the Commissioner of Police. I would remind honourable members that, with a single exception, all of Mr Cafe's allegations relate to procedural matters or breaches of ministerial directions. The only allegation relating to criminal activity - and I am still not sure whether it was made by the ABC or Mr Cafe because I had heard nothing of the allegations until I watched the 7.30 Report - was that regarding the laundering of money. On that occasion, the NT Police Force was

again asked to investigate, as was the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission. The Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission's report quite clearly proves that the gambler alleged to be laundering \$80 000 per month, who apparently comes from Adelaide, had gambled on only 3 occasions on a single trip to Alice Springs in November. He lost \$6300, and no casino gaming winner's cheques were issued during that period. In fact, and this says something about casinos, no casino gaming winning cheques were issued at all during the months of October and November.

The interim police report which I commented on previously indicates that there appears to be no substance to the allegations. I am satisfied that the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission has acted correctly. The casino manager and the operator have been severely reprimanded for their breach of directions, and I assure honourable members that it is apparent that no criminal action has taken place.

Neither I, nor the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission nor, certainly, the Northern Territory government, will tolerate disregard by operators of the rules and regulations governing the operation of casinos in the Northern Territory.

Year 10 Examinations

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer the minister to his refusal to authorise a cultural exchange trip to Indonesia by Year 10 students of Sanderson High School on the grounds that they will be away for the mathematics portion of the Year 10 external examinations. Given that the various sporting and dance groups from Kormilda College, and presumably anyone who is sick or otherwise incapable of sitting the examinations, will be given the option of sitting for a different examination of assessed equal difficulty at a later stage, will the minister take into account the enormous amount of work already undertaken on the Indonesian excursion and the benefit of the trip to students, authorise the trip, and allow those students to join others sitting at the supplementary examinations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, can I state that only one set of examination papers will be issued. I will recapitulate on the matter of the Sanderson High School trip because it is a disappointment to me that this ever had to happen. I say that because the school itself knows full well that there is a procedure which must be followed when arranging overseas excursions. That procedure requires that the Department of Education be notified. Following that, the matter eventually comes to the minister. In the case of Sanderson High School, that procedure was not followed. Indeed, it was only recently - I think on 23 August - that the department was made aware that a trip to Indonesia was being considered.

Mr Smith: That is not true.

Mr HARRIS: I am led to believe that that is the situation. The Leader of the Opposition may believe otherwise. In fact, I understand that the superintendent only found out by accident that the trip involved Year 10 students. I will go through the procedures. It is important that they are understood because the people who are being hurt are the kids and that is occurring because the school did not follow procedures.

Earlier this year, the schools were notified that the Year 10 assessment package was to proceed and that examinations would occur at the end of September. During the course of March, schools were advised of the examination dates, which were 26, 27 and 28 September, and that the examinations would account for 30% of the assessment in English and mathematics. Schools knew all the details in March.

At that stage, the Sanderson trip was due to leave on 30 September. There was no problem. That date was outside the examination period and there would have been no hassles whatsoever. On 5 July, it was found that there were problems in relation to the itinerary. On that date, the travel agent informed Sanderson High that there were problems. He provided alternative dates for the trip. Those dates were outside the examination period.

Mr Ede: And the students would have had to take an extra week off school.

Mr HARRIS: If you are sincere about this trip and you want the exchange to take place ...

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, if members opposite would stop this chatter and listen, they might learn something about responsibility and looking after the interests of the children.

The reality is that alternative dates could have been chosen by Sanderson High. The school knew that but it chose to propose that the students depart on 27 September, which is the second day of the examination period. I class that as irresponsible. The school knew. Sometimes you have slip-ups in itineraries and sometimes you have to make sacrifices. I believe that the school council itself had the opportunity to proceed with the trip on the alternative dates, which were outside the examination period. As I said last night, I have approved travel arrangements for the Year 8 students and the teachers who will accompany them. Travel requests in relation to teachers will need to be reconsidered because fewer teachers may be going as a result of the travel of the Year 10 students not being approved.

Can I just say again, Mr Speaker, that it is a disappointment. Students save money to go on these trips. I understand that any money outlaid on behalf of the students is to be recovered but, if there were a problem in that area, I would do whatever I could to assist. I repeat that the situation is disappointing. As I said yesterday, there have been people, and there are a number at Sanderson, who have been trying to frustrate the whole matter of the examinations.

Mr Ede: Take it out on them.

Mr HARRIS: It is not a matter of taking it out on them at all. I am being responsible. There are many responsible parents who would take the same attitude as the government in relation to this. It is very important that those excursions and exchanges take place. There is no question about that, and they will continue. The government has put a great deal of effort into that link with the Indonesian area. Indeed, we are seen throughout Australia as leading the way in that regard. There is no question about that and it is because of the CLP government that that has occurred. We will continue to foster those relationships.

This matter should not have even reached me. The issue could have been resolved long ago. There are loose ends with this trip. I do not know if the Leader of the Opposition or the opposition spokesman on education is aware that there are concerns about certain aspects of this trip which still have to be chased up and sorted out. If the school had gone through the right process, those matters could have been looked at responsibly and the students would not have been disadvantaged.

BTEC - Investigation into Allegations

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

In his capacity as minister responsible for the police, can he advise the current status of the police investigation into allegations surrounding the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, on 22 August 1989, the Commissioner of Police forwarded to the government a comprehensive report on the investigations into allegations made by various people in relation to criminality in BTEC. This report has been dispatched to the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy for his

information. Honourable members will recall that this police investigation was initiated following the receipt by the Territory government of allegations made to the federal minister. The report has also been referred to the Department of Law, through my colleague the Attorney-General, for its consideration and opinion.

The investigative team comprised 4 detectives, headed by an acting inspector and under the supervision of the Detective Superintendent Crime Division. The team conducted inquiries between June and August 1989 throughout the Northern Territory and in Adelaide, Canberra, New South Wales and Queensland. All relevant persons were located and statements taken and recorded. The conclusion arising from the investigation is that no evidence of criminality, substantial malpractice or maladministration has been identified. I do not intend to detail the contents of the report at this time nor indeed do I intend to table the report in this Assembly. As I mentioned earlier, the report is now with the Department of Law for its consideration and opinion, as recommended to me by the Commissioner of Police.

Year 10 Examinations

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can he confirm that all Year 10 students at Kormilda College have been given a deferral for the Year 10 examinations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm that at this time, but I will obtain the information and provide it to the honourable member.

Kangaroo 89 - Benefits to Territory

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Is he able to quantify any specific benefits which have accrued to Territory suppliers to date as a result of the military exercise Kangaroo 89?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I can indeed confirm that the Industrial Supplies Office, in particular, has been active and successful in this regard. Whilst final figures have not yet been determined, and some military personnel are likely to be here longer than planned because of the airline dispute, there is no doubt that the Kangaroo 89 exercise has been a real boon to the wide spectrum of Territory businesses.

It is most difficult to accurately quantify the massive sum spent in the Northern Territory in connection with Kangaroo 89. Certainly, personal expenditure by the thousands of service personnel involved must be taken into account. Our entertainment and food industries would be the most significant recipients of that expenditure. The number of people on the beach at the Beer Can Regatta last Sunday was an indication that military personnel are still in town. At a later date, when the final expenditure figures are received, I shall provide them to the House.

However, I can provide the House with examples of the sorts of expenditures which have occurred. Data supplied by the Industrial Supplies Office concerning purchases by the Second Field Supply Battalion alone, which

is located at the 2½ Mile, indicates that expenditure totals nearly \$4m to date. Supplies to the Navy and the RAAF above this \$4m have not been costed in total. Honourable members may be interested in the composition of the \$4m.

It included expenditure on 320 000 eggs. In fact, I know of a farm which increased the number of its chooks to ensure that the egg supply could be maintained during the Kangaroo 89 exercise. The farmer had to subcontract and bring in extra chooks to keep the egg supply up. The troops drank 800 000 poppers during the exercise. The total bill for eggs and poppers was \$1.515m. That indicates the sort of health food which the Army is fed on. There is good vitamin C in the poppers and iron in the eggs.

The value of bulk fuel sold in Darwin alone was \$824 000. Civilian retailers in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and Kununurra sold an additional \$260 000 worth. The hire of pumps, mobile phones, porta-potties, display boards, televisions, videos, fridges etc accounted for another \$30 000. Vehicle hire was \$50 000. In the general stores category, hardware, tools, detergents, medical products, plumbing, batteries etc came to \$540 000. Spare parts for Macks, Mercedes, fork-lifts, graders, tyres, batteries etc came to \$610 000. And the laundry bill alone was \$29 000.

The mind boggles at the thought of soldiers consuming 800 000 poppers, and I trust that the empties have all been disposed of properly. I presume that the occasional green, white or blue popper was also opened, and it would be interesting to know what that figure was.

Mr Smith: That is a classified secret.

Mr COULTER: Yes, probably it would be classified. The Territory consumes some \$78m-worth of alcohol on a regular basis, and I am sure that the 1989-90 figures will be increased somewhat.

The Kangaroo 89 exercise has been a good, cooperative effort between the private sector, government and military authorities, with a valuable coordination role discharged by our Industrial Supplies Office.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the army personnel for their presence in Darwin. I believe that they were well behaved, contrary to the reports in the papers leading up to this exercise. They are a credit to Australia. I enjoyed watching the dogfights and the aircraft movements, and I think we can all be very proud of our armed forces, not only for Kangaroo 89 itself but for the way they behaved themselves here during the campaign. I would like to pay tribute also to the federal minister, Bomber Beazley, for his attempts to lift the morale of the Army, the Navy and the RAAF. He is indeed a fine Minister for Defence and I can only look forward to his further cooperation on the relocation of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment to Palmerston.

Excisions from Pastoral Properties

Mr LANHUPUY to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the Chief Minister received a letter from the Northern Land Council during the last 2 days requesting him to make officers of his government available to meet with land council officers to achieve an early solution to the difficulties in relation to NT titles for Aboriginal communities living on pastoral properties? If he has, can he advise whether he intends to make those officers available and when?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware that my office has received a letter from the Northern Land Council in the last 2 days on the matter of excisions. If the letter was sent, that surprises me somewhat. Such matters are normally brought to my attention immediately.

I did receive a fax from the Prime Minister on the subject of excisions this morning. I have not yet had time to consider the matter in any detail although I am pleased to be able to inform honourable members that the Prime Minister is proposing further negotiations on the matters to which I took exception in his original offer. He has proposed that I go to Canberra to meet with him and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs late next week. I will certainly consider that and respond fairly shortly. It may be that the Prime Minister will have to arrange some transport for me if the pilots' strike is not over by then.

Mr Speaker, I have no problem with meeting with the land council to discuss these issues. Indeed, the officers of the Territory government and the land councils do meet from time to time on a whole range of issues affecting the Northern Territory. I would not like any honourable member or, indeed, any listener to question time this morning, to get the impression that the Northern Territory government does not negotiate with and cooperate with land councils on a whole range of matters. However, whilst not cutting off the possibility of further talks with the land councils on this particular issue, and having regard to the history of the matter over several years, the positions of all the parties involved are very clearly known. It has come down to a matter for governments to resolve. Both governments know the positions of the respective parties. In my view, neither party will have all of its first principles accepted when this matter is resolved. That is probably not unreasonable. I guess that is what negotiations are all about.

The fact is that it is a matter to be resolved between governments. Governments have the powers to enact such a resolution. That is what I will be seeking when I meet again with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I will again state very strongly the Territory government's objections to several provisions which were inserted in the last offer made by the federal government about a week ago. I will make inquiries with my office in relation to the letter referred to by the honourable member and I will consider its contents in due course.

School Leaver Program

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Could the minister please advise as to the outcome of the government's 1989 School Leaver Program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that that question has been asked because the School Leaver Program administered by the Department of Labour and Administrative Services has proven to be an enormous success over the last couple of years. We have stepped up the program quite dramatically and the amount of support which has been given to the program, not only by the young people who have taken advantage of it but by employers in the Northern Territory in both the public and the private sector, has been very pleasing.

Only a couple of years ago, the program catered for some 400-odd students annually but, as I said, we have stepped up the program quite dramatically over the last 2 years and, in this calendar year, the School Leaver Program has directly placed 951 students in training positions. Those are young people who left school last year and failed to find employment in the work force in the early part of the year. The positions ranged right across the board: the automotive industry, the tourist industry, clerical areas of the public service and the private sector, and retailing positions. The retail industry picked up a significant number of young school leavers this year.

The program has grown quite dramatically in the last couple of years. In my speech in the budget debate yesterday, I indicated that the allocation for the program this year will be \$1.29m. That money will go directly into the training of young people during the coming year. We deliberately commence the individual programs which comprise the School Leaver Program in February to March, so that we are not catering to those people who, having left school at the end of the year, are able to find work as a matter of course. The School Leaver Program is designed to pick up those people who find it difficult to obtain work, either because of the type of work they are seeking or because the qualifications they have at the end of their schooling are not as good as those of others.

It has been a successful program and it will continue. The commitment of this government to the young people of the Northern Territory is unquestioned. We have shown this commitment and we will continue to show it.

Neighbourhood Watch in Wanguri and Tiwi

Mr BAILEY to CHIEF MINISTER

When will he fulfil his promise made in the recent by-election that Neighbourhood Watch will be extended to Wanguri and Tiwi?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am expecting a report from the Commissioner of Police in the near future relating to the results of the trial Neighbourhood Watch programs which have been under way in a number of Darwin suburbs.

Mr Smith: He is backing off the by-election promise already.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition does not want to listen, perhaps he could leave the Chamber and give us all some peace.

I am expecting a report on the success of the trial period and, on the basis of that, the government will consider the extent to which Neighbourhood Watch will be extended through the urban areas in the Territory. I expect that the program will operate quite extensively. As I said during the election campaign, the program will be extended to Wanguri. I cannot give a specific date nor did I give a specific date during the election campaign.

Safety House Scheme

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

I believe that the police have been appointed as the coordinators of the Safety House Program. Could he report on the state of affairs in relation to the program?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, I cannot respond to the honourable member's question off the cuff. I will be happy to provide him with details of this matter, perhaps during the course of today. I am sure that my office will prepare a suitable paper on the subject.

Gunn Point Subdivision

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

What process, particularly in relation to environmental concerns, must occur before a decision is made on the proposed Gunn Point subdivision?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, last week, during question time and in the adjournment debates, the member for Koolpinyah made a number of assertions about the Gunn Point subdivision which I think should be clarified further. On the one hand, the honourable member asked if I would disallow the cliff-top part of the subdivision. On the other hand, she stated that she knew that a recommendation had gone to me from the Planning Authority with this expected outcome. She followed this up in the adjournment debate by admitting that her information was 'an educated guess, as these decisions are confidential'. The honourable member said she assumed nothing further would be done in the future in relation to a preliminary environmental report or an environmental impact statement because all the work had been done. She also said that she had not been misinformed and did not put out any misinformation.

I think it would be wise for me to advise the House, particularly the honourable member for Koolpinyah, of the actual process followed by the government. I note that the honourable member claims to have probably forgotten more about conservation than I will ever know. If I did not know the honourable member so well, I would probably be tempted to say that, if formerly she knew anything about such issues, she has most certainly forgotten it now. However, I would certainly not be so cheeky as to suggest that that might be true.

Before the government embarks on any development, it follows a well-documented process. The first stage of this process is production of a land use structure plan. Normally, these plans are exhibited for public comment before being finalised and are then published by the government as a clear indication to the public of the intended future land use. Of necessity, they are long-term documents and they are sufficiently flexible to take into account changed community attitudes and circumstances. Structure plans are followed by statutory zoning plans which, in turn, are followed by detailed development proposals, such as subdivisional and development applications.

In the case of Gunn Point, there have been several documents. A draft land use structure plan for the entire Gunn Point peninsula and a draft land use concept plan, which includes finer detail for the Shoal Bay coastal area, were exhibited. This was undertaken in conjunction with the rezoning proposal and preliminary subdivision proposals to which I will refer later. At the same time, a preliminary environmental report, or PER, was being prepared in accordance with the procedures set down by the Environmental Assessment Act. This was made available to the Planning Authority for consideration, together with any submission received as a result of the public exhibition period. I draw this to the attention of the member for Koolpinyah to ensure that she is aware of the detailed procedures which exist under Territory law.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I know all about the detailed procedures.

Mr MANZIE: Once a PER has been prepared, the Conservation Commission assesses it in consultation with the relevant government departments and authorities and reports back to me, as Minister for Conservation. At that stage, a number of options are available to me. I can accept the PER as satisfactory, I can take note of any deficiencies or areas which may require further attention in the PER, I can call for further information on those issues or I can request that a full environmental impact statement or EIS be prepared.

In the case of the Gunn Point proposals, there were certain issues which required more detailed assessment. These included erosion of the cliff face, about which so much has been said both in this House and in the media. I have directed the proponent of the proposal - and the proponent is the Department of Lands and Housing - to prepare further detailed information on matters raised within the report to me by the Conservation Commission. That work is in hand and I can assure honourable members that not only has no decision been made but, further, no decision will be made until full procedures under the Environmental Assessment Act have been followed. It may not be necessary to go to a full EIS. However, that decision will rest on the degree of detail supplied following my request for further information on the PER.

The other matter raised was the question of the subdivision proposal for Gunn Point. It is true that the Department of Lands and Housing lodged an application for subdivision development to be considered in conjunction with the overall rezoning proposal for the area.

Mr Dondas: That has been going on for 5 years now.

Mr MANZIE: That is right. It has been going on for quite a while. This has been done with the intention of placing before the Planning Authority as much information as possible to allow it to make a considered decision. I would like the member for Koolpinyah to be aware of the fact that I requested the authority to deal first with the matter of rezoning and then to report back before taking any action in relation to a decision on the subdivision application. In fact, the authority has given me a preliminary report and expressed certain environmental and amenity concerns. It was at this point that I requested that the subdivision application be held in abeyance until further information became available.

I have also asked the Department of Lands and Housing to look at alternative subdivision designs which will address the concerns raised so far, particularly those in relation to the cliff-top blocks. Once the environmental processes have been completed to my satisfaction and the Planning Authority is satisfied that all matters of concern have been fully addressed, it will be time to determine the subdivision application.

There remains only one more point to be clarified and that is the nonsense about 10 000 people being crowded on the cliff top.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It is in the development proposal.

Mr MANZIE: It is abundantly clear that the land use plans for the whole area were drawn up to cater for an estimated population of about 10 000. This may not occur for another 50 years, but it is the responsibility of this government to ensure that services, planning and environmental assessment take into account the ultimate development potential of the area.

The initial subdivision proposed was predominantly for weekender usage although that use may change in time. The government certainly would not want to limit citizens' right to occupy their land on a permanent basis. If a permanent population establishes there, it will be because of the foresight shown by this government and the adherence to the full processes of urban and regional planning. This foresight extends to ensuring that adequate land, appropriately located, remains available for commercial uses should such a development occur.

I hope that clarifies for all honourable members the situation in relation to Gunn Point. I think it is important to go over the 2 main issues. Firstly, there is no proposal to race ahead and take steps there which are environmentally inappropriate and, secondly, there is certainly no intention to place 10 000 people on the cliff tops at Gunn Point tomorrow.

Members interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: This is important, Mr Speaker. Comments are made by honourable members in this House, and it is important that the community is aware that the situation that has been presented to it ...

Mr Ede: I did not fear that 10 000 people would be sitting on the edge of a cliff.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart thinks he is very amusing. There are people who have concerns about some of the totally false claims which have been made about this area. These claims have created some misconceptions which need to be clarified. If the member for Stuart thinks it is funny, that is fine. His attitude, however, is typical of that of members of the Labor Party in the Territory. They do not care about the genuine concerns people have. They are interested only in slinging mud and dispensing innuendo and untruth. The community is aware of that but I think it is appropriate that members opposite should hold their peace for a short time in the House while questions which concern the community are answered. Members opposite can make all the noise and throw all the mud they like in their own time. I thank all honourable members in the House, except the member for Stuart, for their indulgence in this matter.

Crimes (Compensation) Act Claims

Mr TUXWORTH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

How many people have been issued with compensation certificates in accordance with the Crimes (Compensation) Act? Also, how many claims have been paid in accordance with the sums stated on certificates, and how many have not been paid in accordance with the sums stated on certificates? And could the ...

A member: What, off the top of his head?

Mr TUXWORTH: There are not a very many claims, Mr Speaker. Let us get that part straight. I am sure the last of my questions will appeal to the Attorney-General, because he will be able to speak for a long time on this.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In view of the amount of detail sought by the member for Barkly, could I suggest that he place the questions on the Notice Paper?

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, could I ask the Attorney-General whether he would be prepared to respond later in the day?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would ask the member for Barkly to put the questions on notice. He knows full well that questions requiring so much detail should be put on notice and I think that he is trying to waste the House's time by seeking to give the impression that his question should be answered on the spot. It is ridiculous.

Retail Petrol Prices

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Some 2 months ago, the minister announced that the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy, together with the Prices Surveillance Authority, had commenced a joint review of retail petrol prices in the Territory. Can the honourable minister advise on the outcome of that investigation and its conclusions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. It is a question that people are waiting to have answered. Unfortunately, the joint review into the structure of petrol pricing has not yet been completed. In the first instance, I had asked that the review take as short a time as possible, and it did not appear likely to be a lengthy exercise. However, the work of the joint review committee has been delayed by a national public inquiry into petrol prices by the Prices Surveillance Authority and the need for the Territory to compile a detailed submission to that inquiry. That has been done. Meanwhile, the joint review into the Territory's situation is largely completed and should be available to the government in the near future.

As part of the review, officers have met with representatives of the oil supply and retailing industries in Darwin. I understand that, contrary to popular belief, there is some level of price discounting by retail petrol outlets in Darwin, although to a much lesser degree than in big cities like Sydney and Melbourne. Of course, the review will not be telling us anything we do not know about the various components that make up the price of Territory petrol at the pumps.

Although some honourable members do not want to be reminded about it, we all know that the price of petrol is high and keeps getting higher due to the federal government's indexed excise duty. Petrol costs an average of 63.9¢ per litre at the Darwin bowser. Of this, the federal government takes a massive 22.4¢ through excise duty. At present, the Territory government takes 3.5¢ from this as a franchise fee, although we know that that figure will increase shortly.

A further 24¢ is for the purchase of the crude oil and cost of refining and delivery to Darwin. I emphasise that to honourable members because I think that the significance of that figure is often overlooked. Going out and discovering the oil, setting up the platform, pumping the oil to shore, applying all the necessary chemical additives and delivering the fuel to Darwin, costs 24¢ per litre. The federal government's excise duty is 22.4¢ per litre. If that is not a grab, I do not know what is. With all the

millions of billions of dollars which go into oil refineries, discovering oil and building platforms at a cost of \$400m, the fuel still gets here for 24¢ a litre, after being transported from international ports, and then along comes the federal government and says: 'We'll take 22¢ of that'.

My real concern relates to the fact that the oil reserves in Bass Strait are winding down. By the end of October 1989, the Northern Territory will be producing the equivalent of one-third of the Bass Strait oil supply. Bass Strait has now come down to about 350 000 barrels of oil a day. We will be producing in excess of 100 000 barrels a day within the next few months. What worries me is that federal governments of either political persuasion have taken \$40 000m worth of revenue out of Bass Strait. Currently, it takes \$1800m out of Bass Strait. What will happen when Bass Strait runs down? Where will the federal government get the money to fund the \$26 000m of social security payments made in Australia today? That worries me. It worries me because the federal government will look for another grab.

Already, Senator Cook has said that gas will be subject to excise. That was first mentioned at the national ministers meeting which I attended in Hobart. This means that gas prices need to increase. We cannot import gas. Western Australia, the Northern Territory and New South Wales are heavily reliant on gas for power generation in particular. If the federal minister intends to levy a tax of some sort on gas to make up the shortfall in relation to Bass Strait, I have grave concerns.

In terms of export income, the gas from the North-west Shelf is currently as valuable as the national wool or wheat cheque - about \$200 000m. Will the federal government tax that as well? It is of great concern to us here in the Northern Territory that federal governments of both political persuasions have taken \$40 000m out of the wealth that has been created through Bass Strait, whose reserves are now running down at an alarming rate.

Where will the money come from? Will there be a tax on gas, which means increased electricity prices for everybody? Will there be an increase on uranium? The gold tax certainly will not make up for it. We are talking about massive amounts, the equivalent of the annual wheat or wool cheque. When Bass Strait supplies come to an end, the federal government will miss out on considerable revenue. At present, the federal government levies an excise of 22.4¢ per litre of petrol. The producers, the refiners and the shippers only get 24¢ for delivering their product here. Talk about the middleman ripping off the customer, Mr Speaker!

The federal government's take has increased by 260% in the past 6 years. The rate of excise is indexed to increases in the consumer price index. On current indications, this will cause a rise in the price of petrol of between 1¢ and 2¢ per litre every year. In other words, the price of petrol comes about courtesy of the Treasury in Canberra and that will continue to occur.

In the Territory, we will do what we can to bring about discounting levels which will make the price of petrol at the bowser as reasonable as possible. The Energy Division of the Department of Mines and Energy is looking at all the options available to ensure that. The reality is that the federal Labor government grabs the lion's share and is solely responsible for the increases in petrol prices during the last 6 years.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr COULTER: The member for Nhulunbuy sits there giving us the benefit of his great knowledge of macro-economics and what is really occurring in Australia today.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I can tell him that the people out there with their fingers on the pump, looking at the prices at the bowser, have more knowledge than he has as he sits there with his finger on the pulse of his great economic knowledge.

Nhulunbuy Wharf

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Speaker, on Tuesday 22 August, the minister assured me in this House that the Nhulunbuy wharf, which is managed by Perkins Shipping, is also owned by Perkins Shipping despite the substantial financial contribution which the Northern Territory government made towards the wharf's construction. Can the minister confirm that Perkins Shipping owns the wharf in Nhulunbuy, as he maintained on Tuesday 22? If so, under what arrangement was the Northern Territory's financial contribution transferred to Perkins Shipping? If Perkins Shipping does not own the wharf, why does the Northern Territory government not demand that the wharf be made available to all potential users of the wharf, with the same provisions as apply to the Darwin public wharf?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I indicated to the member for Nhulunbuy last week, the facilities at Nhulunbuy are leased in their entirety to Perkins Shipping. The leased area contains a barge landing and a small wharf.

It is correct to say - no, I had better qualify that and say that, to my knowledge, the facility as such is totally owned by Perkins Shipping. I shall check the exact legal situation and advise the honourable member later in the day. It is my recollection that the facility was built and financed substantially by Perkins, with a contribution from the Northern Territory government in return for which there is an agreement under which fishing vessels and government vessels can use the facility on terms equivalent to the wharfage charges at Darwin wharf.

There is no agreement with Perkins in respect of other private cargo vessels. Much negotiation has been occurring following some disputation between Perkins and other operators in regard to access and to cost of access. To that extent, I have had a positive commitment from Perkins that it is more than happy to negotiate appropriate rates with any of those other operators. To that end, I will be checking with the various operators after the sittings to see whether those arrangements have been put in place.

Subsidy to Sheratons

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

On ABC radio this morning, the minister stated that the pilots' strike would increase the Territory taxpayers' subsidy to the Sheratons by \$200 000 per week or possibly \$1m per month. Would the minister confirm whether this is the maximum exposure that the government is likely to face?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think I mentioned in the Chamber yesterday as well as on radio this morning, that the loss being experienced by the Sheratons at the moment is around \$200 000 a week. It could get worse, depending on how long the strike continues and depending on how long we continue to maintain our staffing levels. A range of management decisions have to be made which will vary the shortfall required. At present, \$200 000 a week is a figure that is being realised as a result of the airlines strike.

NT Government Advertising

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I have noticed that the format of advertising of positions vacant in the public service has changed significantly in recent months. Is this method of advertising more expensive, and what results have been achieved to date?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is a good one. There has been considerable discussion about the new advertising format of the Northern Territory Public Service. The area that is most noticeable is advertising for positions in the Northern Territory and I can confirm that we are saving money through the new arrangements. Mr Speaker, you will have noticed the block advertising, often full-page, placed through the group which currently has the advertising contract with the Northern Territory government.

As a part of that advertising campaign, in the early stages at least, we placed a small section at the bottom of each advertisement, in which we asked people whether they had considered working in the Northern Territory and to make contact if they were interested. That has produced a significant number of responses. In fact, we had to cease the practice because, apart from people responding specifically to jobs advertised, over 500 people made contact saying that they were interested in working here, giving information about their skills and asking what we had to offer. As a result, we have been able to pick up a number of people with skills that have previously been very difficult to obtain. I am talking about professional people, such as those in the medical and engineering professions, whom it has been very difficult to attract.

The Department of Labour and Administrative Services has prepared an information folder which has been sent out to all prospective job applicants, to those people whom we think will fit in to a job, and to people who have expressed interest in working here and have skills which are needed. A department which may be interested in a particular person adds its own information to the general package and the material is sent to the person concerned. People who make contact advising of their skills rather than responding to particular job vacancies are placed on a list of people who may be able to fill a position at some time in the future. Departments are notified that these people are available and some have been able to pick up people for areas of work where recruitment has previously been difficult. We have sent out 700 information folders and they have had a big impact on people who have responded to job advertisements. The feedback we have received indicates that recipients of the folders have found them very useful in terms of providing information about the Territory.

The opposition says that public servants are leaving the Territory in droves but that is not true. As of yesterday, we are only 95 under our MSL, which is the best situation we have been in since 1987. In fact, in 1987 we were significantly further below our MSL. We are only 95 below MSL and most of the vacant positions are in the professional categories which are very difficult to fill. There is no problem attracting people from within the Northern Territory to most positions in the public service. It is only with particular professional and technical positions that we have some difficulty. The new advertising format and the folder which we send to prospective job applicants have been very successful in overcoming that problem.

I am very proud of the efforts of my department in its efforts to lift the profile of the Northern Territory as a place of employment. The profile of the Territory is now very high. For a while it was very poor. I would have to place some of the blame for that on the member for Barkly who attempted in 1985-86 to take away from public servants so much of what they had fought for. The fact is that the Northern Territory is competing effectively in the marketplace now. We are able to attract very good people to the Northern Territory and, together with the Minister for Industries and Development and the Minister for Tourism, we are working up a program to make the Northern Territory even more attractive as an employment destination.

Health and Community Services Portfolio

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister presently holds the Health and Community Services portfolio. I refer him to his indication prior to the recent Wanguri by-election that, during these sittings, he would announce the new Minister for Health and Community Services. Given the problems the department has been experiencing under his ministry in respect of child-care, tuberculosis and juvenile offenders, how much longer can the decision be delayed? I ask the Chief Minister to inform the House of exactly when the appointment will be made.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am indeed the Minister for Health and Community Services at present.

It is very interesting to hear the member for MacDonnell say that there are a range of important issues in the Health and Community Services portfolio which urgently need to be addressed, particularly when one considers that the opposition has allowed almost 6 days of these sittings to pass with hardly a question relating to the portfolio. There were a couple of questions about child-care centres earlier in the sittings but the opposition has been prepared to waste 6 hours of the Assembly's time debating an absolutely pointless and unfounded censure motion. The opposition chastised us during that debate for accusing it of wasting the time of this Assembly. Now, at 10.59 am on the last day of the sittings, 1 minute before the end of question time, the member for MacDonnell wants to imply that there is a range of important issues which honourable members should start to address. I think he should be ashamed of himself for having stood up in this Assembly and admitted it.

Mr Bell: So the answer is that you do not know.

Assistance to Primary Producers During Pilots' Strike

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Does the government intend to continue to assist primary producers to export horticultural produce interstate during the pilots' strike and, if so, what form will this assistance take? Further, what is the extent of the government's financial help extended to those primary producers who have unfortunately lost so much of this season's crop of horticultural products?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government, and my department in particular, commenced work last week to address the needs of both horticulturists and fishermen who were having difficulty in getting produce to market as a result of the pilots' strike and resultant the lack of air transport. Many fishermen have been able to make arrangements with airfreight carriers such as TNT and are getting their product to market. This is particularly important from their point of view, given that those products are very perishable, particularly in the case of live mud crabs. They have had some success in this regard.

The horticulturists, together with the department, have been able to find some forms of alternative transport. The Horticultural Association met this week and provided some advice to the department. It has indicated that most of its members have been able to find alternative transport. One or two growers are nearing the end of the season for their particular products and they will probably be winding down a little earlier than anticipated. However, alternative transport has been found in many cases. Transport is very important given that Territory growers have established markets in the south over a number of years, have developed products of very high quality and have been able to supply their markets consistently. As I have said, the department is continuing to assist growers to find transport to get their product to market.

The Minister for Industries and Development referred yesterday to action being taken to provide further assistance and, I believe, gave full details. I can assure the member for Koolpinyah that the department is pursuing the matter of transport requirements in conjunction with the Minister for Industries and Development.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Katherine Fire Station

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I have a response to a question asked of me during the course of these sittings by the member for Arafura in relation to the manning of the Katherine Fire Station.

In 1986, the Northern Territory Fire Service and the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union of Australia negotiated the rationalisation of manning of fire stations in the Northern Territory. As part of this agreement, the permanent staff numbers in Katherine were reduced from 5 to 2 members on a rotating shift basis. In addition, an electronic call-out system was introduced to remove the necessity for the station to be manned during the night hours and on weekends. At the time, there was considerable public debate about this decision. However, negotiations with both the auxiliary firefighters and the Katherine Town Council settled the issue.

Soon after the decision to close the station at night was made, it was found necessary to produce a form of security duty to prevent vandalism. A special rate of payment was arranged until the new police, fire and emergency complex could open. This duty is continuing. The new police, fire and emergency service complex in Katherine is nearing completion. It is expected that the complex will be opened in October. Recently, there has been media reporting of claims by auxiliary firefighters that there will be increased response times as a result of the changed manning. They reportedly seek to maintain the night time manning of the station.

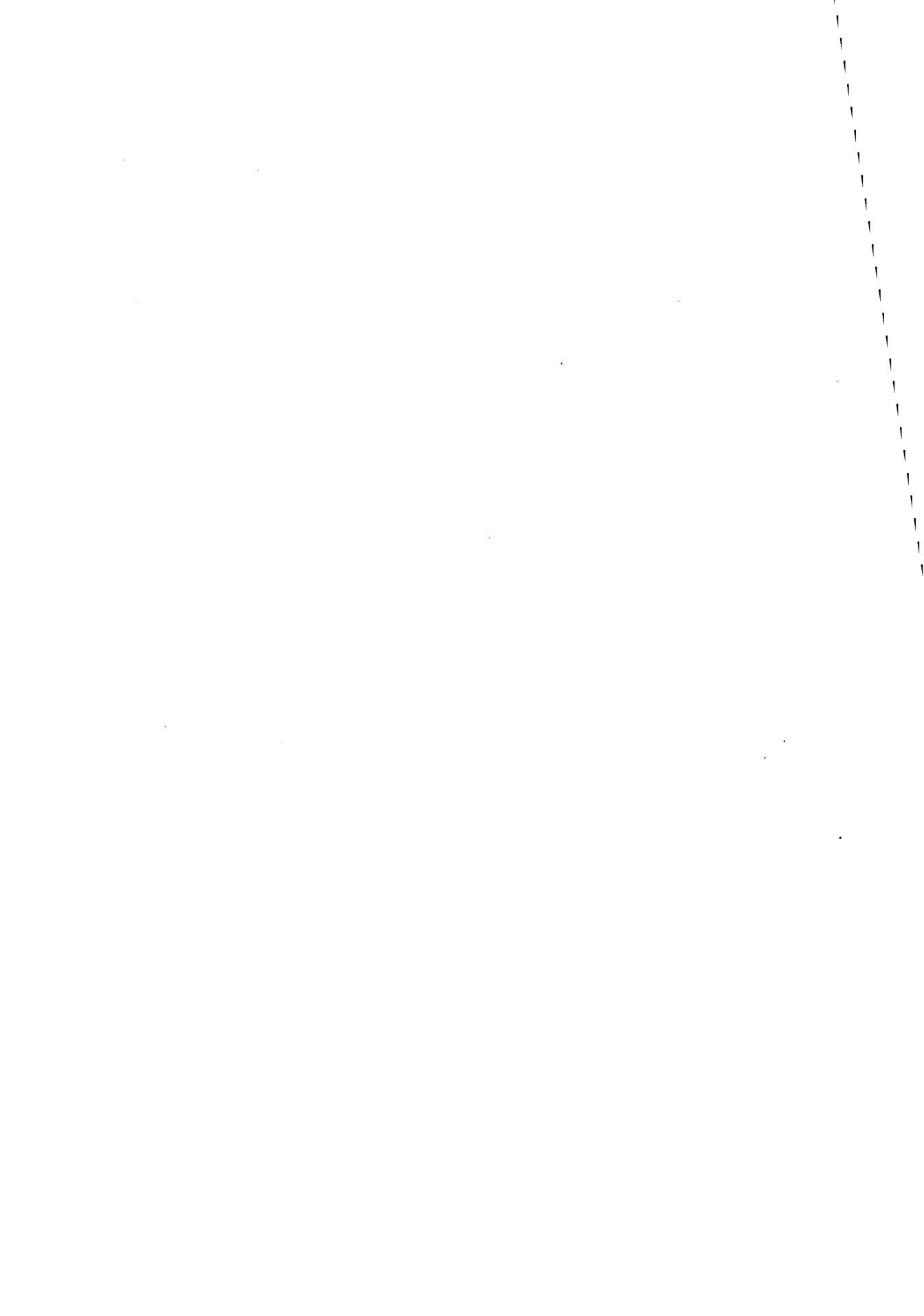
Clearly, Katherine has grown since the agreement was signed in 1986. However, Katherine's population has stabilised and the fire calls in the period from 1986 to the present have increased by an average of just 1.5 per fortnight. The present level of call-outs is approximately 280 per year. At present, the Director of the NT Fire Service sees no reason to change the proposed arrangements for manning as set out in the agreement.

On 2 August 1989, discussions were held with the Mayor of Katherine over this issue. The Mayor expressed concerns about the changes. After discussions, he understood the position and asked that the fire protection of Katherine be monitored and reviewed from time to time to ensure that the town was receiving an appropriate level of cover. It was agreed that this was not only desirable, but a proper process for the Director of the Fire Service in any case. That evening, the director met with the auxiliary firefighters and they were clearly concerned that the media has been developing this issue out of all proportion. In fact, the auxiliaries denied that they had initiated the comments attributed to them in the media. Indeed, they accused other persons of creating the issue.

The auxiliaries will operate from the new complex from the date of opening under the operating instructions agreed to in the manning package. The director has given an undertaking to monitor the situation to ensure that every effort is made to provide the people of Katherine with a proper and timely response to fire and emergencies.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

16 May 1989

87. BTEC Payments to Mr Dunbar

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In the 'Letters to the Editor' section of the Sunday Territorian dated 23 April 1989 you stated that Mr B. Dunbar 'has received more than \$500 000 of BTEC funds to assist him in fulfilling the scope of his agreed program, as well as \$130 000 in low-interest BTEC loans'.

What were the -

- (a) various purposes under which these amounts were provided;
- (b) exact amounts involved;
- (c) works required from Mr Dunbar in respect of each of (a) and (b) above;
- (d) full details of the extent of the works carried out in respect of each of the above by Mr Dunbar as at 23 April 1989; and
- (e) details of outstanding works or moneys on behalf of Mr Dunbar or the Northern Territory government.

22 August 1989

90. Loans Converted to Grants

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Which organisations have, in the past 12 months, had loans from the Northern Territory government changed to grants.

In each case, what was the amount.

92. Liquor Licences

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What were, by type, the number of liquor licences extant as at 31 December 1988 for each year since the Liquor Commission was established in 1979 in -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region.
2. Are holders of Special Licences required to provide a return detailing sales under the Special Licence.
3. How many applications for new liquor licences have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the commission in each year since its establishment.
4. How many applications for renewal of liquor licences have been rejected by the commission in each year since its establishment.
5. In each year since the Liquor Commission was established, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected.
6. How many applications for -
 - (a) new licences;
 - (b) licence renewal; and
 - (c) changes to licence conditions,were opposed by commercial or community interest. Of the opposed proposals how many were ultimately granted, in each year since the commission was established.

7. What was the volume of beer, wine and spirits respectively sold in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) the balance of the Northern region; and
 - (f) the balance of the Southern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
8. What has been the annual amount collected by the Northern Territory government in liquor licence and related licence fees since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
9. What was the wholesale value of beer, wine and spirits respectively purchased by licensees in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
10. How many liquor licences have been suspended or cancelled for breaches of licence conditions in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979 and what were their reasons for the suspension or cancellations.

11. How many prosecutions of licensees were -
- (a) commenced; and
 - (b) successful,
- for the offences of serving alcohol to minors or to intoxicated persons in each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
12. What was the per capita consumption by Territory residents of beer, wine and spirits respectively in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.

**95. Treasury Employee, Costs of Disciplinary
Action Incurred by Government**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

An employee of the NT Treasury has been subject to the following Public Service action since September 1988 -

- ° On or about 6 September 1988 - Disciplinary action commenced in accordance with section 53 of Public Service Act. This action was not proceeded with
- ° On or about 5 October 1988 - NCOM Controller recommended the employee be terminated
- ° On or about 13 October 1988 - Under Treasurer recommended to PSC that action be taken under section 49 of the act to retire employee on inefficiency grounds
- Employee suspended from duty on full pay

- ° On or about 14 October 1988 - PSC writes to employee advising section 49 action proposed. Asks for comment
- ° On or about 19-30 October 1988 - Submissions made by union on employee's behalf
- ° On or about 31 October 1988 - Employee's services terminated
- ° On or about 31 October 1988 - Appeal lodged under Public Service Regulation 18
 - Appeal tribunal formed
- ° On or about 1 December 1988 - 1st tribunal hearing
- ° On or about 19 December 1988 - Tribunal advised PSC that -
 - ° Treasury has inappropriately used discipline process and recommended they review their procedures
 - ° employee referred to CMO
- ° On or about 23 December 1988 - 2nd tribunal hearing
- ° On or about 29 December 1988 - 3rd tribunal hearing
- ° On or about 10 January 1989 - PSC sought clarification from tribunal on a number of matters
- ° On or about 12 January 1989 - CMO examination gave employee clean bill of health
- ° On or about 20 January 1989 - Tribunal responds
- ° On or about late January 1989 - Tribunal reports to PSC -
 - ° allegations against employee presented in a biased misleading way
 - ° there were serious defects in procedures followed

- the employee was denied natural justice
 - DOLAS negligent in advice given to Treasury on case
 - recommended officer be redeployed to another department for 3 months
- On or about 27 January 1989 - PSC ignores recommendation and advice and terminates employee
- On or about 30 January 1989 - Union, on behalf of officer, lodges claim on PSC seeking reinstatement and payment of \$250 000 compensation for unfair dismissal
- On or about early February 1989 - Dispute notification lodged
- On or about 16 February 1989 - Dispute before Commissioner Cross in Sydney. PSC engaged QC
- On or about 6 March 1989 - Further Commission hearing with QC
- On or about 26 June 1989 - Commissioner hands down decision awarding ACOA jurisdiction on reinstatement
- On or about 17 July 1989 - At date of this question, the Public Service Commission has appealed to Full Bench of Industrial Relation Commission

How much money has been spent by the Department of Labour and Administrative Services and the Northern Territory Treasury in the following areas since September 1988 in presenting the matter -

- (a) salary and allowances of the employee during suspension;
- (b) salary and administration costs of all NTPS employees involved;

- (c) Appeal Tribunal costs;
- (d) legal costs including Queens Counsel (QC) fees; and
- (e) air fares, travel and accommodation costs for senior staff in his department.

97. Emergency Evacuations from Titjikala (Maryvale) and Atitjere (Harts Range)

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many evacuations from each of these communities were there during the years 1986-87 and 1987-88.
2. What means was employed for these evacuations.
3. In how many of these evacuations were private vehicles from the community used.
4. At what rate were the owners of these vehicles reimbursed.

100. Investnorth dealings with Sheraton Company

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. What recurring costs does Investnorth pay in respect of -
 - (a) Sheraton Darwin;
 - (b) Sheraton Alice Springs; and
 - (c) Sheraton Ayers Rock.
2. On what basis is the return to the Sheraton Company from these publicly-owned facilities calculated.
3. What was the initial capital cost of each property.
4. Has Investnorth commenced legal action against White Industries because of construction defects with the Sheraton Ayers Rock Hotel.
5. Will the minister table the agreement between Investnorth and the Sheraton Company. If not, why not.
6. What has been the cost of the repairs to flood damage sustained at Sheraton Ayers Rock Hotel in 1989 and under what headings have these costs been incurred.

101. Brucellosis and Tuberculosis - Tarlton Downs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. On what date this year was a TB reactor found on Tarlton Downs Station.
2. When was the station notified that they had a confirmed case of TB.
3. What was the cause of the delay.
4. When was the station sent documentation to sign authorising the de-stock.
5. What was the cause of the delay.
6. Will the station owners be compensated for losses incurred due to the fall in prices, loss of condition and/or loss of production.

102. Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

How many Aboriginal Health Workers were employed in the following communities in -

- (a) 1981;
- (b) 1985; and
- (c) 1989.

Barunga-Wugularr	Borrooloola
Daguragu	Lajamanu
Yugul Mangi	Mataranka
Pine Creek	Angurugu
Milyakburra	Galiwinku
Gapuwiyak	Milingimbi
Numbulwar	Ramingining
Umbakumba	Yirrkala Dhanbul
Kardu Numida	Belyuen
Pularumpi	Milikapiti
Naiyu Nambiyu	Nguiu
Peppimenarti	Gunbalanya
Jabiru	Maningrida
Minjilang	Warruwi
Amoonguna	Aputula
Areyonga	Kaltukatjara
Ikuntji	Imanpa
Iwupataka	Papunya
Pmara Jutunta	Santa Teresa
Wallace Rock Hole	Yuendumu
Urapuntja	Ntarria
Walunguru	Ali Curung
Alpurrurulam	Elliott

103. General Practitioners in the NT

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Does the Northern Territory government survey the availability of general medical practitioners in the Northern Territory.
2. If so, how many GPs work in the Northern Territory.
3. How many GPs working in the NT are -
 - (a) in private practice;
 - (b) publicly employed; and
 - (c) employed by community-based medical services.
4. In the case of questions 3(b) and 3(c), what are the employing agencies.
5. Of these GPs, how many live in -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Katherine;
 - (c) Tennant Creek;
 - (d) Alice Springs;
 - (e) Gove;
 - (f) Jabiru;
 - (g) Alyangula; and
 - (h) elsewhere.
6. In the case of question 5(h), where are they resident and by whom are they employed.

14 February 1989

70. Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Has Henry and Walker, or companies or a consortium associated with Henry and Walker, been given development rights to Myilly Point. If so -

- (a) what are the terms and conditions of those development rights;
- (b) how long does Henry and Walker have exclusive rights over the land;
- (c) what is the value of the covenants placed on the land; and
- (d) what value has been placed on the land.

ANSWER

The Henry Walker Group has the development rights to Myilly Point.

Whilst there is no formal time constraint on the developer, the government will not allow those rights to extend indefinitely.

No covenants will be placed on the land nor a valuation be made until a firm development proposal has been considered.

I have recently been advised by the Henry Walker Group that a new feasibility plan with respect to Myilly Point is currently being undertaken.

22 August 1989

91. Consultancy - Ms M. Gaither

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Did the former Minister for Community Welfare (Mr B. Coulter) recruit a Canadian consultant Ms Marilyn Gaither to the Northern Territory. If so -

1. On whose advice was Ms Gaither employed by the Northern Territory Government.
2. What were the terms of reference given to Ms Gaither, upon the commencement of her consultancy.
3. What were the conditions of her contract.
4. How much was she paid during the period of the consultancy.

5. What written reports did she provide to the minister/government.
6. What action did the government take upon receipt of the reports.
7. What programs have been established as a result of the consultant's recommendations.

ANSWER

1. Yes, the then Minister for Community Development, the Hon B.F. Coulter, MLA, on advice from Mr Harlan Knudson, Executive Director, Washington State Medical Association - (recommendation attached) facilitated Ms Gaither's engagement consequent to a visit to the United States jointly funded by the NT and the Office of the then Aboriginal Affairs Minister Clyde Holding.

2. The terms of Ms Gaither's contract were:

Services to be provided by the Consultant

- (a) As consultant provide advice and interim report on the development of a Northern Territory Counselling Service.
 - (b) As consultant advise and report on the future policy and optional strategies for community based service programs currently operating within the NT and associated Commonwealth programs, such as Home and Community Care and Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.
 - (c) As consultant advise and report on the special needs of Aboriginal communities in the area of community services with a particular emphasis on youth service problems such as alcoholism, crime and petrol sniffing.
 - (d) As consultant advise and report on policy and option strategies for the devolution of community based service programs to the private and volunteer sector(s).
 - (e) As consultant review and assess recommendations and strategies of the Task Forces on Domestic Violence and Juvenile Crime and the Report of the Advisory Committee on the Uncontrolled Child.
 - (f) By the conclusion of the consultancy a report on (a) to (e) shall be provided in a format for presentation to the Minister for Community Development.
3. It is not the practice of this government to provide these details in relation to employment contracts.
 4. It is not the practice of this government to provide these details in relation to employment contracts.
 5. Reports in accordance with 2(f).

6. The reports were considered in conjunction with ongoing departmentally based programs.
7. Various existing programs were enhanced or had changed emphasis as a result of Ms Gaither's consultancy.

Various of Ms Gaither's papers and comments, on a range of welfare related topics, were similarly valuable to government in its deliberations on policy and procedures.

No specific new programs, directly and discretely attributable to Ms Gaither's activities, have been introduced. Consideration was given to the establishment of a Northern Territory Counselling Service but it was determined instead to modify existing activities rather than introduce a new service.

(See following page for attached recommendation.)

W S M A

WASHINGTON STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

900 United Airlines Building, 2033 Sixth Avenue, Seattle,
Washington 98121
(206) 441-9762 1-800-552-0612 Impaired Physician Hotline
1-800-552-7236

October 31, 1985

Mr Barry Coulter
Minister of Community Development
Northern Territory
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr. Coulter:

It is my sincere pleasure to recommend on a personal and professional basis Ms. Marilyn Gaither, MSW. As you know, Marilyn is a Counselor for the Cabrini Alcohol Program.

Marilyn Gaither is a leader in alcohol treatment and rehabilitation programs in this community.

She brings to this most challenging field high professional skills and a long and distinguished record of accomplishment. The Cabrini alcoholism program is recognized as an excellent program in the Seattle area and Ms. Gaither is a major factor for that recognition.

Marilyn Gaither is an excellent communicator, well organized and an individual who has the drive and ability to create and implement new programs. Perhaps no field is more complex and difficult than that of alcoholism, but with leadership from individuals such as Marilyn, I think we can make tremendous strides in dealing with the dreadful disease.

Combined with her professional skills, Marilyn brings with her a keen understanding of human nature and 'the real world.' I think she would be both a strong leader and a good team member for your government program.

I recommend her highly.

Sincerely,

Harlan R. Knudson, CAE
Executive Director.

93. Brucellosis and Tuberculosis - Administration

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. (a) How much was spent in the Northern Territory on each of the following heads of BTEC expenditure for the 5 years 1983-84 to 1987-88 -
 - (i) Type A - Operational;
 - (ii) Type B - Compensation, De-stocking, Reactors;
 - (iii) Type C - Mustering subsidy;
 - (iv) Type D - Property Improvement Loans;
 - (v) Type E - Re-stocking freight rebate; and
- (b) the percentage of each expenditure head, spent on the following where applicable -
 - (i) Salaries, wages and allowances;
 - (ii) Unmusterables;
 - (iii) Private veterinary services;
 - (iv) Equipment and materials;
 - (v) Travel and subsistence;
 - (vi) Vehicle running costs;
 - (vii) Abattoir Brucellosis sampling and ear tags;
 - (viii) Surveys; and
 - (ix) Helicopter charter.
2. With regard to cattle compulsorily de-stocked from Balbarini Station since 1 January 1989 -
 - (a) what was the average value per beast set by the valuation process;
 - (b) what was the average price per beast obtained at sale;
 - (c) who paid for removal costs etc; and
 - (d) what proportion of these cattle were purchased by Balbarini Station following de-stocks on Seven Emu and Manangoora Stations.
3. Has the Northern Territory government in each or any year since 1985 issued publicly a marketing plan which identified -
 - (a) each property;

- (b) cattle numbers to be de-stocked; and
 - (c) timing of de-stocking operations before the commencement of each meatworks season to ensure that turnoff is scheduled as far as possible with likely market demand.
4. Are those marketing plans reviewed at the end of each season to assess the degree of compliance with the plan, and if so, would the Minister supply copies of both the marketing report and the compliance review.
5. What has been the turnover rate of staff in the following professions or groups since 1982-83 financial year -
- (a) Veterinary Officers;
 - (b) Stock Inspectors; and
 - (c) Animal Industry division overall.
6. What have been the changes in method and rates of compensation paid under BTEC for various classes of de-stock since the end of the 1982-83 financial year.
7. Are pastoral producers entitled to receive further assistance under BTEC where they have knowingly re-stocked with diseased cattle. If so -
- (a) what is the extent of that assistance and its limitations; and
 - (b) if not, when did the practice cease.
8. Does the Northern Territory compile, prior to each operating season, a summary document based upon the Approved Property Program for each participating property and premises, detailing all of the planned operating activities for that year and the number of cattle to be tested for both Brucellosis and Tuberculosis, the number to be destroyed on the property either as untruckable or unmusterable, as well as detailed cost estimates. If so -
- (a) is a quarterly report prepared detailing actual activity undertaken on a property by property basis;
 - (b) is a summary of achieved activity by property detailing physical data and cost prepared at the end of each season comparing actual with planned achievement; and
 - (c) what were the results for each of the past 6 seasons.

ANSWER

The information sought by the honourable member is contained in departmental records. It is not my intention, however, to redirect valuable departmental resources into preparing the detailed responses that the questions call for. Furthermore, in one instance, it is quite inappropriate for the information to be

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

provided since it involves the commercial operations of an individual property owner.

Specifically, however, in respect of question 1(a), the details are as follows -

1983-84

Type A Operational	\$ 4 603 625
Type B Combined with 'Other Assistance'	\$ 8 393 185

1984-85

Type A Operational	\$ 6 107 851
Type B Compensation	\$ 5 980 809
Type C,D,E Grouped as 'Other Assistance'	\$ 3 724 547

1985-86

Type A Operational	\$ 7 601 573
Type B Compensation	\$ 5 639 151
Type C,D,E Grouped as 'Other Assistance'	\$ 4 284 917

1986-87

Type A Operational	\$ 7 740 912
Type B Compensation	\$ 5 852 139
Type C,D,E Grouped as 'Other Assistance'	\$ 2 840 865

1987-88

Type A Operational	\$ 8 228 358
Type B Compensation	\$ 4 435 229
Type C Mustering Subsidy	\$ 2 003 622
Type D Property Loans	\$ 56 001
Type E Restocking Freight Subsidy	\$ 27 054

1988-89

Type A Operational	\$ 9 598 370
Type B Compensation De-stocking, Reactors	\$ 4 302 964
Type C Mustering Subsidy	\$ 2 569 756
Type D Property Loans	\$ 464 959
Type E Re-stocking Freight Subsidy	\$ 318 818

With reference to a marketing plan for BTEC, my department has not been involved in any preparation of a marketing plan. I am, however, prepared to table the Strategic Plan for the remainder of the program. This plan outlines the manner in which cattle will be marketed if acquired by the government.

The turn-over rate of staff has been the subject of previous questions and debate and some information has been provided. I am not prepared to use further departmental time in preparing the briefs to answer these questions.

With respect to the changes in methods and rates of compensation paid under BTEC, I can advise that over the period in question,

there have been changes agreed to by all the participants. These changes of compensation have moved from market value to fixed rates and back to market values. The way in which compensation is now applied, is clearly outlined in the Strategic Plan.

In response to question 6, the answer is no and the practice has not changed.

Finally, the way in which the Territory prepares its baseline information prior to each operating season is also outlined in the Strategic Plan.

96. Tourism Marketing Duty

Mr EDE to TREASURER

1. How much has been collected in Tourism Marketing Duty to date.
2. What percentage of the possible collectable amount does this represent.
3. How much has it cost the government, directly and indirectly, to collect the tax.

ANSWER

1. The amount of duty collected to 19 August 1989 is \$1 963 624.
2. It is not possible to determine the collectable amount precisely. It is estimated that the above represents close to 95% of the collectable amount. The remaining 5% is made up of late returns and a small amount for avoidance.
3. The estimated cost of collecting the above duty is as follows -

◦ direct costs	\$40 700
◦ indirect costs	<u>\$15 400</u>
	<u>\$56 100</u>

**98. Aboriginal Housing Program
Administrative Procedures**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

What are the terms of reference of the Review of Administrative Procedures - Aboriginal Housing Program which was alluded to at page 11 of the Northern Territory Government Gazette, No. 19 of 17 May 1989.

ANSWER

The terms of reference of the consultancy to review the administrative procedures for the Aboriginal Rental Housing

Program are to examine and recommend appropriate changes to the department's current procedures aimed at improving the efficiency of administration.

The review will examine procedures associated with -

- (a) the establishment and conditions of grants;
- (b) use of consultants by communities;
- (c) the type of contract documentation to be used; and
- (d) general administrative matters including a greater usage of plain English.

99. Computer Software Contracts

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What are the details of computer software referred to as reference QSA 2894 on page 12 of the Northern Territory Government Gazette, No. G19 dated 17 May 1989.

ANSWER

The software is the personal computer product 'Lotus 123'. The application is a 'spread sheet' and used in PAWA's Financial Service area.

The requirement for two (2) copies of the software was advertised in the NT News and offers were received from four (4) local companies -

- Data Products
- Darwin Data
- Data #3
- Computer Sales and Leasing

An order in the amount of \$1128.80 was awarded to the lowest tenderer, Data Products.

Gaming Machines

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

What difficulties are involved in allowing licensed clubs to instal cash payment gaming machines, as was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition recently?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the member for Ludmilla has asked that question. Given the 4 weeks rampage that the Leader of the Opposition spent in misleading clubs as to the potential for gaming machines, I thought he would raise the matter on my return from holiday. I am pleased that he has appointed the member for Nhulunbuy as opposition spokesman on racing and gaming because, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, at least he has a chance of understanding matters pertaining to racing and gaming.

During the last few weeks, the Leader of the Opposition has written a 5- or 6-page letter to all licensed clubs in the Northern Territory. That letter contains no less than 9 clearly recognised errors. I will call them 'errors', although one might question whether they are accidental or deliberate. Given the capacity of the Leader of the Opposition's staff to comprehend agreements and matters pertaining to video machines, I can conclude only that probably the whole saga has been concocted deliberately by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that it is a fairly simple matter for licensed clubs to be able to convert to cash payouts on their video machines. That is totally incorrect, not for legislative reasons as the Leader of the Opposition suggests, but because of the legally-binding agreement with the Darwin casino.

Mr Smith: Where is it in the legally-binding agreement?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, that legally-binding agreement was tabled in this House some 14 months ago.

Mr Smith: It is not in there.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition suggested that we quietly snuck in the agreement with the casino on budget day last year. In fact, it was tabled and circulated to each of the 6 honourable members then opposite. I thought that they might take at least some interest in matters pertaining to the casino. The administration and audit report was tabled on the same day. Did they take no notice of that either? The Leader of the Opposition seeks to blame this government for his ineptitude and for his lack of interest in matters pertaining to ...

Mr Smith: Tell us about the legal agreement.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, let me talk about some other misleading statements made by the Leader of the Opposition in his correspondence. He was suggesting that the tax pertaining to the casino, written into that agreement, was such a complex formula that it would take a mathematician to understand it.

Mr Smith: It does.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it does not take a mathematician to understand the formula that he has quoted. It is necessary only to be able to read English. In the same schedule, the description of what each of the factors means is written in pretty clear English. It is necessary to be able to read English because the formula that the Leader of the Opposition has quoted has nothing to do with the tax rates. Clearly, it has to do with the exclusivity period.

Mr Smith: That is right.

Mr FINCH: The Leader of the Opposition now acknowledges that that is the case. That is not what he has written to each of the clubs. He has misled them deliberately in a number of areas, this one included.

The tax rates are very simple and are written in the same agreement. They change according to the performance of the casino. In fact, the formula has been written so that it is easier to interpret. It has greater returns to the Northern Territory, and the actual returns are proof of the pudding. The returns to the government over the last few years are covered in the annual reports. The return from the Darwin casino is increasing as a result of the very good work done by the Darwin casino management who are marketing overseas and interstate as they are required to do. The Leader of the Opposition does not have such a bad memory that he can forget some of the basic reasons for which this government saw fit to change the operators of the casino some years ago. Among other things, it was because of the former operators' lack of performance in attracting overseas and interstate gaming participants.

That success is now very well demonstrated, not only in the gross return to the Northern Territory, but also in the breakdown of the returns from the various gaming options. The Leader of the Opposition, incorrectly of course, says that the majority of income comes from locals because the poker machines and the video machines etc provide the greatest return. It is not true. In fact, what is happening is that the return ...

Mr Smith: Table it.

Mr FINCH: You need only to read the report, Mr Speaker. For goodness sake, the annual report last year would indicate the trends. I am pleased to advise that, currently, the decline in return from poker machines is still apparent. There is a switch from the poker machine income to a greater income from baccarat, an indication of higher fliers, and that is what the whole exercise was about. The casino is performing well. If it were not for that, we would not see Singapore Airlines' planes coming here.

Mr Speaker, let me get back to the reason why that agreement was rewritten. It was rewritten to give the casino an opportunity to perform. It gave the government an opportunity to obtain a clearer and a better arrangement as far as its taxation agreements were concerned. It placed more stringent ownership provisions on the operators. The exclusivity period that the Leader of the Opposition referred to, incorrectly again, is not until the year 2003, but is for a 10-year period. There is a productivity formula, to which he referred incorrectly in his letter to the clubs, that provides the opportunity to the operators, if they perform, to obtain an extension of that exclusivity period up to a period of 15 years. There is good reason for that. The arrangements for taxation were simplified and deductions that could be made previously against gross profit were eliminated. As I have indicated, this resulted in a better return for the Northern Territory taxpayer.

As for the misleading of the clubs, it will be my task to discuss further the concerns of clubs and other participants in the liquor and gaming industry to ensure that we are able to address their needs as best we can. We will do that on the basis of an overall balance, not by picking out just one aspect and trying to ride it as a political winner. There is far more to the poker machine and video game potential than the Leader of the Opposition wishes to demonstrate. That has been clearly shown in New South Wales where, in many instances, poker machines in clubs have led to their decline. It will be my task to ensure that the clubs' management and committees are across all of the facts pertaining to the total industry. It is not simply a matter of picking up one item and claiming that it is the easy solution. It is not that easy. The Leader of the Opposition has done himself no good and, I would suggest, has gone a fair way towards causing damage to the clubs. It will be my role to provide them with a balanced view and a considerate hearing of their concerns.

Gaming Machines

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

I understand that the honourable minister really has not had the time to get on top of his new portfolio because he has been on holiday for 4 weeks. Quite clearly, the casino does not have a monopoly over video gaming machines as the opportunity for clubs to have video gaming machines is contained in the Lotteries and Gaming Act. Where, in the agreement with the casino, does it state specifically that, in relation to video gaming machines, the casino operators are the only people in the Northern Territory who can offer cash prizes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, once again, the Leader of the Opposition is miles off track. Licences to use video gaming machines are issued to clubs on the strict understanding that play is for a non-cash prize. Secondly, under the agreement with the casino, there is a very specific clause ...

Mr Smith: Where is it? Table it.

Mr FINCH: I will come back to the Leader of the Opposition with the specifics later. Following the Leader of the Opposition's outrageous misleading of the clubs of the Northern Territory, the Racing and Gaming and Liquor Commission sought a legal view as to the position in respect of the agreement. That legal view is that the casinos have an entitlement to cash poker machines throughout the Northern Territory.

Mr Smith: But not video gaming machines.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, in a technical sense, there is no difference.

Mr Smith: There is a difference.

Mr FINCH: The only difference that the Leader of the Opposition should be concerned with is whether the machine pays cash or not. They all come under the definition 'gaming machines'.

Mr Smith: They do not.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it will take much more than 4 weeks for me to demonstrate it to him and to make him understand. Now that he has delegated the responsibility for racing and gaming to the member for Nhulunbuy, I am more than happy to go through it quietly with that honourable member. I am sure the member for Nhulunbuy will grasp it more quickly than the Leader of the Opposition. I would be more than delighted to take time during these sittings to do that.

Cattle at Cape Hotham

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, I believe the minister has in his possession a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition relating to the conservation of navy blue cattle at Cape Hotham in the Northern Territory. Perhaps the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is confused. Perhaps he is referring to feral cattle at the Shoal Bay naval facility which may be referred to as the 'Navy's moo cows'. Is the minister taking any action to ensure the conservation of these phantom cattle or perhaps these cattle dressed in phantom suits and, if so, what action is he taking?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I think it is worth reading its contents into Hansard:

Dear Minister,

I have been advised that a herd of the original cattle brought into Darwin in 1864 by Finnis still survives in the Cape Hotham area. These cattle are, I am told, listed for shoot-out in the coming months. I have been advised that these cattle, which range from mottled through to navy blue, have developed some special characteristics. They have had extensive inbreeding in a particular environment for 125 years. I am told that this can cause rapid genetic changes as the species attempts to come to terms with the new environment. Observed changes are the ability to live in mangrove swamps and, during the dry, to drink water that is barely distinguishable from sea water. I do not know what work has been done on these cattle, but I believe that it would be most unfortunate if they were shot out.

Apart from their historic value, these cattle may contain valuable genetic traits that could do an enormous amount of good for the pastoral industry in the Top End. The best thing would be to trap a substantial number and keep them on government research stations for study. A number could be incorporated in a display at the Berry Springs Wildlife Park. I am sure that they would have tourist appeal.

Your advice on this herd, the work done on it and your intentions as to its future would be appreciated.

Mr Speaker, I table the letter. A number of serious questions arise from its contents. The first relates to where the member for Stuart obtained his information. I presume that it came from the same reliable sources which have previously given him information about the cattle industry and which have supplied him with information which he has utilised in this House.

There are questions regarding the protection of the mangrove pastoral areas that are mentioned. Mud crab habitats and things like that could be in danger, and those are matters that the Minister for Conservation could probably handle. Originally, I did not understand why the letter was sent to me as Minister for Lands and Housing but certainly, Mr Speaker ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Don't you know? They are shooting them all out.

Mr MANZIE: Yes. If they are being shot out, I advised the member yesterday that the Department of Industries and Fisheries does undertake shoot-outs on behalf of the Department of Lands and Housing.

Obviously, the information was sent to me in all seriousness. It is clearly a query that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition takes very seriously. His sources probably are the same impeccable sources that they usually are, and the information plainly is up to the normal standard that the member presents to this House.

Mr Ede: Are you going to check it out?

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the Minister for Conservation may like to add some further information in relation to this matter, because it probably comes within his portfolio area, and possibly that of the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries as well.

Mr HATTON (Conservation): Mr Speaker, I must take this opportunity to add briefly to those comments as the matter has been referred to me by the Minister for Lands and Housing.

A copy of this letter was referred to me yesterday, and I sought to source the information. I must say I was somewhat perplexed that cattle were brought into Cape Hotham in 1864 through Darwin which was not settled, I understand, until 1869, and that these cattle have adapted to drinking sea water and living in mangrove swamps and have developed blue colouring. It would help if the member for Stuart could advise who gave him this information and perhaps in which pub. We may then be able to track them down. I approached the honourable member yesterday and received ...

Mr Ede: This is serious business.

Mr HATTON: I am trying to take the matter quite seriously.

Mr Ede: Well, it does not sound like it.

Mr HATTON: I am sorry. I really am trying to take this matter seriously, Mr Speaker. We are trying to obtain information.

Nobody in the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries knows about any blue cattle and nobody in the Conservation Commission, to my knowledge, knows about any blue cattle. The member for Karama, who was born and raised in this country and who has spent his lifetime walking around the Northern Territory ...

Mr Ede: Is he your expert witness?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I must say ...

A member: You have been set up by the backbench.

Mr HATTON: He speaks for the rural areas, and he knows nothing about these cattle, but that is not to say that the member for Stuart, whom we all know has impeccable sources, may not have received some quite serious information. I am quite sure that, if there were some blue cattle walking around - even though some of them are red and white and blotchy - they would make an interesting exhibit.

I must say that the Territory Wildlife Park does have descendants of the original cattle that came into the Northern Territory. These came in in 1837 to Port Essington at Victoria Settlement. They were banteng cattle from Timor and some of their descendants are exhibited at the Territory Wildlife Park, as are buffalo which were introduced at at the same time.

If the honourable member is prepared, for once, to reveal the source of this serious information, that would enable somebody to carry out some checks. I know of nobody working in the rural areas of the Northern Territory who knows anything about this. It may be serious and, if so, it will be worth investigating. However, I must say that, on the face of it, it sounds very much as if someone has had a lend of the honourable member.

Crimes Compensation

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer him once again to his actions in the matter of crimes compensation. Does he recall the case of Mr Greg Bray, the victim of a violent assault in Alice Springs? Is it a fact that the magistrate in the case awarded Mr Bray \$15 000 in compensation? Is it also a fact that the Attorney-General decided to cut that compensation down to \$5000? Is it true that he refused to provide Mr Bray or his solicitors with a reason for this decision, and is it true that, after 18 months, Mr Bray's solicitors issued proceedings in the Supreme Court against the Attorney-General, at a cost of more than \$2000, to recover their client's full compensation? Was it not on the day that proceedings were due to commence in the Supreme Court that the Attorney-General gave in and paid up? How many more such cases are on the minister's file?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot recall details of that matter. However, I have made it clear to all honourable members, including the member for MacDonnell, that I have exercised my responsibilities under section 20 of the Crimes Compensation Act. I certainly do not resile from my responsibilities as Attorney-General and any suggestion that I should not comply with the law is reprehensible.

This issue has been dealt with and the member for MacDonnell's actions in trying to extend it simply indicates the type of attitude that he adopts. He is not worried about the rule of law or the responsibilities ...

Mr Smith: No. He is worried about your ridiculous attitude.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that question time is being broadcast.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, obviously the Leader of the Opposition is not interested in truth. He believes in shouting down anyone who may have a contrary view. It is a good thing that we live in a democracy where people

understand that the right to speak cannot be trampled on by the likes of the Leader of the Opposition. As I pointed out, I certainly do not shirk my responsibilities under the act. I have no problem in accepting responsibilities which the laws of this parliament place on me and I find reprehensible any suggestion that I should do so.

The circumstances which the honourable member outlined may or may not be true. However, the fact is that I have deliberated on 107 matters in accordance with the law. In 104 matters, I have made a decision which relates to ...

Mr Smith: Plus Mr Bray and how many others?

Mr MANZIE: The Leader of the Opposition is not interested in listening. He likes to make a bit of fuss. As I was saying, of the 107 matters which I looked at, as I was required to do under the law, I made decisions in 104, which does not relate to ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing order 113 clearly states that an answer shall be relevant to the question. Any interpretation of the minister's response would have to leave one with the conclusion that he has not answered the member for MacDonnell's question and that he has absolutely no intention of answering it. I would suggest that, if he is unable to answer, he should simply say so and sit down. If he is able to answer it, then I suggest that he do so.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the opposition is attempting to prevent information being presented to the community. However, the community is aware of the role which the opposition plays in this House.

As I was saying, I have deliberated on 107 matters and, in 104 of those matters, I made no changes to awards recommended by the court. In 3 matters, I considered that partial payment should be made, and that was in accordance with my responsibility under the act. Yesterday, I explained in this House that an amendment to the act will remove section 20 and with it my responsibility to assess the findings of magistrates in relation to these matters. In future, such findings will be directions and there will be no review role for the Attorney-General. I explained also that people who have been affected by the review process will not be disadvantaged. They will be treated as if no review process had operated. It is only fair and proper that they receive the same treatment as people in similar situations will receive in the future.

I do not intend to make any further revelations in this House of details of court actions or decisions made in relation to them. If the person referred to by the member for MacDonnell wishes to make public the full facts of the matter, that is quite appropriate, but I do not think that it is proper that such details be released by me in this House. Any suggestion that I should contravene the law in some way or other is reprehensible. The community should be aware that the rule of law is very important and any suggestion that members of this House should contravene laws is reprehensible and should not be tolerated.

Mining at Coronation Hill

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

There seems to be some confusion in the minds of the Australian public and, certainly in the minds of the masters of misinformation who sit on the opposition benches of this parliament about the location of the Coronation Hill mineral deposit in relation to the world famous attraction of Kakadu National Park. Could the Chief Minister inform the House of the nature of the Goodparla and Gimbat pastoral leases, which surround Coronation Hill, and the geographical and environmental relationships with Kakadu?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not surprised that most Australians are confused about Coronation Hill and its surroundings. As recently as this week, on Northern Territory television, the Coronation Hill debacle was illustrated with camera shots of brimming billabongs, teeming bird life and crocodiles. Further afield, last Friday, the 7 National Network heralded Labor's cop-out on Coronation Hill and the 2500 km² Conservation Zone with the words: 'Good news for Australia's greatest national park. Kakadu has been saved from the miner's spade'.

Coronation Hill is 75 km from Yellow Waters and it is 40 km from Twin Falls, as the crow flies. It is 130 km from Obiri Rock. It is adjacent to the very early headwaters of the South Alligator River in its creek stage. BHP has developed disaster-proof plans to ensure that the working of a Coronation Hill mine would never mingle with the waters of the South Alligator. Apart from that stream, the closest substantial permanent water body is at Koolpin Gorge, some 5 km away. There is not and probably never has been a crocodile within biting distance of Coronation Hill. Crocodiles tend to favour the wetlands and billabongs of the real Kakadu, not the dry stony ridges and sparse vegetation of Coronation Hill's immediate environment. In fact, a crocodile attack has occurred closer to this Legislative Assembly - at the base of Lameroo Cliffs in 1908 - than any crocodile has ever ventured in the vicinity of Coronation Hill.

As honourable members would be aware, any story about mining anywhere in the heavily mineralised Kakadu region is always accompanied by television pictures of the beauty of Kakadu National Park proper - Kakadu Stage 1, as we usually call it. Part of the cause for this is perhaps our fault. Since self-government, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission has issued to television stations Australia-wide video clips depicting the beauty of the real Kakadu in order to market tourism in the Top End. Television stations have since built up their own video inventory of Kakadu, often during trips to the area to cover Prime Ministerial visits, such as Mr Hawke's more frequent visits in recent years which, of course, have coincided with the growth of the anti-mining environment lobby in Labor's political arithmetic.

Probably, many television stations use their own video clips of features such as Twin Falls and Yellow Waters quite innocently when Coronation Hill hits the headlines. Many have never seen Coronation Hill, the South Alligator River valley or the old pastoral leases of Gimbat and Goodparla, which have been elevated to national park status. In fact, there would not be much reason for newsmen or tourists to visit Coronation Hill or the almost 7000 km² of Stage 3 of Kakadu National Park unless they are deeply interested in abandoned mine sites, much-used grazing land and the sparse snappy gum and speargrass vegetation of Coronation Hill itself.

The editorial in this Monday's *The Australian* described Coronation Hill as being as scenically attractive as a full ashtray. This is the very area which the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, the absentee landlord of Kakadu, suggests should join Kakadu Stages 1 and 2 on the World Heritage List because of its intrinsic environmental value. The federal minister responsible for the environment, Senator Richardson, said on television on Sunday that the area will be a nice little earner for tourism if it is saved from mining. The Prime Minister said on television on Monday that the whole area must be preserved as it is a catchment area of the South Alligator River which feeds the major part of the Kakadu system.

Let us look briefly at the history of this area, which the ANPWS wants to preserve as a pristine wilderness. Feral buffalo, introduced early last century, had started to infest the area by the time Dr Ludwig Leichhardt traversed the Alligator region in 1844 on his way to Port Essington. For 80 years or so, Gimbat and Goodparla were used commercially as pastoral leases grazing both buffalo and cattle, but that was not the only commercial use of the so-called pristine wilderness of Kakadu Stage 3. Commercial gold mining started there in the 1930s. In the 1950s, at least 11 small but rich, uranium mines were worked on the Gimbat pastoral lease alone. History shows that a total of 14 producing mines operated on the 2 pastoral leases, 2 of which were Coronation Hill and El Sherana. Some of the mines were underground shafts and some were open-cut. A total of 45 mining outcrops have been heavily worked in the area, either for mining or exploration purposes. All the associated road works, living areas and even 2 treatment plants have existed at times in this pristine wilderness. No wonder Senator Gareth Evans called it 'clapped-out buffalo country' and no wonder that, shortly afterwards, Labor strategists suggested that he take the foreign affairs portfolio. So much for Senator Richardson's tourism drawcard and the ANPWS idea of a wilderness area.

I turn to the Prime Minister's concern to preserve the headwaters of the South Alligator River. Indeed, I am sure all reasonable Australians are concerned to preserve the headwaters of the South Alligator River. The proposed pit at Coronation Hill will be one-fifth the size of the Parliament House complex in Canberra. I have been shown a very interesting picture which shows that pit superimposed on a picture of that impressive building. The closest extremity of the pit to the South Alligator, even when the water course is much expanded in a 1-in-100-year flood, is 200 m. It is still high above the floodwater line. According to the BHP environmental impact statement, the residue pit, which will contain some sedimentary nasties such as cyanide, is designed as a non-release area. It would not overflow if all the rain generated by 5 Cyclone Tracys fell in its immediate catchment area. In total, the mine will disturb 2 km² on the outer extremity of a 20 000 km² national park. I have not gone into details on the prospective mineral wealth of the old Goodparla and Gimbat pastoral leases because that is very well documented.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! There is plenty of opportunity in this House for ministers to make statements. I recently had the privilege of visiting the mother of parliaments, the Westminster parliament, where the Prime Minister of that country could answer, in 2 minutes, questions on national defence, matters concerning the European Common Market and matters pertaining to whether or not Britain should maintain its effort in Northern Ireland ...

Mr SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, my point of order is that the Chief Minister can very simply answer the question in an extremely short time instead of using question time to make a statement. I would contend that my point of order is relevant to standing order 113.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, I would ask the Chief Minister to answer the questions as precisely and as quickly as he can.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I will complete the answer to this important question. Indeed, it is an important question for Territory listeners even if the member for Nhulunbuy is bored by the whole proceedings. I feel sorry about that.

Mr Speaker, last week's decision by Cabinet to abolish overnight the 2500 km² Conservation Zone and its non-decision on Coronation Hill has nothing to do with the environment, conservation, tourism or the economy of this country. It has everything to do with the Labor Party clinging to power on green party preferences, votes cast by people who mistakenly believe that the real Kakadu National Park is at risk from any mining activity anywhere in the Conservation Zone. The ANPWS is debasing the currency in which it trades by preserving 2 over-used cow paddocks and a couple of dozen of mine sites as a national park and then trying to sell it internationally as a World Heritage area, and the Australian Conservation Foundation and the green politicians have betrayed the genuine concerns of the environmentally conscious to gain mastery of Labor's agenda.

The Labor Party has traded on a general lack of knowledge of the topography of Kakadu, and that is a matter which should be of concern to all members of this House. I hope it will get some additional attention in the media, particularly the southern media, when the distortions are put forward to the Australian people about what the Conservation Zone looks like compared to Stage 1 Kakadu, which is the Kakadu that we all know so well.

Year 10 Examination Results

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Would the minister make freely available the results of the Year 10 examinations on a school-by-school basis or does he believe, as was said by Sir Humphrey in 'Yes Prime Minister' on Monday night in that educational program, that 'parents are the very worst people in the world to make decisions about what schools their children should attend', and therefore intends to keep the results quiet? I hope that he will give a positive response.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was not able to witness the 'Yes Prime Minister' program the other night to which the member for Sadadeen refers. I believe that I have made very clear what is to happen with the results of the examinations. Those results, which are the 30% component, will go back to the schools for each school to make the decision as to whether or not the students or the parents are to receive those results. However, I make it very clear that, if a school decides that those results are not to go to the students, then the students or the parents are able to obtain those results from the Board of Studies.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: That is ridiculous.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, it is not ridiculous. The results will be given to the schools. The average across the Territory will be given to the schools so that they can compare their own position with that average. This has been a very sensitive process and I am sure honourable members of this Assembly would be aware of the concern and the feeling among some teachers and some parents about our move towards the introduction of external assessment as part of the overall Year 10 assessment package. I believe we have acted responsibly. We will be monitoring the process very carefully, and the results of those examinations will be out before the end of the year so that they can be used for the conversion to A to E scale for inclusion on a Junior Secondary Studies Certificate. As time goes by, we will be looking at those results and I will be able to inform the House further if there are to be any changes, but that is the situation as it exists today.

Crocodile Products Export Trade

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Have there been any recent developments in the Northern Territory's crocodile products export trade prospects?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to advise the honourable member that there have been some exciting developments over the weekend. Honourable members will be aware that the Northern Territory has been leading Australia and, in many respects the world, in the protection of the salt-water crocodile both for the development of those products and in order to repopulate Northern Territory waters with salt-water crocodiles. Although some people have had some concerns about that, I am certain the tourist industry has been a major beneficiary of the expansion in the number of crocodiles within the Northern Territory.

The management program developed by the Conservation Commission and successfully promoted to the world through the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and again through the organisation that supports the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, CITES, to have the crocodile moved from appendix 1 to appendix 2 by the CITES, allowed us successfully to introduce the crocodile industry. The CITES has been meeting over this last week in Switzerland and 2 of the Australian delegates are the Director of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission and Dr Goff Letts on behalf of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. They have been discussing, among other things, the protection of the salt-water crocodile. More than 100 countries are signatories to this convention but, unfortunately, there have been some countries that have not been signatories nor have they been participating in the agreements and treaties for the protection of endangered species and the trade in them. One of those countries is Japan which is an enormous potential market for crocodile products. But, because Japan refused to accept the limitations imposed by the CITES agreement, exports from countries such as Australia to Japan were banned as part of that process. But now, with the development of a successful industry in Darwin, Japan announced it will now become a signatory to the CITES agreement. The effect is that it opens up the entire Japanese market to the supply of crocodile products from the Northern Territory, and that in itself is a major potential boost to our crocodile industry.

That is combined with work that is currently being undertaken by the Conservation Commission to expand the opportunities for development of the

crocodile industry. As a consequence of the successful repopulation of crocodiles in the Northern Territory, we believe that it is now appropriate that more of the eggs be taken from the wild. There is a potential to expand the crocodile farming industry in the Northern Territory and obtain amendments to the Crocodile Management Plan for that purpose. If that can be achieved, we can expand employment and export development in this exciting industry. We hope that we will be able to convince the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and the federal authorities, and through them the IUCN and CITES, of the need for amendment to the Crocodile Management Plan so that we can provide for expansion of the industry. It is a practical way of ensuring the protection and survival of this native fauna. Secondly, it would provide industry opportunities by utilising natural resources in a responsible and sensible way. The combined goals of the Conservation Commission's work and the work that is being undertaken on research for equivalent management arrangements for the magpie goose and some other wildlife species have real potential for primary industry development. I do not anticipate, however, undertaking breeding programs with blue cows.

Crimes Compensation

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer to my previous question in relation to his extraordinary determination in the case of Mr Greg Bray. I remind the Attorney-General that it is about time we nailed down this figure of 103 cases or 104 cases in which he alleges that he did not interfere. I remind him that, in this House on Tuesday, he said there were 104 cases, yet there were 103 cases according to his statement yesterday. Is the Bray case one of those cases that he claims that he did not change?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, first of all, I say categorically that I have not interfered with 107 matters because there is no interference involved at all. The inference that is being made that, somehow or other, I interfered with the court process is totally and utterly wrong and it should be refuted very strongly. If the member for MacDonnell cannot understand that, that is his problem. But, it is important that the community realise that there is no interference in the court process. The court had a role under the act and that role was to recommend ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Evidently the Attorney-General has misunderstood my question. The word I used was 'changed' in relation to the court's ruling. I will repeat the question for the benefit of the Attorney-General.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the honourable member has raised a point of order. He cannot ask the question again without being recognised by the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it was quite clear to all people listening to the radio and to all people in this House that the member for MacDonnell twice said that I had interfered. I am pointing out very clearly, before I commence answering his question, that the inference is totally incorrect.

Under the act, the court makes a recommendation to me. I have a role under section 20 then to decide whether it is to be paid in full, whether it is to be paid in part or whether it is not to be paid at all. Any suggestion that there is any interference in the processes is totally incorrect. I remind the honourable member that this parliament set in train the act under which these processes work. The total number of matters that I have dealt with is 107. The number of matters on which I have exercised my role under section 20 and determined that part of the amount recommended be paid is 3. Therefore, the number of matters which I have considered and then authorised payment as recommended in the certificate is 104. In relation to the matter that is raised, I believe that it has been settled and paid and therefore it is among the 104.

I think there is only 1 of the 3 matters which has yet to be raised. I am sure that, for the benefit of everyone, the member for MacDonnell will raise that last matter. I certainly will not be mentioning the person's name but it will come out. It will be one of 3 in which, in exercising my legal discretion and role under the act that was passed by this parliament, I made a decision. Again, I deny blatant suggestions that I have interfered with the legal processes, and the community should be aware of those facts.

Motor Vehicle Encumbrance Register

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer him to recent newspaper articles in respect of a motor vehicle encumbrances register. What is the current situation with respect to the implementation of this scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently, there was a 7.30 Report item which reflected on the level of consumer protection in regard to motor vehicle encumbrances. Some comments were made by a local motor vehicle dealer regarding that as well. In fact, he reflected on the government 'having been sitting on legislation', I think was his expression, for some 3 years. That is totally incorrect. This government has acted very properly and as promptly as possible in implementing a satisfactory system of motor vehicle encumbrance registration for the Northern Territory. The system will be linked to the existing New South Wales system. That will give coverage of 40% of all motor vehicles in Australia ensuring that there are no encumbrances at the time of transfer of ownership transfer. I emphasise the figure of 40%. That means that any of the remaining 60% of vehicles in Australia could enter the Northern Territory without our having direct access to a means of ensuring that there are no encumbrances.

At a Transport Ministers Conference last year, I put forward the concept of a nationally-linked system. That concept has been adopted by all state ministers but it will take some years to put into place. In the meantime, we have to wait for New South Wales to upgrade its system by expanding computer capacity. Also it had to legislate to allow the Northern Territory access to its system. Legislation has been introduced into this House but it will not be possible to finalise all the details until such time as New South Wales finalises amendments to its act.

We are hopeful of having in place early next year a comprehensive system that will be operable for the benefit of all Territorians. In the meantime, as we have said time and time again, it is a matter of buyer beware whether it

be a member of the public or a motor vehicle dealer. Motor vehicle dealers ought to know the game pretty well by now but, if they have any doubts, it is worth their while to search each of the interstate systems to ensure that a vehicle is not encumbered. Action is well under way. This government has taken prompt action of which it should be proud and which should not be condemned by the opposition.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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The written questions are included in Parliamentary Record No 15 for 10 - 12 October 1989.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Last year, the Territory taxpayer lost \$27.5m through supporting the hotel deals of the minister's government at Yulara, Alice Springs and Darwin. That is, last year the taxpayer's funds were draining into those deals at the rate of \$500 000 a week, \$75 000 a day - and wait for it, Mr Deputy Speaker - \$50 a minute! My questions are as follows. Was the all-up annual figure of \$27.5m \$8.3m over budget? Was this massive 30% flow-out recorded before the pilots' strike commenced, and will the minister now give Territory taxpayers a clear and open statement of how much more they stand to lose in the year ahead?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, answers to the questions which the Leader of the Opposition has asked need to be very carefully thought out and given to him in great detail. Had he bothered to phone me and give me notice that he intended to ask this, although these are questions without notice ...

Mr Smith: That is correct. This is where we test how good ministers are.

Mr COULTER: But he has to expect that the answers that have to be given, need to be given in a very precise manner. I will take the questions on notice, and I will endeavour to provide him with the answer by the end of these sittings.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I draw the honourable minister's attention to the government's decision to make a half-yearly payment in advance to the Yulara participants. My questions are these. Was that advance of taxpayers' funds about \$5m? Was the advance paid to the following groups, who are participants: the Commonwealth Trading Bank, the National Commercial Banking Corporation, the National Westminster Finance Company, Capel Court Corporation Ltd, Beneficial Finance Corporation and James Hardie Finance? My final question is this: when the government had already paid out far more than its estimates in the budget in support of Yulara and the 2 Sheratons, why did it add on this extra pre-payment of \$5m?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, likewise, I will take that question on notice and endeavour to provide the Leader of the Opposition with the information during the course of these sittings.

Crimes Compensation Act

Mr TUXWORTH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Deputy Speaker, my question relates to matters which were debated in this House last week which were resolved by some welcome moves by the Attorney-General. Is the Attorney-General prepared to intervene in the litigation that is about to commence between the Northern Territory government and Mr Peter Bunney and his solicitors for the recovery of \$2600 of legal expenses incurred by Mr Bunney in attempting to gain his full compensation

payment from the government? Given the magnanimous gesture which the minister made last week, would he also consider settling the litigation out of court? Otherwise, the amount will come out of the extra \$7000 which Mr Bunney is due to receive as compensation.

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am unaware of any litigation that is about to commence but, in terms of the principle of paying crimes compensation, the costs are generally picked up on top of the compensation payment. I presume that that is what would occur this time. However, I will certainly look into the matter and will report back to the Assembly before the end of the sittings.

Hong Kong Expo

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I understand that the final briefing for participants in the Hong Kong Expo was conducted at the Trade Development Zone last Monday. What is the composition and size of the Territory delegation attending expo?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, in all, 106 people will be travelling to Hong Kong, including 41 public servants, 5 members of ministerial staff, 3 ministers, 2 representatives of Territory local government, 51 people from the private sector and 4 media representatives.

Obviously, the member for Karama's question stemmed from the Leader of the Opposition's performance on the ABC Radio Morning Program yesterday. Of course, he was ably assisted by the member for Barkly, who was quoted in the Sunday Territorian as having great concerns about the number of people travelling to Hong Kong. It was interesting to note that, when the compere of the Morning Show asked how many people were to travel to Hong Kong, the Leader of the Opposition virtually replied that he did not know. He did not know what he was talking about and he did not understand the logistics, but he was prepared to be on the front page of the Sunday Territorian. The member for Barkly did not contribute too much about how many people he would send and perhaps he could give some figures to the media himself. Would he send 10 people, 40 people or 100 people?

The clear inference of the criticisms is that the Northern Territory government is spending too many dollars on the expo and associated events in Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Let me make this point immediately: the cost can be measured only against the returns to the Territory. The cost will be in the vicinity of \$1.1m or \$1.2m and the returns will be many times that even in the short term. In fact, I suggest that the returns may well be hundreds of times that in the medium to longer term. If opposition members expect me to take a defensive position on this matter, then they are sadly mistaken. If they want to talk about the Big Bang Barry syndrome, that is okay by me too because, at the end of the day, they will be the ones who will have egg on their faces.

Mr Ede: Nothing for Territorians.

Mr COULTER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says that there is 'nothing for Territorians'. What we are providing the public of the Northern Territory with is a clear distinction between the 2 parties. We know what the

Leader of the Opposition thinks about development: knock, knock, knock. The people will know where we stand about providing development and an extension to our manufacturing base: jobs, jobs, jobs. That is the choice that the people of the Northern Territory will have at the next election. I am pleased to hear people like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition say that there is nothing in it for Territorians. It gives the people in the community a better chance to make the choice between the 2 parties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not be defensive about this at all. I ask members to remember that the expo events have been one full year in planning. As part of this massive planning exercise, much advance work has already been done in Hong Kong and we know the sort of reception the Territory contribution to the expo will receive. I can say with total confidence that it will be resoundingly successful. More than that, I suggest to honourable members that it will be viewed in later years as a watershed event in the Territory growth story. For more than 10 years, we have been talking about the need to integrate the Territory's economic development with Asia. We have done hard work in establishing a Territory presence in leading Asian commercial centres, particularly Hong Kong. Now it is time to reap the rewards.

In this sort of scenario, the opposition wants to score a cheap political point suggesting junkets and shopping trips for Territory public servants or, in the words of the member for Barkly, 'mates of the CLP'. It is curious logic from the honourable member. For that sort of throwaway line to have any credence, the Territory presentation at the expo would have to be organised by the CLP or at least the government but it is - and I stress this point - a project jointly organised by the government and the private sector. In fact, the private sector has dominant numbers on the organising committee.

In effect, the member for Barkly is accusing the Territory business sector of organising junket trips for friends of the CLP. 33 private Territory companies are participating in the expo in Hong Kong. Are they all friends and mates of the CLP? Are they on shopping trips? Let us run through some of the people the honourable member so casually describes as 'freeloaders and mates of the CLP'. Mr Chris Lai of Peat Marwick Hungerfords, Mr Neil Philip of Philip and Mitaros, Mr Colin Fitzgerald of The Professionals, Mr Ron Warner of Warner and Feros, Ms Karen Brown-Dell of Shades of Ochre, Mr Bruce Embery of the Master Builders group and Mr Jim McGregor of Westpac. I am sure that, if the honourable member wanted to name these people in the public arena as 'freeloaders and the CLP cronies', he would be sued for all he is worth.

The member for Barkly is talking rubbish. Unfortunately, for the sake of a cheap and nasty throwaway line on the front page of the newspaper, he has swept up hardworking government employees doing no more than their jobs and a host of Territory business people into a net of alleged freeloaders and junketeers. If he thinks he is the champion of small business and the Business Council, I would refer him to the council's media release yesterday headed: 'When Will We Learn'. It says:

'Sending our trade delegation to Hong Kong Business and Lifestyle Expo with the political knives in their backs will not help business investment opportunities', the Chairman of the Northern Territory Business Council said today.

'The government's initiative in promoting the Territory requires support from all sections of our community and those businesses actively taking part in the expo were not impressed with the comments of Mr Smith and Tuxworth. Attracting investments under current

federal government constraints, particularly taxation and interest costs, made the marketing of the Territory that much harder', he said.

'The knockers would do well to look at the incentives the country can offer rather than attempt to score a few minor political points. The business groups who are represented at the expo should expect both an experienced and well-briefed government delegation'.

There was an argument about whether government representatives should be E4s, E3s or E2s. How cheap, Mr Deputy Speaker! How cheap and juvenile the argument was. The Chairman of the Business Council went on:

'The delegation needs to be a high ranking delegation. To support the reduced delegation numbers illustrates a lack of understanding of the need for a credible and determined level'.

The Chairman of the Business Council is quite right, Mr Deputy Speaker. How many people would we send? How many people will be going through the expo? The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Barkly did not know what they were talking about yet they were prepared to jump in on the front page of the Sunday Territorian and then to have another bash on the radio yesterday. It was a cheap political stunt. I make no apologies for the delegation that we are sending. I know that they are all hard-working people who will be working many hours face to face with up to 30 000 or 40 000 people a day coming through the expo. What members opposite have done is nothing but shameful.

However, the Leader of the Opposition has been more cautious by adopting his classic 'yes but' approach. He says: 'Yes, I like the expo, but it is costing too much'. The reality is that he knows almost nothing about what is involved in holding the expo and the associated investment seminars and all the promotional events surrounding them. He has no idea about the cost involved. He does not know how much is too much and how little is too little. The organising committee has been dealing with those matters. I repeat that it is a joint operation with the Territory private sector and the organising committee is dominated by the private sector.

It is difficult to be precise about the numbers of Territorians going to Hong Kong and Shenzhen for the expo events because those numbers are changing all the time. Only last Friday, the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government rang me indicating that he had 700 applications for jobs and that there were likely to be at least 250 people on the short list. These people had to be interviewed and he needed more people to conduct the interviews. That number will fluctuate, and I make no apologies for that. I will repeat the numbers in the expo delegation and I will stand by them. There are 41 public servants, 5 ministerial staff members, 3 ministers, 2 representatives from local government, 51 people from the private sector and 4 Territory media people, a total of 106 people. I am proud of every single one of them.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Last week, the Minister for Tourism stated that the cost of the pilots' strike to the Territory tourism industry now stood at \$45m. How much of that \$45m bill will be picked up by the Northern Territory taxpayer through the minister's deals with the Sheratons and Yulara?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister was given a briefing on that very subject when he met with members of the Northern Territory Tourist Promotion Association here in Darwin. It is interesting to note that our request to the Prime Minister to share equally the cost of these salvage efforts has produced no response at all. We have not even had a letter back from the Prime Minister on this particular issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me go a little further. The Prime Minister was reminded yesterday about the promises we have heard on television that there would be big marketing exercises and that the Commonwealth would do a great deal for the tourism industry. We have heard how Kakadu Stage 3 will be the greatest thing since sliced bread, and we cannot go ahead with mining at Coronation Hill ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I recall the question. It was very simple. It concerned the contribution that the Northern Territory government was making towards meeting the costs incurred as a result of the pilots' strike through its repayments to the Sheratons and Yulara. The minister has not addressed that question and it seems obvious that he will not do so. He has addressed almost every other subject connected with the pilots' strike but he certainly has not addressed the cost to the Northern Territory government through the deals that have been made. I think his answer is quite out of order. That is my point of order. The minister is not relating his answer to the question at all.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I would suggest that the minister relate his remarks more closely to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a matter that is on the Notice Paper for discussion. Debate was adjourned on the motion of the Leader of the Opposition, and I intended to bring it on again as a matter for debate today so that members could contribute their comments on the effects and the financial implications of the pilots' strike in the Northern Territory. I believe that the matter would be more fully dealt with in the context of debate on that particular statement.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr COULTER: It is a statement. The Leader of the Opposition does not want me to talk about it. He wants some quick throwaway answer. Let us go into the matter in great detail. The opportunity is there. It is on the Notice Paper. Debate was adjourned. Let us bring it back on later today.

Hong Kong Expo

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The Leader of the Opposition and his coalition colleague, the member for Barkly, have been complaining about the number of people participating in the Hong Kong Expo. Among those attending are 8 from the Territory Department of Education and the Northern Territory University. Can the minister advise the House of the role of those 8 people at the expo in Hong Kong?

Mr Ede: That is a repeat of a former question surely, Mr Deputy Speaker.

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is not a repeat of the former question, and could I say that it is about time that the opposition and, indeed, a certain journalist, realised that there are benefits which will flow back from the expo in Hong Kong. That needs to be pointed out to the community, because what is being put across at the moment is that the people who are going to the expo will be taking part in a junket. That is a nonsense, Mr Deputy Speaker, and that needs to be made very clear.

The overall purpose of our role in this expo is to promote the Northern Territory as a place to invest in and migrate to. We want to demonstrate that our education sector can provide vital support in meeting the education needs of new citizens and that it can support new industry with training and research. Another very important purpose is to promote the Northern Territory as a place to study in and a place with saleable education services. Obviously, the opposition is not aware of the fact that huge financial benefits can flow to the Northern Territory. During the course of an answer to a previous question, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition interjected that there was nothing in this for Territorians.

Mr Ede: Let us concentrate on fixing up the Territory.

Mr HARRIS: Let us see what will flow into the Northern Territory as a result of 8 people from the Department of Education and the Northern Territory University attending the Hong Kong Expo to show what the Northern Territory has to offer. The Leader of the Opposition gets up and tells us: 'Everyone is tightening their belts in the Northern Territory. The government is telling people to tighten their belts but then it sends others away on a junket'. These people are not going on a junket. They are going to Hong Kong to bring dollars into our economy so that Territorians can loosen their belts.

Fee-paying overseas students are of great economic value to the Territory and the opposition knows it. The Northern Territory University now has over 200 overseas students and we aim to recruit an additional 50 students in this exercise, with an estimated additional economic return of \$1m. The Northern Territory TAFE is seeking an additional 50 students, worth \$800 000. The Alice Springs College of TAFE already has some 30 overseas students and is aiming to double this figure in the next 4 years. We are seeking an additional 25 secondary students, which will be worth some \$350 000. These student recruitment targets represent an additional value to the Northern Territory economy of \$2.15m per year. Successive students from Hong Kong will create a snowball effect and we can look forward to continued growth in this area. By 1995, we are aiming for a total of 1100 overseas students with a combined economic value to the Northern Territory of some \$22m per year. Involvement in exercises like the Hong Kong Expo ...

Mr Ede: You cannot get the teachers to teach them.

Mr HARRIS: The opposition is talking a load of nonsense.

Mr Ede: You cannot provide an education system for Territorians.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HARRIS: Mr Deputy Speaker, both the department and the Northern Territory University are looking to export educational expertise by providing consultancy and other services to overseas educational institutions,

governments and industry. The Northern Territory University is also looking to promote its availability as a base for research activities by organisations dealing with Australia and South-east Asia. The good name of the Menzies School of Health Research is also attracting people to Darwin for research purposes.

Other initiatives which I cannot announce at this particular point in time are being negotiated. They will definitely benefit the economy of the Northern Territory by many millions of dollars and I hope to be making announcements on them later during the course of the year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we also have an urgent need to recruit teachers. The member for Stuart continually interjects about the need for teachers and there is no doubt that a need exists. We need to fill vacancies in the subject areas of maths, science and business studies. The member for Stuart knows that there is a national shortage in many specialist areas of teaching and he knows that most of the other states are making efforts to recruit overseas teachers. We also have to work at attracting teachers to the Territory.

Mr Ede: What about training Territorians?

Mr HARRIS: We can talk about that at another stage. I am happy to talk about training young people to take up the teaching profession.

In the past, we have tried using various methods of selling education overseas but there is no substitute for direct marketing, particularly in attracting overseas students. The area is highly competitive and the competition includes not only the other Australian states but a number of other nations including the UK, the USA, Canada, France and West Germany. A whole range of nations are actively marketing their education services. At a recent expo in Singapore, the Western Australian contingent included 50 people from the education sector attending 10 stands, and that expo was smaller than the Hong Kong Expo will be.

On the occasion of the Singapore Expo, in order to save dollars, we placed our information on the stand of the International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges, an avenue which we often use. When a person from the Northern Territory, who was attending the expo, saw nothing obvious relating to the Northern Territory, he asked those manning the stand for information about the Territory. He was referred to a stack of brochures in a corner of the display and, Mr Deputy Speaker, you can guess where our brochures were. They were right at the bottom of the stack. That is why it is important that we have representatives from the various institutions in attendance to put forward their cases and to sell their institutions.

I will take this opportunity to outline the marketing methods used and some other reasons why people from our institutions must attend these expos and conferences. The Northern Territory University is involved in overseas education seminars with organisations such as Austrade and the International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges, which I have already mentioned, as well as country trade fairs, expositions, seminars conducted by overseas marketing agents, and direct contact with students following written applications. By far the greatest number of students are enrolled through seminars, trade fairs and expositions conducted overseas.

In general, the recruitment of 2 overseas students in each promotion would cover the cost of an overseas marketing exercise. The average full student fee is \$8500 per year and most students stay for 3 years. Therefore, the

income produced by 2 students is approximately \$51 000 over a 3-year period. This easily covers the average cost of about \$12 000 for a seminar, leaving a considerable residue of funds even after federal capital grant payments and other costs are extracted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the TAFE sector uses a combination of direct visits to overseas countries and on-site agents. It is difficult to ascertain the proportion of students attracted through on-site agents and those attracted from direct visits because, until now, the ASCOT agents have all been private agents. Whilst advertisements have been placed, the actual selection of students requires someone from the college to go overseas and talk to the students and their parents. This is necessary to ensure that prospective students have the appropriate level of English to enable them to understand tertiary studies in Australia, and that students' motives are in accord with what is being offered. It has also been essential for a college representative to go overseas because the majority of students' parents wish to meet with and talk to a representative of the institution before they are prepared to commit money to have their children live in Australia for 2 years. It should also be noted that recruiting agents are paid a commission for each student actually recruited and, therefore, are driven by commercial motives.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! The minister has ample time in this House to make a statement. He is giving an extremely protracted answer to what was a very simple question. He has been speaking for more than 10 minutes and, given that Territory taxpayers are paying \$50 a minute to the Sheratons and Yulara, we have spent \$500 while he has been on his feet. If he wants to make a statement about education, he has the right to do so at any time. This is a ridiculous waste of question time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order but I suggest that the honourable minister relate his remarks to the question.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Deputy Speaker, my remarks are directed to the question and it is disappointing that the opposition does not want to know the facts. This opposition is promoting the idea that 40 officers of the Northern Territory Public Service are going to the Hong Kong Expo on a junket. That is how it has been reported and that is a nonsense which has to be corrected. I am correcting it on the record now, Mr Deputy Speaker. Attendance at expos creates major financial spin-offs for the Northern Territory.

The longer the Northern Territory CLP government stays in power, the more criticism we will receive from the opposition in relation to matters such as this. However, the government will continue to be positive in promoting the Northern Territory. We will continue to do that despite the opposition's attacks. We will attend expos and conferences so that we can compete with the states and other nations in marketing our services. It is important that people listening to question time get the message. The opposition says that the government sends people on junkets whilst asking the rest of the community to tighten its belt. However, the belt can only be loosened if more dollars flow into our economy. One way of achieving that is by selling our wares overseas. We have a very good education system here and it can make a great deal of money for us.

One final point is very important. It relates to the university. We have gone out on a limb with the Northern Territory University. We have supported its establishment but we need student numbers. If we do not get those numbers, the taxpayer feels the impact. Attendance at the Hong Kong Expo will increase the number of Hong Kong students enrolled at the Northern Territory

University and will help to relieve a very important burden on the Northern Territory taxpayer.

CLP Property Transaction

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to this government's propensity for playing down the parlous state of the Darwin property market. I would ask the minister to explain why a Darwin city property purchased 8 years ago in October 1981 for the sum of \$240 000 was sold last month for \$215 000, given that the vendor was the CLP's Carpentaria Pty Ltd and the purchaser was CLP Gifts and Legacies Pty Ltd. Does this mean that the value of the property has genuinely crashed through the floor or that the CLP party machine's estimate of Darwin property values is in direct conflict with that of this CLP government?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I heard a statement but the question eludes me.

Mr Leo: Do you want me to repeat it?

Mr MANZIE: The fact that there has been a downward trend in property values can be attributed to only one thing. All members of the Territory community are well aware of why we have plummeting property values in the Territory. The fact is that, since 1984, when the Memorandum of Understanding was broken, the Territory has received \$1100m less from the federal government than it would have received if the memorandum had not been broken. The actions of the Labor Party have created tremendous problems in the Territory. However, as was evidenced by the comments of the Minister for Industries and Development this morning, this government is undertaking many innovative steps to bring economic prosperity to the Territory, only to be continuously attacked for doing so. We will, however, continue to do so.

I do not know what the honourable member is getting at in terms of property values in the city. Perhaps he should contact a valuer. If he wants to ask me a specific question, I will try and give him a specific answer.

Mr Leo: I did ask you a specific question. Do you want me to repeat it?

Aboriginal Social Club in Alice Springs

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

For some months now, I have had numerous meetings with the minister and his department in Alice Springs in an effort to resolve the long-standing problems of the Tangentyere Council and various Aboriginal community groups in their efforts to find a suitable site for an Aboriginal Social Club in Alice Springs. What progress has been made by his department in Alice Springs to resolve this problem?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to inform honourable members that a suitable site for an Aboriginal social club has finally been found. This matter dates back some years and it has certainly proved to be a most difficult question to resolve. In February 1987, the then Minister for Lands offered the Tangentyere Council a Crown term lease over part of a lot in

the town of Alice Springs on the southern side of the Blatherskite Ranges. However, the presence of sacred sites in the area meant that legal access to the site was not possible unless it could be negotiated with Australian National Railways. Unfortunately, those negotiations failed to resolve that problem. Following the purchase by the government of the Stuart Auto Museum, I instructed my department vigorously to pursue a resolution of this matter.

The president of the Tyeweretye clubs, Mr Eli Rubuntja, wrote to me about the matter in June. His letter identified 2 preferred sites. I advised Tyeweretye in July that, of the 2 sites, lot 1736, Town of Alice Springs, was the most acceptable to the government. Lot 1736 is a 13.7 ha block off Ilpapa Road just over the railway line. It does not front on to the Stuart Highway. The block was originally the subject of an application from the South Alice Springs Sporting Club for development as a sporting club and football oval complex. At first, we thought it might be possible to cater for both organisations. However, following negotiations with Tyeweretye clubs, including a meeting between their representatives and the member for Araluen, the government accepted that the 2 clubs would not be compatible on that block. I then wrote to the president of Souths, Mr Peter Ross, to ask if his club's project was likely to proceed. We received verbal advice that it would not and that was followed up with an application to withdraw its application for the block.

When I received notice last week that the application had been officially withdrawn, my department commenced negotiations with the Tyeweretye clubs to establish the size and location for a social club. Officers of my department - and the member for Braitling was involved in these discussions as well - met with the members of the Tangentyere Council. The final solution was the ratification of a 5 ha site for development at the northern end of Lot 1736. The provision of adequate buffer zones on the northern and eastern boundaries of the development has been an important factor in deciding that an area of 5 ha may be required. It has been the subject of discussions between the Tangentyere Council and the Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Central Australian Affairs.

It is my intention to offer Tangentyere Council, at nil cost, a development lease which will be convertible to perpetual leasehold when the development conditions have been met. It is also important to point out that the government will provide the headworks necessary to service the social club. It has certainly been a difficult matter to resolve but, hopefully, we are well on the way and I certainly wish all the people involved every success with the venture.

CLP Property Transaction

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Would he agree that, on the face of it, it is strange that, where the unimproved capital value of a property in 1981 was about \$85 000 and by 1989 had increased to \$175 000 and there had been no substantial change in the buildings, the value of the property fell from \$240 000 in 1981 to \$215 000 in 1989?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have some information that has just been provided to me on the basis that there was interest shown both by the ABC and the opposition parties - and, of course, those 2 groups being in concert would not

be unusual - in the CLP's property in Woods Street that changed ownership recently from a company called Carpentaria Pty Ltd to a company called CLP Gifts and Legacies Pty Ltd. As the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, the property transferred for a value below the amount for which it was purchased some years ago. That is true.

Honourable members and others will no doubt be aware that property values in the Territory have not been what we would have liked them to have been over the past few years, particularly as a result of the difficult financial circumstances the Territory has found itself in since the ALP came to power in Canberra and clipped our wings somewhat in terms of our financial allocations. There are other factors as well. It may well be that the original purchase price - and I make no judgment on this because I have not compared it with like buildings at the time - may have been a bit more than it should have been.

However, I would like to make this matter clear. The property which was transferred recently had an assessment made of its value for the purposes of the Tax Commissioner assessing stamp duty. The Tax Commissioner wanted a valuation rather than an assessment of valuation. He advised that he was prepared to bring the Valuer-General in to value the property. The Tax Commissioner does this at any time that he feels that he wants confirmation or his own advice on this matter. However, he gave the purchaser - in this case, CLP Gifts and Legacies - the option to submit a sworn valuation. A sworn valuation was prepared by T.C. Waters Pepper and Co of Darwin. It valued the property at \$220 000. That valuation was supplied to the Tax Commissioner and, on that basis, the stamp duty was levied.

Mr Smith: \$220 000 or \$215 000?

Mr PERRON: In fact, the sale price was \$215 000. It is not unusual that the Tax Commissioner or a valuer might assess the value of the property at a slightly higher or indeed slightly lower level than that. The value of the property for stamp duty purposes was assessed at \$220 000, and that is the figure on which the stamp duty was paid. The Valuer-General inspected the property afterwards, no doubt on the instructions of the Tax Commissioner, and the matter was finally concluded to the Tax Commissioner's satisfaction. On 21 September, he advised CLP Gifts and Legacies that he would be accepting the sworn valuation by T.C. Waters Pepper and Co, a division of L.J. Hooker. That may clarify the situation in respect of any innuendo which the Leader of the Opposition might be attempting to make in relation to this matter.

Tunnels Under Darwin

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Mr Deputy Speaker, in the construction of the Supreme Court building and also in the future construction of a Legislative Assembly, what care and regard has been paid to the historic tunnels under Darwin, one of which runs adjacent and pretty well parallel to the front fence of Government House and another of which runs under these grounds to Mitchell Street? These were used as late as 1960 for storing fuel which, indeed, was the purpose for which they were first built.

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, there certainly has been a renewed interest in those tunnels in recent times and I understand that some of the historical groups

occasionally take guided tours through them. I am able to confirm that they will have no effect on the State Square project. There are 2 sets of tunnels, and the the project does not impinge upon either.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: The building will not effect their safety?

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I confirm that the matter has been looked at and the advice I received earlier was that there is no adverse impact or effect. In regard to historic matters, however, I might take the opportunity of very briefly advising the honourable member, who takes an interest in these matters, that other historic monuments etc around the precinct will be taken into account in the course of the development. I am sure that all Territorians will be pleased with the end result which will take into account our roots and our heritage, and I am sure that she will be pleased when she sees the final effect.

Hong Kong Expo

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I note from comments that were made in the weekend press that the Public Service Commissioner and the department's Director of Human Resources are travelling to Hong Kong later in the month to attend the Northern Territory expo. Why is it necessary to send these departmental officers to Hong Kong?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is the same matter that has been raised a couple of times this morning. I read with interest the article in the weekend press which showed, at the head, a photograph of the Northern Territory's Public Service Commissioner, and went on to talk about a jaunt of the government's mates to the Hong Kong Expo. If being competent public servants makes public servants mates of government, then so be it. The 3 people who are attending the Hong Kong Expo on behalf of the Department of Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government are very competent public servants, and would be highly upset about any comment that they are going as mates of the government. These people are in the jobs that they are doing because they have the capacity to do those jobs.

In early September, the Department of Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government placed an advertisement in the South China Morning Post for specific categories of employees that are required in the Northern Territory, in fact, employees that are required not only in the Northern Territory but throughout Australia. We have been having difficulty for some time in employing specific categories of professional people and every state government reports that it is having the same difficulty in recruiting such people. I am talking about engineers, town planners, medical practitioners - mainly specialist medical practitioners - computing specialists, accountants and economists, teachers, nurses and lawyers. Those categories are difficult to recruit in a number of areas throughout the country.

As a result of that single advertisement on 2 September, the Department of Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government has received 1100 applications. A figure of 700 was referred to this morning by the Minister for Industries and Development but, since receiving that report, the number has grown to 1100 applicants. As a result of that advertisement, the number of applications is increasing by an average of 50 to 100 per week.

Obviously, not all of those people will be interviewed, but a very large number of them will. During the period following the placing of the advertisement, departments interested in particular applications and the Department of Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government have shortened the list. A very large number of interviews will be taking place in the period from late October until about 7 November. As a result of those interviews, we would expect to be able to fill a number of jobs in the Northern Territory which we have not been able to fill for some considerable time. Those, of course, are the specialist professional positions to which I referred.

As the Minister for Education indicated, the Department of Education will be conducting its own interviews with regard to categories of specialists required in the Northern Territory, and there are a number of applicants from Hong Kong. The other area was in the nursing profession. Those interviews will not be carried out by my department, but will be dealt with through the Nursing Assessment Council process.

A substantial number of the people who responded to the advertisement have the specific skills that we require in the Northern Territory. We have discussed this issue with the relevant unions in the Northern Territory and they have accepted the need for us to look further afield for these types of employees. I sought, as the Minister for Industries and Development indicated last Friday, the ability to take 1 extra person because we just could not cope with the work. We have received an enormous response. There is interest in Hong Kong from people with these specialist skills to come to the Territory. We need them, and this government will go out and get them.

CLP Property Transaction

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Treasurer will recall that a property transaction involving the CLP Woods Street headquarters was raised yesterday. He was uncertain why a property, bought 8 years ago for \$240 000, was worth only \$210 000 when it was sold to another CLP company last month. He will know by now that that is a fall of over 50% in real values. Can the Treasurer now tell the House whether this catastrophic fall in property values is general and widespread throughout the Darwin CBD or restricted to this particular building?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot tell the House if it is general. Obviously, I have not looked at the matter in any further detail since yesterday. I would doubt that it is a general fall across the board otherwise the matter would have been brought to my attention. Honourable members may care to look at the report of the Valuer-General for the Northern Territory, who is, of course, also the Valuer-General for the Commonwealth. He files an annual report in this Assembly each year. Each year, he comments on the general trend in property values in at least the major centres of the Northern Territory.

The honourable member raised this matter further this morning, as did the ABC last night on its 7.30 Report. I express considerable disappointment concerning the appalling presentation on the 7.30 Report last night and I am advised that complaints will be laid. I am advised that the presenter was in this Assembly during question time yesterday when information was given by myself on the 3 valuations which were obtained for this property. I understand that reference to those explanations was largely absent from the 7.30 Report last night. It is disappointing that that is the sort of thing we have come to expect from the ABC as a result of its extremely biased reporting, not only on this subject but on a number of other subjects in recent times.

Tortilla Flats Research Farm

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

When was the decision made to decommission the Tortilla Flats Research Farm? Why was it made? What will happen to the buildings, fixtures, fittings and machinery on that property? What will be the future of the land comprising the Tortilla Flats Research Farm?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the decision to close the Tortilla Flats Research Farm was made earlier this year in the context of budgetary considerations in relation to the overall operations of the department and, of course, not without considerable consideration of the future of the department's research effort.

Honourable members would be aware that the operations at Tortilla Flats have concentrated on rice production. Over 800 varieties of rice have been trialed at the farm and a number of those varieties have been found to be suitable for Northern Territory conditions. The whole thrust of research is to provide industry with sufficient information to be able to pursue

endeavours on private holdings and, in this case, to enable people to grow rice to meet the needs of the Territory. The current demand for rice in the Northern Territory is something in the order of 1000 t annually. Last year, local production was in the order of 100 t, of which 60 t was grown at the Tortilla Flats Research Farm. That indicates to me that there are more than enough opportunities for producers to grow rice and to meet the demand of the established market in the Northern Territory, should they wish to do so. The problem is not the lack of research undertaken by the department but the fact that there are no growers who are taking the matter seriously and directing their activities towards meeting the needs of the market.

The fact is that the necessary research has been done to prove that rice is a viable crop for the Northern Territory. A market has been established and does in fact exist. All we need now is for growers to take up those market opportunities and move into the industry in a serious way. It is clear from those facts that there is no longer a need for continued direct research into rice at this time. There is more than sufficient information available for producers who wish to become involved in the rice growing industry. That information is already available to prospective growers and will remain so. My department remains committed to providing information to growers. The work at the research farm has put it in a very good position to do that in relation to rice.

Some of the buildings at Tortilla Flats are being transferred if they are suitable for the purposes of other research establishments. The land itself will be sold. Some of the fixtures will be sold with the property. I expect that operations at Tortilla will cease at the end of this year as existing programs wind down. Some effort will be transferred from Tortilla to other experimental farms. At some some time early in the new year, the land at Tortilla will be made available for sale. From memory, its area is in the order of 640 ha.

Tourist Commission Advertising Campaign

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TOURISM

The Northern Territory Tourist Commission started its latest advertising campaign on Monday 9 October to increase its efforts to woo visitors to the Territory. What effect has this campaign had? I understand that the program was launched in South Australia. Have sales increased at the NT Government Tourist Bureau in Adelaide and what rate of inquiries has resulted from this latest marketing campaign by the commission?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am delighted to answer the question. For the first time in many weeks, there is some good news for the tourism industry following the commencement of the advertising program on 9 October. I will read out some comparative figures. Following the start of the advertising campaign, sales started to pick up around 12 October. I will give last year's figures compared to this year's figures, where I have them. On 12 October, last year, we wrote \$5500 worth of business and the figure for this year is \$13 000. On 13 October last year, the figure was \$8785 and this year it is \$16 000. As yet we do not have the figures for 16 and 17 October last year. However, for 16 October this month, the figure is \$10 000. Yesterday, and this figure is obviously well above last year's, the figure was \$20 500.

Obviously, the advertising program has had a dramatic impact which is way beyond our original expectations. The member for Stuart asked yesterday why we were advertising in South Australia. The reasoning is that South Australia is the nearest approachable market that is readily accessible to the Territory. However, that does not preclude residents from any other state booking through the South Australian operations, including our own tourist bureau, and obtaining the discount.

I might add that, whilst that is extremely good news for the tourist industry, we are still a long way from the end of a very dark tunnel. Until such time as full airline services are restored, the problem will not be solved completely. Hopefully, this increased rate of bookings through the Tourist Bureau will continue and will provide a certain amount of relief for our tourist operators from the Alice Springs region right through to Darwin.

Involvement of Ministers in Government Contracts

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

What guidelines exist to cover the direct or indirect involvement of Cabinet ministers in government contracts? Is a Cabinet minister required to reveal to Cabinet any possible direct or indirect involvement in a government contract? More specifically, does a minister require Cabinet approval before participating directly or indirectly in a government contract?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, perhaps the honourable minister could be rather more specific about what he is referring to. Yes, Cabinet members are required to advise their colleagues if they feel there is a matter of vested interest arising in Cabinet which may affect their affairs. That is about all I can say on the matter.

Credit Card Transactions

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer the Chief Minister to recent publicity surrounding the credit card transactions of the Country Liberal Party candidate for the next House of Representatives election. Secondly, the Chief Minister will no doubt recall his defence of his former Cabinet colleague, the member for Araluen, when he was being questioned in regard to his credit card transactions. No doubt he will further recall basing that defence on the principle that pressure of work and accursed amnesia were adequate reasons for his colleague's failure to acquit the sum of \$50 000. My question is this: did not the Chief Minister repeatedly state that his former colleague's failure was not sufficient grounds for resignation? Does the Chief Minister therefore stand by this principle today?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I consider the honourable member's question to be facetious and not in keeping with the usual rules.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I think in respect of a reasonable, sensibly put question without notice, the use of the demeaning adjective facetious is highly uncalled for and should be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr PERRON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not responsible to this House for answering questions in relation to the personal affairs of private parties and I repeat that I consider the honourable member's question to be facetious.

RSPCA

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Honourable members will be aware of the plight which the RSPCA has found itself in and of the recent closure of its shelter. What is the current situation in relation to that shelter and the future of the RSPCA?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a very good question and a topical one. Of course, the RSPCA is a very worthwhile and highly commendable organisation which does a great deal of very good work in the community, not only here in the Northern Territory, but right throughout the country and, under other names, further afield.

There has been an ongoing problem with the administration of the RSPCA facility in Darwin, and I am not necessarily being critical of the organisation as such when I say that. Whilst in Alice Springs on 28 September, I received a telegram from Darwin indicating that the RSPCA shelter would be closed forthwith and animals destroyed unless money could be found to overcome its problems. I was concerned at the very precipitate advice which I was given. Basically, it was: 'Pay up or else we will destroy animals'. However, I promptly provided some support for the RSPCA in the form of \$2500 to allow it to keep its doors open for a couple of weeks to give us time to talk. Geoff Miers, the newly elected President of the RSPCA in the Territory, came to see me in Alice Springs on that very same day. We discussed the matter and I indicated to him that I would provide the money and that the animals should not be destroyed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, also on the same day, I called together the Director of the Office of Local Government and Garry Storch, the Darwin Town Clerk, who were both in Alice Springs for a local government conference. We commenced discussions on ways of overcoming the difficulties that the RSPCA in Darwin was facing. Of course, the problems are confined to Darwin. They are not significant in Alice Springs. In fact, the Alice Springs branch of the RSPCA has been continually financial, and the new chairman is an Alice Springs person.

We are all aware that, at this stage, the Berrimah shelter has been closed temporarily. A new executive has been appointed to the Darwin RSPCA and I believe it to be a very high-calibre group of people. As I mentioned earlier, it is recognised that there has been an ongoing problem and the support of the Darwin community has been tremendous. I must commend the efforts of the member for Karama in this regard. A few weeks ago, the honourable member put out a request for support for the RSPCA, and as a consequence collected a very large amount of dog and cat food which was delivered to the shelter. I would like to place on record my thanks to the people who came forward with dog and cat food at that time and, of course, to the member for Karama for his efforts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it does not rest there. The owner of The Joint entertainment complex in Cavenagh Street came forward a few days ago with a proposal that a Melbourne Cup luncheon be held at The Pasta Joint, and that a number of fashion houses would be approached to hold a fashion parade on that occasion. Fashion garments would be auctioned to raise money, with associated support from the government. That support has been forthcoming. I have guaranteed to the RSPCA and The Pasta Joint that I will match funding raised on that day to the maximum value of \$2500. I have also presented a challenge to the Darwin City Council and the Litchfield Shire and Palmerston Town Councils to match that funding. I am hopeful that they will do that because, if we can all come together on this, we can largely overcome the problems facing the RSPCA. It is a good way of raising money. This is a community responsibility, not a responsibility which rests solely with government or with councils. The community has been very forthcoming in that regard but we need to get together to organise functions such as this one. I commend The Pasta Joint for its initiative and I commend the occasion - Melbourne Cup Day at The Pasta Joint. The government will be assisting with financial support and advertising.

I encourage people listening to the question time broadcast to come along to the function and support the RSPCA. The RSPCA will benefit not only from the cost of the lunches, which I understand will be quite reasonable, but also from the sale of garments. Matching funding will be provided by the Northern Territory government and, hopefully, the 3 councils. I commend the people of Darwin for getting behind the RSPCA, which is a very worthy cause. Hopefully, the shelter can be opened in the very near future to provide that very important facility for the people of Darwin.

Granite Cutting and Polishing Industry

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Recently, the minister proposed publicly the establishment in the Northern Territory of a cutting and polishing industry for Northern Territory granite. Does he envisage that the granite being produced currently in Tennant Creek will be the product for a cutting and polishing plant? If that is the case, has he or any of his officers in the department had any discussions at all with the owner and operator of the lease and the producer of the granite?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, information that has been brought to my attention as late as yesterday afternoon indicates that the successful applicant to establish the dimension stone production facility in the Northern Territory had discussions with the operator of that particular lease. I am not sure exactly when the discussions with Ray Stevens took place but I believe it was some time last week. From memory, the name of the company, which comes from New South Wales, is Cluther.

The honourable member may or may not be aware that the Tennant Creek Council has made representations to the government asking that such a facility be established in the Tennant Creek region to provide employment opportunities. Of course, the decision will be made on a commercial basis by the participants in the development of the dimension stone industry. We are talking about exporting dimension stone and we need a single production centre for the 3 major areas of availability of stone, which are in the region of the Western Australian border, the Tennant Creek region, and also near the old Mount Bunday Quarry in the northern region. It is considered to be uneconomic

to establish 3 production centres. Rock would be carried to a single centre in large pieces rather than processing it on site and transporting large amounts of slate.

The dimension stone industry is a very exciting one. The Northern Territory not only has the best granites in the world but a range of other types of stone which, I believe, will form the basis of a pioneering industry here. Huge amounts of capital are involved in the establishment phase, which involves purchase of cutting and polishing machinery worth millions of dollars. Much of it is computer operated and runs 24 hours a day. These will all be commercial decisions and, no doubt, the people who have put in the expressions of interest to operate such a facility in the Northern Territory will be approaching many operators in an attempt to source raw material. I think we should congratulate those officers and also the prospectors who have become involved in this particular industry because it will give us value-added downstream processing of our raw materials, which is very much needed in the Northern Territory, and will provide employment opportunities.

Economic Action Plan of Liberal National Coalition

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

What can Territorians expect from the economic action plan announced by the Liberal National Coalition Parties last week?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the coalition tax policy or economic plan is certainly a breath of fresh air for Australia and the Territory in particular. As listeners will be interested to know even if honourable members opposite are not, the family will be the big winner.

The family is the key economic and social unit, and the Liberal National Coalition has clearly recognised that. Mr Peacock's policies will ensure that families which are struggling to make ends meet to raise and educate their children will gain major relief. Families will get a new program of child tax rebates, increases in dependent spouse rebates and tax rebates for child care in instances of either sole parenting or both spouses being members of the work force. The new child tax rebates will be paid at the following rates. For the first child under 13 years, \$250; second and subsequent children under 13 years, \$200; first children from 13 to 15 years old, \$350; and second and subsequent children from 13 to 15 years of age, \$300.

For the Northern Territory, with a relatively high portion of its population aged under 15 years, these measures alone imply an additional \$11.5m each year into the pockets of Territory families. In addition, the child care rebate amounts to \$20 per week for the first child under 5 years of age and \$10 per week for other children under 5, and all children in care aged between 5 and 12. It is estimated that the Territory will gain around \$7m from this measure alone. Benefits to the Territory are likely to be nearly \$60m, once the total multiplier effects from these new policy initiatives have worked their way through our economy.

Eligibility rules for the dependent spouse rebate will also be eased by increasing the income which a dependent spouse can earn from \$282 to \$1000, whilst still being able to claim the full \$1000 rebate. Eligibility for the rebate will fall by \$1 for every \$6 the dependent spouse earns above \$1000. As a result of these changes, a 2-income family with a combined pay packet of

\$39 000 - that is, say, an income of \$26 000 plus an income of \$13 000 - and 2 children, one aged less than 5 and the other aged between 5 and 12, would get an extra \$36.35 a week after tax. Another 2-income family earning \$39 000 - that is, an income of \$24 000 plus another of \$15 000 with 3 children aged 4, 9 and 11 - would be better off by \$49.42 after tax. In any language, this is a substantial benefit for every Territory family.

Of course, the coalition policy is not without some short-term costs, although we would expect the Northern Territory government to get some support from a coalition government in view of its special circumstances. These costs include a cut of \$300m in general purpose funding to the states. This would indeed impact on the Northern Territory, but we have always said that the Northern Territory is prepared to take its fair share of national belt tightening. We do object when we are expected to carry a disproportionate share of the burden, as we have been required to do by the current federal government in the past several budgets.

There will also be cuts to Aboriginal funding of some \$100m. No doubt this will also have an impact on the Northern Territory, as we do have a high level of expenditure on Aboriginal affairs. However, no one could deny that the enormous sums of money that are spent in Aboriginal bureaucracies across this country could bear some pruning. I do not think that the ATSIC organisation which, sadly, will be set up under legislation which is now being processed in both Houses of the federal parliament, will be any improvement on the system. That is because, as has been predicted, it will be the commencement of a second government within this country. This matter will dawn upon many Australians as the months and years go by. At this stage, however, we do not have details of where the \$100m will be cut from the federal government's spending in Aboriginal affairs generally. An enormous amount is spent currently in the area and we believe that there is certainly plenty of room for cuts in the plethora of organisations which take that money from the Australian taxpayer and deliver so little of it, on the ground, to Aborigines themselves.

In summary, there are likely to be significant benefits to the Territory from the policy enunciated by Andrew Peacock. We believe that the down-sides are capable of resolution between the Territory and an understanding government in Canberra.

Year 10 Examinations

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

There are 2 parts to my question. First, has the minister been briefed yet by his department as to what procedures have been carried out or are planned to be carried out to enable the results from the Year 10 external maths exam to produce valid and reliable results, taking into account the problems associated with students being able to do only 75% of the questions? Secondly, when would I expect to be interviewed by the police regarding the information given on Thursday night and the threatened police inquiry, or was that purely a tactic to cover up the problems with the Year 10 exam, divert attention away from the real issues and put pressure on public servants who are concerned about the process in an attempt to frighten them into silence?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, quite frankly, the member for Wanguri has not learned his lesson. I know he has not been in this Assembly all that long but ...

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I refer the member for Nhulunbuy to standing order 65.

Mr LEO: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Deputy Speaker, the other evening, during the committee's consideration of the Appropriation Bill, the member for Wanguri displayed a great lack of ethics in relation to this matter of the examination process. It was a disgraceful performance from the member for Wanguri and he should have known better, and the Leader of the Opposition, who supported the member for Wanguri, should be ashamed of himself too. To selectively leak part of the results, thereby creating a fear in the community that something is wrong, is disgraceful. The honourable member should be ashamed of himself. He should have waited until the results had been completed.

The information given the other night in relation to the top marks has indeed changed. The examinations have gone extremely well. The honourable member implied that the examinations were a mess, and that is a load of nonsense. I congratulate all of those teachers and others who have been involved in the exercise. I will not be commenting on the results of the examinations until I have a complete report from the Board of Studies and I will be receiving that report later on this year. The member gave details of results which appeared to have been accurate at that time and I have indicated that that has already changed.

He also said that, because of the difficulties apparently experienced in the mathematics examinations at level 1, we intended to lop 20 marks from the scores. That matter was discussed by a number of teachers who had been involved. I can assure the honourable member that no decision had been taken in relation to that. The weighting of examination results will be carried out by professional people. It will not be interfered with by myself or anyone else. Professional people will make those decisions. The other thing to remember is that it will not impact on the end result because all the students sat for the same exam at the same time.

Obviously, there has been a breach of confidentiality and that is of concern to me. The matter was referred to the Board of Studies but, again, I indicate that it will not impact on the validity of the exam. However, it is of major concern. The teachers involved in the examination process each signed declarations relating to conflict of interests and to confidentiality. It would appear that someone has indeed broken that trust and that person should stand condemned. However, I understand that, given that it was the first examination, some of those teachers may have been discussing the results in a professional manner. If that is the situation and if the honourable member has broken that trust with those teachers in making this information public at this time, again he stands condemned.

Whilst the case was very serious and came very close to being one in which action could have been taken, I have been advised at this ...

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Deputy Speaker, members opposite are trying to make out that the government does not know what it is doing and that the examinations have been a disaster. They have been successful and we know exactly what we are doing.

I have decided that no further action will be taken at this particular point in time. It is sad that some teachers and some members of this Assembly have decided to selectively leak confidential information which can have a major impact on people who are actively involved in the assessment. I can assure honourable members that I will be making further inquiries into the matter and I will be recommending that, if it is found in future that someone is guilty of a breach of confidentiality, that person will be able to be prosecuted.

I have made it very clear all along the line that professional people are handling the examinations. Members of the opposition have the opportunity, as do other members of this Assembly and members of the public, to contact the Board of Studies in relation to any concerns which they may have. The opposition throws out these little remarks every so often in an attempt to introduce fear into the community about certain issues. The member for Stuart has taken that approach in the past and I had a police investigation carried out in relation to one exercise in which he was involved. If he would like to ask me a question about that, I will be happy to provide him with an answer.

Mr Ede: Make a ministerial statement.

Mr HARRIS: Are you frightened to ask me the question?

Mr Ede: No. I am hoping you will make a ministerial statement about the impact of the Year 10 exams.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HARRIS: Mr Deputy Speaker, the reality is that the examinations have proceeded well. The results are being assessed. They are before the Board of Studies. A full report on the whole exercise will come to me, as the Minister for Education, later this year.

Mr Leo: Will you make it available to this House?

Mr HARRIS: I will not be making any comment until I have received the full report from the Board of Studies.

Establishment of National Parks in Arnhem Land

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

During debate in this House in May in relation to the ministerial statement on the establishment of a West MacDonnell's National Park, the member for Arnhem made what can only be described as an excellent suggestion in relation to the establishment of parks in Arnhem Land. Has the minister or the Conservation Commission acted upon that suggestion and, if so, what stage have such actions reached?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is true that, in the debate referred to by the member for Karama, the member for Arnhem put forward an excellent suggestion concerning the possibility of developing national parks in Arnhem Land. Page 6164 of the Parliamentary Record reports him as saying:

I would like to encourage the minister to look at the possibility for additional parks in Arnhem Land. I believe that area offers a unique

opportunity to the people of the Northern Territory. I agree with the Minister for Tourism when he says that we should develop not only the central part of Australia and the Top End, but the Northern Territory as a whole. I therefore ask the honourable minister to accept those words of advice and consider talking to people in the NLC about the possible use of areas in Arnhem Land. I certainly would be willing to consult further with the people in my area to ensure that their interests are looked after in the process of opening new parks and creating employment in them. I am sure that people in Arnhem Land would welcome the idea of setting up a park somewhere.

The honourable member continued in that vein.

My predecessor as Minister for Conservation wrote to the member for Arnhem in June taking up that offer and seeking the involvement of the member for Arnhem. It is a very good idea. There are some very beautiful areas in Arnhem Land and national parks in that region could form part of the entire matrix of parks in the various environments that we have throughout the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, we are still awaiting a reply from the member for Arnhem to that letter. Since becoming Minister for Conservation, I have written to him again to remind him of his undertaking and to encourage him to take action in relation to his undertaking to become involved with us in the process of identifying areas in Arnhem Land in which national parks could be established.

The member for Arnhem is quite right. The development of parks in that area would provide an additional opportunity for people living in Arnhem Land to become involved in the tourism industry and park management. Parks would provide alternative opportunities to people in that area, particularly as mining ventures closed down. They would provide some ongoing employment and industry opportunities in the area. We must all aim to work towards that and park development can provide the necessary resource base. I hope that the honourable member is prepared to back up his words with some action. It is very easy to stand up in this House and ask the government to do something and offer assistance. It is a bit harder when you are actually asked to get involved in doing something. I urge the honourable member to take up our offer and become involved as a matter of urgency. And, please, could he also answer some letters?

School Transport in Remote Areas

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The minister would be aware of problems on Groote Eylandt, where children living in homeland centres have no transport to and from school. Can he advise whether the department will be providing a bus or another means of transport so that these children can attend school? Can he also advise whether he is aware of similar difficulties which exist at Barunga and several other Aboriginal communities in the central region?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, as honourable members would be aware, this matter involves 2 departments, the Department of Transport and Works and the Department of Education. My understanding is that officers of both departments are looking at the details of transportation of students to and from schools and homeland centres in the East Arnhem region. Whilst I am not

sure what stage that review has reached, I know that officers of both departments are talking with a view to satisfying the concerns of people in that particular region.

New Road in Kakadu National Park

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer him to a recent ABC News item which stated that the new bitumen road in Kakadu National Park is in conflict with the park's plan of management. Could he please clarify this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is sad that, despite a comprehensive briefing on the matter, the journalist got the facts wrong. Hopefully, there will be an opportunity to correct the misconception that the very valuable upgrading works currently under way on the Oenpelli Road are somehow in conflict with the park plan. The road in question is referred to by a number of names such as the Oenpelli Road or the East Alligator Crossing Road. It goes from the Arnhem Highway to the East Alligator crossing.

The first stage is now bituminised and was opened recently. In fact, in itself, that became something of a political football for a while. Senator Collins was spreading rumours in Canberra that his colleague, the federal minister, Bob Brown, and myself travelled by helicopter to the opening and did not travel by road as did everyone else. In fact, that was not the case at all. Bob Brown and myself drove most of the route from Pine Creek. There was a good reason for that. I wanted to ensure that the federal minister understood the problems encountered by Territorians and to gain his sympathy. I think that was done quite successfully. In fact, all of the federal minister's party travelled back on what turned out to be a fairly bumpy bus ride. It was a pretty rugged trip. The bus broke down a short distance from the Arnhem Highway. Actually, Senator Collins and Warren Snowdon cruised ahead in their comfortable hire-car in great comfort, relatively speaking. The shoe was somewhat on the other foot in that circumstance.

The allegation made on ABC Radio that the dirt road could not be upgraded for environmental reasons under the plan was nonsense. The road can be sealed and should be sealed. I do not know where people get this idea that bitumen roads detract from the environment. It is quite the opposite. Apart from that, they reduce the rate of accidents. Many tourists travel in that area in 4-wheel-drives or coaches that are not particularly stable. There is a great concern that the roads in that area should be sealed.

In conclusion, the second stage will be completed shortly. We have 2 alignments. The preferred one is through the Ranger lease. Whilst it will not give all-weather access, it will give a greater degree of reliability to residents and tourists. If that is not possible through agreement with Ranger, we will be reverting to the existing road alignment which is under the control of the ANPWS. Let me indicate that all stages of development of that road have been undertaken in consultation with the ANPWS which part-funded the first stage. It is ridiculous to suggest that the ANPWS would part-fund a road which did not fit within its park plan. We are liaising not only with the ANPWS, but also with the Aboriginal people. If it does not go through the Ranger lease, the final proposal will be a matter for discussion with the traditional owners and the NLC before we proceed.

Year 10 Examinations

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to his answer last Thursday to a question I asked in relation to whether he was going to release the examination results on a school-by-school basis. After reading the Hansard report of his reply, I ask if this is a fair interpretation. Firstly, that you have just had an exhaustive fight with the teachers over the actual holding of the exams. Secondly, that you are not prepared to stand up to teachers who oppose the release of exam results. Thirdly, that you are tacitly supporting the teachers against parents and students by refusing parents the right to know about the performances of schools so that they can make an informed judgment about a choice of school for their children, and by that, I mean the parents not just of those students who sat the exam, but the parents of other children. I will add this comment. The community has paid \$48 000 for the creation of that information and is now being denied access to it.

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am afraid that the member for Sadadeen is not with us at the moment.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HARRIS: Mr Deputy Speaker, parents are able to obtain information on the results of their children, and I have made that very clear to the members of this Assembly. The issue has been a difficult one and, as I said, I believe that it has been blown out of proportion in relation to a 30% assessment component in English and mathematics.

The answer I gave the other day made the process very clear. We are not withholding information from parents or students. In fact, we are providing the results to the schools. They will be doing the calculation to convert the percentage score into a grade and that grade will appear on the JSSC certificates. Individual schools can make their own decisions in respect of whether or not they give examination results to the children or the parents. If the schools decide that that is not to be the case, the parents of the children can apply to the Board of Studies to have the results made available.

I think it is a reasonable compromise. The issue has been debated at length and I believe that, as time goes by, we will look back and say that it was a move in the right direction. We will be reviewing the situation from time to time.

Economic Action Plan of Liberal National Coalition

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his answer earlier about the so-called wonderful Peacock tax package. He seems to be the only person in the country who does not have the details of the proposed cuts in Aboriginal expenditure, which amount to one-tenth of the total amount of money allocated at present. My question is this ...

Mr Perron: One-tenth was it?

Mr SMITH: One-tenth.

Is the Chief Minister aware that the proposed cut of \$100m on areas of Aboriginal expenditure will be made partly in the following areas: \$10.6m under the heading of land and economic development, which covers the subheadings of land ownership and administration; CDEP programs, and I might say that there will be no new CDEP programs; and the Aboriginal Development Corporation? Is he aware that \$22m will be cut in the area of social advancement, under the subheadings community development support and community infrastructure? Is he aware that \$23m will be cut in the areas of Aboriginal employment, education and training, subheadings Aboriginal employment, Aboriginal education and Abstudy, and is he aware that \$11m will be cut in the areas of community services and health, including the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement. Does he agree with me that, if those cuts are put in place, the effect on the Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory will be disastrous?

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Chief Minister will be heard in silence.

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think it is really comforting for this Assembly to see a demonstration of the fact that, on occasion, the Leader of the Opposition can become concerned about federal funding for the Northern Territory. There has been precious little demonstration of such concern from him about the treatment that we have received from the Hawke Labor government in 5 years of successive, disproportionate cuts to the Northern Territory's general revenue funding. Those cuts have consisted not of \$100m in the national allocation spent on Aboriginal affairs but of \$100m in the Northern Territory's allocation. The real meaning of the disproportion between those figures may not even dawn upon the Leader of the Opposition. If he does not believe that there is enormous waste in this country in the bureaucracies that have ...

Members interjecting.

Mr PERRON: He has a great deal to learn.

However, I am very pleased to see this renewed interest in Territory funding. I would expect to see many more words in Hansard in this Assembly over the next few months about the Commonwealth government's treatment of Territorians financially. Members of the opposition have been constant apologists for the federal government's attitude towards the Territory as, I guess we might have expected.

Ministerial Advisory Council on Work Health

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

When the safety and health of people employed on a mining lease is determined by the Mines Safety Control Act, why was there a mining representative on the previous Ministerial Advisory Council on Work Health and on the present council, as is demonstrated in the report?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, while there was no direct representative of the Australian Mining Industry Council on the Ministerial Advisory Council, there were and still are, and I do not have the names or the numbers in front of me at this very moment ...

Mr Leo: There is one.

Mr McCARTHY: No, there are at least 2 people with a background in mining on the current Ministerial Advisory Council.

Of course, as has been pointed out, Mrs Lorelei Bradshaw is employed by Nabalco, and her interests are in the mining area. We do not have anybody representing the Australian Mining Industry Council at the present time, but it should be remembered that there is a very broad interest in the Ministerial Advisory Council of Work Health and a number of organisations wish to be represented. We have had applications from the Australian Mining Industry Council but it has been unsuccessful in gaining representation.

I have no doubt at all about the ability of Mrs Bradshaw to represent the interests of miners on the Ministerial Advisory Council. I note, from previous experience, that she is a very competent person and quite capable of putting that across. I do not think that there is any reason at all to say that we have to broaden the Ministerial Advisory Council to represent every group in the Northern Territory. If there is an ability to represent a group by combining the employer representatives and a mining representative, that would be appropriate.

Diamond and Watts Brunei Market

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Does the honourable minister join with all members from this side of the House in congratulating Diamond and Watts on establishing a major market in Brunei; does he agree that that is a tribute to the enterprise and tenacity of the company which fought to open that market for 3 years; and does he also agree that the company's commitment to rely on local suppliers will spread benefits throughout the Northern Territory enterprise community?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, without being political about this in any way shape or form, or taking any credit for having done anything to assist and promote those types of activities, I do indeed support the efforts of Diamond and Watts. I have said in this House many times that what the Trade Development Zone needed was faith and commitment and that is what a lot of things need in the Northern Territory. But I do sound a note of caution in relation to the people who will be travelling to Hong Kong in a few days time and suggest that they should use Diamond and Watts as an example of the type of effort, faith and commitment that is required to do business in Asia. People in the Northern Territory should not trapeze into Hong Kong thinking that it is a third world country and that Australians are going there to help the locals. That attitude would not go over very well in a booming economy such as that of Hong Kong. And, of course, the richest man in the world lives in Brunei.

I would like to pay tribute to a previous Minister for Industries and Development. I can well remember him bringing into Cabinet a proposal to build a house in Brunei. We nearly threw him out. We said: 'What about building a house in Darwin for a change? That might help some of the local people'. He argued very well that this type of support was required for Brunei, and for Diamond and Watts so that they could enter the market. We were saying only yesterday, after the announcement of the Diamond and Watts contract, that perhaps we should have stuck with a few other people in terms of their efforts in Brunei. One of those, of course, was Haig Arthur, who attempted to establish a hardware franchise there. He had a great deal of difficulty when he went there. For example, he tried to sell the wrong paint brushes. The brushes were made of hog bristle and he wondered why he could not sell them in that Muslim country. We learnt a range of other things and perhaps we did not stick with him as much as we should have, in the light of the success of Diamond and Watts.

I hope that honourable members realise that it is not easy to trapeze onto the Asian market. I congratulate the proprietors of Diamond and Watts. It is a very successful effort and 3 long hard years of work has paid off. I pay credit also to the Chief Minister, who was the Minister for Industries and Development when the project commenced and who supported the building of that initial house in Brunei. I sincerely thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and support and for the support of other members opposite.

Sale of Tobacco Products to Children

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Earlier this year, I expressed concerns that tobacco products, in particular cigarettes, were being sold to children by retail outlets in contravention of the Children's Protection Amendment Act. I subsequently

wrote to the minister pointing out that the act was not being enforced and requesting that he take such action as was necessary to correct this. The minister responded at the time advising that the matter had been referred to a committee which would investigate the situation and recommend appropriate action. Could the minister now advise the current status of the committee's review and confirm what action is being taken to address this problem?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, this has been an ongoing problem. Members know that there is a very old South Australian law in the Territory which provides some limitation on the right of people to sell tobacco products to minors. However, the law is ineffective in terms of properly controlling the consumption of tobacco products by young people, which has been a growing problem in the Northern Territory. The member for Jingili raised this matter earlier this year and last year. It has been raised also by other members. Correspondence has also been received from the Attorney-General and other members.

Further, the Statutory Law Review Committee, a group formed from the government backbench in 1986, recommended the repeal of that 1904 act and the substitution of a new act. Draft legislation relating to the sale and supply of tobacco to children was prepared but, to date, we have not introduced such legislation. We are working on the proposal to introduce legislation which is enforceable. Discussions have been undertaken through the department, as far back as 1987, looking at different legislative programs. The initial approach was to try to get the industry to engage in some process of self-regulation. The evidence in my electorate, as I am sure is the case in the electorates of other honourable members, is that the self-regulation approach is not working.

The problem is not with the tobacco manufacturing area, although many members would argue quite strongly that the nature of advertisements used by cigarette producers has an influence. I know that Dick Smith has written a book which graphically demonstrates the appeal of cigarette smoking to young people, particularly young women. He has been lobbying for programs to change the nature of advertising, where it is allowed, for cigarettes.

The issue needs to be addressed on a national basis rather than a state-by-state basis, and that is occurring. The problem is the proportion of young people smoking, particularly of young girls. Whilst there has been a drop-off in smoking amongst adult women and men, an increasing number of young people, particularly young girls, is taking up smoking. That trend is of concern to people involved in the campaign to reduce the level of tobacco consumption in the Northern Territory, with the obvious objective of trying to remove some of the very serious health problems that flow from that.

Whilst the marketing of tobacco industry products is a problem, the real onus should rest with retailers of tobacco products. The manufacturers will supply them to the shops for sale, but it is actually the retailer who is selling the cigarettes.

The process of enforcement is complicated. At the moment, enforcement has been attempted through the police force but, probably, health inspectors are the more appropriate option. We are closely examining the possibility of some appropriate legislative controls backed up by public awareness campaigns through the Drug and Alcohol Bureau and the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse. The anti-smoking advertisements that we see regularly on television try to impress on young people that smoking is not a vehicle to appear mature,

cool or whatever, but that it is an activity for 'dags' - 'only dags smoke fags'. Programs of this kind are being used in an endeavour to emphasise the fact that, if you do not smoke, you can be cool and express your individuality in the process. That campaign will continue.

It is not simply a matter of passing a law, because there is no point in passing a law unless you can make that law enforceable and police it effectively. That has always been the difficulty with laws of this kind. We have an interdepartmental committee on NT tobacco products, and we are currently preparing a Cabinet submission for a Territory policy statement, as well as looking at a tobacco control program which must and will address the issue of sale of cigarettes to minors as well as the advertising of tobacco products, although I think that must be dealt with on a national basis.

There is no simple or clear answer to the question raised by the honourable member. We must all work to try to discourage young people from becoming hooked on cigarettes. A number of members in this Chamber can speak with some feeling about the consequences of taking up smoking and the difficulties of giving it up from time to time or even permanently. It is not an easy program, and anybody who is a smoker would certainly want to encourage people not to get hooked on the weed to start with.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It depends on your will power.

Mr HATTON: It depends more on your won't power than your will power. It is really a question of having the strength of character to say no. Having been a smoker for many years, I can say to the young people in the gallery that I have been going through the process of not smoking for a year and a half now. I can assure all of them that it is ...

Mr Bell: How can you go through a process of not smoking? Does that mean you just stop?

Mr HATTON: That is right. The problem of getting off the nicotine goes on for a long time. I can only urge the young people in the gallery and those who might be listening on the radio not to make the mistake I made as a youngster. It is not worth taking up smoking. Giving it up is quite a painful process.

Mr Bell: Have you been suffering withdrawal symptoms?

Mr HATTON: The member for MacDonnell has smoked and I think he is probably still a smoker. He would not appreciate just how difficult giving it up can be.

I know that the member for Jingili has a real concern in this area. Through the interdepartmental committee, we are addressing the issues of getting together some effective laws and continuing to discourage people from taking up smoking. We need a community attitude which opposes smoking individually and reverses the trend which existed when I was young, when it was the norm to take up smoking. If we can achieve that, we will make significant gains in the area of community health.

Gaming Machines in Clubs

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

Last Thursday, the honourable minister made the extraordinary claim in question time that approval for clubs to operate gaming machines for cash prizes could lead to the decline of clubs and, in fact, had led to the decline of clubs in New South Wales. Has the minister's attention been drawn to an article in the Brisbane Courier Mail of Monday last which quoted ABS statistics which showed that, in New South Wales, the clubs with machines enjoyed an average turnover of \$1.3m whilst those without machines had an average turnover of only \$300 000 and, further, that clubs with machines employed nearly double the staff of those without? In the light of those statistics, how does the minister justify his extraordinary statement? Secondly, will he request Crown law officers to review the legal opinion which he claims to have, which is the sole impediment to Territory clubs being free to operate video gaming machines and offer cash prizes and hence to claim the benefits?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition again displays his lack of knowledge of and, I would suggest, his interest in this subject. Once again, he jumps to conclusions, this time on the basis of an article in an interstate newspaper. That is just typical of the Leader of the Opposition.

What the article said, in fact, was that there was an increase in the average turnover of machines in clubs. What the Leader of the Opposition has failed to address - and of course it would not be discussed in the article - is the across-the-board effect on clubs. In fact, the experience in New South Wales was that the big clubs got bigger and the small clubs got smaller.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr Ede: You want all the clubs to get smaller.

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, members of the opposition are all experts on this subject but I would suggest they take a little time ...

Mr Smith: We certainly know more about it than you do.

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a matter that the clubs and associations of the Northern Territory will need to take into account. We are having some constructive discussions on the issues at the moment rather than running off half-cocked without the full facts. The problem that occurred in New South Wales with the growth in numbers of poker machines was that the big clubs got bigger while the smaller bowling clubs, RSL clubs and so on, ended up in strife. The substantial number of machines which the larger clubs had, enabled them to offer larger prizes and jackpots. They were able to offer cheaper meals and free entertainment. Meanwhile, the small suburban clubs, the bowling clubs and so forth, which had a small number of machines, found that their members were going to the larger clubs to take advantage of the better facilities there. As a result, the problems of the smaller clubs were compounded.

It is just not good enough to pick an arbitrary figure out of a newspaper and say that, just because the average goes up, everyone is better off. That

is a nonsense. The Leader of the Opposition and his deputy have demonstrated in this House on numerous occasions that, in matters of finance, they have no credibility or understanding whatsoever. That is quite understandable to me. Their lack of involvement in the real world of business means that they have no experience of such matters. They should seek some constructive and deliberate advice on these matters, and not take as gospel some ...

Mr Smith: We have.

Mr FINCH: ... 10-line article out of the Brisbane Courier Mail.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I stand by the statement that I made in this House the other day. It will not necessarily be to every club's advantage and the clubs acknowledge that.

Mr Bailey: So you are protecting them from their own difficulties.

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, the new member for Wanguri is again flapping his jaw about matters which he does not understand. I would suggest that he get around to some of the local clubs in the northern suburbs to get some of the broader views.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not going to quiver at the wet threats of the Leader of the Opposition about where I might stand in the northern suburbs. It is a matter which I should be taking far more seriously than the Leader of the Opposition obviously wishes to. He is a political opportunist and one cannot blame him for that. He has nothing else to go on.

In reality, the situation is that these matters will need to be thought through. All possible effects of changes in the arrangements over poker machines and video machines will need to be considered carefully and understood by all parties concerned.

In regard to the view that has been put to me by the Department of Law, I do not intend at this time to call for a review. There is no cause for a review at this stage. The Leader of the Opposition has had 6 weeks but, because of his lack of understanding of the act and the procedures, he has been unable to come up with anything which would indicate that the view put forward by the commission and the Department of Law is not valid. Until such time as somebody with some sort of experience in these matters can raise a matter of substance in regard to the interpretation of the act and the procedures, I have no cause to call for review.

BTEC

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In last night's adjournment debate, the member for Stuart made certain allegations regarding the use of the departmental yards at Katherine. Can the minister advise the House on the veracity of those allegations and of other allegations the member for Stuart has made in relation to the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Program?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. The member for Stuart raised a number of issues last night, one of which related to a number of bulls - and I think that he said the number was 200 - that were being moved through the Territory. He stated that they had been rested in the yards at Katherine and that that was done in such a way that there was a possibility of contact with dirty bush cattle, that they were drinking from the same water troughs ...

Mr Ede: No, I did not say that.

Mr REED: ... which meant that they were exposed to the possibility of being infected with TB by coming into contact with the dirty bush cattle.

I am advised that, whilst 190 cattle were shipped to Western Australia in a single shipment, they were not spelled in the Katherine yards. The position as regards other animals that passed through the Katherine region recently is that 25 bulls on their way to Jindare Station, near Pine Creek, were spelled in the yards over 1 weekend. Another 35, on their way to Mullabulla in Western Australia, in the southern Kimberleys, were spelled on another occasion. However, I must point out to the member for Stuart that the operators acted responsibly in both cases, resting the cattle in the right-hand enclosures with separation from any other cattle by a pen and a laneway. That is to say that there was a pen and a laneway between any one group of cattle and another in the yards at that time. Drinking troughs for each area were separate.

On a number of previous occasions, I have remarked on the biased and unsubstantiated nature of the matters which the member for Stuart raises in this House in respect of BTEC. I would defend to the end the right of the honourable member to raise questions but I think that he should do so in a responsible manner. The way in which he raised this issue last night was a case of clear inference about the way that the yards were managed by officers of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, and if I were an officer of the department I would be getting more than a little tired of the aspersions and the inferences of the member for Stuart. I have defended the officers of my department a number of times in this House and I do so again on this occasion. They have acted as one would have expected them to act. I reject totally the inferences made by the member for Stuart and the suggestion that they operated in a lax and unprofessional way.

This has not been an isolated case. On a number of occasions, the member for Stuart has raised issues of this nature. On 11 September, he wrote to me in relation to the de-stocking of a particular station. I will not delve into the depths that he delves into by naming people. I will retain the confidentiality of the people concerned. The honourable member raised a number of issues. He was a bit late. I had discussed the matter personally with the pastoralist concerned a week or two prior to that and put in place the necessary arrangements. Following a discussion with the pastoralist, the honourable member wrote to me about a number of issues. That is fair enough, but I must say that the matters were well in hand.

Officers of my department have been in contact with this pastoralist over a period of time. They are quite satisfied with the processes that have been put in place and have no concerns in relation to the matter. In fact, only this week those people indicated that they did not want a letter from the minister to explain what was going on, let alone a letter from the minister to

the member for Stuart, because they were fully aware of what was happening. The point that I want to make is that, whilst 4 of the matters related to the property concerned and were raised by the pastoralist, the member for Stuart used his letter as a vehicle to raise another issue which that pastoralist did not express a concern about. That is the sort of thing which the member for Stuart does. He uses a letter on a pastoralist's behalf, asking questions about the operations of the pastoralist, as a vehicle for other issues, clearly giving the inference that the pastoralist himself is concerned about such issues, when that is not the case.

It really does disturb me that the member for Stuart takes this very irresponsible approach when pursuing issues on behalf of pastoralists, and it is little wonder that the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory is becoming increasingly wary of him. Just hearing his name is enough to make many of them shaky. 'What has he doxed me in for this time?' is the question that someone asked. 'What has he spoken out about on my behalf without my approval or authority?' After last week's stories about polka-dot and navy-blue cows, one can hardly wonder that they are getting a little touchy about him.

I certainly defend the actions of the officers of my department. I totally reject the inference that was made in relation to the cattle yards in Katherine, and I reinforce the message to the member for Stuart that he should be more responsible when addressing issues. He should check his facts prior to placing allegations before this Assembly, and make sure that what he is saying is in fact right. He should not base his allegations on rumour and innuendo because it is not doing the industry any good. It certainly is not doing the officers in my department any good. They are out there trying to assist industry and I believe that they are doing a good job, despite the difficulties they experience because of the efforts of the member for Stuart.

Fire Levy

Mr FLOREANI to TREASURER

Can he confirm whether the government is contemplating the introduction of a fire levy on every household and business property in all Territory centres? Would the Treasurer confirm or deny this and, if a fire levy is being contemplated, could he advise the Assembly when it may be introduced?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I can confirm that the government is not contemplating the introduction of a fire insurance levy, which I think is what the honourable member is referring to. There has been no discussion or suggestion whatsoever that this should be introduced. I am not sure where his suggestion came from. I point out to honourable members, however, that a fire insurance levy amounts to something like 5% or 6% of insurance premiums on assets such as a house, a car and commercial buildings. State governments levy this charge which, as one can imagine, raises very substantial sums of money with which to help offset the costs of their fire services. Since self-government, we have consistently rejected the introduction of a fire insurance levy in the Northern Territory. We believe that the burden of other taxation and government charges paid by Territorians is quite sufficient and that they should not be burdened further with a fire insurance levy.

Legislative Assembly Seats

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to speculation regarding the number of Legislative Assembly seats that will be used as a basis for the coming redistribution of electorates and, in particular, to the possibility that the number of seats will be increased from 25 to 27. Is he now in a position to quash those rumours and assure Territorians that he has no intention of increasing the number of Territory politicians?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot give the honourable member the assurances that he is seeking. I would have thought that he might have been fairly keen on seeing an increase in numbers. One of the only chances members opposite will have of increasing their numbers will be by subdividing their existing electorates because they will be lucky to hold on to their present seats at the next Territory election.

Fight Crime Committees

Mr POOLE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Can he advise on progress made in the establishment of fight crime committees in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, when I announced the review of the Territory's criminal system in February, I indicated that the government had decided to establish community-based committees to fight crime throughout the Territory. The proposal came about because the government recognised that no single agency, including the police force, has the capacity to deal fully with crime and public disorder. I believe strongly that governments in this country cannot be expected to deal with criminal justice issues in isolation. It is time for the community to become more involved in developing solutions to issues of public concern. The proposal for regional fight crime committees is a good starting point in this process. It is clear that, if effective crime prevention strategies are to be developed, there is certainly a need for a system to be established which involves the wider community and which is able to tap into the various areas of expertise to address issues of public concern.

Within this broad framework, it is proposed that the committees will provide mechanisms to increase the information flow to and from the police about actual and perceived problems in law enforcement and community safety and to ensure that these problems receive detailed consideration with the aim of developing effective strategies to address them. It is expected that the fight crime committees will have a practical and genuine role in addressing criminal justice issues in their respective regions.

The original proposal was that there be a central committee with a number of regional branches. However, as the matter has been further explored by officers of both my department and the police, the proposal has been revised. It is now suggested that each region has its own committee which would be chaired by the local mayor. While it is proposed that each regional committee would be autonomous, that would not prevent the various committees from

consulting with each other and sharing information. To this end, I have sent letters to the Mayors of Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Palmerston to invite them to establish regional fight crime committees.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Are we okay as regards crime?

Mr MANZIE: We can certainly send the same letter to the Litchfield Shire Council. Obviously, the more community-based organisations we can involve in this, the more effective it will be. I am also offering the mayors a comprehensive briefing by officers from my department and the police, although the President of the Litchfield Shire is probably quite aware of all the problems involved.

Mr Bell: What is the difference between this and Neighbourhood Watch?

Mr MANZIE: There is a big difference. If the honourable member would just like to wait patiently, he will possibly pick up the differences as I go on.

I can report that a number of councils have already shown interest in the proposal, and the next step will be to organise those comprehensive briefings. The question of fight crime committees for Aboriginal communities is also under consideration at present. I should mention that I would welcome any suggestion from honourable members as to how this could be made most effective.

There may be some confusion about the proposed committees and their relationship to Neighbourhood Watch programs. Honourable members are aware that Neighbourhood Watch is a proven community-based crime prevention program aimed at the protection of property and personal safety. However, the objectives of Neighbourhood Watch do not address such issues as truancy, vandalism, drunken abusive people in public places, theft of bicycles from schools and shopping centres, street kids and numerous other issues. I certainly hope that fight crime committees will address such issues, which are far broader than those covered by Neighbourhood Watch. I would also hope that those committees would become involved in the Neighbourhood Watch programs, where they can be of assistance. Obviously, it would be beneficial to everyone concerned if there were ongoing consultation between groups who are operating with the same ultimate aim of reducing crime in our community.

As I mentioned earlier, work to establish regional fight crime committees is well under way and I will certainly keep honourable members advised about further developments. In this day and age, it is important that people realise that the solution to crime does not lie in providing more police officers. The solution, in terms of preventing criminal activities in our community, is for everyone in the community to become involved by taking a stance and by saying, 'We will not tolerate this situation', and by their becoming involved in reporting matters of a criminal nature to allow the police to carry out their job effectively. I believe quite sincerely that, if the community is involved actively in ensuring that criminals cannot succeed, they will not succeed.

Cane Toads

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

The nation's most renowned authority on frogs, Associate Professor Michael Taylor, has issued a public warning in a Sydney Morning Herald article that,

when the cane toad reaches Kakadu, it will undergo a population explosion quite unrivalled by that which has occurred anywhere else in Australia. Is the minister aware of the rate at which the cane toad is advancing on Kakadu, when it will get there moving at that rate, and of any positive measures, apart from research, which are being undertaken to slow its advance?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, initially I refer the honourable member to detailed responses which I gave to questions during the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill, dealing with the work which has been occurring here in respect of research on the cane toad problem over a number of years. I refer particularly to the work of Dr Bill Freeland of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission, who is regarded as one of the world's foremost experts on the cane toad.

We are well aware of the problem referred to by the honourable member. I am personally aware of statements and responses to questions going back to 1985, dealing with exactly the same issues. The cane toad invasion is proceeding in the Northern Territory, around the Gulf of Carpentaria and in the Barkly electorate. I know that the member for Barkly will be well aware of the continuing advance of the cane toad which, I believe, is in the order of 10 or 20 kms per year. I will obtain exact information on that.

Of course, the cane toad invasion is a continuing problem. At present, it is moving through relatively dry country. However, if it reaches the tropical wetlands on the north coast of the Northern Territory and in Arnhem Land, it can reasonably be expected that there will be a major population explosion throughout the area and that it would be virtually impossible to stop. We are researching population control measures in a range of areas. Research is being carried out by the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and federal governments into various protection mechanisms and biological controls. In particular, there is what is called the Townsville virus. This seems to be providing a natural control mechanism and there is considerable research being done on that. We believe that we may well have found an appropriate viral, biological control for the cane toad.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Why don't you catch the males and sterilise them?

Mr HATTON: There are too many males for us to catch them all.

Controlling the cane toad population through the products of that research will still cost tens of millions of dollars. In the world's greatest statement on the environment, the Prime Minister has indicated that the federal government is prepared to finance any major research into control of the cane toad scourge. I am sure that he will be only too willing to spend those tens of millions of dollars to initiate the necessary biological controls to honour his promise to the Australian community. I look forward to his involvement in putting the financial resources behind the excellent research that we have done.

In respect of the Top End, there is another problem which honourable members should be concerned about. Members will be aware of the posters relating to hitch-hiking cane toads. These are still important because the difficulty is not only the gradual spread but also the potential for leap-frogging by hitch-hiking on the backs of trucks or inside pot plants. There is a need for strict quarantine controls over the movement of horticultural products. In the Top End in recent years, we have had scares

about cane toads and extensive searches have been undertaken because of the potential risks. There is always a risk from people who do not adopt proper quarantine controls on the movement of goods from Queensland.

There are some who believe that a cane toad invasion is inevitable. We would like to think that it can be controlled. We hope that, through the introduction of effective biological control agents, we will be able at least to control the populations and minimise the potential devastation to native fauna and flora. Cane toads will eat anything and will pollute waterways. Later research indicates that they probably will not destroy fauna but will seriously damage it. We must direct our efforts at biological control and maintenance of continual vigilance against 'leap-toading', to coin a phrase, into the Top End wetlands. If they begin breeding there, we will be in for some horrible consequences.

Regulatory Review Committee

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

A couple of years ago, as the result of community complaints regarding what was perceived as unnecessary restriction through government regulation, the Chief Minister of the day established a review of all government regulations. Since then, little has been heard of the progress of this review. Could he advise whether the review is still in progress or, indeed, has been completed and inform the House concerning the outcome to date?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, in January 1987, Cabinet established the Regulatory Review Committee to initiate action for a comprehensive review of Northern Territory regulatory activities and administrative procedures. All departments have regulatory responsibilities. They were required to undertake a systematic review of regulations and administrative procedures and to report regularly to the Regulatory Review Committee. The scheduled timetable for this systematic review required regulations introduced prior to 31 December 1982 to have been reviewed by 30 June 1988. This review was completed and a report made to Cabinet which identified numerous regulations to be amended or repealed.

Phase 2 of the systematic review required all regulations introduced after 1 January 1983 and prior to 31 December 1987, together with relevant administrative procedures, to have been reviewed by 30 June 1989. This phase of the review has now been completed with a submission ready to be presented to Cabinet. The review was launched under the government's policy of eliminating red tape, reducing unnecessary and ineffective regulatory practices and reducing the burden of Northern Territory government regulations and administrative procedures on business in particular and the community in general.

New regulations and amendments are subject to an arrangement of regulatory review which involves monitoring by the Coordinating Committee with secretarial services provided by the Department of Industries and Development. There has been much comment bandied around about bureaucratic red tape and much criticism of government regulation and interference. The Territory government has demonstrated that it stands ready to respond with the completion of this review.

The second phase of that review will be presented to Cabinet very shortly. I know full well the problems with removing red tape. Honourable members will remember that I was the chairman of a committee established to review regulations, and I think that the member for Sadadeen might have been a member of that committee with me. It was easy to get rid of the old South Australian statutes that applied in the Northern Territory. We got rid of the Gawler Tram Trust. Legislation of that sort is easy to remove from the statute books. We removed something like 100 pieces of legislation in one fell swoop.

The problem is that, once you have a piece of legislation which offers some protection to an industry or an individual, it is very difficult to remove that piece of legislation. Ronald Reagan, of course, did the same thing with his regulatory review. In fact, Mr Peter Grace, who would be well known to some Territorians as the owner of Mount Bunday Station and a shareholder in the Goodall Mine now situated on Mount Bunday Station, was in fact Ronald Reagan's Regulatory Review Committee Chairman. Speeches which he made indicate that he faced similar difficulties. There are no problems with the old statute regulations but, as soon as you face a situation in which a business is based on the very piece of red tape you are trying to eliminate, it becomes extremely difficult to remove it from the statute books. That was the problem faced by old Peter Grace - and I say that respectfully - in getting rid of such legislation. It is the very same problem which we have run into in the course of this regulatory review.

However, the second phase of the review is to go before Cabinet, and I hope to be able to give an update to the Legislative Assembly during the November sittings of the Assembly.

Parletoria Scale on Date Palms

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

My question relates to parletoria scale, a problem which threatens date palms in central Australia. I know that the minister is aware of the problem but is he aware that, in California, growers have found a way of removing this pest, which could ruin a fledgling industry in the Territory. They used a process of torching, which basically involved burning the outside of all infected palms and doing that everywhere. Will he undertake to have the situation studied, bearing in mind that the fledgling date industry in central Australia needs to get rid of parletoria scale, which has the potential to kill the industry before it has a chance to become established?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Sadadeen rightly raises this issue. It is important and, as he indicates, could have a rather dramatic effect on our developing date industry. I note too in passing that the department and, I think, 2 private growers are at this time importing new date offshoots from California. That is how the scale was introduced into Australia. Of course, care is now taken to ensure that offshoots are acquired from scale-free areas and are free from other diseases that might affect our industry, as well as to ensure that the quarantine measures in the Northern Territory, for which my department is responsible, are effective and will ensure that no other diseases are introduced.

Parletoria blanchardi is the name of the scale. It is a hard scale thought to be indigenous to Iraq but it is now widely distributed throughout most date growing countries. The injury to date palm occurs due to feeding by

the adult and nymphal scales on the succulent tissues at the base of the leaf stalk. With heavy infestations, feeding can occur on the foliage and fruit of the palm. The damage causes leaves to wither and die, loss of vigour of the plant and reduction in the marketability of the fruit. As the honourable member has indicated, it is quite damaging to the plants.

Overseas control is usually achieved to such a level that injury is negligible. That control relies primarily on insecticides. The literature indicates that dimetho-8 and malathion appear to be the least harmful effective insecticides. Diazanin and parathion are also used. In the United States, as the honourable member has indicated, it appears that quite successful results have been achieved with a system of inspection, quarantine and control by stripping and burning and, as he said, torching of some plants.

There is a great deal of cooperation between industry and officers of my department in investigating this issue and seeking to come up with an effective control measure. I am sure that that cooperation will continue. Certainly, the department will pursue the matter.

I mention in passing that the member for Sadadeen was recently nominated by central Australian horticulturists, via the Growers Association, to represent them on the Horticultural Advisory Commission which reports to me on matters relevant to the horticulture industry. It was my pleasure to accept that nomination, and I am sure that the member for Sadadeen will prove to be a very good representative for central Australian growers and will pass on important information to me in my role as minister. This is a good indication of the sort of role which he is able to play.

NT Portion 1097

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I remind the minister of the Federal Court decision in respect of NT portion 1097, created by his government as Kings Creek Station 8 years ago. The court's decision was that, in fact, the granting of that lease was ultra vires. Secondly, I remind the minister of the need to provide a land base and occupations for the families of people like Bruce Breden, Nahassan Ngwanaka, Helmut Pararoultja, Ben Clyne and others. Thirdly, I remind the honourable minister of the need for Ian Conway and his family and Tim Lander and his family to be able to get on in a certain fashion with their tourism project, which involves camel catching and other activities. My first question is this. Will the minister pursue this matter in the manner of the former Minister for Lands, the member for Nightcliff, in seeking to negotiate the competing land needs? Secondly, will he give an undertaking to this House that he will not be pursuing a case in the High Court in appeal against the Federal Court decision in respect of that parcel of land?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I certainly thank the member for MacDonnell for reminding me of so many things. I can assure the honourable member that I am fully aware of all the matters he mentioned. I can also assure him that I believe that negotiation is the best way to try to settle this problem. As he is probably aware, I have been involved in this matter in the past. I have had a number of meetings with both Mr Lander and Mr Conway, and with the traditional owners of the land in that area. I believe that, with goodwill on all sides, a satisfactory arrangement can be made. I would also like to let honourable members know that, on several occasions, we came very close to

negotiating a settlement. Unfortunately, things seemed to collapse at the last minute. I certainly hope that those negotiations can continue.

In terms of responding to the honourable member's question in relation to legal proceedings, I am, of course, unable to give any undertakings. It is incumbent upon me to make sure that there are no grounds for such action to be taken and, if there are grounds, to weigh up the question of whether there may be any benefit to the Territory community in initiating any action. I certainly can give no undertaking at this stage.

However, I reiterate my belief that negotiation is the only satisfactory means of resolving this matter. I am certainly quite disappointed that, on several occasions when a negotiated settlement seemed very close, it did not eventuate. I will be using my best endeavours to try to ensure that that is what occurs.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Ministerial Advisory Council on Work Health

Mr McCARTHY (Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to provide more up to date information on a question asked by the member for Nhulunbuy yesterday in relation to current representation on the Ministerial Advisory Council on Work Health. Mr Deputy Speaker, I indicated yesterday that Lorelei Bradshaw was the person representing the mining industry on the Ministerial Advisory Council. I now have more up-to-date information and can advise that John Farthing replaced Lorelei Bradshaw during the year and is the current representative. He also represents the interest of the mining industry.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Crimes Compensation Act

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): On Tuesday 17 October, the member for Barkly asked if I was prepared to intervene in litigation that is about to commence between the Northern Territory government and Mr Peter Bunney and his solicitors for the recovery of \$2600 of legal expenses incurred by Mr Bunney in attempting to gain compensation payments from the government. He asked, given the gesture which I made last week, whether I would consider settling the litigation out of court.

I would like to advise honourable members that, on 10 July 1989, I approved payment of Mr Bunney's legal costs to be taxed as agreed. On 30 August, Mr Bunney's solicitors wrote to the Solicitor for the Northern Territory enclosing a bill in taxable form and advised that they would arrange a date for the taxation of legal costs. This has not yet been done. However, I have approved and will happily pay Mr Bunney's legal costs, taxed as agreed in accordance with the usual practice. I certainly was unaware of any proceedings. If they have commenced, as the member for Barkly suggested, I would ask Mr Bunney to check with his solicitors to ensure that they are aware of the correspondence which has been sent to them and also of the advice which they have given my office that they would indeed arrange a date for taxation of legal costs. I repeat that I agreed in July this year to make full payment of legal costs.

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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.

23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

16 May 1989

87. BTEC Payments to Mr Dunbar

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In the 'Letters to the Editor' section of the Sunday Territorian dated 23 April 1989 you stated that Mr B. Dunbar 'has received more than \$500 000 of BTEC funds to assist him in fulfilling the scope of his agreed program, as well as \$130 000 in low-interest BTEC loans'.

What were the -

- (a) various purposes under which these amounts were provided;
- (b) exact amounts involved;
- (c) works required from Mr Dunbar in respect of each of (a) and (b) above;
- (d) full details of the extent of the works carried out in respect of each of the above by Mr Dunbar as at 23 April 1989; and
- (e) details of outstanding works or moneys on behalf of Mr Dunbar or the Northern Territory government.

22 August 1989

90. Loans Converted to Grants

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Which organisations have, in the past 12 months, had loans from the Northern Territory government changed to grants.

In each case, what was the amount.

92.

Liquor Licences

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What were, by type, the number of liquor licences extant as at 31 December 1988 for each year since the Liquor Commission was established in 1979 in -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region.
2. Are holders of Special Licences required to provide a return detailing sales under the Special Licence.
3. How many applications for new liquor licences have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the commission in each year since its establishment.
4. How many applications for renewal of liquor licences have been rejected by the commission in each year since its establishment.
5. In each year since the Liquor Commission was established, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected.
6. How many applications for -
 - (a) new licences;
 - (b) licence renewal; and
 - (c) changes to licence conditions,were opposed by commercial or community interest. Of the opposed proposals how many were ultimately granted, in each year since the commission was established.

7. What was the volume of beer, wine and spirits respectively sold in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) the balance of the Northern region; and
 - (f) the balance of the Southern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
8. What has been the annual amount collected by the Northern Territory government in liquor licence and related licence fees since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
9. What was the wholesale value of beer, wine and spirits respectively purchased by licensees in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
10. How many liquor licences have been suspended or cancelled for breaches of licence conditions in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979 and what were their reasons for the suspension or cancellations.

11. How many prosecutions of licensees were -
- (a) commenced; and
 - (b) successful,
- for the offences of serving alcohol to minors or to intoxicated persons in each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
12. What was the per capita consumption by Territory residents of beer, wine and spirits respectively in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.

**97. Emergency Evacuations from Titjikala (Maryvale)
and Atitjere (Harts Range)**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many evacuations from each of these communities were there during the years 1986-87 and 1987-88.
2. What means was employed for these evacuations.
3. In how many of these evacuations were private vehicles from the community used.
4. At what rate were the owners of these vehicles reimbursed.

10 October 1989

101. Brucellosis and Tuberculosis - Tarlton Downs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. On what date this year was a TB reactor found on Tarlton Downs Station.
2. When was the station notified that they had a confirmed case of TB.
3. What was the cause of the delay.

4. When was the station sent documentation to sign authorising the de-stock.
5. What was the cause of the delay.
6. Will the station owners be compensated for losses incurred due to the fall in prices, loss of condition and/or loss of production.

103. General Practitioners in the NT

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Does the Northern Territory government survey the availability of general medical practitioners in the Northern Territory.
2. If so, how many GPs work in the Northern Territory.
3. How many GPs working in the NT are -
 - (a) in private practice;
 - (b) publicly employed; and
 - (c) employed by community-based medical services.
4. In the case of questions 3(b) and 3(c), what are the employing agencies.
5. Of these GPs, how many live in -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Katherine;
 - (c) Tennant Creek;
 - (d) Alice Springs;
 - (e) Gove;
 - (f) Jabiru;
 - (g) Alyangula; and
 - (h) elsewhere.
6. In the case of question 5(h), where are they resident and by whom are they employed.

21 November 1989

104. Cooperative Housing Development Program

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. Which 'older areas in Darwin and Alice Springs' are being considered for the cooperative housing development announced by the minister in a media release, dated 19 September 1989.
2. Is it envisaged that the government will buy back the property.
3. How will the proposed \$165 000 be spent.

**105. Appointment of Assistant Secretary,
Department of Lands and Housing**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. Was Mr Les Williams appointed as Assistant Secretary, Department of Lands and Housing in June 1988.
2. Was this appointment aborted.
3. Was an out-of-court settlement paid by the government to Mr Williams; if so, was the amount of the out-of-court settlement \$27 500.
4. Can the minister confirm that the out-of-court settlement was \$27 500.

106. Water Supply at Ulbanyali

Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What arrangements have been made for a water supply for families living at Ulbanyali in the vicinity of Kings Canyon who now have to cart water for several miles from Lila.

107. Water Reticulation Pipes - Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. Is it a fact, as reported some months ago, that leaking water reticulation pipes in Alice Springs are causing a costly and wasteful loss of water in the town. If so -
 - (a) what has been done or is planned to be done to detect these leaks;
 - (b) what has or is planned to be done to fix these leaks; and

- (c) if the answer to (a) is nothing, would the government consider seeking advice from ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) on how the leaks might be detected.

108. Patients Assistance Travel Scheme

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Which applicants under the Patients Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) have had their applications refused during -
 - (a) 1987-88; and
 - (b) 1988-89.
2. For what reasons were these applicants refused.

22 August 1989

95. **Treasury Employee, Costs of Disciplinary
Action Incurred by Government**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

An employee of the NT Treasury has been subject to the following Public Service action since September 1988 -

- ° On or about 6 September 1988 - Disciplinary action commenced in accordance with section 53 of Public Service Act. This action was not proceeded with
- ° On or about 5 October 1988 - NCOM Controller recommended the employee be terminated
- ° On or about 13 October 1988 - Under Treasurer recommended to PSC that action be taken under section 49 of the act to retire employee on inefficiency grounds
 - Employee suspended from duty on full pay
- ° On or about 14 October 1988 - PSC writes to employee advising section 49 action proposed. Asks for comment
- ° On or about 19-30 October 1988 - Submissions made by union on employee's behalf
- ° On or about 31 October 1988 - Employee's services terminated
- ° On or about 31 October 1988 - Appeal lodged under Public Service Regulation 18
 - Appeal tribunal formed
- ° On or about 1 December 1988 - 1st tribunal hearing
- ° On or about 19 December 1988 - Tribunal advised PSC that -
 - ° Treasury has inappropriately used discipline process

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

- and recommended they review their procedures
- employee referred to CMO
- On or about 23 December 1988 - 2nd tribunal hearing
- On or about 29 December 1988 - 3rd tribunal hearing
- On or about 10 January 1989 - PSC sought clarification from tribunal on a number of matters
- On or about 12 January 1989 - CMO examination gave employee clean bill of health
- On or about 20 January 1989 - Tribunal responds
- On or about late January 1989 - Tribunal reports to PSC -
 - allegations against employee presented in a biased misleading way
 - there were serious defects in procedures followed
 - the employee was denied natural justice
 - DOLAS negligent in advice given to Treasury on case
 - recommended officer be redeployed to another department for 3 months
- On or about 27 January 1989 - PSC ignores recommendation and advice and terminates employee
- On or about 30 January 1989 - Union, on behalf of officer, lodges claim on PSC seeking reinstatement and payment of \$250 000 compensation for unfair dismissal

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

- ° On or about early February 1989 - Dispute notification lodged
- ° On or about 16 February 1989 - Dispute before Commissioner Cross in Sydney. PSC engaged QC
- ° On or about 6 March 1989 - Further Commission hearing with QC
- ° On or about 26 June 1989 - Commissioner hands down decision awarding ACOA jurisdiction on reinstatement
- ° On or about 17 July 1989 - At date of this question, the Public Service Commission has appealed to Full Bench of Industrial Relations Commission

How much money has been spent by the Department of Labour and Administrative Services and the Northern Territory Treasury in the following areas since September 1988 in presenting the matter -

- (a) salary and allowances of the employee during suspension;
- (b) salary and administration costs of all NTPS employees involved;
- (c) Appeal Tribunal costs;
- (d) legal costs including Queens Counsel (QC) fees; and
- (e) air fares, travel and accommodation costs for senior staff in his department.

ANSWER

The question relates to the retirement of a Treasury employee on the grounds of inefficiency, not disciplinary action as stated in the title to the question. After an unsuccessful appeal to the PSC, the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association appealed against the retirement to the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) on the grounds of unfair dismissal. The Territory government held that the IRC had no jurisdiction in the matter and this issue is not yet resolved. An appeal against Commissioner Cross' decision to hear the case will be held in Sydney in October.

Costs, therefore, are not yet finalised. Also, the answers to the questions raised can in most instances be only best estimates as they involve individual officers recollections of time spent on the case.

The answers are as follows:

- (a) The employee was not officially suspended from duty, but the delegate of the Public Service Commissioner absented him from the work place on full pay.

The employee earns an annual salary of \$27 640 as a Computer Systems Officer Grade 1. He was absent from duty on full pay for 14 weeks, at a cost of \$7418.

- (b) The matter involved NTPS staff from the employees own department and the Department of Labour and Administrative Services. It was not an additional cost as personnel management of all kinds is part of the normal functions of the employees concerned. The notional estimated cost calculated on the number of hours spent by individuals on the case is \$8000. This is inclusive of appearances before the tribunal and the commission but exclusive of work done in employees own time.

- (c) The Appeal Tribunal consisted of 3 NTPS employees one of whom was nominated by the union. Salary costs of the employees were met by their home departments. However, based on the amount of time spent in preparation, hearings, discussion etc by 3 senior officers the cost was in the order of \$2100.

It should be noted that as in (b) work undertaken in members' own time is excluded.

- (d) Legal costs to date inclusive of Queens Counsel fees are \$8850.

- (e) Air fares, travel and accommodation costs for 2 senior officers to attend the Industrial Relations Commission hearing in Sydney were \$2843. Their salaries are included in (b).

10 October 1989

100. Investnorth dealings with Sheraton Company

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. What recurring costs does Investnorth pay in respect of -
 - (a) Sheraton Darwin;
 - (b) Sheraton Alice Springs; and
 - (c) Sheraton Ayers Rock.
2. On what basis is the return to the Sheraton Company from these publicly-owned facilities calculated.
3. What was the initial capital cost of each property.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

4. Has Investnorth commenced legal action against White Industries because of construction defects with the Sheraton Ayers Rock Hotel.
5. Will the minister table the agreement between Investnorth and the Sheraton Company. If not, why not.
6. What has been the cost of the repairs to flood damage sustained at Sheraton Ayers Rock Hotel in 1989 and under what headings have these costs been incurred.

ANSWER

1. Investnorth Management Pty Ltd does not pay any costs in respect of these hotels. It acts as agent for the government in ensuring that obligations in the documentation are met.
2. In each case Sheraton manages these properties under an agreement with the owner.

These are basically standard documents of the kind they use around the world.

Under the agreements they are entitled to a 2-level fee. Firstly, a small percentage of the gross revenue received from hotel customers. Secondly, as and when it is achieved, a percentage of the gross operating profit of the property as an incentive.

The relevant percentages in all such agreements is a matter of commercial confidence given the competitive nature of the industry.

3. The initial capital costs, including machinery, fixtures and fittings, were -

Sheraton Darwin	\$34.5m
Sheraton Alice Springs	\$34.2m
Sheraton Ayers Rock	\$42.2m

4. The matter is in the hands of senior legal counsel engaged by the company. Specialist technical advice has been prepared by consulting engineers.
5. I presume this question refers to the management agreements between the respective owners and Sheraton. As stated, these are commercially confidential documents.

The government has no direct contractual relationship with Sheraton.

6. The cost of repairs for flood damage is covered by insurance with the TIO and the claim has been accepted.

Estimated repair costs subject to insurance claim total \$1.6m.

10 October 1989

102.

Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

How many Aboriginal Health Workers were employed in the following communities in -

- (a) 1981;
- (b) 1985; and
- (c) 1989.

Barunga-Wugularr	Borroloola
Daguragu	Lajamanu
Yugul Mangi	Mataranka
Pine Creek	Angurugu
Milyakburra	Galiwinku
Gapuwiyak	Milingimbi
Numbulwar	Ramingining
Umbakumba	Yirrkala Dhanbul
Kardu Numida	Belyuen
Pularumpi	Milikapiti
Naiyu Nambiyu	Nguiu
Peppimenarti	Gunbalanya
Jabiru	Maningrida
Minjilang	Warruwi
Amoonguna	Aputula
Areyonga	Kaltukatjara
Ikuntji	Imanpa
Iwupataka	Papunya
Pmara Jutunta	Santa Teresa
Wallace Rock Hole	Yuendumu
Urapuntja	Ntarria
Walunguru	Ali Curung
Alpururulam	Elliott

ANSWER

Attached is a schedule setting out details as requested.

A question mark appears for those communities in the Alice Springs and Barkly Regions where numbers for 1981 are not available.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER NUMBERS
1981; 1985; 1989

ALICE SPRINGS AND BARKLY REGION

Aboriginal Name	COMMUNITY	European Name	1981	1985		1989	
				Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
Ali Curung		Warrabri	?	4	1	4	
(homelands)		Canteen Creek	?		1		2
		Murray Downs	?		1		1
		Epenarra	?				2
Alpurrurulam		Lake Nash	?		2		3
Amoonguna			?		1		1
Aputula		Finke	?	3		2*	
Areyonga			?		3		2
Elliott			?	5		4	
Ikuntji		Haasts Bluff	?		2	0	
Iwupataka		Jay Creek	?		1	0	
Kaltukatjara		Docker River	?	5			4
Natarria		Hermannsburg	?	4		4	
Papunya			—	6	—	2	2
			?	27	12	16	17

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER NUMBERS
1981; 1985; 1989

ALICE SPRINGS AND BARKLY REGION

Aboriginal Name	COMMUNITY European Name	1981	1985		1989	
			Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
	Carried Forward		27	12	16	17
Pmara Jutunta	Ti Tree	?	2		3	
Homelands:	Napperby	?		2		3
	Neutral Junction	?		1		1
	Stirling	?		2		1
	Ti Tree New Camp	?		1		1
	Ti Tree Station	?		1		1
Santa Teresa		?	5		7	
Wallace Rock Hole		?	0			1*
Yuendumu			<u>6</u>		<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>
		<u>?</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>27</u>

*Plus AHW Positions funded by DEET 1989-90

Aputula = 1
Wallace Rock Hole = 1

COMMUNITIES DIRECTLY FUNDED BY DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Imanpa Mt Ebenezer
Urapuntja Utopia
Walunguru Kintore (Pintubi)

ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER NUMBERS
1981; 1985; 1989

DARWIN REGION

Aboriginal Name	COMMUNITY European Name	1981		1985		1989	
		Full Time	Full Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
Belyuen	Delissaville	2		3		3	
Gunbalanya	Oenpelli	4		4		4*	
Jabiru		0		0		0	
Maningrida		5		9		9*	
Milikapiti	Snake Bay	5		5		5*	
Minjilang	Croker Island	3		1	3	1	2
Nauiyu Nambiyu	Daly River	2	3		2	1	2 1
Nguiu	Bathurst Island	11		11		9	1
Peppimenarti		1		1			2
Pularumpi	Garden Point	4		4		4	
Wadeye (Kardu Numida - Council)	Port Keats	9		10		10	
Warruwi	Goulburn Island	3		2	2		4
	TOTAL	<u>49</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>12</u>

*Plus AHW Positions funded by DEET, 1989-90
 Gunbalanya = 2
 Maningrida = 2
 Milikapiti = 1

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER NUMBERS
1981; 1985; 1989

EAST ARNHAM REGION

Aboriginal Name	COMMUNITY European Name	1981	1985	1989	
				Full Time	Part Time
Angurugu		5	6	3	6 1
Galiwinku	Elcho Island	9	10	4	6
Gapuwiyak	Lake Evella	2	3	3	1
Milyakburra	Bickerton Island	0	0	0	
Milingimbi		9	9	4	3 2
Numbulwar		2	3	3	1
Ramingining		1	3	4*	
Umbakumba		5	5		2 2
Yirrkala Dhanbul		5	4		1*
		<u>38</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>1</u> <u>26</u>

*Plus AHW Positions funded by DEET, 1989-90

Gapuwiyak = 1
Numbulwar = 2
Ramingining = 1
Yirrkala = 1

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER NUMBERS
1981; 1985; 1989

KATHERINE REGION

Aboriginal Name	COMMUNITY European Name	1981	1985		1989 Full Time	1989 Part Time
			Full Time	Part Time		
Barunga-Wugularr		3	3		3*	
Borrooloola		4	4		5	
Dagaragu/Kalkaringi	Wattie Creek	5	4		4	
Lajamanu	Hooker Creek	5	4		4	
Jilkminggan	Mataranka	0	0	2	0	1*
Pine Creek		1	1		1	
Yugul Mangi (Ngukurr)	Roper River	5	4		6	
		23	20	2	23*	1*

*Plus AHW Positions funded by DEET, 1989-90

Barunga = 2
Jilkminggan = 1

Crimes Compensation Payment

Mr BELL to ATTORNFY-GENERAL

I refer the Attorney-General to his undertaking given during the last sittings of this Assembly to repay the sum of \$7000 that he slashed from the crimes compensation payment to a sexual assault victim known only as Diana. Why then, as late as last week, was this victim of the Attorney-General's appalling interference still waiting for her repayment? How can the Attorney-General possibly justify this delay in light of his open public concession that the full compensation should be paid? How long must this woman wait for the Attorney-General to give her just payment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, approvals and directions regarding that payment were made some time ago. I will certainly make inquiries as to whether there is any truth in the accusations made by the member for MacDonnell.

Habitation Review by Australian Electoral Office

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister advise the House of the results of the recent Northern Territory habitation review conducted by the Commonwealth Electoral Office and of its possible implications for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in view of recent speculation in the media about the results of the habitation review and the effect it may have on the numbers in this Assembly, I am pleased to be able to put this matter to rest. At a meeting of the Executive Council last Friday, the Administrator was advised by my government to direct the Distribution Committee to redive the Northern Territory into proposed electoral divisions. The job of the Distribution Committee will be to propose new boundaries for electoral divisions, taking into account the findings of the habitation review recently completed by the Australian Electoral Office.

At the last redistribution in 1986, 69 985 voters were enrolled in the Northern Territory. The quota for each of the 25 electorates was then set at 2799 voters with tolerances of plus or minus 20% allowing for upper and lower limits of 3359 and 2240 voters respectively. The habitation review completed this year resulted in more than 25 000 enrolment transactions, reflecting the Territory's high mobility and the updated rolls will form the basis of the next redistribution. There are now 72 642 electors on the Northern Territory rolls, an increase of 2657 on the 1986 figure.

After giving this matter serious consideration, the government has determined that the electoral redistribution will not encompass the creation of new seats. The number of seats in this Assembly will remain at 25. The government must reflect the will of the people in this regard and I do not believe that Territorians will wear one more politician while the Northern Territory and Australian economies are in their current state. However, a redistribution is necessary. With 72 642 electors now eligible to vote, the quota for each of the 25 seats has risen to 2906, with upper and lower tolerances respectively set at 3487 and 2325 electors, and 5 seats have been found on this basis to exceed the allowed tolerance. Port Darwin, Flynn,

Stuart and Braitting are all below the minimum number of electors by between 12 and 125 electors. The electorate of Palmerston is 913 electors above the upper tolerance. Almost every other electorate has an enrolment substantially above or below the quota, although within the 20% tolerance. It is clear that very significant changes to existing boundaries are necessary. However, I repeat that the redistribution will be carried out on the basis of 25 seats.

Litigation by White Industries

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Can he confirm that White Industries is suing the Northern Territory government for \$20m in a dispute arising from the construction of the Yulara resort project, and will he inform the House of the stage the legal proceedings have reached?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can inform the honourable member that White Industries has issued a writ of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory against the Northern Territory of Australia, the Conservation Commission, the Territory Loans Management Corporation, the Territory Insurance Office and the Yulara Development Company. The dispute involves costs of construction in relation to Yulara. I would like to inform honourable members that the writ is being vigorously defended by the Northern Territory government and senior counsel have been briefed. I do not think it would be proper to say any more on the matter.

Secondary Student Enrolments in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Demographic figures circulating in Alice Springs indicate that there are 200 fewer secondary students likely to be enrolled next year. Can the minister confirm those figures and can he give a reason why the figures are dropping?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I know that there is considerable movement in relation to student population throughout the Northern Territory and Alice Springs does have particular difficulty in that regard. I do not have the details with me but I am happy to provide the information to the honourable member at a later stage during these sittings.

Federal Government Competition with Local Businesses

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In the last few weeks, I have been approached by a considerable number of constituents in my electorate over the actions of a federal government department competing with Territory businesses in the provision of goods and services. I ask the minister to advise concerning the impact that this quasi-commercial operation will have on local business houses.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer in simple terms is that such action will have a devastating effect on local businesses, particularly at a time when things are tough enough in private enterprise as it is. All Territorians should be demanding an explanation from the federal representative, Mr Warren Snowdon. When I raised the matter in the middle of last week, Mr Snowdon avoided the question totally. He has much to answer for. He needs to come back to Territorians with a plausible explanation as to why a federal government department is involved in direct competition with the private sector in an area in which it has no need nor entitlement to be.

When this issue was raised, it was revealed that the federal Department of Administrative Services was circulating its shopping list among almost anybody who had the slightest bit to do with federal funding. The shopping list principally involves motor vehicles but extends also to white goods and fruit and vegetables, some of which involve local companies. In the main, what was involved was supplies direct from manufacturers interstate. Its excuse for such action is that it would build its bulk and give it better buying power next year or a little rake off from the top. Quite unashamedly, it announced in its circulated letter to the various groups - Aboriginal councils, St John Ambulance, town councils etc - that it would be including what it called a marginal fee with this period contract figure for all of its supply items.

What we have seen is motor vehicle orders going direct to Melbourne suppliers. In fact, the only action that most local businesses get is to prepare motor vehicles for collection by these various authorities and bodies, motor vehicles at virtually no cost. Thus, there is an imposition on local businesses rather than the opportunity to compete on fair grounds. Of course, in some cases, the absolutely outrageous situation exists where vehicles could be supplied more cheaply through local businesses. In one case, there was a difference of \$800 between the federal department's shopping list and the local supply price. That quite ridiculous situation has come about as a result of this totally unacceptable entry into the marketplace by the Department of Administrative Services.

The federal member has a responsibility to answer to the Northern Territory community. Jobs are being affected. It is not simply a matter of salesmen. It is a matter of the total package presented by local retailers of the sales and the follow-up service. It affects mechanics and apprentices in the workshop and various other people who participate in the industry.

Mr Collins: The multiplier effect.

Mr FINCH: Of course, it is the multiplier effect. It applies not only to motor vehicles, but also to fridges and all types of other goods.

The member for the Northern Territory argues that many of these purchases are made through local suppliers. In his press release, I believe that he mentioned Le Cornu Furniture Centre as one of the furniture suppliers. Apart from whether the department should be involved in this exercise or not in the first place, the question is at what cost it is involved. Are the local retailers who obtain a small share of the action being asked to supply at the bulk price which applies in Melbourne? Are they being asked to reduce their margins so that they can fit into the scheme? Are they being asked to share the profit margins with the distributors from down south? What is the value of this federal program to local businesses? I put it to you, Mr Speaker, that it has no value.

The negative effect on local industry is something that must be addressed by the federal member. Through this Assembly and through the media during the last year, the federal member has been asked 6 or 8 questions about the effectiveness of federal government expenditure in terms of benefits to Territorians and the negative effects of some of its actions. He has not answered any of those questions. It is now up to the community of the Northern Territory, through the media, to demand a reasonable answer from its federal member in the House of Representatives.

Beaufort Hotel - Breach of Contract Lawsuit

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, can the honourable minister inform the House of the situation in relation to the government's defence of the \$20m-plus lawsuit launched by the owners of the Beaufort Hotel in Darwin against the Northern Territory government for alleged breach of contract? Can the honourable minister confirm that a Department of Law team is based in Sydney to fight the case and can he confirm that the cost to the taxpayer has reached \$1m?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a matter that is before the courts. The case has been vigorously defended by the Northern Territory government, the Darwin City Council and a number of other parties. I do not intend to reflect on the conduct of the court case. I certainly do not intend to reflect on where we are and what we are doing. Is the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that we should not defend such a claim? Is he suggesting that we should blindly write out a cheque? Obviously, that is what he would do because he has no intestinal fortitude for anything.

We are defending the matter. Experienced legal counsel are working on the matter for us and, at the end of the day, we will know just who pays what costs. I can assure taxpayers that one of the things that the Territory government will be doing is claiming legal costs at the end of the day. We have good advice which leads us to believe that we will probably be successful. I do not think that it is proper even to discuss the contents of these matters and I do not intend to. We will defend the matter vigorously and, I hope, successfully. What a ridiculous question!

National Aboriginal Education Policy

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Recently, the federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training announced his new national Aboriginal education policy with \$33m for new initiatives throughout Australia. Has the minister been advised how much of that money is earmarked for the Territory and, if so, is he satisfied with that allocation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Indeed, it is opportune that we discuss this matter during the course of these sittings. I will be calling on my colleagues and members opposite to support the government in its efforts to try to attract more Commonwealth money for the provision of educational services to Aboriginal communities. Honourable members would be aware that the national Aboriginal education policy was

recently announced by the federal government. We were supportive of the direction it was taking because it was placing more emphasis on the need for providing services to traditional Aboriginal people. I am very pleased about that. There is also more emphasis being placed on consultation and the need for governments to work together to ensure coordination so that, when a school is constructed, housing is built at the same time.

My major concern is that the Northern Territory will not have a great share of the \$33m that is distributed for Aboriginal education throughout Australia. At the moment, officers are talking about that issue. We are looking initially at receiving some \$4m or \$5m. Considering that the Northern Territory has some 1.6 million square kilometres and that two-thirds of the Aboriginals are non-English-speaking, I think it is disgraceful that we are only to be given some \$4m to \$5m initially. We should be looking at trying to increase the ante.

There is no doubt that, in the Northern Territory, there are real concerns about the provision of education to Aboriginal people. When we talk about the overall Australian situation, no state or territory has similar problems to those we have in the Northern Territory and it is very important ...

Mr Bell: Tom, that is nonsense.

Mr HARRIS: I would be pleased to have you get up and deny that fact. Mr Speaker, members of the opposition know that we are providing education to Aboriginal people throughout the 1.6 million square kilometres from Lajamanu right down to Santa Teresa and over to Kintore, right out in the bush areas. They know that. It is very difficult ...

Mr Ede: South Australia is doing it.

Mr Bell: Western Australia.

Mr HARRIS: ... and we have to work together.

Mr Ede: South Australia.

Mr HARRIS: South Australia! When you talk about housing in South Australia, you are talking basically about 10 communities. In the Northern Territory, we have over 100 Aboriginal schools plus outstations and, as I said, they are scattered across the Territory. Mr Speaker, I am surprised at the opposition. All I am trying to do is to get its support ...

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will allow the Minister for Education to answer the question in silence.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I am surprised at the opposition's objections to my reply. All I am trying to do is to gain a fair share of an amount of money that has been set aside for Aboriginal education in Australia - some \$33m. If we get \$5m out of the \$33m, I do not believe that that is a fair deal for Territorians, and I am sorry that the opposition feels that way.

We will continue to press for more funding for the Northern Territory. When we talk about the differences in the past between the Commonwealth and the Territory, it has been on the basis that the Commonwealth has been trying to drag us down the line. It has built schools and we have not been able to

provide housing. At least with this new education policy, which has indeed changed markedly from mark I, and as a result of discussions between the Commonwealth and this government, we are now looking at dollars being provided to the Northern Territory so that we are able to coordinate the development of schools so that not only are schools able to be built, but housing is able to be provided also. I urge members to support the government in its efforts to obtain for Territorians a greater percentage share of the \$33m. The situation in the Territory is different. There is no question about that, and we need all the support we can get.

Economic Planning Advisory Council

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

Following his attendance at the recent Economic Planning Advisory Council meeting in Melbourne, can the Chief Minister advise on the state of the national economy and its effect on the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, last Friday, I attended the meeting of EPAC in Melbourne. The forum is one of the highest forums established by the federal government to discuss the state of the nation with various parties. Participants in EPAC include 3 of the states of Australia and the Northern Territory on a rotational basis, the ACTU, representatives of national welfare organisations and representatives of business, the professions and local government. It is quite a significant forum. Usually, the Treasurer, Mr Keating, attends the EPAC meetings and briefs the council on the state of the nation but, on this occasion, he was absent overseas. Having listened to the Prime Minister's wrap-up of where we are at, delivered on the Treasurer's behalf, I can understand why he was overseas.

The regrettable fact is that the condition of the Australian economy is a matter of grave concern to us all, and I can provide little good news to honourable members as a result of the Prime Minister's statement. I will illustrate the mess that the Australian economy is in as a result of the Australian federal government's management policies. I say 'as a result of the federal government's management policies' because, quite clearly, if the economy was in good shape, it would be shouting from the rooftops that it was all a result of its economic policies. Why shouldn't it wear the odium if the country is in a bad state?

Let me compare a few economic indicators as they were at the end of June 1987 when the present federal government was last re-elected along with the present Northern Territory member of the House of Representatives. These are the most recent statistics. On the balance of payments on current account for the year ended 30 June 1987, there was a deficit of \$13 000m. The deficit in the quarter ended September this year was close to \$6000m in only 3 months. The Consumer Price Index in 1987-88 was increasing at an annual rate of 7.3%. The recently announced figure for the September quarter for 1989 had the CPI increasing at 8% per annum. The average new housing loan interest rate from a savings bank in the June quarter 1987 was 15.5%. In the September quarter of 1989, it has increased to 17% and is showing no signs whatsoever of declining. Australia's net foreign debt at June 1987 was \$82 000m. In June 1989, it has risen to \$108 000m and undoubtedly has increased since then.

Honourable members will be aware of a recent forecast by a private organisation that, unless some dramatic steps are taken, Australia's foreign

debt could indeed rise to something like \$500 000m by the turn of the century. I am sure that prediction is disputed fairly hotly and will continue to be. I point it out to honourable members as something which has been flagged to the Australian people by at least one bank which has been involved in such matters, so that we might all take heed.

None of this is good news for the Northern Territory. The only so-called good news - and I use the term 'good news' with some reservation - is that the unemployment rate in Australia has risen from 5.9% in August 1989 to 6.3% in October 1989. It is rather amazing that an increased unemployment figure should be heralded as some sort of good news, but it is good news for those who are keen to see evidence of the Australian economy slowing down. This particular statistic was seized on by the federal government recently as solitary evidence of the fact that its economic policies are actually working. There are economic policies which aim to wind this country back. The only figure that looked good to it was a rise in unemployment. With success like that, who needs failures?

That is about all I need to say in respect of the federal government's economic management performance. Hopefully for all Australians, we are seeing the last stages of the final term of the federal Labor government and we will not have to put up with it for too much longer. I fear, however, that the news on the Territory scene is not very encouraging, stemming from the federal situation.

Whilst Territory government policies have done much over the last few years to cushion the effects of federal funding cuts, the Territory is not complacent about the following statistics which I place on the record. The situation in the Territory is not good. However, whilst the national CPI is increasing at 8% per annum, the Territory figure is under 6%. It has been below the national rate for 4 years. Employment growth in the Territory over the year to June 1989 was 6.7%, double the rate of employment growth elsewhere in Australia. As the Minister for Industries and Development often points out, the Northern Territory's contribution to Australia's exports is around 10 times the national average per head of population. No one can accuse the Northern Territory of not pulling its weight on the balance of payments front. However, the Northern Territory has a long way to go before we are out of the economic woods. Our population rate is yet to recover to the levels of the early 1980s after declining temporarily during 1988. The rate of housing and non-residential construction is still depressingly low even though I welcome the recent observations from the Master Builders Association that healthy signs are starting to reappear in the construction industry in the Territory.

The Territory's problems have been greatly magnified by the Prime Minister's mishandling of the pilots' dispute which is having a devastating effect on the Territory's tourist industry. The Northern Territory government has done its best to help the industry but it is still suffering greatly, despite the fact that the Prime Minister does not seem to believe that we have a problem any longer. He tells us all that the dispute is over. The next time the Prime Minister or his local representative, Mr Snowdon, tells us of the economic magic being performed in Canberra, he should bear in mind the plight of people like the citizens of Alice Springs who are involved in the tourist industry, directly or indirectly. No doubt, they will take the opportunity to give the Prime Minister a message at the next federal election.

Finally, I remind the House yet again that the fundamental cause of the Territory's particular economic ills is the 4 consecutive years of savage cutbacks in the Northern Territory's general revenue assistance from Canberra.

Do not believe for a moment that our federal member has done anything of significance to arrest that decline. He stands condemned not for Australia's general economic mismanagement - I would not go so far as to lay that blame at his feet - but for doing so little to protect the people who elected him and put him where he is.

Minister for Education's Comments on Student Standards

Mr EDE to Minister for EDUCATION

I refer the minister to the ongoing debate in the timetabling of English and maths and to his contribution which featured on the front page of the NT News dated Saturday 4 November. After insulting the President of the Sanderson School Council, the honourable minister said: 'The reason for the new guidelines is that the secondary colleges are worried about standards of students from junior colleges'. Last Thursday, the Chairman of the Casuarina College Council phoned the minister, who was appearing on the Gerry Gannon show on ABC radio, and challenged him regarding those remarks. The minister agreed that he had no documentary evidence and that his comments were all based on hearsay. I ask the honourable minister whether he will apologise to students, parents and teachers for the damage caused to schools as a result of the ill-feeling his statements have generated between junior high schools and secondary colleges.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the whole issue in relation to timetabling and the curriculum review which has been carried out is a beat-up. I am disappointed ...

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Will you listen?

Mr Speaker, I have made it very clear that, as far as the government is concerned, all we are looking at is ensuring that students have access to appropriate education throughout the year. We are also trying to ensure that our system is accountable. There has been great demand for accountability from the public, not only in the Northern Territory but throughout Australia and, indeed, the world. We have tried to introduce a system that will cater for the concerns of those people. The process has been carried out in an appropriate manner, calling for a great deal of comment in relation to proposals. Whether we like it or not, the reality is that there has been concern expressed about the standards of students who go on to further education.

Mr Smith: By whom?

Mr Ede: Hearsay!

Mr HARRIS: You can say what you like but the same thing occurred during the course of the debate on Year 10 examinations. There were teachers who were in favour of the examinations. They would not put their views on paper. They would not come out and publicly support the examinations.

Mr Ede: Why not?

Mr HARRIS: Yes, why not? That is a good question to ask. Why don't you ask them?

Mr Smith: They do not exist. That is why.

Mr Ede: They only exist in your imagination.

Mr HARRIS: Actually, I have a couple of letters from teachers supporting the Year 10 examinations.

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: It is a pity that the member for Stuart did not refer to the other callers who rang during the talkback section of the Gerry Gannon program that morning. I am sure the community would like to recall the remarks expressed by other parents of students attending Sanderson High School.

Mr Speaker, I have never attacked Sanderson High School as being a school that is not of value. Like other government schools in the Northern Territory, it has some very good programs. I have made that very clear and I am quite willing to discuss those matters with the various people involved. All we were concerned about was that students, whether they be middle to low achievers or gifted children, should have access to continuity throughout the school period. There is no question that Sanderson High allows for that. I spoke with the chairman of the school council yesterday and it is clear that the school encourages continuity of access.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: We hear members opposite interjecting. They should listen. The public will see through all the nonsense they are screaming about. I have been very patient. I have spoken to people about the issue and I am quite happy to go on talkback and rehash it.

Australia's Ministers for Education are working towards national curriculum goals. They are working towards a set of standards. It is very important to develop standards throughout our school system and to ensure that access is available to maintain the levels. Students move throughout the Northern Territory and we have people moving here from various states. Mobility happens to be a problem in the Northern Territory and members opposite should be aware of that. Indeed, through the AEC, we are chairing a working party on that very issue. We are playing our role in that regard.

Can I just explain the situation in relation to Sanderson High? Yesterday, I met with the chairman of the school council, Mr Vandenberg, and the school principal Warren Bury. We had a very sensible discussion. Both agreed, as I agree, that there were faults on both sides of the fence. The simple fact is that the government is responsible for the curriculum. We all know that. There is no question about it. I made that very clear during the course of my review of council regulations at the time when I spoke to all the councils about the curriculum and responsibility.

The Board of Studies review was a routine review. It was looking at a whole range of issues. Some 23 issues were being looked at. The board asked for feedback, particularly in respect of the time allocation models and continuity. Schools have replied to that. A number of schools raised that particular issue. I guess that where it started to come unstuck was in the tone of the letters written from both sides of the fence and the response that was received from the Sanderson council as well. That has been acknowledged by Mr Vandenberg and I have acknowledged that there are some problems in relation to those issues. At this time, after discussions with Sanderson High School, it is acknowledged that it does in fact meet the time requirements ...

Mr Ede: Nobody doubted it.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, we should have a look at what they have in fact said. The school has met the time requirements and it has also met the requirement as far as continuity of access is concerned. There is no argument about that, and the school's timetable will not be upset. I have mentioned this on many occasions. The school's timetable will not be upset as a result of this review.

What has been said is nonsense. It is interesting to note that, in his column in the Sunday Territorian, the Leader of the Opposition put forward some inaccuracies. I do not know if he wrote the column himself, but we had the Leader of the Opposition, who paints himself as the white knight, as the person who will present the facts to the community, making this particular statement in relation to Sanderson High School in the Sunday newspaper. During the course of the column, he said that the school is so successful that it produces prize-winning maths students. That is true, and it happens at other schools as well. Nightcliff and some of the other schools have also produced prize-winning mathematics whiz-kids, and that is good. He went on to say that the school had 'Year 10 results way above the average'. I have indicated in this House that I will not use the results of the examinations actually to compare one school with another. I gave that undertaking at the start, and all I will say in relation to that statement is that he is wrong.

The other point I would make in relation to his column concerns the part where he talks about 'the brawls with the Council of Government ...

Mr Smith: Okay, I will withdraw the word 'way'. Will you settle for above the average?

Mr HARRIS: I am just saying that you are supposed to have written this and you are ...

Mr Smith: Will you settle for above the average?

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has a very high disapproval rating and it will go up at a rate of knots if he keeps carrying on with this. I do not know if he wrote it himself because I would expect the Leader of the Opposition to check his facts. In reference to myself, the column stated: 'He brawls with the Council of Government School Organisations, he attacks individual schools and he will not even talk with the Teachers Federation'.

Recently, I opened the COGSO half-yearly conference at Batchelor. I have spoken to the executive of COGSO. In the near future, I am to have lunch with Richard Creswick, who is the Chairman of COGSO, and I will be addressing a COGSO meeting in the near future. As far as COGSO is concerned, we have a great deal of input at the moment.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: I have not attacked an individual school. I support the government school system and I support the schools that we have.

Mr Smith: Did you defend Sanderson High school against Harvey Fewings?

Mr HARRIS: I have defended the Sanderson High School timetable and the results that come from Sanderson High School.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said that I will not talk to the Teachers Federation. Can I say that I came to an agreement some months ago, and he should know that because he has a ready line to the Teachers Federation. I have agreed to talk with the Northern Territory Teachers Federation in relation to the Year 10 examination results. I have been doing all this.

I do not know if the Leader of the Opposition wrote this column, but I would say to him that he should perhaps check the facts, because the public wants to know what the facts are. People do not want to be misled, and I believe that the Opposition Leader is in fact doing that.

May I close by saying that it is unfortunate that the situation has blown up the way it has, because the ...

Mr Ede: But you did it.

Mr HARRIS: No, that is not what I did.

Mr Speaker, as has been acknowledged, there have been faults on both sides of the fence and I am quite happy to talk about the issue. At the moment, the situation is that the principal of Sanderson High School and the chairman of the council have spoken with me. We have agreed about what I require and what the government wants in relation to the school's timetabling, and we believe that the matter can and will be negotiated. I hope that parents of students attending Sanderson High School acknowledge that we will not affect their timetable. Their timetable will continue. All I ask and all the government asks is that there is access to continuity, and that will continue.

Mr Bailey: Can you give assurances that the principal will not be transferred?

Mr HARRIS: What has that go to do with the price of eggs? Come on!

Expenses for Government Employees at Trade Expos

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Before we get carried away with euphoria of the honourable minister's personal statements about the success of recent trade expositions in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, I would like to give the minister the opportunity to put to rest the rumours of unusual personal expenses that some senior public servants may have incurred. Did the government employees on these trade expos have expense accounts according to rank and what were these expense accounts expected to pay for, or was carte blanche the order of the day?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I intend to make a ministerial statement later this morning. If the member for Koolpinyah would like me to address those very negative aspects of what has probably been the greatest success story that the Northern Territory has had for some considerable time, I will do so. I do not believe that it will detract from the statement itself and I am therefore quite happy to include the answers ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Just put the rumours to rest.

Me COULTER: The rumours? Rumours can be created about anything, Mr Speaker. If the honourable member has any evidence or if there is any public servant whom she wishes to name or provide me with assistance in identifying in order to investigate the matter further, I would be only too happy to do so in order to put to rest the rumours that she claims are around. If it is okay with the member for Koolpinyah, I will handle it in that manner.

Allegations Relating to Renegotiation of Commercial Leases

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, a front page article in the Sunday Territorian reported that supermarket operators and other shopkeepers were being forced by property owners to pay tens of thousands of dollars in goodwill money to enable them to renegotiate their leases. Could the minister advise if this matter has previously been brought to his attention and whether the government intends to address the issue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I saw the article in the Sunday Territorian and I heard the interview conducted on the Gerry Gannon program yesterday morning. First and foremost, I advise the member that I have not been advised previously of such practices in Darwin or elsewhere in the Northern Territory. However, those allegations naturally caused me to carry out some investigations and examine possible legislative answers to such a situation. I am advised by officers in Consumer Affairs and a tenancy officer within my department that they have never had these matters brought to their attention before. Our officers were in contact with the President of the Real Estate Institute yesterday who also advised that he had not previously heard of this practice. The institute was quite surprised to hear about this on the weekend. The comments made by the president on the Gerry Gannon program yesterday were based on the premise that the allegations were in fact correct. The institute advised that it had no information or evidence of any such practices existing in Darwin.

Since that time, there has been some debate around town and, from discussions that occurred last evening, there seems to be some indication that there may be some truth in the allegations.

Mr Smith: There is a great deal of truth.

Mr HATTON: The Leader of the Opposition claims to have specific knowledge in respect of this. It would certainly assist our inquiries if he could make specific names available to us. I am advised by the Department of Law that such payments could have taxation implications. This is verbal advice at this stage, but early indications are that there are no records of any returns having been submitted to the Northern Territory Commissioner of Taxes in respect of such payments which, I am advised, are subject to stamp duty. There may be some taxation issues that would need specific examination and could lead to prosecution for possible tax avoidance.

I preface all this by saying that that is if the allegations are correct. We have preliminary information at this stage, but we are carrying out comprehensive investigations into the allegations. We have been examining the legislative options available to us should it be appropriate to ban such practices. Later today or tomorrow, I propose to seek a meeting with organisations such as the Retail Traders Association, representatives of the small shopkeepers, and representatives of building owners in Darwin in order

to hear both sides of the story and to try to learn the facts of the matter. If the allegations can be substantiated and when formal written advice is available from the Department of Law and my department, the government will examine the possibility of making some legislative amendments in relation to this matter.

Obligations on Operators of Air Services

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What obligations are on holders of exclusive rights to provide air services within the Northern Territory to service the communities for which they hold the exclusive service rights? If there are obligations, what are the penalties for failing to honour those obligations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I assume that the honourable member is referring to not only commuter but intra-Territory services for which the Northern Territory government has control. We are well aware of the impact on services throughout the Territory resulting from the horrific national pilots' dispute. All aircraft owners and charter operators are under incredible stress at the moment in trying to meet the demands. Under the licence provisions for commuter and intra-Territory services, there are specific requirements for frequency of service. The holders of those licences have no choice but to meet them. Certainly, as far as the scene within the Territory is concerned in terms of Ansett NT, they have not been met to quite a significant level. Any other operator who meets the provisions of CAA etc is able to apply for and meet that non-achieved demand or level of service. Throughout the dispute, there has been mixed success in that regard. Gove and Groote Eylandt, for example, did not do too badly through Air North and, in recent times, the introduction of F27 services. There have been additional provisions involving a Queensland company in the Gove-Groote sector, which is not too badly off.

Mr Smith: What about Yulara?

Mr FINCH: I will come to that.

As of this week, Ansett NT is operating 3 BAE 146s to that eastern sector and, for all intents and purposes, the situation is back to what it was before the dispute. In the Katherine and Tennant Creek areas, where the loadings are much lighter, there have been no jet services throughout the entire dispute. However, some of the small charter firms have been operating with the cooperation of Ansett in taking bookings for the Darwin to Katherine and the Alice Springs to Tennant Creek routes. That has provided at least a reasonable service in those areas, given the circumstances.

Services to Yulara, where the principal demand relates to tourism, are of great concern to all Territorians. As one would expect, throughout the first 3 months or so of the dispute, there has been a downturn in the number of tourists coming to the Centre with the intention of travelling to Yulara. Ansett has not provided a jet service to Yulara and has left the door open, by way of encouragement, to any smaller operator wishing to provide such a service. I understand that the demand from tourists wishing to travel to Yulara via Alice Springs has been minimal. One would hope that the demand will begin to build up again from now on.

At least there are more regular services to and from Alice Springs itself. Given the unpredictability in respect of being able to get out of places such as Yulara, people have not been prepared to fly there during their holidays. The law of supply and demand has been operating. I am advised that Ansett NT intends to provide some jet services to Yulara after 27 November. Australian Airlines recently provided a 737 service under this arrangement and I understand that it intends to run a weekly service for the time being.

As the small operators have attempted to provide services to meet overall demand, this has resulted in lesser services in some areas. Some communities have expressed concern that they have not been serviced or are under threat of not being serviced. We have written to licence holders demanding an explanation of why service requirements are not being met. If it is found that services are not being provided to small communities, it will be possible for other operators to provide such services during the dispute. At this stage, I have the ability to give approval for that to occur only whilst the dispute continues. If I were to attempt to extend that ability, legal questions could arise.

My prediction is that air services in Australia will never be the same again. I do not believe that services will ever return to pre-dispute levels. It is a shame that this dispute got out of control. A number of parties have been involved and, as I said during the last sittings, one of the principal players responsible for the depths which the dispute has reached is the Prime Minister himself. He jumped in too quickly and too aggressively, without leaving room for the normal negotiations between the 2 parties. There was a simple solution. It might have taken a few weeks to reach it, but it would not have taken 4 months. In fact, I believe that we will never achieve a full resolution of this matter. With deregulation next year, the ballpark will change altogether and we will see a threat overall to servicing of remote areas including Western Australia, the Northern Territory and north Queensland. We will be under threat from poor services and higher air fares.

The federal government has known for years that it should untie the hands of Australian Airlines to enable it to compete with Ansett, otherwise we will not see anything like civility and balance in future air services. I doubt whether, even by the middle of next year, we will see a return to much more than 80% of the previous level of air services throughout Australia. In the Territory at the moment, we have approximately 50% to 60% of the service levels which applied before the dispute. Of course, that is denied by the federal government. It keeps quoting loading figures and it talks about meeting demand. Of course people will not travel. Of course people will not arrange conferences. Only this morning, I became aware of a conference that was scheduled to be held in Darwin next March and which has now been cancelled because the organisers cannot obtain guarantees of air services. The organisers do not believe that they can go to the expense of arranging a conference for some 300 or 400 people when this whole issue is unresolved.

The Prime Minister has participated strongly in this exercise. It is time for him to find some solutions. In the meantime, there is much to be answered for. I understand that he is paying some hundreds of millions of dollars to 1 of the 2 airlines by way of compensation. Those figures will have to come out sooner or later. There is much more work to be done to resurrect the entire industry and, as I said before, it will never be the same again.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Crimes Compensation Payment

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I will respond to a question asked by the member for MacDonnell at the beginning of question time. I would like to inform the honourable member that, as I stated, instructions have been given for the repayment. Cheques have been processed and I have just received advice that the cheques have been delivered to the respective solicitors.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Expenses for Government Employees at Trade Expos

Mr COULTER (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, I will answer the question asked during question time by the member for Koolpinyah. I am informed that expenditure by public servants of an official nature whilst overseas is clearly covered by the determinations issued by the Public Service Commissioner. These relate to rank, as the honourable member pointed out in her question. I understand that all public moneys which are so expended are fully accountable on return and are verified in accordance with procedures laid down both in terms of advances paid and reimbursement sought. Such reimbursements and claims are also subject to later scrutiny by audit authorities.

Secretary of Department of Education

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Yesterday afternoon a senior education officer, acting on instructions from the secretary of his department, deliberately countermanded the minister's decision on Sanderson High announced in this Assembly yesterday morning. The secretary informed school principals: (1) that the minister had been briefed and, regardless of what he actually said in this Assembly, he should have said that the secretary reserves the right to determine that some students shall do maths and English continuously; (2) that the minister should have said that there will be no major changes to the Sanderson High School program and not that there will be no changes; and (3) that, regardless of what the minister said in this Assembly, as far as the secretary was concerned, the matter of programming at Sanderson High School had not been resolved. Does the minister accept he has no option but to require the immediate resignation of the secretary of his department and has he taken the necessary steps this morning to obtain the resignation of the secretary of his department?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the outset, can I indicate to honourable members that I will definitely look into the issue that has been raised by the member for Stuart. However, can I make it very clear that I gave the answer in the House yesterday because I had spent a great deal of time talking with different people and speaking with the Chairman of the Sanderson High School Council and also the Principal of the Sanderson High School. After discussing the school timetable, it was found out that the school in fact could comply with the requirements of the department without amending its timetable. In fact, there has been a beat-up. The reality is that some people wanted this to become a major issue. That really concerns me because, as minister, I have been trying to resolve the issue in a responsible manner. I believe that that has been done.

The opposition spokesman raced out of this Assembly yesterday after I gave my answer in question time. He went on talkback radio and said: 'Great win for the people! The government has reversed its decision in relation to Sanderson High School. Get out there and do the same and the government will buckle under pressure'. That is irresponsible behaviour from the opposition spokesman on education when I am trying to resolve this issue responsibly and quietly. He then started ringing principals. Really, Mr Speaker! I was very upset about the actions of the member for Stuart. We had a very sensitive issue. It was blown out of all proportion and it has been resolved. I believe that the directions are very clear. I will follow up the issues that have been raised by the member for Stuart in relation to the matter. However, I repeat that, following my discussions with the school principal and the chairman of the school council, I believe that there is a process which meets my requirements and allows the approved curriculum to be taught. That is a requirement which applies to all schools so that there is continuity of programs throughout the system.

Mr Ede: Have some gumption.

Mr HARRIS: Do you want to see the issue resolved or not? Are you interested in the results for the kids or not?

Mr Ede: He is turning around everything that you say.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, as I said, I believe I have answered the question in relation to Sanderson High School and its vertical timetabling. I will investigate the issues the member for Stuart has raised.

Mr Smith: You have known about that since yesterday.

Mr HARRIS: What is this 'known about it since yesterday'?

Mr Smith: The Chief Minister received a phone call about it last night.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion to censure the Minister for Education.

Leave granted.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the question paper and that the radio cease broadcasting.

Mr Smith: You are worried about this one, aren't you?

Mr COULTER: We do it every time, no matter what.

Education Ministry

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Does the Chief Minister understand that the conflict between his Minister for Education and his departmental head poses a threat to the administration of education and, obviously, the future of children in the Northern Territory? Does he recall that, yesterday in this House, the minister failed to support his departmental head and that government members failed to support the minister in the censure motion that followed? Does he understand that the Territory education system cannot function if schools do not know who is the boss? When will he take control of this problem and decide who should go, the departmental head, the minister or both?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that the Secretary of the Department of Education is a very outstanding officer of the Northern Territory government. He certainly has my support. He has the support of his minister and he has the support of the government.

Mr Smith: You would not have known that from yesterday's debate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that question time is broadcast and, if we are to maintain a level of dignity outside the Chamber, we must have some dignity within the Chamber.

Mr PERRON: In responding to the motion yesterday, the minister responded to the substance of the motion. As he said, he did not see any specific need to further refer to the Secretary of the Department of Education. I support the line that the minister took. There was nothing to defend. The Leader of the Opposition says that members on this side of the House did not support our minister in his defence.

Mr Smith: That is right.

Mr PERRON: What we were trying to do was to avoid the sort of letters that the Leader of the Opposition writes to me from time to time saying that we do not have enough time to do business in this Assembly and should sit for more days. My response to his latest letter, which he will receive shortly, states that, if he and his colleagues stopped wasting the time of this House with frivolous and unsupported censure motions and so-called matters of public importance, perhaps the Assembly could get down to some business instead of the politicisation of the education system which we are seeing as a result of the irresponsible actions of members opposite, who are far more interested in a headline about education than about the actual workings of the education system. They ought to be ashamed of themselves. It was for that reason that the government moved yesterday to gag debate after 2 speakers had spoken on the motion. We will do that again whenever we believe that the opposition is wasting the time of this Assembly.

Gap Neighbourhood Centre

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Gap Neighbourhood Centre in Alice Springs has been operating for 6 years and is an integral part of the lives of Aboriginal women and children in the Gap area of Alice Springs. It appears that the centre may have to

close at the end of December as a result of a lack of funding. Is the minister aware of this and, if so, does he propose to do anything about it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the circumstances confronting the Gap Neighbourhood Centre. The centre has novel ways of bringing matters to the attention of ministers. I was in Alice Springs last week to brief myself on a number of matters relating to my portfolio. Whilst I was approaching to attend discussions at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, I was waylaid in the passageway by a group of people who claimed to be representing the Gap Neighbourhood Centre, along with a reporter and a microphone. That was their method of seeking to meet with me to discuss their concerns. They had never approached me to make an appointment to discuss the matter while I was in Alice Springs. Naturally, in those circumstances, it was rather difficult to hold meaningful talks.

However, I have investigated the circumstances confronting the Gap Neighbourhood Centre. It has found itself in a difficult situation because, for a number of years, it has chosen to seek funding directly through Commonwealth grants-in-aid. The Commonwealth has decided to pull the financial pin on it. Having had the financial pin pulled by the Commonwealth, it has turned around, after we are well down the road in the determination of grants-in-aid for the Northern Territory, and said: 'The federal government will not fund us any longer. You must fund us'. I understand the concern but we also have obligations to a wide range of community organisations that we are financing. The Department of Health and Community Services provides some \$20m in grants-in-aid to approximately 200 organisations throughout the Northern Territory. We probably receive applications for up to twice that amount of funding. We have to make hard decisions in terms of priorities regionally and functionally throughout the Northern Territory.

The Gap Neighbourhood Centre has developed a range of services. It was funding itself through a children's services allocation from the Commonwealth. It has changed the nature of its functions yet, as I understand it, continues to seek funding under the children's services funding. Because it had changed its functions, the Commonwealth decided that it no longer met its criteria. It applied to the Northern Territory government for funding. Because of its priority setting and functions, and the late nature of the application, there were difficulties. We did not have much extra money this year because the federal government reduced funding to us in real terms. We have had to make quite difficult decisions in relation to meeting services throughout the Territory. In the first run through, its application was unsuccessful. The reality is that, if it were to receive funding, others would miss out. The decision was taken on the basis of a breakdown of the funding that is to be made available throughout the Territory.

During that rather novel form of consultation, I told the Gap Neighbourhood Centre people that, if they presented me with a comprehensive submission, I would look at it. That submission should indicate what the centre is doing, the services it is seeking to provide and the anticipated outcome to the community of the provision of those services so that I can make an assessment of what it is doing in comparison with what is done by other groups in Alice Springs. I need to satisfy myself that it is not duplicating other services and that what it is doing is worth while.

If I receive that submission, I will review it in the context of the first budget review which will be commencing over the next month or so. As we have

virtually no money, I will have to look very carefully at what we may be able to do. I cannot give any guarantees to that organisation, but I am prepared to look at a proper submission from it because, so far as the Northern Territory government is concerned, it is a first submission for funding. It is not funding for an ongoing service. It has chosen continuously to fund itself by direct contact with the Commonwealth government. I will not repeat its comments with respect to the Northern Territory government's funding. It needs to develop a submission to justify its case against other priorities. Our first obligation is to the continuation of services in the Northern Territory.

The minister for Youth, Sport, Recreation, and Ethnic Affairs advises that the Gap Neighbourhood Centre received a cheque for an amount in the order of \$10 000 to assist towards the centre's funding. I think that the total amount requested for annual funding this year was in the order of \$24 000. I do not know the implications of that information, but it has just been provided to me.

Yulara - Use of Commonwealth State Housing
Agreement Funds

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to comments made by the member for MacDonnell on the ABC Morning Program today in which he claimed there are irregularities in the use of Commonwealth State Housing Agreement funds at Yulara and, further, that the Territory government had refused to give him any information about the use of those funds. Can the minister advise whether or not there is any truth in those claims?

ANSWER

As usual, there is very little truth in the claims of the member for MacDonnell. If he had bothered to remain in this Chamber after the luncheon adjournment yesterday, he would have heard me address the questions of housing at Yulara. He would have heard me demolish a number of other inaccuracies contained in his contribution to the debate on the Chief Minister's statement about the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Perhaps that is why he was not prepared to be in the Chamber at that time. However, for the benefit of the member for MacDonnell and in the hope that he ...

Mr Bell: I have managed to master the loudspeaker system, Daryl.

Mr MANZIE: In the hope that he will cease his totally inaccurate claims, I will briefly provide him with some information about housing at Yulara. To put it very simply, Mr Speaker, the provision of housing at Yulara is no different to the provision of Housing Commission accommodation elsewhere in the Territory. The housing has been provided in direct response to demand from Territorians employed in the tourist industry. Since 1985, a total of 456 accommodation units have been constructed with public funds at Yulara. These units are managed by the Yulara Development Corporation on behalf of the Housing Commission and the units have been constructed as part of an active public housing program which saw the construction of more than 3000 dwellings throughout the Territory during the same period. A total of \$37.4m was allocated for construction of these accommodation units at Yulara and this includes units in the current program.

The funding has been provided through 3 sources. In 1985, the funding was provided by semi-government borrowings which were not related to the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. The funds provided from 1986 onwards have been provided through nominated loan funds, which are covered by the CSHA, and internally generated funds from the Housing Commission, which are a combination of CSHA and non-CSHA funds.

As I explained to the House yesterday, all funds expended by the Territory government under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement must be acquitted annually with the federal government. If the member for MacDonnell took the time to look into what the CSHA is about, which I presume he would take the time to do as the opposition housing spokesman, he would see that the acquittal process is part of that agreement. It always has been. Logically, if the acquittal process was not undertaken, the agreement would be broken and the Commonwealth would get quite upset.

Mr Bell: And they are.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, this is absolutely unbelievable! This man purports to represent the opposition on housing matters. He does not know what is in the agreement and he does not understand that acquittals are being processed. He claims that there have been no acquittals, that nobody knows what has happened or how the money has been expended. As I explained yesterday, all of the Territory government acquittals have been accepted by the federal government. Given that this acquittal process exists and that Territory government accounts have been accepted by the federal government, I am at a loss to understand how the member for MacDonnell can claim that there are irregularities in funding the public housing at Yulara and that no one knows how that funding has been expended.

Another furphy which has been raised in relation to Yulara is that accommodation which was constructed with public funds has been converted to tourist accommodation. This information was passed on to the federal Minister for Housing and Aged Care when he visited Alice Springs a few months ago. I wonder who told him that one. Once again, it was a totally baseless allegation. In fact, 68 maisonettes were recently converted by the Yulara Development Corporation into low to middle priced tourist accommodation. These were part of the original staff accommodation at Yulara and have never been owned by the Housing Commission.

The final point that I wish to make is that all of this information has been provided by the federal minister at his request. A letter about the maisonettes was sent to the federal minister on 11 September this year, signed by the Minister for Education who was acting on my behalf. I sent a further letter to the federal minister on 19 October giving the rest of the information that I mentioned today. Mr Speaker, I table copies of those letters.

I can only hope that this will put to an end the scurrilous and misinformed allegations by the member for MacDonnell that there are irregularities in the use of public housing funds at Yulara. It is important that everyone understands that there is an acquittal process that has been followed. It has been followed since we have entered the CSHA. It is part of the agreement. I have explained that in this House on previous occasions. The member for MacDonnell does not want to know. He makes unsubstantiated allegations, and those he made on radio this morning were absolutely disgraceful for a man who is supposed to know what is going on. The trouble is that he works on the basis of the same theory that the federal member has:

throw the muck around and a bit will stick. That is an approach that they have developed. That sort of action is beneath contempt, and I did not think that the member for MacDonnell would behave in such a manner.

If he has any problems about any particular instance, he can raise them. He can ask his questions. He can point to a particular instance and say that he believes something is wrong or ask me what is happening. However, simply to throw mud, especially when the information is available and the agreement sets out exactly what has happened, is beneath contempt. All honourable members and the community should be aware of what the processes are and to what level the member for MacDonnell has stooped in his public statements on this matter. I certainly hope that I have clarified the matter once and for all.

NT Secondary Correspondence School

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Unfortunately, the minister was not present in the House last night during the adjournment debate. Can he comment on the information given to the Northern Territory Secondary Correspondence School at a meeting earlier this week at that school that its status will be changed from a school to a TAFE institution for next year? In the context of the organisation of his department, can he explain why a decision which affects the status of all staff is made 3 weeks before the end of the school year? Why have staff not been given the opportunity to apply for transfer if they do not want to change their status from the NT Teaching Service to TAFE? It is my understanding that all positions will be changed. Does that mean that those positions will be advertised at the beginning of next year so that other teachers are able to apply? They are changing working conditions ...

Mr Manzie: Is this a statement or a question?

Mr BAILEY: Can the honourable minister explain the organisational procedures that he follows, and the consultation in his department in pursuing this sort of action?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, from the lead-up to the question, I presume that the member for Wanguri raised this matter during the course of the adjournment debate last night. Is that correct?

Mr Bailey: Yes.

Mr HARRIS: I am happy to respond to a matter raised during the adjournment debate, and I will do so during the course of these sittings.

Department of Administrative Services Period Contracts

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

On ABC radio yesterday morning, the honourable minister was accused by the federal member for the Territory, Warren Snowdon, of conducting a campaign for a new federal member because he demanded questions on a number of outstanding issues relating to the Northern Territory. At that time, he stated also that local businesses had ample opportunity to participate in the tendering process for the Department of Administrative Services period contracts. Is that correct or not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in his outburst yesterday in response to some very serious questions that have been asked over a period of approximately 2 years, the federal member sought to denigrate the questions by suggesting that I was launching a campaign to unseat him. No doubt he will be unseated, but let me get back to the core of the questions. Either the honourable federal member does not understand the questions or he continues deliberately to avoid the answers. He answered comprehensively some 7 questions through the media yesterday. One response was absolutely incorrect. It was misleading and totally untrue. I refer to the answer in relation to road funding. The federal member said that, following his lobbying in relation to the cutback in road funding for the Territory versus a federal increase of 10% - and I am aware that he has been lobbying in relation to the Victoria Highway for a long time without achieving any results ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I am sure that your hearing is as good as mine. The question related to the quasi-commercial operations of a Commonwealth government department. There was nothing in the question relating to road funding. It is a repeat of a question that was asked on Tuesday. None of the answer is related to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the minister to direct his answer to the question asked by the member for Ludmilla.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I will do precisely that. The first part of the question from the member for Ludmilla asked whether or not I was launching a new campaign with my questions and accusations of the federal member. It is not a new campaign. I will demonstrate that, in fact, it is a very old campaign. These are old questions which have still gone unanswered. Maybe the member for Nhulunbuy is not interested in road funding for the Northern Territory but, when the federal member falsely claims in writing that the Territory government received an extra 10% this year, he does so in answer to questions that have been outstanding since August this year. The federal member himself acknowledges that he has been lobbying in relation to the Victoria Highway, following my prompting, since August this year.

In regard to the capital works program, I asked what portions of the \$462m beat-up the Territory can expect this year in terms of cash. Is it less than \$50m, as I predict, or is it not? That question has been outstanding since the Wanguri by-election but has been conveniently forgotten by the federal member.

In regard to last year's cash expenditure and capital works program within the Northern Territory, my question was why it was cut from \$52m to \$39m. Where is the answer? It has been outstanding since August. It is not a new campaign. Why was the Australian Construction Services cut back by 70-odd people? Why don't Territory consultants receive a fair share? That is a question that is 2 years old. We have asked that question since October 1987. The federal member has had plenty of time to answer it, but he seeks to avoid it. What he said yesterday is that work is carried out within Darwin and Adelaide for Territory projects. How much is carried out in Darwin and by whom? How many of the residual staff are left in the decimated ACS Darwin office which was cut back by 70-odd people? How much goes to the Territory consultants? Except for the odd, small scrap, there is nothing. It is all done by consultants in Adelaide and Perth.

What about the answer in relation to the administrative services purchasing? There is no answer yet. I must confess that this is a recent question, but the federal member's response is that these arrangements have been in place for ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As the Minister for Transport and Works should well know, ministers can be asked questions about areas of the public service for which they are responsible. Whatever the aspirations and ambitions of the member for Leanyer may be, he is not the minister responsible for the federal Department of Administrative Services.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I would ask the Minister for Transport and Works to keep his answer as short and direct as possible.

MR FINCH: Mr Speaker, I am not the only one who is demanding these answers. Territorians are demanding these answers and I will not harp on it any longer. I will leave it to the federal member. He has between now and the election to come up with some constructive answers. In the meantime, car companies here are losing thousands of dollars worth of business, as are other small businesses. No doubt, they will let the federal member know personally.

Mr Speaker, in regard to the second part of the question ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I will read the question which the minister was asked on Tuesday 21 November. It appears on page 2A of the Daily Hansard. If this was a new question, I would not give a damn. I will read the question so that there can be no doubt in any member's mind ...

Mr SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr LEO: The point of order is that the question has already been asked once during these sittings. It has been repeated today and the answer is being repeated again today. That is clearly against the intention of standing orders. If you will indulge me, Mr Speaker, I will give you the number of the specific standing order which applies. Members cannot repeat questions and this is a repeat question with a repeat answer.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. As far as I am aware, honourable members have the opportunity of asking a question as many times as they like in this House.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the second part of the question asked whether Territory businesses were getting a chance to bid on federal contracts. They are, but it is not the point. The point is that those contracts should be limited to federal departments, not to all and sundry in the community as direct private enterprise competition against the private sector by a taxpayer-funded department.

Education Ministry

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, last night on the ABC 7.30 Report, the minister announced that he did not have an agreement with Sanderson High School in relation to its timetable. That directly contradicts statements which he made in this House on 3 different occasions during Tuesday's question time. It would therefore appear that he has capitulated to the policy line adopted by the secretary of his department.

Mr PALMER: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 112 which sets out the general rules in relation to the asking of questions. Obviously, the member for Stuart has transgressed those rules in a number of ways. He is putting arguments, instances and imputations. He is using ironical expressions.

Mr Ede: Sit down!

Mr PALMER: He has contravened standing order 112.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the member for Stuart to keep the preamble to his question as short as possible.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I feel that I should reiterate the preamble because the honourable minister may have forgotten it. However, hoping that his memory is better than that of the member for Karama, I ask the minister what possible confidence any school can have in any undertaking which the minister may give it in the future, following his failure to back up the undertakings that he gave Sanderson High School?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it almost appears that the member for Stuart has inside information about confidential meetings between myself and members of the Sanderson High School Council.

Mr Ede: Come on. The 7.30 Report last night.

Mr HARRIS: I make it very clear to honourable members that the issue between Sanderson High School and myself is in fact being discussed. It has been discussed for some time and it will continue to be discussed. The member for Stuart does not want to resolve this issue. Look at him. He is just trying to pick points.

Mr Ede: I am just trying to find some sense in your answer.

Mr HARRIS: I am just trying to indicate to you, Mr Speaker, and to members of the public that I am acting responsibly. I am taking a bit of stick at the moment. I am quite prepared to take it if it will benefit the kids out there in the community and if it will benefit the parents and others. I do not care if the member for Stuart raises this 27 times every day. I am going to talk with the Sanderson High School Council. I am talking with the chairman of the council and also the principal of the school.

Mr Ede: But you give them undertakings and then go back on them.

Mr HARRIS: He again raises the issue of undertakings. The reality is that I am discussing those matters with the council. I am not going to be dragged into debate by the member for Stuart who is trying to smear everyone. He is not interested in resolving issues and that has been made very clear during the last couple of days.

Mr Ede: That is outrageous, Tom, and you know it.

Mr HARRIS: He is a disgrace to this parliament. He has performed in a disgraceful manner and he stands condemned.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I request that the honourable minister be directed to withdraw the phrase 'disgrace' applied to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: As I asked the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the word 'disgraceful', I ask the minister to do so now.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the remark. Can I just say, Mr Speaker, that the issue ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr HARRIS: I withdraw the remark.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister must withdraw unreservedly.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister for Education withdrew the remark. There is no point of order.

Mr HARRIS: Goodness me! They are really edgy at the moment. I am surprised. They jump up and make these outlandish statements.

Can I just make a final point and try to get the member for Stuart to realise that this is a sensitive issue which has to be addressed responsibly. You are the one who is trying to beat it up. You are the one who is trying to make this ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister well knows that he must direct his comments through the Chair, not directly at my colleague.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, I ask the Minister for Education to direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, can I just say that I believe that the whole issue of the Sanderson High School timetable has been blown out of all proportion. There is no question in relation to access to continuity at the Sanderson High School. It already happens and there is no problem. There is also no problem about the approved curriculum. There should be no reason at all why the timetable should have to change. I have made that very clear.

Mr Ede: You said the school's timetable will not be upset

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I reiterate the points that I have made. The member for Stuart is nitpicking. If the whole matter blows up, he stands condemned because it will be as a result of his mouthings in this Assembly and the actions that he has taken.

Darwin to Alice Springs Railway

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister recently attended meetings in Tokyo in relation to the Darwin to Alice Springs railway. Can he advise the House on the outcome of those meetings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in previous statements that I have made in this Assembly on the railway, I have confirmed this government's commitment to this project. That commitment stands. The government, the vast majority of Territorians - and I would hope the opposition as well - want to see the railway built, and built as soon as possible. I do not need to explain to honourable members that the railway is a very difficult and complex project. In a strict commercial sense, it is ahead of its time. The government strategy has been to bring forward a project which will have a great benefit to Territorians and which will serve as a major catalyst for substantial growth and development rather than to simply wait for however long it takes for the project to be judged a commercial proposition by prospective investors. The focus of the government's approach through Railnorth has been to explore ways in which to achieve the project in the shortest possible time, in particular through the expertise which the private sector participants in Railnorth have. The company has been very active in this regard. It has made contact with a range of organisations within Japan and elsewhere and the level of interest in our railway project continues to be very high.

I felt that it was time for me as Chief Minister to meet with the principals of our Japanese Railnorth partners to assess progress and to agree on the next steps. In that regard, the visit was productive and worth while. The Japanese partners have confirmed their strong commitment to the railway and their continued willingness to use their contacts and their expertise to bring this giant project to fruition. In particular, the visit gave me an opportunity to agree with our Japanese partners on the direction which the company should take over the next few months and the areas which need to be progressed. The visit also provided an opportunity for all parties to outline the main issues which need to be overcome before a start could be made on this project.

The Japanese partners indicated to me their view that the project could not be put together at this time without government financial support. They have not indicated how much support might be required but this is something which I expect will emerge over coming months. I have made no commitment of government funds to the project and will not do so until and unless I am confident that the government funding is necessary and affordable. In the event that government funds are required, an approach will be made to the federal government for assistance. After all, it promised Territorians that it would fund the project 100% just a few years ago.

There is no doubt in my mind that the railway will be built. The contribution it will make to the Northern Territory will be enormous. No other section of the national rail network in Australia has been expected to cover the capital costs of construction as well as its operational costs. If it had, the line to Alice Springs or the national line to Western Australia would never have been constructed. It is hardly surprising that the project is taking a long time to develop and to negotiate. We intend to continue the present course because it seems to us that it provides the best prospects for

the earliest possible commencement of the project. I will continue to keep honourable members of this House informed of progress.

Air Services to Yulara

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I direct the honourable minister's attention to the Yulara resort pilots' dispute fax sheet day 99. It commences by saying: 'Day 99 and still not 1 Ansett flight into Ayers Rock'. I remind the Minister for Transport and Works that he has the responsibility for the RPT or Regular Passenger Transport route between Alice Springs and Yulara. I remind the honourable minister that he sets the licence conditions and that he issued the licence. I remind the honourable ...

Mr COULTER: A point of order, Mr Speaker! A reasonable preamble is acceptable when putting a question but, if the honourable member wants to make a statement, he could use the adjournment debate or other avenues that are open to him. Could he put his question to the honourable minister?

Mr Bell: You do not think that airline flights to Yulara are an important issue?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell made a point earlier about members making their remarks through the Chair. I remind him of that now and ask that he put his question.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I apologise humbly, but I was being seriously provoked.

I remind the Minister for Transport and Works that he knows that the licensee has not flown that leg for 98 days. I remind the honourable minister that he knows the licensee is flying from other gateway ports into the Territory. Given the extent of the financial exposure of the people of the Northern Territory in the Yulara project and given the real distress that is being expressed by workers and employers at Yulara, will he use his authority to ensure that regular, scheduled flights between Alice Springs and Yulara commence forthwith?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly do not need reminding about all those matters by the member for MacDonnell.

Mr Ede: Then why don't you act?

Mr Bell: It has taken 98 days.

Mr FINCH: The member for Stuart asks why I do not act. Why has it then taken 98 days for the member for MacDonnell even to think of raising the issue? What a slow thinker, Mr Speaker. Let me tell him what I told him during the last sittings. Perhaps he would like to refer to the Parliamentary Record for the last sittings. Let me remind him of what this government, myself included, has done about helping to return air services, not just to Yulara but throughout the Northern Territory.

Right from day 1, this government set about using great initiative to get air services returned to Territorians through a number of methods, but in relation to Ansett NT ...

Mr Ede: How many to Yulara?

Mr FINCH: If the honourable member will have the patience that was afforded to the member for MacDonnell during his most lengthy questioning, I will give the answer.

This government set about encouraging Ansett to return services as quickly as possible. In the absence of its being able to service any of its licensed routes, it was also encouraged to assist the smaller operators in carrying out those services, and Ansett did do that. It was taking bookings. It was helping with the loading and off-loading etc of commuter-type light aircraft to service those routes of the Northern Territory for which they had responsibility.

Certainly, I have been disappointed, as have my colleagues, that jet services have yet to return to Yulara. Accordingly, last week, I suppose in exasperation, the Territory government, through the Chief Minister, served notice on Ansett NT that it was in breach of its licence requirements.

Mr Bell: You did not issue a press release about that.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, this government is not about doing its business on the front pages of the newspaper.

Members interjecting.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, aren't they in good humour this morning! Let me tell you about the constructive work of this government in relation to the return of air services. We arranged for Australian Airlines to have access to Yulara once a week. Our encouragement of Ansett has led to a commitment for Yulara of, I believe, 3 services per week. It was supposed to start on 27 November. I believe that there may be some adjustment to that commencement date, but that was the commitment given to us for the return of air services, through Ansett NT, to Yulara. That is what this government has done. It did not take us 98 days to get round to doing it.

Let us talk about the contribution from the Prime Minister in this whole dispute, and of our federal member who grandstands about 2 extra flights into Alice Springs ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable minister has been asked a question which, for once, falls within his competence. It relates to part of his portfolio activities. It is a specific question concerning the activities of the Northern Territory government in getting the livelihood of people at Yulara restored to them, and it might be helpful if the honourable minister addressed that question rather than spraying all over the place in his normal manner.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr Smith: Why not?

Mr SPEAKER: Because of the nature of the question asked by the member for MacDonnell. It was far-reaching and I believe the Minister for Transport and Works is answering in accordance with the requirements of the question asked by the member for MacDonnell.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, one of the critical components of getting air services and passengers back into Yulara is the return to normality of the interstate domestic airline service. The principal responsibility for the hindrance to that occurring has to fall on the shoulders of the Prime Minister himself. Mr Fix-it from day 1, what were the results of his actions as compared to those of the Northern Territory government? He created an atmosphere of total mistrust, of non-promotion of a resolution to the problem. The consequences of that will be far-reaching and long lasting. Unfortunately, it is my humble prediction that Australian airline services will never be the same again, thanks to Bob Hawke among other people.

It is no use having shuttle services in and out from Alice Springs to Yulara if you do not have any tourists who are prepared to book to come into Alice Springs from elsewhere. Obviously, that defies logic. However, the member for MacDonnell would have had Ansett flying 8 or 10 flights per day in and out of Yulara with no connection from anywhere else in Australia. What a load of nonsense! One of the reasons that Ansett has given for discontinuing that service was lack of demand. People are not prepared to travel, tourists particularly. Only business people travel now because they have to. The whole face of the aviation industry in Australia has been irreversibly changed.

Mr Coulter: Dismantled.

Mr FINCH: It is totally dismantled. It will never return to normality again. There is the answer to the honourable member's question. He might like to digest it and do his best, through the federal member, Warren Snowdon, to get the Prime Minister to come to his senses and back out of areas that he has no business being in, 98 days later.

Land near Berrimah Agricultural Research Centre

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can the minister tell me how he has disposed of the land at the front of the Berrimah research station which was sold for a private school that went broke and did not fulfil its covenants? He has indicated in a previous answer that the land is now his concern. Is there any chance of handing the land back to the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to try to counteract the deleterious effects of decisions to sell off the Katherine experiment station, the Upper Adelaide River experiment station and part of the Berrimah experiment station?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, off the top of my head, I cannot give any specific details. I know that the lease covenants certainly were not complied with and I know that action was being taken for the return of the land. In relation to the requirements of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, the member would have to address a question to the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You have the land.

Mr MANZIE: The land is under the control of the government. In this area, the Department of Lands and Housing is only a service department. We do not make decisions as to who is going to ...

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, may I redirect my question to the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries?

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member may redirect the question. The Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries.

Mr REED: The suggestion that the Katherine Experiment Farm has been sold off is not quite correct. The department still undertakes extensive research work in the area to which the honourable member referred.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I did not mention that. The CSIRO ...

Mr REED: If the honourable member meant the CSIRO Research Station, perhaps that is what she should have said.

In respect of the Berrimah Agricultural Research Centre, the work that was being undertaken in those areas is now being undertaken at other research stations. I do not think the research undertaken by the department has been deleteriously affected by the change of ownership of that land.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: What has happened to the land?

Trade Development Zone - ACTU Support

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, is the honourable minister aware of moves by the Australian Council of Trade Unions to withdraw its support from Darwin's Trade Development Zone as advocated by the local union organiser, Peter Tullgren?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Honourable members will remember that ACTU representatives were in the Northern Territory a week ago as part of the monitoring committee to look at the Trade Development Zone. A week earlier, Peter Tullgren took the opportunity to raise certain allegations about the Trade Development Zone. Indeed, he said that he would send home the 50 Chinese specialist workers who are working within the zone. It must have been very disturbing for those 50 Chinese people working in the zone to read on the front page of the newspaper that their futures were grim and that, according to Mr Tullgren, they would be sent home. However, honourable members would be getting used to Mr Tullgren's outbursts. On 16 May this year, he claimed that he had done a deal with Senator Rae and that all immigration visas would be cancelled and nobody could come into the zone. In January this year, he claimed that he was about to shut down the zone because of working conditions there. He referred to 'sweatshop labour'. I am not sure if any honourable members have visited factories in the rag trade in Sydney or Melbourne and have seen the conditions there compared to those at the zone. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that the air-conditioned factories at the zone are a model that the rest of Australia could do well to follow.

I am surprised that public statements made by Mr Tullgren continue to be regarded with any degree of credibility whatsoever but, apparently, they are. He always gets it wrong. It is hardly coincidental that he began a week of attacks on working conditions in certain factories at the Trade Development Zone a week before the scheduled meeting in Darwin of the monitoring committee. This committee is comprised of representatives of the ACTU, the

Commonwealth Departments of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, and Employment, Education and Training and the Trade Development Zone Authority. It met last week to review progress on the tripartite negotiated arrangement concluded in September under which skilled workers are brought to the zone from overseas to fill gaps that cannot be supplied from the Australian work force and to train local workers in these skills. I quote now from the statement released after the committee met last Thursday:

Committee Chairman, Mr McEnery of the Department of Employment, Education and Training, said that, at its meeting, the monitoring committee reviewed the development of training programs tabled by clothing and textile companies to enhance the skills of all employees and was satisfied that adequate pre-employment training was being conducted under the job training program to meet the requirements of the immigration tripartite negotiated arrangement. Significant progress has also been made in developing structured entry and post-entry levels in training initiatives. In response to concerns on occupational health and safety issues expressed by the ACTU, he went on to say that it was agreed that they should be addressed in the normal course, directly with the companies.

Mr Speaker, compare those words with the forecasts of Mr Tullgren, who claimed that the Chinese workers would probably be packed up and sent home after a major ACTU inquiry into sweatshop working conditions, and that third-world working conditions were being imported into Australia. Again, Mr Tullgren has been left stranded like a beached whale. I could think of no more apt description of him than that.

Honourable members should recall the threats discussed by Mr Tullgren earlier this year about imminent moves by the federal Minister for Immigration to ban entry to skilled Chinese workers. This was promptly denied by the minister. Mr Tullgren is the Assistant Secretary of the Miscellaneous Workers Union, a union largely unwanted by textile workers at the zone, who actually prefer the more specialised attention of the Federated Textile and Allied Workers Union. Mr Tullgren is also well known as a de facto Labor Party spokesman, a role which he plays from time to time. He is a delegate to the ALP's national executive and, in 1989, the opposition spearhead for attacks on the Trade Development Zone generally.

Mr Tullgren represents the deeply-entrenched, old-time union suspicion and resentment of all matters Asian. You would have thought that the anti-Asian feelings once rampant in the Australian trade union movement would have died out in 1989, but we heard them in this Assembly from the Leader of the Opposition who virtually described the people out there as white trash. That is how he described them. It is ironic that he claims skilled Chinese workers are bringing third-world working conditions to Australia. In 1989, it is Australia that is much closer to the third world than Hong Kong, one of the world's most vibrant and buoyant economies. These workers are also bringing back into the Australian work force skills that have been lost in the last 30 years as the Australian textile industry languished and almost disappeared.

I might add that, in the Trade Development Zone, with the help of the federal government, we have relocated people from Tasmania following the collapse of their textile industry. The Leader of the Opposition claims that that is not the type of industry that we want in the Northern Territory. Let him tell that to those people from Tasmania who were relocated here, people whom he claims are being paid below the average wage. He did not seem to understand that, in order to have an average wage, somebody has to be paid less than the average.

These workers are bringing skills back into Australia and I am proud of every one of them. In the process, they are helping to create hundreds and, shortly, thousands of new jobs for Territorians. For every new job created in the Trade Development Zone, 2 or 3 other jobs are created in the Territory work force generally. As far as I am concerned, this is part of the best good news story for 1989 in the Northern Territory. Mr Tullgren is an old-style union bully seeking to damage that scenario for his own political ends. I think he should get lost.

Ambulance Service at Palmerston

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Can the minister confirm that last Friday a seriously injured Palmerston man had to wait between 15 and 30 minutes for an ambulance to come to his assistance from Darwin? Can he also confirm that the ambulance service was forced to dispatch a fire brigade unit because, in the first instance, no ambulance was immediately available. Further, can he confirm that St John Ambulance is funded to operate only one rostered shift per day at Palmerston and that, last week, even that shift was not available on several occasions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the incident referred to by the Leader of the Opposition which occurred last Friday. I have had the matter investigated to ascertain the facts. I am advised that St John Ambulance was contacted at 12.29 pm last Friday in relation to an accident at Palmerston. I do not know the details of the accident. At 12.31, an ambulance was dispatched from Darwin and it arrived at 12.45 pm, I understand, to attend the patient.

The ambulance service at Palmerston is provided on an 8 hours per day shift from 2.00 pm until 10.00 pm. Other services are provided on a call basis from the Casuarina ambulance station. I am advised that this is an arrangement that was proposed by St John Ambulance as a means of providing ambulance services. I am not prepared to say anything more than that until I have the details. I am not prepared to comment on matters that I have not yet had confirmed.

I understand that the average call out time for answering calls under optimal conditions in Palmerston is 12 minutes. That relates to response times in equivalent cities in Australia of between 15 minutes and 18 minutes under optimal conditions. I refer to places such as Bendigo in Victoria, Tamworth in New South Wales, Cairns in Queensland and Karratha in Western Australia. There is always a great difficulty in determining what is an appropriate response in the provision of emergency services. One would like to see responses within a couple of minutes if that were physically possible. Services seek to provide that sort of response. Our contract with St John Ambulance is that it provide an effective and efficient ambulance service in the Northern Territory. Its allocation and organisation of resources is carried out by St John Ambulance, and I have faith in its ability to develop and provide such services.

With respect to the particular incident referred to, because I was aware of the circumstances and some concerns, I made the effort to find out whether there had been any untoward occurrences in relation to it. I understand that it is the result of the time limits which I have told the honourable member about.

Mr Smith: The problem is that you do not have a full-time service in Palmerston.

Mr HATTON: There is not a 24-hour service in Palmerston. That is correct. It is not correct to say that a full-time, 24-hour ambulance service is not available to the citizens of Palmerston. The issue that arises is that of the appropriateness of response times to incidents.

Excisions Legislation

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to a Sunday Territorian column written by the Chairman of the Northern Land Council, Mr Yunupingu. He said that the Northern Territory government was reneging on its word in relation to the excisions on pastoral properties legislation. Has the Chief Minister in fact reneged on his word?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly my attention was drawn to that column, which concerned me but I guess did not surprise me. The Chairman of the Northern Land Council's claims are totally untrue and seek to heap on the Territory government the failings of other parties in this excisions program, particularly the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

The facts are these, Mr Speaker, and it is important that honourable members bear them in mind because the excisions process in the Northern Territory is of very great significance to the Northern Territory, particularly to Aboriginal people. On 7 September, the Prime Minister and I signed a Memorandum of Agreement on the granting of community living areas on Northern Territory pastoral properties. That memorandum committed both the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth to a course of action and required early legislative action from both of us. Honourable members will recall that the Territory government introduced the Community Living Areas Bill in the October sittings and this House passed that bill during the same sittings. Last week, we introduced amendments to the Crown Lands Act dealing with certain access issues associated with the excisions program. We have indicated our intention to seek passage of that bill during the course of this week.

The Commonwealth, for its part, was required to amend the Land Rights Act to provide for the scheduling of certain parts of existing claims on stock routes and reserves. That legislation is currently before the Senate. A very important provision under the Memorandum of Agreement is that the Commonwealth has agreed to commence the amendments to section 50 of the Land Rights Act, passed through the parliament in June 1987, to remove stock routes and stock reserves from future land claims. In fact, my understanding is that section 50 is to be amended prior to its commencement.

Mr Speaker, a great deal has been achieved since the Prime Minister and I signed that Memorandum of Agreement in September. It is totally incorrect to claim, as Mr Yunupingu has done, that the whole process has been delayed and that the Northern Territory is not honouring its word. I note that Mr Yunupingu went on to say that perhaps he could be proved wrong. I am sure that that is the case. There are still steps to be taken before all of the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement are in place. The Commonwealth is clearly lagging behind the Northern Territory in processing the necessary legislation. More importantly, it is a matter of great concern that the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has failed to undertake a meaningful and responsible program of consultation with pastoralists. The consequence is that pastoralists are suspicious of the Commonwealth's intentions and genuinely concerned about the consequences of some of the actions the federal minister is proposing to take, as indicated by some aspects of the schedule to the bill now before the federal parliament. The most important of these is the federal minister's apparent determination to proceed to schedule areas on stock routes and reserves without first resolving matters of great concern to pastoralists.

I have to say that, in this regard, the federal minister is ignoring the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement, which very carefully indicated under what circumstances scheduling would or would not take place. I have pointed out repeatedly to the federal minister that this approach would inevitably provoke a suspicious and resentful attitude among pastoralists. I regret to say that this appears to be happening.

I am not here as an apologist for the federal minister in any way. It is a matter of considerable disappointment and regret that he has failed to properly implement the Memorandum of Agreement. In so doing, he has eroded much of the goodwill which has been established following the outcome of negotiations between the Prime Minister and myself. As for the Chairman of the Northern Land Council, it would seem that he is unable to comprehend what is taking place, even in relation to these issues which should be of great concern to him. I hope that he is being briefed daily on this matter by the bureaucracy which supports him, as events unfold in Canberra on a day-by-day basis.

Ambulance Service at Palmerston

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is the minister aware that the Deputy Chief Minister and member for Palmerston was informed in April of this year of the problems caused by the lack of a full-time ambulance service in Palmerston? Is he further aware that his colleague was told at that time that extra funded shifts were vital to maintain standard services to Palmerston? Is he aware that his colleague, the member for Palmerston, has not even bothered to reply to the letter raising those serious concerns?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must add some information to my previous answer because it was incomplete. I have further been advised that, whilst that ambulance left at 12.31 pm and arrived at 12.43 pm, a paramedical vehicle was also sent to the accident scene to provide support. That vehicle left at 12.32 pm and arrived at 12.44 pm, a response time in both cases of 12 minutes. I point that out in order to fully clarify the situation.

In respect of correspondence to the local member, the Deputy Chief Minister, I understand that he has had some discussion as recently as last week ...

Mr Coulter: On 7 April after receiving a letter on 4 April.

Mr HATTON: ... with the gentleman who raised these concerns with him. The Deputy Chief Minister has not failed to respond to those. In fact, he met with the gentleman who raised the concerns and spoke to him about them.

Mr Smith: He hasn't met the concerns, though, has he?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is raising a concern about the ambulance service. I ask him to take the time to talk to St John Ambulance about this.

Advertisement by Small Business

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, it has come to my attention that an advertisement, entitled 'Christmas Party Tax', appeared recently in a southern newspaper. The advertisement apparently was placed by a small business and drew attention to the difficulties small businesses face under the impost of the federal government's tax regime. Can the Chief Minister advise if he is aware of this advertisement and if a similar situation exists for small businesses operating in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of this advertisement which may be of some interest to honourable members. The situation certainly applies to small businesses in the Northern Territory as well. I would like to read this short advertisement to honourable members. It has a large heading: 'Christmas Party Tax'. It was placed in a southern newspaper:

Yes Mr Hawke, Mr Keating and the rest of the Labor government, there is a Santa Claus - but not where you work. Once each year, my business takes out my 16 hard-working men and women and their partners for a Christmas party. To us, it has become more than just a good night out. It symbolises the end of the year. It is a thank-you to our partners for the unsung part they play in our success. It is also a thank-you from the business to those who work so hard year in and year out.

For the past few years, the business has paid a tax on our Christmas party to Canberra. It is considered a fringe benefit. Of all the new taxes imposed on this small business and its proprietors, and there have been many - an increase of 48.2% to 1988 since Labor came to power - none galls me as much as Labor's Christmas party tax. To me, it symbolises Labor's lack of understanding of how successful small businesses operate. It strikes at the very heart of the camaraderie and goodwill and spirit that must be present for a small business to succeed. It is an insult to those of us who work in small business. I challenge you, Mr Hawke, Mr Keating and the whole Labor government, to publish your justification for the Christmas party tax.

Yours sincerely,
Grahame Hawkins

Mr Speaker, I am sure that many people in Territory business feel much the same as Mr Hawkins feels. Within the next few months, of course, they will have an opportunity to express their displeasure at taxes such as this, when the next federal election is held.

Clearing on Pastoral Leases

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Can the minister tell me whether there is any obligation on holders of pastoral leases to notify relevant government departments of any plans for extensive clearing on their leases and, if not, why not? If so, what is the response of his department to reports - and I do not know whether they are

based on fact or rumour - that there are plans at Douglas Station to undertake extensive clearing operations in the order of 30 000 ha?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to answer that question but I will certainly obtain details and provide them to the honourable member as soon as possible.

Malak House

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Yesterday, I forwarded to the minister a statement containing serious allegations about conditions at Malak House. Can the minister confirm that, on arrival at Malak House, whether on remand or otherwise, new inmates spend up to 3 days in a security room clothed only in their underpants? I ask the honourable minister whether he approves of this practice and, if so, on what grounds?

ANSWER

The first part of the honourable member's question indicated that he had written to me on this matter. I have not received that letter.

Mr Ede: It was hand delivered.

Mr REED: I can advise the honourable member that there may have been some recent instances of increased numbers of inmates at Malak House, principally as a consequence of a training course for officers of the Wildman River Wilderness Camp which led to the temporary transfer of detainees from Wildman River to Malak House. I think that the training program finishes this week and that, consequently, detainees from Wildman River will return there from Malak House. However, I will take note of the honourable member's concerns and provide a more detailed response later.

Air Services to Yulara

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to his extraordinary comments and those of the former Minister for Tourism, the member for Araluen, particularly the claim that there was no demand for air services to Yulara. Can the honourable minister now confirm that he will join myself and the Minister for Tourism in our efforts to get air services to Yulara restored to their pre-dispute levels?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can answer that question in 2 parts. The first part is that, for the last 100 days, I have been joining with the Minister for Tourism in an effort to restore services to Yulara and to other Territory locations as well. The member for MacDonnell, the local member for Yulara, entered into this at day 101. I am amazed at his lack of interest until this late stage. The reality is that the Minister for Tourism and myself have been able to achieve some results. There now will be 4 BEA 146 flights in and out of Yulara each day - my apologies, each week.

Mr Bell: It is Thursday, Fred.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the interjection by the member for MacDonnell just goes to show ...

Mr Bell: It's not what you said on television on Thursday night either.

Mr FINCH: In fact, the lobbying and constructive support for Yulara over the last 3 months by the Minister for Tourism and myself has come up with some results. A fortnight ago, the Chief Minister gave formal notice to Ansett that it was in breach of its licence conditions. The honourable member failed to hear the whole involvement of this government in restoring air services. It goes back to day 1.

Mr Bell: It is a bit hard to hear when you were not saying anything.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, on day 1, this government lobbied Ansett Airlines to have services restored and, where they were not restored, to cooperate with having other operators fly the routes. As the honourable member would know from what I said last week, we were able to get some services in and out of Gove and Groote Eylandt. The charter operator who had been flying indirectly in and out of Yulara for some time opted to move to the east coast where he saw more lucrative fields, and that is his commercial decision. Nonetheless, it was the Northern Territory government's position that any operator who wanted to run to and from Yulara or any other part of the Northern Territory across licensed routes was free to do so. What we did not count on was that the Prime Minister himself intervened in this whole matter to such an extent that, 3½ months later, we are still waiting for a resolution of this dispute ...

Mr Bell: Blame the feds, go on. It is always their fault.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, 2 parties were involved in the disputation from day 1 and the Prime Minister, without any reasoning at all, came in boots and all on day 1 and involved himself in the matter frustrating any possible reasonable attempts made by the 2 parties to get back together.

I do not condone the actions of the airlines or the pilots, but I certainly do not condone the action of the conciliator, Prime Minister Hawke, in getting involved. As I said last Thursday, the sooner he backs out of the way and allows people to use their own resources to come to a resolution, the better. But, for the honourable member to stand up in this House and suddenly grandstand 3½ months later, is shameful of him. It is just as shameful as it was when, some 4 weeks ago, the federal member, Warren Snowdon, stood up in Alice Springs and said: 'Look what I have done. I have brought 2 Australian airline flights into Alice Springs'. Mr Speaker, the background to that is very clear. When I pursued the matter, Australian Airlines had not even heard from Warren Snowdon about lobbying for extra services. He waltzes through the corridors of Canberra saying that he has access to this person and that person and that he is very influential. He has not been at all influential in this dispute, by any means, nor will the member for MacDonnell be. I ask the honourable member to be constructive. The work that this government has been doing has led to a return of flights, to the pleasure of those operators in Yulara who have had a tough time, and that is no thanks to their local member.

As outlined last week, this government will continue its efforts, and we have sought from Ansett and from Australian Airlines an undertaking on the services that will be in place for the next 3 or 4 months and, where services are not met, whether they be to Tennant Creek, Katherine, further out to Gove and Groote Eylandt, or anywhere else in the Northern Territory, including commuter runs to Aboriginal settlements, this government ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Transport and Works seems unable to give a simple answer to a simple question. He insists on using the House's question time for the purpose of making speeches. This matter has been debated ad nauseam. He was asked a very simple question about whether or not he would care to join with the member for MacDonnell in promoting further flights to Ayers Rock. The minister has done nothing but repeat speeches that have been made ad nauseam in this House. We have only 2 more question times left for this year, and the minister seems determined to waste question time. Mr Speaker, I ask that you direct him to be prompt in his reply.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. However, I ask the Minister for Transport and Works to complete his answer.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it is unfortunate that one has to repeat answers to repeat questions. The Territory government has been doing very well in returning air services to the Territory. It will continue to do well. As I was saying, the Territory government has made it clear to Ansett, Australian Airlines and to other commuter operators that, where pre-dispute service levels are not being met, we will encourage, allow and expect their cooperation with any other operator using any other acceptable CAA-approved aircraft to make up the difference in those levels. That is the constructive work being done by this government. We will not tolerate latter-day harping by the member for MacDonnell who stands condemned for his lack of involvement.

Mosquitoes in Northern Suburbs

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

The minister will be aware of the annual infestation of mosquitoes in the northern suburbs coming from both Leanyer and Meckitt Swamps. Can the minister advise what programs his department has in place to eradicate the problem, especially in relation the salt marsh mosquito, *Aedes vigilax*.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as everybody in the far northern suburbs knows only too well - and I am continually having this brought to my attention by the CLP members representing the community in that area - there have been problems with mosquito control recently, largely as a result of weather and wind conditions which frustrated attempts to destroy larvae or wrigglers. However, I am pleased to report that the latest breeding cycle brought on by high tides about 2 weeks ago has been interrupted by some very swift and efficient work by the Medical Entomology Branch of the Department of Health and Community Services. This unit was set up some years ago to control, among other things, the huge mosquito problem which used to plague residents of Darwin's northern suburbs. I know there are complaints about mosquitoes from time to time and I suspect that that will always be the case because of the environmental uncertainties associated with control programs. If there are high winds and adverse weather conditions, the spraying programs are not as effective as we would like. That is generally when we have an upsurge of mosquitoes in an area. That is when debates about fogging occur in the community and there are even fanciful discussions about building dams over bomb sites.

I can assure honourable members that the situation today is much better that it was 10 years ago. The Medical Entomology Branch must take a very large credit for this. In cooperation with Darwin City Council, the branch has eliminated the threat proposed by breeding sites which once existed

throughout the town area, particularly around East Point, Rapid Creek, Nightcliff, Casuarina and the Botanical Gardens.

Branch staff mounted operations again last week following inspections that revealed extensive hatching of larvae of salt marsh mosquitoes, *Aedes vigilax*, in Holmes Jungle and Meckitt and Leanyer Swamps following very high tides on 14 and 15 November. The spraying operation, which was conducted using helicopters, covered more than 80 ha at Holmes Jungle and Meckitt Swamp and smaller pockets of larvae infestation in bomb craters in Leanyer Swamp and around the sewage ponds. Inspections after the weekend spraying revealed a better than 99% kill rate in Holmes Jungle and Leanyer Swamp and a 90% kill rate in Meckitt Swamp. The lower kill rate was due to thick vegetation and water movement, but this was considered adequate because this area is farthest from suburban homes. Most people living near the Leanyer Swamp would not even have been aware that this operation took place. It was unnecessary to spray near homes.

The insecticide use on the weekend cannot harm fish or other mosquito predators and it does not persist in the environment for more than 24 hours. The salt marsh mosquito is a persistent biter during the day and the evening and many people living in the northern suburbs today would not be familiar with the severity of the regular swarms of these mosquitoes several years ago. Problems such as the big swarm which occurred several weeks ago are now a rarity. This is due to larvae spraying campaigns and also to the construction of an extensive drainage network under the supervision of health authorities which has largely nullified the mosquito breeding problem close to the northern suburbs homes.

However, salt marsh mosquitoes can disperse up to 300 km from their breeding sites and therefore the potential for occasional infestation is still there. The situation is being studied to see if the mosquito problem can be handled effectively. A working group of the recently established joint Northern Territory government and Darwin City Council task force on mosquitoes, which comprises officers from the Department of Health and Community Services and the Darwin City Council, is meeting regularly and working towards preparation of a comprehensive statement on current control and monitoring procedures and on proposals for future management. That report is due at the end of the month and, until it is complete, I think it is premature to discuss the possibility of other approaches such as the salt-water lake which has been suggested.

Outside the controlled areas that were sprayed at the weekend, mosquitoes are still breeding, as some of Darwin's rural residents may now be discovering. Parts of Howard Springs close to Howard Swamp could be subject to increased mosquito activity this week and I urge Howard Springs residents to protect themselves and their children with mosquito repellents and clothing which covers as much of their bodies as possible if they venture outdoors during the evening or early morning.

Malak House

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Could the minister advise whether he has received the letter which was delivered by hand to his officer yesterday and which contained serious allegations about conditions at Malak House? Could the minister also confirm that inmates spend up to 3 days in a security situation, clothed only in their underpants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I indicated earlier, I have not seen the letter.

Mr Smith: It was delivered by hand yesterday.

Mr REED: It may well have arrived in my office, Mr Speaker. I have indicated to the honourable member that, as soon as I am able, I will provide an answer in relation to the matters which he has raised.

Closure of BHP Gold Mines Ltd Darwin Office

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can the minister confirm whether the Darwin office of BHP Gold Mines Ltd is to be closed, whether or not Darwin staff are being retrenched and whether or not this is a direct result of the federal government's decision not to proceed with the Coronation Hill goldmine?

Mr Ede: The answer to the question is no.

ANSWER

In fact, in response to the interjection from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the answer is yes. It is a very sad day when such a closure occurs. Politicians may stand in forums such as this Legislative Assembly and talk about whether mining will proceed at Coronation Hill or not, but the fact is that what hurts most is the loss of jobs. We talk about wealth creation and the potential of Coronation Hill in terms of the \$100m-worth of minerals that it contains but, when it comes down to the wire, a decision not to mine led to the loss of jobs, the closure of offices, hardship and stress, and people leaving town. All that occurs for no reason whatsoever. We should be proceeding with the proposed mine and, as Australians, we should be proud of that. Instead, we have nothing but hardship and the loss of jobs.

It is all very well for politicians such as the federal member for the Northern Territory, Mr Snowdon, to gloat about the Coronation Hill fiasco. He sees the fact that mining is not proceeding as a personal triumph and counts it as a political victory. Meanwhile, Territorians who know or care nothing about political gains and power plays are out of work with Christmas just around the corner. I confirm with regret that BHP Gold Mines Ltd is shutting down operations at its Winnellie office and that at least half a dozen workers were affected immediately. Among them is the office manager who, I understand, has worked on this project for the past 7 years. She is a single mum who purchased a house in Darwin just a couple of months ago.

The BHP decision is related directly to the lack of progress on the Coronation Hill project and it is difficult to blame the company in these circumstances. The mining industry is patient, but not that patient. It is entirely unreasonable to expect any company to invest many millions of dollars and in fact BHP Gold Mines ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As I pointed out earlier, we have only 2 more sessions of question time during these sittings. The minister has answered the question adequately. He was asked whether the Darwin office of BHP Gold Mines Ltd would be closed and, if so, whether that closure related to the federal government's decision on Coronation Hill. The minister has answered yes to both questions and I fail to see why he should ramble on.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy to complete his answer to the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I believe that I am answering the question.

Members interjecting.

Mr COULTER: I also believe that, by interjecting and calling frivolous points of order, the opposition is simply using up the remaining period of question time during parliamentary sittings this year.

BHP has spent \$12m on the Coronation Hill project.

Mr LEO: You were not asked how much it spent.

Mr COULTER: I am telling you what it means. It means jobs. Most of that money was spent in the Northern Territory. It meant jobs for Northern Territorians, jobs for 14 Aboriginal people working out there. Jobs, jobs, jobs - that is what it was about. All that has now been lost. The office has been closed because of political expediency and the fact that the federal government does not want to make a decision in respect of one of Australia's best known mineral reserves. That is what it is about, and hardship has been created through the loss of those jobs just before the Christmas period. As I said, it is people in those jobs, people who have invested in the Northern Territory themselves, who are thrown out of work. They do not have anything to do with the political power plays that Mr Warren Snowdon, the federal member, keeps on talking about. That is what it is about, and it is a shame. Shame on the federal government for having caused such hardship and stress.

Gurungu Council and TCHIP

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Why has the Gurungu Council at Elliott been treated differently in relation to money for housing and town camps to Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs and Julalikari Council in Tennant Creek? I understand that it has been the philosophy of the minister that Aboriginal people should be allowed to make their own decisions. Why can't he accept this one?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am rather surprised that the member for Arafura, the shadow minister for local government, would ask this question, given that I am aware that he knows the answer. The government took a decision some time ago to enter into an agreement with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to provide town camp housing and infrastructure to urban communities. That agreement, made between the Minister for Lands and Housing and the federal government, provided for \$18m of Territory funds and \$12m of Commonwealth funds, over a period of 3 years, be allocated to improve town camp housing and infrastructure. At that time, the Territory government took the view that, other than in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek where large organisations existed in municipal areas, the appropriate body to deliver those services was community government. The form of government that the shadow minister and I represent sorely wants to provide those services to their constituents in places like Borroloola and Elliott.

That decision was taken by this government, not because we did not want those responsibilities in the hands of Aboriginal people but because they should be in the hands of the people fully instituted in those communities and best equipped to deliver those services. The councils at both Borrooloola and Elliott have a majority of Aboriginal members, but they are not solely Aboriginal. They are representative of those communities. Basically, the numbers in the council reflect the numbers of Aboriginal people compared to other than Aboriginal people in those 2 communities.

Both community government councils sought to have the responsibility for the administration of TCHIP. The other organisations were formed under Commonwealth legislation - legislation that I and ministers before me have sought to have rescinded, legislation that was put in place before we had effective local government in Aboriginal communities. That legislation was put in place by the Commonwealth but was to be rescinded when we had effective local government here. While we have made approaches to successive ministers of the Commonwealth to have that legislation rescinded, they have refused. They have said that there may still be communities which want to use it. There has been a deliberate attempt, on the part of the Commonwealth and the Northern Land Council, to ensure that, where we have community government established, they form these other bodies under Commonwealth legislation which claim to be legitimate councils.

I have proof that, through its lawyers, the Northern Land Council was the body that established Gurungu Council and the council at Borrooloola, and yet the honourable member opposite, who purports to represent local government, believes that these bodies are the more appropriate bodies to establish and handle TCHIP in those communities. Gurungu was established on a \$35 000 grant from the Commonwealth minister. The group at Borrooloola was established under the same method using the federal legislation and the land councils as vehicles. They have set out deliberately to thwart the legitimate interests of the local governments in those areas. In respect of Elliott, they have taken proposals to the council at the last minute and sought to have the council accede to their wishes at a moment's notice. That is not appropriate. There have been claims made against the Community Government Council at Elliott. I have had them investigated and found them to be untrue. In fact, the Community Government Council at Elliott will provide the services under TCHIP. They will provide whatever services are required to the Aboriginal people at Elliott. However, it must be remembered that the land on which they are going is privately owned. It is owned by the Aboriginal people who can say that they do not want it to provide the services. If they do that, the council would be hard pressed to provide the services that it should provide for those people.

When the Elliott and Borrooloola councils were established, they took the town camps under their wing as places that should be maintained and supported by them. It is really up to the people to support their local government. If they do not support their local government, the local government cannot support them. There have been complaints that members of the Gurungu Council have tried to undermine the legitimate members of local government in that community by speaking to them outside council and trying to have them express a view that is contrary to what they express in council. I am not prepared to let that happen. The government's decision stands and community government will be responsible for TCHIP in those 2 communities.

Sheratons and Yulara - Exposure of Government Funds Due to Pilots' Dispute

Mr FLOREANI to TREASURER

During the August sittings, the Minister for Industries and Development stated that the pilots' strike had increased the Territory taxpayers' subsidy to the Sheratons by \$200 000 per week. Would the Treasurer advise the Assembly of the maximum exposure to date that the government is likely to face in relation to both the Sheratons and Yulara as a result of the pilots' dispute?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have such information before me at this time. The effects of the pilots' dispute on the Northern Territory are indeed very severe and, from a budgetary point of view, we will be making a comprehensive assessment of its effects on our revenue and expenditure patterns, and how they may have varied since the dispute began. However, that exercise is not expected to be completed until the end of December. In the meantime, I will see whether I can provide the honourable member with some information.

Malak House

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Can the honourable minister confirm that teenagers held at Malak House have been kept in solitary confinement for up to 2 days and, in 1 case reported to me, for up to 4 days, despite the fact that departmental regulations provide for a 12-hour maximum solitary confinement period?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question relates to the matters raised by the member for Arnhem. I have indicated that I have not seen the letter referred to by that honourable member. I would imagine that my staff are currently pursuing the matter and I will obtain an answer for the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Arnhem as soon as possible.

Todd River - Reported Environmental Problems

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

There have been a number of recent reports about river red gums dying along the Todd and various other environmental problems. A few weeks ago, a suggestion was even floated suggesting that a Todd River authority needed to be established to properly manage the river environment. Could the minister tell the Assembly what is actually occurring and what he is doing about the Todd River situation?

ANSWER

There is no doubt that there has been concern about river red gums in Alice Springs. The whole Todd River environment has long been a matter of concern within the community and to a number of members of this House, including the member for Sadadeen, the member for Araluen and other Alice Springs members who on many occasions have raised issues associated with the Todd. The situation is quite complex and recently there have been calls for the formation of a Todd River authority in Alice Springs.

I took the opportunity recently to visit Alice Springs to brief myself on matters associated with my new portfolios and, during that visit, I met with representatives of a number of authorities which have responsibilities relating to various aspects of the Todd River. The problem is not so much a lack of control or legislation as a lack of coordination between the various governments, departments and authorities which currently have a say in the management of the river and its resources. I doubt that another statutory authority is needed, with the expense and additional bureaucracy that would entail. Perhaps some kind of interdepartmental committee, including representation from the Alice Springs Town Council, may be an appropriate solution. I am preparing a report for the Chief Minister who will be responsible for any decisions associated with interdepartmental activities. I will be making recommendations on an appropriate mechanism to coordinate activities relating to the Todd River.

The deaths of river red gums are commonly attributed to sandmining and erosion in the river bed, exposing their root systems. There is also strong evidence that the rising watertable of the town basin is to blame. In addition, some dieback would be due to the trees approaching the end of their natural life span. There is a need to set clear objectives for river management. For example, the roles of the river as a flood safety valve and as a tourist attraction need to be defined. How important is the river as a source of sand for local construction? The current debate on the value or otherwise of introducing couch and buffel grass perhaps fails to recognise that, while the profile of the riverbed in the vicinity of Alice Springs has changed dramatically with flooding over recent years, scientific records show that the cross-sectional area has changed very little. There is evidence that the grass has a negligible effect on the water flow during a significant flood. However, there does seem to be a case for considering a revised management regime in relation to the introduced grasses. There is also the question of the proposed flood mitigation dam and its likely effect on the river environment. I have asked the Conservation Commission to examine the situation and I expect to receive expert advice soon.

The final decision will be a matter for the Chief Minister because it will involve a number of departmental authorities. Sandmining is under the control of the Department of Mines and Energy. Water controls are the province of the Power and Water Authority. In fact, within the old town boundaries, the river has reserve status under the management of the Alice Springs Town Council. At the Telegraph Station Site, the river is under the control of the Conservation Commission. The problem is one of bringing all those authorities and functions together. The fire management regime used in controlling grasses sometimes creates problems by killing off the young river red gum saplings. That leads to a lack of regrowth to replace some of the older trees which are dying off. We are certainly addressing the problems and the matter will be before the Chief Minister in the very near future.

Backpacker Accommodation

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to the considerable publicity which has been given to backpacker accommodation and the 5 m² rule which relates to such buildings. I ask the minister whether it is a hard and fast rule or will fire ratings of buildings and escape routes be taken into account in determining the safety of buildings? Could the minister also inform me of the government's policy in terms of the application of this rule to caravans? A caravan measuring 9 m by 2.4 m, the dimensions of a 6-berther, only has an area of about 2.4 m² per person.

ANSWER

I have some information in relation to this matter which, as the member for Sadadeen rightly observed, has been the subject of considerable interest, particularly in central Australia. There are no codes relating specifically to caravans in respect of floor areas per person. Similarly, that is the case for single dwelling houses under the Northern Territory Building Code. These types of dwellings are not subject to the provisions of part V of the Building Act and are excluded from the fire safety provisions of the Northern Territory Building Code. This is because the dwelling house is usually owned or rented by a single family unit in which family members are responsible or generally considered to be responsible for each other's actions. This is also the case with caravans which, in the main, are owned or rented and used by related family units.

Nevertheless, section 11B of the Caravan Parks Act enables the regulation of numbers of persons who may live in a caravan other than in a caravan park or camping area if the chief inspector considers that the number of persons is excessive. I thought that was a little odd. It seems to indicate that there is a bottom line where the caravan parks inspector could rule that a caravan outside a caravan park or camping area was overloaded with people.

The fire safety codes are designed to provide fire protection generally for people who are working or living together for limited periods and who are unrelated to each other and are not responsible for each other's actions. Clearly, circumstances in low-budget, transient accommodation should, as far as possible, be such that a person who goes to sleep in such accommodation should be reasonably able to do so in the knowledge that he will be safe during the night from fire or that, if there is a fire, he will become aware of it and have reasonable time and opportunity to escape.

The current Building Code and the proposed building code for Australia require 15 m² per person for hostel-type accommodation. This is also the case with guest house accommodation. Code 20 was adopted on 29 August 1989 by the Darwin Planning Authority after negotiations with the Department of Health and Community Services. The model used for this code was Cairns City Council by-laws which reflect the International Youth Hostels' standard floor areas and cubic capacities allowable which are 4.65 m² per person floor space and 12.5 m³ dormitory space per person.

A meeting was held in Darwin in September between the Department of Lands and Housing, the Northern Territory Fire Service and the Department of Health and Community Services to review the public safety issues relating to backpacker accommodation. Having regard to Code 20 and the requirements of the Northern Territory health regulations which requires 14.1 m³ per person for health reasons, as well as a ceiling height of 2.4 m required by the Building Code, it was identified that a floor area of 5.8 m² per person was required to meet these regulations. The Northern Territory Fire Service accommodated this process by accepting that, if certain other provisions were provided, such as single station smoke detectors for premises accommodating less than 20 persons, and hose-reel firefighting equipment, that a floor area of 5 m² per person was a compromise well below that of the 15 m² required under the Northern Territory Building Code. It is possible for developers to seek a variation of the Building Code requirements through the Building Act by making application to the Building Controller and each application will be considered on its merits. However, there is a requirement for a standard and 5 m² per person in this type of accommodation is a standard that was agreed to by the 3 relevant Territory government departments.

Drawing a parallel between a caravan and a converted house in which there may be up to 70 people accommodated for the night is not really appropriate. While there may be circumstances where caravans may be used to provide accommodation to individuals on a low-cost basis, in the most cases they are rented by persons from the same family who are hiring the caravan as a single family unit dwelling place for a period of time as opposed to a backpacker situation where a person, more often than not, is accommodated with people with whom he is not acquainted and whose actions during the night hours he cannot control.

There was a fair bit of scaremongering by some arms of the media in Alice Springs about the fact that a 5 m² flat rule for backpacker accommodation would close down a number of establishments. Indeed, across the Territory, a number of establishments have closed down, and probably reasonably so. However, the 5 m² rule is primarily one which is to apply to accommodation which was not purpose built hostel accommodation and it applies specifically to houses that are converted. In many cases, these are houses of more than one storey and are not in a situation of a purpose built facility where additional egress facilities have been incorporated into the building and, in many cases, appropriate fire safety equipment has been fully installed. The rule that has been adopted will not result in the widespread closure of accommodation in the Territory.

Cuts to 1989-90 Budget

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister confirm that government departments have been asked to make cuts in their 1989-90 budgets, including \$2m cuts for the police department and up to \$4m in the Department of Health and Community Services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm that they have been asked to make those cuts at all.

Cost Savings in Property Management

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer him to a question that I asked late last year about cost saving measures to be introduced in respect of property management in the public service. Can he advise me whether those measures were put in place and what savings have been made as a result?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a very good question. Attempts were made in 1987 to examine property management and identify savings which could be made in that area. The cleaning contract has already saved quite significant sums for the government and has the potential to save more. The new cleaning contracts do not necessarily require cleaning on a daily basis. Cleaning is done at a nominated frequency depending on the use of the building and the necessity for cleaning. The savings that we are currently making are in the order of \$112 000 or \$113 000 a year.

In relation to power management, obviously we are saving money in this building at present because we have cut down on air-conditioning. The Properties Division has an energy management program which identified buildings that were not cost efficient in the use of power. By the use of timing devices, we are currently saving, on costs of about 12 months ago, \$238 000 per annum. That is a continuing program and we are working through all buildings on a priority basis. In time, that process will bring about enormous cost savings on government buildings. The Government Printing Office is an example where significant savings have been achieved. Through more careful management of its power resource, the Government Printing Office has been able to make very significant savings. That is not the only example. Over the next 12 months, we will continue to make further savings in energy management, cleaning costs and other areas of property management.

Public Service Incentives

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

My question is in 3 parts. It refers to the package of conditions brought down yesterday. Why did the Chief Minister refer to the \$15 pay rise to public servants as an 'incentive' when it is not a cent more than their entitlement under national wage agreements and when Northern Territory public servants have been among the last public servants in Australia to receive it? Secondly, when will the Chief Minister provide a simple, clear and accurate costing of the components of the package? Thirdly, will the Chief Minister

assure this House that the incentives for the FOILS, Fares Out of Isolated Localities Scheme, will be in place in time for teachers and public servants wishing to use the FOILS fares over the Christmas vacation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there are 3 parts to the question. I consider the first one to be somewhat pedantic. I comment merely that the Leader of the Opposition feels that word that I used in my statement yesterday was probably an inappropriate choice. I guess he is entitled to that opinion.

The second part of this question related to the cost of the benefits. I do not know when I can provide him with a detailed listing of the costs. I am sure that the 15 300-odd public servants who will partake of those benefits are less concerned with their overall cost to government than with the fact that the government has moved to recognise their special needs in so many respects.

In response to the third part of the question, I advise that each of the respective schemes is to be in operation as soon as is practical. The implementation has been left to the Public Service Commissioner who, I understand, has a fair amount of action to undertake in terms of amending various rules, regulations and so forth, in order to bring some of the schemes into operation. I cannot give the Leader of the Opposition an exact assurance as to when these ...

Mr McCarthy interjecting.

Mr PERRON: I note the interjection from the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government that the accommodation component of TA which will now be payable for those public servants who partake of FOILS benefits is to be available forthwith.

Education Policy

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The minister was accused recently of not being in charge of education. He was told by the member for Stuart that he must exert his authority over his department and that his secretary must implement the policy of the government without question and with complete obedience. In fact, the member for Stuart went so far as to say that, if the secretary did not do that, he should be sacked forthwith. Will the minister seek the support of the member for Stuart, which will logically be forthcoming on the basis of his recent statements, in getting the message across to all members of the Department of Education, including all teachers, that their job is to implement government policy without question? In the process, he might like to undertake to point out the inconsistencies of the member for Stuart in his attitude toward the external exams and his opposition to the government in that matter.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Sadadeen for his question. I have tried always to seek the support of the member for Stuart in relation to government policy and on the formulation of government policy. Quite often, as honourable members would be aware, the member for Stuart gives a completely negative response to many of the documents which put government policy in place. I should start by saying that there never has been any question

regarding the secretary and the implementation of government policy. He has always carried that out to perfection, and he will continue to do so.

It is indeed unfortunate that the member for Stuart has been hell-bent on trying to destroy the positive policies of this government in relation to education. It is interesting to note that a matter of public importance will be discussed later today and I hope that the media and others will be present to listen to that debate. We can go through a whole range of issues where the member for Stuart has been negative in relation to the university, to the Year 10 assessment ...

Mr Ede: The university? What a load of rubbish.

Mr HARRIS: Here he is now! Mr Speaker, I can go through a whole range of issues that have benefited Territory people. I can remember problems with the member for Stuart over the secondary college split. There are real concerns relating to Aboriginal education which are being addressed by this government yet the member for Stuart carps and carries on and does not look responsibly at the issues. I have tried repeatedly to get him on side. At one stage recently, I thought that he was coming around because he took part in one section of my review. I was very glad to see him sitting down and listening to how the review was operating.

Mr Ede: What? You could not get anybody to stay. You begged me to stay because nobody else would hang around.

Mr HARRIS: Here we go again, Mr Speaker!

Matters relating to Aboriginal education such as avoidance problems, the inability of a brother and sister to sit in the same room, skin groupings etc are very real problems which need to be addressed. I hope that the member for Stuart and other members who have predominantly Aboriginal electorates will have a great deal of input. I will continue to seek the support of the member for Stuart. I agree with what the member for Sadadeen said the other day. Departmental personnel and teachers should be supporting and implementing government policy. We give plenty of notice and opportunity for comment in relation to policy. Once policy is determined by the government, it is their job to carry it out. That is very clear. The secretary does it and the teachers teach according to the policy of government.

I am trying to get the member for Stuart to adopt a responsible attitude to education issues. I hope that he is able encourage teachers and others to implement government policy. Unfortunately, I do not hold much hope, but I guess I can always live in hope. There is to be a matter of public importance discussion later today in relation to education. I will be outlining a wide range of areas where this government has provided opportunities for students to progress through the education system. These are very positive policies. I hope that the media and others will stay for that debate and listen to the nonsense that is put forward by the member for Stuart. I hope that he learns to become involved and to have positive input into the very vital area of education.

Vandalism in Conservation Commission Parks

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Mr Speaker, I understand that there is some concern about vandalism in Conservation Commission parks and reserves in central Australia. Could the minister tell us what he and the commissioner are doing about it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there have been some concerns in the central Australian area in particular. Some Alice Springs tour operators and local citizens have reported an increase in vandalism in some parks and reserves. It is a very difficult problem to resolve. We want the natural attractions and Aboriginal art at these sites to be open to the public and we cannot possibly provide full-time security at all points of interest. We have increased ranger patrols at susceptible sites and we are carrying out a thorough investigation to assess damage at Kuyunba, N'Dhala Gorge, Chambers Pillar and Rainbow Valley. The commission has also begun a public awareness program utilising television, radio and newspaper advertisements to seek community assistance. I believe that an appeal to the public is the best course of action. After all, these vandals destroy their own heritage. If they realise that, perhaps they will reconsider their actions.

Another initiative the commission has taken is to seek advice from the Psychology Unit of the Northern Territory University hopefully to shed some light on the best way of appealing for public understanding and assistance and the most appropriate design and wording for signs at those parks and reserves which have received the attention of vandals. The type of vandalism that has been concerning us is the engraving or carving of initials and names into features such as Chambers Pillar, the possible removal of slabs of rock bearing Aboriginal art, the use of spray-pack paints on rock, and people damaging Aboriginal petroglyph sites by walking over them.

As members of the community, we must all play our part in promoting protection and respect for those parts of our heritage that we want people to see and enjoy so that they can gain the benefits which flow from an understanding of our environment. Unfortunately, if these practices are allowed to continue, and if the community does not stand up and make it unacceptable, as it has done in the case of litter control, an unfortunate consequence is likely to be the forced closure of some areas to public access. I desperately hope that we never have to take such action.

Darwin Bus Service Strike

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question assumes that the minister is aware that the Darwin Bus Service strike is now in its third day. What he may not be aware of is that people trying to get to work, students trying to get to exams and shoppers trying to get to supermarkets have been stranded for those 3 days. Can the minister confirm that the strike is not over a large pay claim or award conditions but over a tiny and easily remedied management practice? Is it not a fact that the current practice penalises drivers for shortfalls in the daily take when the accounts demonstrate that the quarterly take is consistently higher than ticket sales would indicate? Was not an agreed solution suddenly dumped by management yesterday prolonging the strike with all its inconvenience and will the minister instruct management to accept the agreement hammered out in the commission?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is in part correct. I am very much aware of the deleterious effect that the strike has had over the last 3 days, particularly on students who are doing their final exams, on pensioners and on others in the community who have no other form of transportation. I am aware

that it is over a very trivial matter. It is not over a major wages claim but over a minor matter of procedure which has been in place for some 7 or 8 years ...

Mr Smith: On a trial basis.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it has been in place on a trial basis, if you like, for 7 or 8 years. Part of the requirements of this accountability of the bus drivers' take is not unique to the Northern Territory nor would one expect it to be. It is a practice that occurs in every state in Australia, on every public transport system with the exception of the ACT where tickets are not even issued. I am sure that is not a situation that honourable members would suggest ought to be the procedure for any area of government involving collection of public money.

In fact, the system in use here is probably easier for bus drivers to operate than some of the systems elsewhere. Let me briefly explain that system, which has recently been tightened in a security sense, in the interests of the drivers as much as anyone else. On completion of their shifts, drivers clock off on the computerised system, which has a record of all of the individual components of their day's work. That, of course, is part of the balancing procedure. Instead of tying up their money bags with string or whatever, drivers now have their own individual seals which they use to seal their bags before depositing them in a night safe. This is not dissimilar to a bank's night safe. The supervisor endorses the fact that the driver has clocked off and that the bag has been deposited in the safe. Of course, the supervisor does not even have access to that night security system.

On the following morning, accompanied by supervisory staff, the security firm removes the contents from the night safe, places them in a delivery system, again with a seal, for transportation to the security company's counting facilities. The bags are not even opened by the security firm until it has checked that the seal numbers are the same as those endorsed by the supervisor. All of that security is provided. To that stage, nobody can touch the bags bearing the seals with the drivers' numbers. The contents of the bags are counted individually and advice concerning the count is forwarded to the depot by 3 pm or 4 pm that afternoon for pasting on the board ...

Mr Smith: Why don't you count it on the spot?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition will listen for a while, he will hear the system ...

Mr Smith: Why don't you count it on the spot?

Mr FINCH: There are many reasons for not counting it on the spot. One reason is on advice from the Auditor-General and another, of course, is to comply with the opposite role requirement of the Receiver of Territory Moneys. A system has been introduced in part as a follow-on from the Auditor-General and a requirement of the Under Treasurer. All of these things need to be done properly.

Let me get back to where I was with the advice on the individual driver number's take for the day - and that is a preliminary figure. There is no balance against his card-in because there are factors such as discredited tickets that have to be taken into account. All of that advice goes up on the board at 3 or 4 o'clock the same afternoon. In effect, this the driver's

receipt from his previous shift run. It is all done under absolute security, in the interest of the driver, in the interest of the Northern Territory government and the taxpayer, and I see no problem with that system. If there is a problem with it, then constructive suggestions as to how that system might be modified or improved ought to be proposed. However, to hold the travelling public to ransom instead of going to the Industrial Relations Commission and having it fixed ...

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, these drivers are normally very rational, and I do not understand what this dispute is about. It is a very minor matter ...

Mr Smith: Why don't you understand?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I understand ...

Mr Smith: Why don't you try to sort it out?

Mr FINCH: ... the details, but I cannot understand why they are continuing to hold the travelling public to ransom over what is a trivial matter, as the member for Nhulunbuy said before he was joined by the crowing of the Leader of the Opposition. I do not understand it at all, and it is up to the drivers to get themselves back to work until this matter is resolved by the Industrial Relations Commission.

Mr Smith: It was all hammered out yesterday. What are they to backtrack from?

Mr FINCH: Wrong.

Mr Smith: That is not wrong.

Mr FINCH: Once again, the Leader of the Opposition does not know what he is talking about. There is no agreement.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr FINCH: Crow, crow, crow. What a mob of galahs.

Mr Speaker, no agreement was reached yesterday. In fact, the driver who was interviewed on television last night unfortunately did not have it right either. No agreement came out of the commission. We need to go back to the commission now and have the matter resolved, and the department will go along with the finding of the commission. There is no problem there. In the meantime, all those people are without bus transport as a result of a dispute over such a minor, trivial matter. I do not understand it.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

The minister will be aware that the Cattle Council of Australia, supported by industry groups in the Northern Territory, has made a submission to the National BTEC Committee to extend the deadline for the completion of BTEC to the end of 1992, thereby giving pastoralists a further cattle season in which to comply. Does the minister agree that such an extension offers a golden opportunity for the industry to extract a much needed financial benefit and

could, in fact, mean the difference between economic survival or otherwise for many producers in the Top End? Will the minister give an undertaking to give his wholehearted support for this move when it comes before the committee of ministers? If so, will he now treat sympathetically any application to place a moratorium on the current round of shoot-outs for 1 year to allow pastoralists and others the benefit of that extra season to attempt to muster stock and obtain an economic return from them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there are 2 parts to the honourable member's question. First of all, there is an application to extend the deadline for the BTEC program until the end of 1992. That matter is being discussed in various committees, not only in the Northern Territory but throughout Australia. It will have the support of the Northern Territory BTEC Committee which, as the honourable member would be aware, has membership from the Buffalo Industry Council and the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association. These matters are considered very carefully and, if there is benefit to the industry in the Northern Territory, they receive full support as this one will.

In relation to the cessation of activities under the current BTEC program, what the honourable member is asking is that the decision in relation to the extension to 1992 be pre-empted and that we take action now that could be deleterious to the industry in the event that the submission is not approved. That might be the way that the member for Stuart operates his business, but we are not in the habit of pre-empting decisions to be made by a national body. We will await the outcome of the meeting. If there is any benefit for the Northern Territory cattle and buffalo industries from that decision, they will certainly be taken up by the Northern Territory BTEC Committee of which I am the chairman. As always, we will aim to provide the greatest benefits to the producers in the Northern Territory.

Recycling of Waste Materials

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

There has been a lot of interest recently in the difficulties relating to the economic collection of waste materials in the Northern Territory for recycling. Could the minister advise what he is doing to encourage and promote such recycling?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, community and government interest in recycling is increasing as is evidenced by the recent formation of the Total Recycling Advisory Community Committee, known as TRACC. That includes community, industry and government representatives. Recycling programs are already in place. Government departments and statutory authorities are taking steps towards recycling their own material but, to date, this has been in piecemeal fashion with some departments and authorities further advanced than others. Therefore, the government has decided to formulate a policy on recycling that will apply to all areas of the Northern Territory government. This will coordinate the efforts now being made and hopefully will result in some economies of scale as far as the purchase of recycled paper is concerned. One of the major impediments to wider use of recycled paper products is the cost premium. There is no doubt that we could do more, and we will be looking at other possibilities for more economical use of resources, but any additional cost associated with these initiatives will pose problems.

Currently, about 10 000 m² of material is recycled annually in the Northern Territory. This comprises paper, glass, aluminium cans, cooking and sump oil, iron, plastic and film processing materials. My own office has introduced recycled paper for several applications and is under instructions to reduce paper usage as much as possible. Other areas of government are taking similar steps.

I appreciate the steps taken by some honourable members yesterday in recycling envelopes that delivered papers to them. I can assure honourable members that those envelopes are being recycled properly. When you start the process of considering recycling and environmental consciousness, it is amazing how many people take up the issue. That is a classic example of how individual consciences and consciousness can come into play in little ways, all of which assist in the process of recycling.

A recent Conservation Commission study indicated that about 54% of waste in the Northern Territory could be recycled using current technology. Major problems with recycling in the Northern Territory are the cost of collection and transport to southern recycling centres. The recycling of many materials is thus not economically viable. Possible solutions to this could include a high degree of community involvement, concentrating on materials that can support an economic program and encouraging recycling within the Territory where possible. For example, organic waste can be composted for resale as soil conditioners and fertilisers. Community involvement could be encouraged. For example, householders could think about separating their own rubbish so that the recyclable material can be made available to central depots. That is a way in which individuals can involve themselves actively in the process of increasing the proportion of material that can be recycled.

I know that many schools and governments are actively involved in recycling programs, and they should be actively supported. The Conservation Commission Environment Unit is investigating strategies which can be implemented throughout the Northern Territory to actively increase recycling of materials and to look at alternative uses that can make recycling economic. We do not want to get into a situation in which we have a totally uneconomic process of recycling for the sake of recycling and utilising government moneys to support that. We have to look for appropriate uses of recycled materials and carry out the process as economically as possible.

Allegations Relating to Renegotiation of Commercial Leases

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer the honourable minister to the problem of standover landlords demanding up-front cash payments from commercial tenants in lease renewal renegotiations. The honourable minister has now been given first-hand and conclusive evidence that the practice exists. He indicated last week that, in fact, the government would move on this issue during this week. Will the minister give commercial tenants an absolute guarantee that he will legislate to provide protection before the end of these sittings or does he intend to leave these tenants at the mercy of unscrupulous landlords until next year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I said last week that I would carry out a full examination of the situation and look for a considered response to the circumstances. I would be interested to see what evidence the Leader of the Opposition is using to support his claim that I have given an unlimited guarantee to introduce

legislation. I said that, if there was an appropriate solution, I would take action. I advise honourable members that, since the matter was raised, I have had discussions with shop owners who are lessees. They outlined a series of concerns, some of which referred to specific up-front payments. I have also had discussions with lessors as to the circumstances and the claims which they make in justification of what they refer to as premium payments paid for extensive leases. I have also had discussions with the President of the Real Estate Institute and the Confederation of Industry and Commerce. I had extensive briefings from the Department of Law. I can advise honourable members that I have been advised by the Department of Law, the Confederation of Industry and Commerce and the Real Estate Institute not to engage in a knee-jerk legislative reaction but rather to develop a considered proposal over the Christmas period.

On the advice of all people involved and in the interests of a balanced approach, I will not be bringing legislation forward during these sittings. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, we do not simply jump in and enact legislation without considering the consequences across the community. There are quite a number of legal problems associated with finding solutions. There are possible solutions, but they all potentially have unintended consequences. We leave the knee-jerk reactions and unintended consequences to the Labor Party. We will address the matter in a proper and considered way and we will take advice from the very people whom the Leader of the Opposition originally spoke with in relation to this subject.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Many months have elapsed since the minister last reported on the flood mitigation dam for Alice Springs. Can he advise of the latest position in relation to progress on this project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government is still negotiating in relation to the flood mitigation dam. I cannot release any details in addition to those which I have provided at other sittings. I have indicated that I would not comment further on the dam. I can assure the honourable member that the matter is proceeding quite well. Discussions have been taking place between all of the government departments involved and, of course, the traditional owners have been consulted recently. Discussions have also been taking place between the various landowners within the region. The matter is proceeding. The government is aware of the situation regarding flood mitigation for Alice Springs. The Chief Minister is committed to the project. He has allocated some \$15m which has \$1m in cash put aside for that project. I hope that the dam can be commenced in the very near future.

Darwin Airport

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can the minister confirm that construction of the Darwin Airport terminal will commence on time as promised by the federal member, Mr Warren Snowdon?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it will not. Two days ago, Senator Tambling received a response to a question that he asked of the Public Works Committee. The response alarmed me: 'It is anticipated that evaluation of tenders for the major contract', and this relates to Darwin, 'will be completed early in the new year and that site works on this contract will commence by the end of January 1990'. All honourable members will be well aware of the sorry saga of the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports.

Mr Bailey: Work has already started there.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Wanguri is not only new to this place but, obviously, has not been following what has been going on in the real world. It started 6 years ago. In relation to the tower on which work has recommenced, work was commenced at the end of 1984. This saga has involved about 3 Territory transport ministers and about 10 federal transport ministers. Honourable members will well recall the visit by the then minister, Mr Peter Morris, when he was castigated by the entire community.

Let me come back to the promises. The member for Wanguri ought to be sensitive because I happen to have with me a message to the Wanguri electorate from Warren Snowdon and Senator Bob Collins: 'What we promise, we deliver'. The question is when. Darwin Airport and numerous other items are mentioned. Some of the claims made by the federal member and Senator Collins have been proven to be totally false and they ought to be ashamed of themselves. Let me talk about the promises of Warren Snowdon and Bob Collins. I am not talking only about the 1984 or the 1987 federal election promises. I am talking about even their recent promises. Two days ago, the federal member had the audacity to stand up in the federal parliament and say: 'I take great pride in the fact that I, along with my colleague, Senator Bob Collins, have been able to push this project through the organs of government. We have been able to achieve something quite outstanding, given the fiscal constraint of the government'. I am not sure which organ he is referring to. This is a very serious matter. He often claims that he is able to push things through in Canberra, but what worries me is how long it takes.

The announcement that the contract will not be let until January means that, even under the fast track system that is to be utilised, construction of the terminal building - not site works, not putting up fences and more signs, and finishing off works and sewerage - will be delayed. What is important to Territorians, to the business community and to this side of the House is a visible sign that that terminal building is back on track again, the same terminal building which led Bob Hawke to sit on a bulldozer in mid to late 1984 ...

Mr Hatton: It was an election campaign.

Mr FINCH: ... when he splashed off his big campaign: 'You can trust only a Labor government'.

Let me come back to 23 February this year, when the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition ridiculed me in this House for tabling a draft FAC timetable. They ridiculed me! Do honourable members remember that? Bob Collins ridiculed me. Warren Snowdon ridiculed me. The big problem is that I knew what timetabling was about. What I did not know is that not even that timetable would be met. Very quickly, they ran to the media and said: 'Oops! A draft does not mean anything. What really will

happen is that construction will begin by the end of the year'. Of course, they changed that to November, in concert with an FAC officer who found himself in something of a hot seat in the Territory. At the same time, they ridiculed the private sector for showing an interest in this matter.

Mr Ede: Go and talk to the workers who are out there now.

Mr Bailey: And say that they are doing nothing important.

Mr Ede: Go on. Tell them they are not working.

Mr FINCH: For the benefit of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am well aware that there are some ancillary works. This program says: 'construction on the terminal by February 1990'. The amendment pushed down our throats by Warren Snowdon and Bob Collins referred to November. In fact, I think they said 1 November 1989.

Mr Speaker, do you recall when they grandstanded about the transfer on 1 April? 1 April was not an appropriate day. Eventually, after promising transfer on 19 August last year, they promised transfer by the end of the next month. They then promised transfer by 1 April - April Fools Day. Then, Bob Collins and Warren Snowdon appeared on television. The journalist asked: 'How can the people of the Territory believe this?' They replied: 'Fred Finch does not know what he is talking about'. They said that the construction work on the terminal building, the symbolic recommencement of work itself, would happen in November.

Mr Speaker, as it is now, mid-April would be the earliest date. The FAC has been doing its darnedest. It could not obtain transfer for 8 months. It had to go through the nonsense of the PWC even though it had all been done 8 years earlier. It had to comply with the bureaucratic processes of the federal government. It is no wonder that it has taken this long.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The minister has answered the question ad nauseam. In his deluded opinion, the building will not start this year. I do not know why he has to subject this House to any more of his ranting, and I respectfully ask, Mr Speaker, that you request him to conclude his answer forthwith.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, I ask the honourable Minister for Transport and Works to make his point in answer to the question. I point out that we have only 10 minutes of question time left.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I always know when I have made the point. It is when the member for Nhulunbuy calls a point of order.

In conclusion, the Labor representatives in the federal parliament, whom we are unfortunate to have at the moment - and they will not be there for long - are unable to deliver. If one does credit them with an ability to deliver, it is a question of when. I will, however, commend the FAC which, in the face of a great deal of red tape, has given a commitment to get on with the job. It is doing what it can - the ancillary works, the site works, the re-erection of signs, the completion of old works - but it cannot get on with the real work on the terminals here or in Alice Springs until 6 months after the date promised by Warren Snowdon and Bob Collins. It was an election promise in 1984. It was an election promise in 1987. It will be a federal election promise in 1990.

Canine Parasite Eradication Research

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In view of the excellent initial research done by officers of his department on the eradication of internal and external parasites from canine populations with the use of Ivomectrin and Avomec, could the minister indicate whether the research is continuing in the Northern Territory and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, some work is continuing in relation to that program in the Northern Territory. Whilst I am not totally familiar with the current standing of that research, I am aware that consideration is being given at present to the conducting of some field work in an Aboriginal community to control parasites in dogs ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: That has been done and it was successful.

Mr REED: Yes, it has been done. What I am saying is that the work is continuing and consideration is presently being given to conducting further work in other communities. At this stage I can say only that the work is continuing but I will make some further inquiries and advise the honourable member of the outcome. As she indicated, it has been a very successful program. I can assure her that some work is still under way and, as I say, there are intentions to ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: The drug has to be declared.

Mr REED: That is right. There are intentions to continue the program in other communities.

Mosquitoes in the Northern Suburbs

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer the minister to the mosquito problem in the northern suburbs. Is he aware that the government's own expert advice is that fogging offers no effective long-term solution to the problem? Is he aware that the report of the government's Coastal Management Committee recommends physical control through drainage, tidal bunds and fresh or salt-water lakes? Does he agree with the member for Leanyer that these are pie-in-the-sky solutions or does he think that these works would bring more benefit to the community than the construction of a new Parliament House?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I greatly appreciate this question. It is interesting to see the incompetence of the honourable member reflected in some of his questions.

The Minister for Transport and Works does support drainage works in the area referred to. In fact, the minister's electorate is Leanyer, which is in the northern suburbs. The member for Karama, another northern suburbs electorate, is also a member of this government as was the previous member for Wanguri. For quite a number of years, CLP members have engaged in a major campaign to alleviate the mosquito problem in the northern suburbs and there have been dramatic improvements in the suppression of the mosquito problem in

the northern suburbs as a consequence of their diligent and continuing work in that regard.

Nobody denies the fact that fogging does not provide a permanent solution to the mosquito infestations that occur. It is not the solution to the problem in the long term. Other measures being implemented include the drainage works that are under way to remove ponding, and specific insecticide spraying to kill larvae, to which I referred to in this House yesterday. However, when circumstances affect such measures - for example, adverse weather conditions during spraying - why shouldn't fogging be considered as an additional short-term measure? We should also be prepared to consider those areas where appropriate fogging opportunities are available to alleviate the immediate problems of the populace. That is where the issue of fogging should be properly addressed.

As to the concept of building a lake, I suggest that the member for Wanguri be the first to push the bombs out of the way when he starts to excavate. The area to which he has referred is the site of an old bombing range. He might find that a bit dicey, given that the military have not yet removed the explosives from the area. You will know, Mr Speaker, that the government has been working very hard for some time to get the military to clear that site completely so that other works can proceed in the area. It is not a simple matter of building a lake there. There are many issues to address and, unfortunately, Johnny-come-latelies jump in where angels and wiser men fear to tread.

Mr Bailey: Read your own reports over the years.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, it is true that you seek to remove ponding. What you do not seek to do is blow up workers when you are doing it.

Commonwealth State Housing Agreement - Negotiations

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to his negotiations with the federal Minister for Housing in relation to the new arrangements for funding under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. I ask whether the minister sought the assistance of the Territory's 2 federal Labor representatives in those negotiations. If so, what was the result?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I wrote to both Senator Bob Collins and the Territory's federal member of the House of Representatives, Warren Snowdon, on 27 July this year. My reason for doing so was that I had learned that the federal Minister for Housing, Hon Peter Staples, was to visit Alice Springs during August. I hoped that, in view of this government's very serious concerns in relation to the proposed changes to the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, both Mr Snowdon and Senator Collins may have been able to use whatever influence they had to assist the Territory's case.

I point out that the reason given for Mr Staples' visit to Alice Springs was to address community groups about the revised CSHA. At the time he was in Alice Springs, officers from his department were meeting in Adelaide with officers from every other state and territory in Australia to thrash out details of the CSHA. Honourable members may appreciate the irony of that. On the one hand, we have the minister telling people in the community about the

contents of the new agreement and, at the same time, officers of his own department and state departments are working out what the agreement is going to be. Unfortunately, that was typical of the federal government's attitude towards the negotiations.

In due course, both Mr Snowdon and Senator Collins responded to my letter. Mr Snowdon's response contained the astonishing claim that he had been advised by the federal minister that the state and Northern Territory governments had been fully consulted on the new CSHA and that the Chief Minister, along with state premiers, had agreed to the new arrangement at the 1989 Premiers' Conference. From the Chief Minister's statement to the Assembly last week, honourable members will be aware of just how false that assertion was.

However, Senator Collins' letter contained an even more interesting claim. He said:

As you would know from the recent publicity surrounding this issue, the federal member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, and myself, have held discussions with the federal minister and have been assured by him that the Territory will not be disadvantaged in any way in terms of its housing needs by any proposal from the Commonwealth government. I can assure you we will continue to actively monitor the situation to ensure that this does not occur.

There was a strong commitment from Senator Collins that 'the Territory will not be disadvantaged in any way in terms of its housing needs'. Honourable members would appreciate that the Territory government is likely to be very seriously disadvantaged by the federal government's proposed changes to the CSHA. The main point of concern is the severe cut in funding that we will receive as a result of the move towards per capita funding. Overall, the Territory stands to lose nearly \$100m over the next 4 years. That is a most severe disadvantage. In comparison with the amount which we received in 1988-89, we stand to lose \$44m a year. Not only will this cause severe disadvantage to the Territory's housing program, the flow-on effects to the Territory economy obviously could be disastrous. I would therefore like to know just how Senator Collins intends to keep his promise. I assume that he is not suggesting that these massive cuts to our funding should not be classed as a disadvantage. Not even the Labor Party could be so naive.

If we are to believe Senator Collins, and I have no reason not to even after the comments of the Minister for Transport and Works describing how the Senator's claims have not always been followed up, there can only be 2 explanations. Either the Territory's housing funds are not to be slashed or the federal government intends to make up the shortfall. It is pretty simple. I have to admit that I have serious doubts about our housing funding being maintained because the federal minister has made it very clear that he will not be changing his position. In that case, Senator Collins must have some information about our future funding levels which this government has not been informed of.

Senator Collins' promise is unequivocal. He says that the Territory will not be disadvantaged and that he and Warren Snowdon will be working to ensure this does not happen. I call on him to explain how he intends to keep that promise. The time has come. It is crunch time, Mr Speaker. The Senator and the federal member have to be called to account for the promises and undertakings they have given to Territorians for the past 4 or 5 years. Those promises have been accepted in good faith by the media and by the general public. But, the time has come. One must account for one's promises. We on

this side of the House have a record which is the envy of all governments around Australia. Commitments that we have given in the context of elections have been followed through continuously by members on this side of the House since we have held government. It is a record of which we can be very proud. We do not make claims on this side of the House unless we can carry them through.

Mr Smith: What about the shared equity scheme?

Mr MANZIE: I would suggest that you go back and read the Hansard because, obviously, you cannot remember what is said in this House.

Mr Smith: Where is it? Where is the shared equity coming from?

Mr MANZIE: If the honourable member reads the record he will find that I tabled a document. I said quite clearly that it was a matter for discussion and comment. We have not heard a peep, not one constructive peep!

Mr Smith: After 3 years, you still have not fulfilled your election promise.

Mr MANZIE: How much interest has the Leader of the Opposition taken? The discussion paper has been available for comment and we have not heard a squeak from him. He should read the Hansard and find out what is all about.

The 2 federal members have had the trust of the Territory community. People trusted those federal elected members. They expected them to fight for the Territory and they believed that any commitments they gave were fair dinkum and could be believed. We have had examples today of the disgraceful performance of the federal Labor government in relation to the airports and the claims made by our federal members which have been shown to be completely and utterly untrue. We have another example here. Our federal members have given a commitment in writing that the Territory will not be disadvantaged in its housing funding yet we have seen that the federal government is removing \$100m. The time has come for those federal members to explain to the community why they think they can give clear undertakings and then do something quite different. The time has come for the community to make decisions about the seats of those members and it will do so on the basis of the facts.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Land Clearing on Douglas Station

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah requested information from me regarding land clearing on Douglas Station. Section 48 of the Crown Lands Act requires pastoral lessees to notify me prior to commencing any land clearing for agricultural development. I have received written advice from the General Manager of Tipperary Station stating that a total area of approximately 30 000 ha of land adjacent to the western boundary of Douglas Station is to be cleared for improved pasture development. However, not all this land is expected to be cleared in the first year and chaining is the first step in the preparation of this land for the planting of improved pasture. This work has commenced and is being carried out under the direction of the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory. The Conservation Commission is producing a clearing plan which takes into account heritage, sacred sites, flora and fauna aspects.

Mr Speaker, I have had the advantage of observing the results of the work carried out at Tipperary. If this work comes up to half that standard, it will be absolutely outstanding because the work there is beyond what anyone could expect.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Land and Business Agents Act

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): The member for MacDonnell had a query regarding the Land and Business Agents Act. He asked me to provide information regarding claims against the Fidelity Guarantee Fund which operates under that act. The fund is established for the purposes of claims by persons who suffered pecuniary loss due to misappropriation of trust moneys by a licensed agent, the administration of the act and, with the consent of the minister, for educational schemes. There has been only one claim made. It was made in 1980 and involved payment of money as a deposit on a house. It was dismissed as the deposit was paid to a person who was not a licensed agent. In the past year, \$18 404 has been expended for educational schemes, \$10 946 for seminars conducted by the Real Estate Institute and \$7458 for lectures conducted by the University of the Northern Territory. At present, the fund stands at \$1.9m. Hopefully, we will see a few more educational programs.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Darwin Bus Service Strike

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I was asked a question this morning regarding the Darwin Bus Service. I wish to clarify one aspect of my answer to the question in regard to an alleged deal made in the Industrial Relations Commission yesterday. There was no deal nor any conclusion to the hearing yesterday. In fact, it was adjourned. I can advise that, in a conciliation meeting yesterday afternoon, in an attempt to come to an agreement, a proposition was put forward that receipts for bags would be issued and that there would be no liability by the drivers at all for a trial period of 2 months. That is totally unacceptable to the bus service and to the government. In fact, it would be in contravention of the Treasurer's requirements for control of moneys.

That proposition from the drivers was rejected. Following a meeting this morning, the drivers decided that they would not return to work. A commission hearing began at 10.30 am. The department is asking for a direction for the drivers to return to work on the basis that the system would be monitored and receipts issued for the lodgment of bags. The department is also inviting Commissioner Cross to examine the system. If he has any concern with security, there is an undertaking that the situation will be rectified.

The count is done on the same day and the balance of the tickets is done 5 days later. The drivers put in any misused tickets. That has to be fully balanced for each driver. The full assessment of shortfall and excess is not done until 3 months later. The driver has advice on the day. This system is in place with Buslink which is still operating. Its drivers do not have any difficulty with the system. I re-emphasise that it is a minor matter and, hopefully, it will be resolved in the commission today.

Directions to Departments to Reduce Spending

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Will the Treasurer confirm that Treasury has asked heads of departments to identify areas for cuts in recurrent expenditure this financial year? Can he confirm that, among the departments affected, are both police and Health and Community Services? Is he aware of deep concern within the Police Association that the government is continually burdening the force with fresh responsibilities without providing the resources to carry out those responsibilities, and can he now assure the association that there will be no cuts to the police budget and that the government will properly resource the force to meet the responsibilities being placed on it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any particular circulars issued by Treasury asking departments and authorities of the ...

Mr Smith: I am not talking about circulars.

Mr PERRON: ... Northern Territory government to make cuts in their approved allocations as processed by this Assembly during the budget session. I guess that answers the honourable member's question. Departments have not been asked to reduce their spending from the allocations made to them.

Ghan Services

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TOURISM

During the pilot's dispute, there has been only 1 Ghan train arriving in Alice Springs. Has the minister done anything about trying to have the railways provide extra services as an opportunity to expand business? Secondly, is the minister aware that a package allowing people to put their cars on the train and to travel on the train at very reasonable rates is being removed at a time when it should be expanded? People should be made aware that one could do that, particularly people who drive to the Centre and do not want to drive back. Will the minister examine those matters?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Sádadeen for his question. In fact, Australian National Railways only recently cancelled the second of the 2 weekly services into central Australia. Indeed, the 2 services played a vital role in central Australia during the height of the pilots' dispute and now things are starting slowly but surely to return to normal. It made a valuable contribution. Australian National Railways has advised that bookings for the trips have dropped off dramatically. As a result, it has ceased the second service until the tourist season starts in April of next year.

I was aware that the package deal which discounted the cost of a car being transported to Adelaide against the cost of a passenger fare. Its removal is to be regretted. On behalf of Territorians, I will take that up with Australian National Railways. I advise the honourable member that people coming into the Territory can still apply for that discount on their travel component that is advertised and offered by the Northern Territory through our tourist bureau offices in Adelaide.

Training Course for Drivers of Vehicles Carrying
Dangerous Goods

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory Work Health Authority recently developed a course for training drivers of vehicles carrying dangerous goods. I understand that the national Advisory Committee on the Transport of Dangerous Goods has shown some considerable interest in this. Can the minister advise whether or not there is a problem with this course?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a very good question. During these sittings, I outlined the range of activities of the Work Health Authority and the very good work it is doing in conjunction with industry in the Northern Territory to ensure that workplaces are safe. The course to which the honourable member refers was developed by the Work Health Authority in the Northern Territory over the last few years in close cooperation with the transport industry. The Northern Territory Fire Service was also involved in the preparation of the course. The course normally runs over a period of 2 days and covers aspects of safe handling and hazardous properties of a wide selection of chemicals and materials transported in bulk on Territory roads. It covers personal protection, spill combat, product segregation and safe transfer procedures for materials such as petroleum fuels, cyanide, ammonium nitrate, hydrogen peroxide and sulphuric acid - all of which are important to the mining industry - as well as a large range of other commercial chemicals in day-to-day use in the Territory. Of course, the member for Stuart knows a great deal about the transport of cyanide. After all, he transported it around in his pocket for a day or two on one occasion.

Mr Ede: No way in the world!

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, candidates for the course undergo technical training in the use of chemical fire extinguishers and self-contained breathing apparatus which is mandatory equipment with certain cargo. Standardised sets of exam questions are used to ensure that a uniformly high standard of competency is demonstrated by drivers qualifying for the Northern Territory Dangerous Goods Drivers Authorisation Certificate.

The good news about this course is that, after evaluating different procedures used in the states, territories and larger transport industries for accreditation of drivers transporting dangerous goods, the Advisory Committee on Transport of Dangerous Goods has now adopted the Northern Territory Work Health Authority training system and course outline as the basis for uniform training for the whole of Australia. This will now be the standard to be used by all states and territories awarding statutory licences for dangerous goods drivers.

Once again, I think that is a demonstration of the very good work being done by the Work Health Authority in the Northern Territory. Its efforts to bring about the safe handling of goods in the Northern Territory and safe practices in the workplace are second to none in Australia. In fact, as I indicated last week, they go far beyond this course which now has national accreditation. The authority is providing the service that it was set up to provide, not only in terms of policing practices but also as a leader in workplace safety in Australia.

Police Workloads

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES

Is the minister aware of serious concerns among police officers about their mounting workloads? Does he recognise that the government's decision to extend police powers in areas such as domestic violence puts more and more pressure on police? What does the minister intend to do to help police officers perform all the new jobs which the government has given to them?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that the honourable member has indicated his concern for the very significant workload which police in the Northern Territory carry on behalf of our community. The police have a job which is constantly becoming more complex and more demanding and I guess this has always been the case. As we sit in this Assembly so regularly, we pass laws which we expect that police force to become familiar with and to administer on our behalf in order that society might be a little better for it. I acknowledge that police in the Northern Territory have a heavy workload. A great deal is expected of them and they perform it very well. Indeed, they perform it brilliantly.

During the 11 years in which it has had the authority, this government has ensured that the Northern Territory Police Force has been well-resourced in terms of equipment and training. That is still our attitude. Our Police Commissioner is a most competent officer who is very highly regarded by his peers throughout Australia. He is doing an excellent job of changing the police force internally in ways he believes are appropriate in the context of modern crime trends and modern police administration practices. Of course, we have a very close relationship and the Northern Territory government will continue to ensure that the Northern Territory Police Force has the resources it needs to carry out its job.

In saying that, it is quite obvious that we cannot have the ideal situation wherein perhaps every citizen is protected by a police officer almost within calling distance or in which we can have patrols in all of our towns 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or where we can afford to put the numbers of detectives on to serious crime that we might like to. We all have to live within budgetary constraints. Over the last few years, the dollar amounts that we have received in order to do the job have been reducing and that has caused very great agony to the government in determining how the respective burdens of these reductions in funds should be spread across government services. The police are not immune from having to live within budget, as any other area of government activity is not immune, but they continue to receive our total confidence and support and, I hope, that of all honourable members.

Overpayment to School Nursing Sisters

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can he confirm whether at least one and possibly all of the sisters attached to high schools in the southern region have been overpaid substantially in their salary over a period of at least 12 months? Can he confirm whether this overpayment was a result of a clerical error in the salary section? Can he confirm whether steps are being taken to recover this money by the department and would the minister be prepared to consider waiving the requirement to repay the money, given that any overpayment was not attributable to the sisters themselves?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not able to confirm the matters raised by the member for Barkly. I will endeavour to obtain information during the course of question time and provide him with an answer.

Live Broadcasts of Southern Horse Races

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

The minister will be aware of the continued high level of interest in the racing industry in the Northern Territory as evidenced by the recent report of the TAB which indicated ever-increasing amounts of turnover. Much of that turnover is attributed to interest in southern racing. What steps has he taken to ensure live broadcasts of southern races will be continued in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm that much planning has been carried out by the TAB. My predecessor, the member for Araluen, and myself have been lobbied continuously by those who have an interest in betting and those who have an interest in racing itself. The current services provided to the Territory are somewhat limited and have become particularly so since the ABC limited its coverage on Saturdays. It is fair to say that race broadcasts are essential from a racing follower's point of view. Many people put it to me that, if they are not able to follow the race itself, racing has nowhere near the same appeal and, of course, that has an impact on the TAB.

For those reasons, the TAB set about obtaining its own broadcasting service. Interstate TABs own various radio stations and have their own broadcast system in place. All TABs, however, have a problem in providing race broadcasts to country areas. With the vast area it has to cover, the Northern Territory has similar difficulties. With support from Minister for Industries and Development and from my department, the TAB has pursued the utilisation of a spare radio channel on the Imparja satellite transponder to which the government can gain access by virtue of the on-payment of the Commonwealth annual grant to the Territory government for the purchase of satellite services from Imparja.

In January 1988, the Northern Territory TAB lodged an expression of interest in the provision of new or improved broadcasting of television services with the federal Department of Transport and Communications. What we were looking for was a limited broadcast licence. If granted, such a licence would provide a service via satellite. It would be limited to broadcasting of racing and other related information such as dividends, turf talks, scratchings etc. The time between racing broadcasts would simply be filled with music. No advertising or sponsorship would be available through that limited broadcast licence and the TAB would therefore not be competing with other radio stations.

With a federal election in the wind and following the very reasonable and well-argued case put by Territory officers, I have the greatest confidence that the proposal will be accepted, hopefully in the near future. One would expect that, immediately such approval is gained, we would be able to see an appropriate service put in place. Of course, that would allow existing radio stations to re-prioritise their broadcasting schedules to suit the broader community. Given that there is a federal election in the wind, I have the greatest confidence that our well-argued case will be agreed to.

Mrs Shirley Blackman

Mr BELL to TREASURER

I remind the Chief Minister of the plight of Alice Springs chiropractor, Mrs Shirley Blackman. Mrs Blackman was registered as a chiropractor in the Territory and her registration was withdrawn. I remind the Treasurer that she claimed losses of \$16 000. She was advised that the Department of Health and Community Services recommended \$10 000, but the Treasurer offered less than \$2000. To add insult to injury, she was told to obtain further qualifications in South Australia to ensure Northern Territory registration. She did that and was then told that she still would not be registered. My questions without notice to the Treasurer and the Chief Minister are as follows. Will the Chief Minister confirm that compensation of at least \$10 000 was recommended for Mrs Blackman? Will he confirm that that compensation in fact will be paid? Further, will the Chief Minister confirm that he will consider further compensation to Mrs Blackman because of the inaccurate and misleading information from his government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm that a recommendation was made for a payment of \$10 000 in this case. In answer to the second question, I cannot confirm whether that amount will be paid. I understand that an offer has been made to the woman concerned and that we are awaiting further advice from her in that regard.

Mr Bell: How much was the offer?

Mr PERRON: I do not think it is appropriate to reveal the personal details in this Assembly.

Mr Bell: \$1600, wasn't it?

Mr PERRON: Even if the honourable member proposes to reveal personal matters, I do not. In answer to his third question, which contained a facetious remark about the attitude of the Northern Territory government ...

Mr Bell: That is woeful, Marshall.

Mr PERRON: The honourable member, by way of interjection, claimed that the Northern Territory government was releasing misleading information. Of course, he did not provide any evidence of such misleading information.

Mr Bell: Obviously, you did not hear the adjournment debate last night.

Mr PERRON: We are pretty used to hearing allegations from the opposition without any substantiation whatsoever. The honourable member is simply carrying on a practice which his colleagues have indulged in for a very long time in this Assembly and I reject the inferences in his last question.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

The minister will have heard that a northern suburbs ALP candidate says that he has written to 2 federal ministers about Darwin's Trade Development Zone and the desire of the ALP in the Territory to turn the zone into a centre

for Australian high technology research and development. My question is this. Has this focus for the TDZ been examined by the government and is there merit in such a role for the zone?

ANSWER

I thank the member for his question. I do not wish to strip flesh from the bones of an eager beaver simply because he is a hopeful ALP candidate. It is interesting to note the apparent change of attitude to the Trade Development Zone by the Labor Party. However, it must be said that this particular vision of the Trade Development Zone is seriously flawed. The charge for a high-tech research and development frontier for Australia was led by the federal Minister for Science and Technology, Barry Jones, earlier this decade. Like General Custer, Barry Jones bit the dust. The federal government has lost hundreds of millions of dollars in the process and hundreds of small research and development companies launched with great hope went to the wall. There were many complex reasons for that, which I will not go into now, but the upshot was that the political career of Mr Jones ended up virtually in ruins. High-tech industries are also high-risk industries which gobble up research funds without any sort of ...

Mr Bailey: What about South Australia and the submarine contract?

Mr COULTER: Let us have a look at some of the states then. Let us have a look at WA Incorporated. Let us have a look at VDEC. What is high-tech about VDEC? The member for Wanguri now wants to express his vast knowledge on the subject of the Trade Development Zone.

Mr Leo: Go back to the script.

Mr COULTER: Get him to be a little more quiet and stop him from interjecting.

The fact is that VDEC went into high-tech industries and lost hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on things like cosmetics and computers. Australia's recent history is full of the failures of such ventures.

Mr Bailey: You are against high-tech?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I am certainly not against the principle of hosting Australian high-tech industries in the Darwin Trade Development Zone and, of course, the zone will always welcome applications from these or any Australian companies producing goods for export. They would receive the same package of incentives and entitlements as any of the successful zone tenants now operating. The reality, however, is that the zone will not receive a flood of applications from Australian high-tech industries, with or without the help or wishes of the Labor Party in the Territory, and with or without the revelations from the Bible according to Barry Jones.

In the decade of the 1990s, the Trade Development Zone will undergo spectacular growth based on production of goods in Darwin, with guaranteed export markets. Honourable members will be aware, from news and events of the past 2 to 3 weeks, that interest in investment in the zone, particularly from Hong Kong and China, is exceptionally high. The zone has moved into the highly desirable position of being able to choose from a range of proposals which promise virtually instant production performance. This is just what the Northern Territory needs at this time. It can be argued that Australia

urgently needs innovative performance extending the leading edge of technology, and even that this should be supported financially by the federal government. I support that wholeheartedly. However, the Northern Territory has more pragmatic needs at this stage of its development. We need to build up our manufacturing sector base substantially in the decade ahead. We need to create more jobs for Territorians. We need to generate more business for the Territory's existing business sector.

The Trade Development Zone is the flagship for just that sort of goal and it is doing the job superbly. It is not the time to depart from the successful approach and to wander down theoretical byways. The Labor Party in the Territory seems to have a problem with Asian investment in the zone. I do not know why, because it means new jobs and new business for the Territory, new opportunities which are not forthcoming from Canberra or anywhere else in Australia.

I note also that the Labor candidate has written in similar vein to the federal Industries and Commerce Minister, Senator Button. I have to tell the opposition that Senator Button is a great supporter of the Darwin Trade Development Zone in its current mode. He wrote to me a couple of weeks ago regretting that he had not had a recent chance to visit the zone and to catch up with latest developments, but that he would definitely do so at the earliest opportunity. Senator Button and the federal Immigration Minister, Senator Ray, have no problems at all with the way the Trade Development Zone is creating jobs and business and generating export income for Australia. The Labor Party in the Territory, on the other hand, although it has changed its previous policy of outright condemnation of the zone, still cannot seem to come to grips with reality. Perhaps it is just a matter of the Labor Party being told what to do and what to say by a particular trade union which has a highly visible vested interest.

Tourist Program

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TOURISM

Mr Speaker, I recently wrote to the honourable minister requesting him to consider a tourist program to sell the country to the city in the form of home, station or farm accommodation packages, not only for Northern Territory city people but for interstate and overseas tourists. Is he sympathetic to such a program and, if so, what are his intentions in respect of its implementation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. I have received her letter. She may not be aware that, in fact, 2 pastoral properties in central Australia have already commenced such initiatives. However, their success has been fairly limited. A copy of the honourable member's letter has been sent to the Tourist Commission for further advice and a meeting will be sought with the honourable member.

There is probably great potential for what is essentially a cottage industry to be developed into quite a considerable revenue-raiser for the Northern Territory. Honourable members would probably be aware that the tourist industry in central Australia virtually was started during a severe 7-year drought in the 1950s and early 1960s. As a result of the drought, pastoral properties attempted to raise revenue from other sources. They started to cater for passing motorists and that type of catering developed

into places such as the Curtin Springs roadhouse, other roadhouses and facilities on pastoral properties. As I said, I believe there is great potential in the industry. One of the problems is that people in the cattle industry have to be convinced of the potential and to divert their attentions from their primary concern which, particularly in central Australia - and I might say that I am a little biased about this - is raising some of the best beef in the world.

Loan to Texfern Pty Ltd

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

The minister would be aware that Texfern Pty Ltd, the owners of Middle Creek Station, received a \$100 000 loan convertible in 1992 to a grant under the Buffalo Development Loan Scheme. Is the minister aware that 2 of the directors and shareholders in Texfern Pty Ltd are public servants in his own Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries? Does the minister believe that it is right and proper for public servants to be the beneficiaries of soft loan grant schemes promoted and controlled by this government?

ANSWER

I am aware that Middle Creek Station received a buffalo development loan. Under the conditions of the loan, the applicants, like all applicants, submitted a proposal in an effort to obtain a loan. That fell within the requirements and the conditions set out therein whereby certain parameters have to be met over the life of the loan. I am not familiar with the identity of the owners of the station but I am happy to have the information checked. I have every confidence that, if a loan was granted, it would have been granted within the guidelines set out under the Buffalo Development Loan Scheme and the conditions required of applicants would have been met. It is a very successful scheme which has demonstrated the commitment of this government to the buffalo industry. I am sure that it will serve to establish a domesticated buffalo industry for the benefit of the Northern Territory and the buffalo industry. I will check further details and advise the honourable member.

Transfer of Teacher Librarians to Public Service

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

This morning, I was advised that teacher librarians around the Territory were being told by the office of the member for Wanguri that they would be transferred from the teaching service to the public service under public service conditions. Is this correct? Is the proposal set in concrete and, if so, what is the quid pro quo regarding such a transfer?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that a paper has been distributed to the teachers detailing a proposal of the government to fall in line with the restructuring involving the 3% increase and the necessary productivity trade-offs. In that document, a whole range of issues is outlined. One of them relates to the transfer that the honourable member mentioned. There is no element of compulsion involved. It will be negotiated with the principals of the schools and others to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. There is a whole range of matters in that paper which will be discussed and negotiated over a period of time. What we are trying to do is

to allow those people to receive more money in their pay packets. However, there are productivity implications and the matter will be negotiated over a period of 6 months.

Destruction of Trees in Uluru National Park

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I ask the minister to confirm that a number of mature desert oaks have been destroyed on the road to Ayers Rock within the national park, apparently to make way for construction of a facility within that park. Does the minister have any knowledge of this and can he offer any reasons why the ANPWS would do such a thing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can. I have had brought to my attention some photographs of a construction about 15 km from Ayers Rock in Uluru National Park. These photographs present a very sorry sight of a string of bulldozed desert oaks. Desert oaks can take well in excess of a century to reach maturity. They are a significant and important feature of the central Australian arid zone area and a very attractive feature. They are hardly in great abundance. One does not see giant forests at this time.

I carried out an investigation to see what the situation was and I have been advised that the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service was concerned that, on the receipts from entry fees to Uluru National Park, it was missing out on about 25% of the income because people were ignoring the service's existing entry station. Honourable members will remember also, in 1985 and 1984, the scandalous assaults on the integrity of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission conducted by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, accusing us of inefficiency and incompetence in not adequately collecting entry fees of about the same percentage. We argued at the time that the reason that was occurring was because it had not provided the capital works payments for an entry station where it should have been located at the entrance to the park, rather than where it is currently located. Of course, the ANPWS ignored that in its power push to grab control of the park for the Commonwealth for its own empire-building ends.

Be that as it may, the ANPWS finally decided to build this entry station about 15 km from Ayers Rock on the Yulara side of the turn-off to Docker River and Katatjuta. In doing so, it has built what looks like a very interesting curved structure of brick on a nice level area close to the road so that the cars can pull up conveniently and entry fees can be paid. Anyone who has been in the area will know that the desert oaks are a distinctive feature. With a bit of sensitive planning it would have been possible to find a site where it would not have been necessary to knock over mature desert oaks in the middle of a national park. It seems that the contractor and the ANPWS supervisor did not respond to that sensitivity and they have bowled over a group of these trees to locate the station. Apparently, the entry station is more important than the desert oaks in the national park.

I realise that, with the construction of roads and other facilities in the area, flora does have to be removed at times. However, a little planning can minimise the impact. The construction of the Lasseter Highway and the road to Ayers Rock by the Northern Territory government was designed to minimise damage and avoid trees. Similarly, the construction of roads in the Kings Canyon area was designed absolutely to minimise any destruction of a fine

stand of desert oaks in that area. In this instance, the entry station could have been located anywhere along a distance of the road. However, that was not good enough. The ANPWS found it necessary to knock over trees to locate it where the engineer or the contractor said he would feel comfortable putting it. I think that is an absolute disgrace.

Loan to Texfern Pty Ltd

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

With reference to my last question, I have now provided the Chief Minister with an extract from the Companies Office of the directors of the company that succeeded in gaining the loan. Does the Chief Minister accept that it is completely improper for public servants to be the beneficiaries of loans or grants from the Northern Territory government to fund their commercial activities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, could you clarify that the honourable member asked this question earlier?

Mr Ede: I asked it of the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries. I am asking the Chief Minister whether or not he thinks it is proper. The minister did not answer the question.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I am not familiar with this matter. A piece of paper appeared on my desk which I thought was destined for somebody else.

Mr Ede: It is a theoretical question. Is it proper or is it not?

Mr PERRON: Could the honourable member ask the question again?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable member for Stuart please repeat his question.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, my question to the Chief Minister is this. Does the Chief Minister accept that it is completely improper for public servants to be the beneficiaries of loans or grants from the Northern Territory government to fund their commercial activities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think it would depend entirely on the circumstances. I understand that the matter to which he is referring relates to what is called a buffalo development loan and, as all honourable members will be aware, the Northern Territory government has a policy of maximising numbers of domesticated buffalo in the Northern Territory prior to the end of BTEC. As part of this campaign, we allocated some \$2m to a series of loans to persons involved in the buffalo domestication industry. Those loans were aimed specifically at trying to maximise the numbers of animals that would be put behind wire and were directed specifically towards those people who have the ability to increase the domestication. When I say the 'ability', I am talking about ability by way of possession of appropriate properties for this to occur. As we all know, among the 15 300-odd public servants who work for the Northern Territory government, quite a few have involvement in businesses. I do not think that that is particularly unusual because, in fact, most people in the private sector who are working for other people are also ...

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr PERRON: ... entitled to have interests in private business as well. I do not see why - if the Leader of the Opposition would like to shut up for 5 minutes and listen to the answer, he might learn something ...

Mr Smith: Yes?

Mr PERRON: ... instead of constantly interjecting, Mr Speaker.

If the application submitted by these people fitted the criteria required to receive a buffalo domestication loan, I do not see why they should not receive it.

Tracy Village Complex Lease

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The minister will be aware of the longstanding issue of the lease of the Tracy Village complex from the Department of Defence. I believe that lease is due to expire at some time in 1991. Can he advise what action he and the Northern Territory government are taking to ensure the long-term security of tenure of the Tracy Village Club?

ANSWER

The question of secure tenure for the Tracy Village complex is of considerable concern to the Territory government and all Territorians who are either members of the club or have been involved in activities that the club supports. I am sure all honourable members are fully aware of the constant pressure that the former member for Wanguri put on the federal government in attempts to resolve this matter. He made untiring efforts in trying to ensure that the members of the Tracy Village club and the Territory community received some fair play and some honourable attention from the federal government in respect of trying to finalise the lease. The complex was constructed originally as a contractors' village on Department of Defence land following Cyclone Tracy. Since that time, the complex has been extended and run as a very successful social and sporting club. The area is leased by the department to the Darwin City Council which in turn subleases a section of it to other parties, including the Tracy Village club and the nearby Pandanus Caravan Park. In 1982, the club was given approval to extend its facilities but that approval was made only on the basis that the lease would not be extended. In the past, the Department of Defence has been consistent in its attitude that the current tenure would not be extended.

I am very pleased to note that there have been indications recently that the Commonwealth now accepts that some form of lease renewal is inevitable. In fact, I understand that the Minister for Administrative Services, Hon Stewart West, supports rationalisation of tenure over the area but he is yet to resolve the matter with the Minister for Defence, Hon Kim Beazley. It is clear that this matter would be addressed at a local level and I have written to both Mr West and Mr Beazley. I have suggested to the ministers that the most efficient solution to the problem would be for the Commonwealth simply to transfer the areas involved to the Northern Territory government. That would enable us quickly to put into place a secure tenure arrangement. There would be absolutely no problem at all. Most sporting or social clubs throughout the Territory and, for that matter, most commercial operations such as the Pandanus Caravan Park, enjoy security of tenure. Obviously, it is

highly desirable that those same arrangements should apply in this case, particularly in relation to such a successful facility as the Tracy Village club.

It is a deplorable situation. I certainly hope that my suggestion to the federal government receives favourable consideration. We are talking about an area of land which is now part of the northern suburbs. We are not talking about something on the edge although I suppose people in Canberra still believe Darwin is a backwater. They have no idea of the size of the city and the activities of people here. The ALP has been notorious for its neglect of the Northern Territory and for its disdain for the efforts of Territorians. This is merely another example of that indifference. There is absolutely no reason why security of tenure for this club and this area cannot be given. The reason can only be indifference or deliberate and mischievous intention.

Honourable members should also be aware of the previous member for Wanguri's efforts to have rear road access to the Royal Darwin Hospital through the defence area behind Tracy Village. This was required because of the possible problems that heavy rains would cause. This effort has been made for quite some time without any reaction from the Commonwealth. I am very pleased to note that Hon Stewart West is appearing to take a positive attitude to this. I recommend that the federal Defence Minister take a leaf out of his book and put an end to what has been a disgraceful situation over the last 15 years.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
Mr Don Dale

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence of a former member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Don Dale. I hope members will join with me in offering Mr Dale a warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

Industrial Relations Agreement with NT Teachers Federation

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Did his department and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation sign an Industrial Relations Commission agreement on 15 November - 2 weeks ago? Did members of his department, in the last week and a half, break that agreement through their actions in restructuring of the NT Secondary Correspondence School? Have they been notified of a breach of this Industrial Relations Commission agreement prior to a dispute?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any breach or dispute. In response to the question concerning the signing of the agreement, I point out that the Northern Territory Teachers Federation has issued a news release. I will read the first paragraph of that release:

It has come to our attention that, at at least one department briefing session of principals held yesterday in Darwin, it was claimed that the federation had agreed to this departmental proposal. This mischievous claim is untrue.

At the moment, Mike Bradley, the president of the federation is really running for cover because the agreement, in fact, was signed by both himself and the department. The federation claims that that was not the case. The fact is that the federation presented a document to the Industrial Relations Commission on 15 November 1989. I presume that is the document to which the honourable member refers. That document was signed by the federation president, Mr Mike Bradley, and the Commissioner of the Northern Territory Teaching Service, Mr David Hawkes.

The document contained a summary of the government's position on several matters involved in the award restructuring exercise. All matters in 'Teaching in Tomorrow's Territory' were covered in that summary. Mr Bradley not only signed the document, but told the Industrial Relations Commissioner that he had agreed to discuss the items on the agenda through working parties during the next 6 months. Further, he hoped that an agreement would be reached so that the second 3% would be awarded and some form of new structure would be agreed on.

Mr Ede: You are not answering the question. The question is whether the actions of the department in relation to the Secondary Correspondence School breached that agreement. It does not relate to discussions.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I believe that the member for Stuart's question is being answered.

Mr Ede: Wanguri.

Mr HARRIS: Wanguri. I have the member for Stuart on my mind at the moment. He misinforms the public continually ...

Mr Bailey: That is what you have just done.

Mr HARRIS: ... and I hope that the member for Wanguri is not going to start to carry out the same exercise.

Mr Bailey: What a pathetic answer.

Mr HARRIS: The situation is that the agreement in relation to 'Teaching in Tomorrow's Territory' was signed by both Mr Bradley and the department. Over a period of 6 months, there will be indeed a lot of discussion in relation to this issue. I would suggest that anyone who has a query in relation to the actual document should take that query to the Department of Education so that it is answered correctly without any scuttlebutt from the other side of the House trying to sink a negotiated position which, I believe, will offer teachers in the Northern Territory a far better deal than they would get in other places in terms of the total package that we are putting forward. I hope that, during the next 6 months, we will be able to negotiate that position and that teachers will see the benefit of the award restructuring process.

Darwin and Katherine Power Stations

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I understand that the Darwin and Katherine Power Stations are now connected by a privately-owned transmission line. Can the honourable minister tell us whether this provides consumers with any greater benefits in terms of electricity supply?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it certainly does bring about substantial benefits and it is easy to demonstrate that. The transmission line linking Darwin and Katherine was completed more than a month ago by Balfour Beatty Power Construction and, on 10 November, the last of a series of tests to check protection circuits was conducted. Loading tests were then scheduled until mid-December. However, on the Sunday morning of 12 November, one of the generators at the Katherine Power Station developed a major electrical fault, resulting in a requirement to shut down the station from Monday 13 November. This is disappointing indeed because the Katherine Power Station has been built only recently. It is a little over a year old and the generator sets are brand new. However, a major fault has developed in one of the alternators.

Test equipment was immediately removed from the new transmission line and power flowed to Katherine from Darwin on that Sunday afternoon. All Katherine's power has since been supplied from Channel Island Power Station in Darwin since then. The advantage, of course, is that the Power and Water Authority can concentrate on repairing the failed generator in the knowledge that uninterrupted power is still available. The power supply from Darwin is remarkably immune from interruption by storms and is, in fact, a superior method of power delivery. What this all means for consumers in the Katherine region is that all bases are covered. Katherine has had a fairly chequered history in relation to reliable electricity supply. All that is now in the past.

It is also good news for consumers in the Batchelor and Adelaide River areas because part of the Darwin to Katherine transmission system is a substation at Manton with interconnectors to the Woodcutters Mine, Batchelor and Adelaide River. The effect of these interconnections is that the length of the low voltage line to Batchelor and Adelaide River has been reduced considerably. That means that consumers can expect a much-reduced risk of outages because of lightning strikes, tree falls, fruit bats and other line problems. There is no need for Power and Water Authority officers to travel the 70 km of line which they had to travel before to identify faults, sometimes in the middle of the night under severe conditions including lightning strikes and very heavy downpours.

An additional line, which has been recently completed, connects Pine Creek and the Cosmo Howley goldmine, providing further backup to both these systems. It is all part of the government's overall energy strategy to build a reliable power grid with sufficient emergency backup through the main residential and industrial centres of the Top End. The grid will keep on extending to take in existing and new mining operations and, the further it goes and the more power that is generated from gas turbines, the greater the ultimate cost advantages to the Power and Water Authority and the taxpayer.

It was with some regret that, on the very day that the Katherine line was energised, I was not able to switch over the Jabiru transmission line. I believe that there is absolutely nothing to stop that line from proceeding. We have had arguments from Senator Richardson about the environmental impact of the line through the park. It is absolute nonsense. In every national park around the world and in Australia, there are transmission lines. This would have made a big impact on the cost of electricity and the savings that could have been passed on to Northern Territory consumers. It is regrettable that we could not connect the Jabiru transmission line at the same time when the Katherine line was connected. We hope that the alternator at Katherine will be repaired in the very near future. There will be considerable

insurance claims. There may even be some legal challenges in respect of the faulty alternator.

The privately-owned power transmission line that now links Darwin and Katherine is a first for the Northern Territory. It heralds an opportunity for private enterprise to become involved in these types of ventures in the future. We now have 2 privately-owned power stations on the route to Katherine. One is at the Cosmo Howley mine, which is operated by TMOC, and the other is at Pine Creek. The latter was not there 12 months ago, but today is the second largest power station in the Northern Territory. It augurs well for consumption of gas to reduce electricity prices and to guarantee supplies to all industries and all citizens of the Northern Territory at prices better than or equal to those in other states.

Costs of Incentive Package for Public Service

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

When will he be able to provide, to use his terms, a detailed listing of the costs involved in his recently-announced incentive package? Why is he unable to provide those costs now? From which division within the budget will the finances, which will be necessary to fund those costs, be provided?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have some information that may or may not keep the honourable member happy about the total costs of the package that has been announced by the government. Firstly, I point out that the package of incentives that we have provided to improve recruitment and retention is separate from the 3% salary increase. I will indicate both figures. The cost of the 3% salary increase is approximately \$15.5m. This should not be included in the package price because, obviously, the 3% would have flowed to employees regardless of the incentives package being developed, provided certain conditions are met.

Mr Smith: The first 3% starts next week. It has been approved.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the total annual costs of the incentive package in 1989 dollars is estimated to be \$2.835m, although many of the costs will not become payable immediately. In a number of cases, there is a period of eligibility prior to the advantage being taken. It should be remembered that these costs will be offset by outcomes of the exercise. This in part answers the final question by the honourable member about where the money will come from.

It may surprise honourable members that the estimated expenditure on interstate recruitment last financial year was \$10m. A further \$1m was spent on local recruitment. If this incentive package can reduce recruitment needs by even one-third, nearly \$4m will be saved, a figure which in fact is greater than the total of the incentive package. Obviously, the government does not know by how much turnover will be reduced. There is a requirement for the Public Service Commissioner to report to Cabinet in 12 months on the success of the package in reducing recruitment requirements and improving retention.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr BAILEY (Wanguri)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the statement by the member for Sadadeen that my office had been ringing teacher librarians stating that their positions will be transferred to the public service is incorrect.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr BELL (MacDonnell)(by leave): Mr Speaker, during question time, the Chief Minister accused me of 'releasing inaccurate information'. In order to establish my case, I seek leave to table a number of documents in respect of the shabby treatment which the Chief Minister and the Treasurer have extended to Mrs Shirley Blackman. I wish to table a letter from the Registrar of The Chiropractors Registration Board that acknowledges the registration of Mrs Blackman in February 1987. I table a letter from the Chairman of the Board, Dr Keith Fleming, in June 1987, rescinding that registration.

Leave granted.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table a further 2 letters from the Ombudsman to Mrs Blackman. One letter indicates that the Department of Health and Community Services was prepared to recommend a \$10 000 payment. A further letter from the Ombudsman, dated 6 months later, indicates that the Treasurer was prepared to pay only \$1644. I wish to table an unsigned release sent to Mrs Blackman in the name of the Northern Territory saying that, if she was prepared to accept \$1644, she should release the government from any further obligation. Further, to indicate to the Chief Minister that I was not releasing inaccurate information, I wish to table a copy of Mrs Blackman's registration with the Chiropractors Board of South Australia and a certificate of registration from the Chiropractors Board of South Australia that she was forced to seek because of what I described quite accurately in question time as misleading, inaccurate advice from the Chief Minister's government.

Leave granted.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Overpayment to School Nursing Sisters

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, the member for Barkly asked a question about the salary of a school nursing sister. The person to whom the honourable member was referring has been overpaid by the Alice Springs office since 8 August 1988. Other school sisters have also been overpaid since that date. Overpayment occurred when the Nurses Federation negotiated a new salaries structure with the Public Service Commissioner. This resulted in school nurses receiving a lower allowance as sisters in charge from 8 August 1988. The full allowance has continued to be paid.

Once aware of the overpayment, the salaries section explained the situation to all nurses employed as school sisters. All except the particular person to whom I refer accepted the situation and made arrangements to make the required payment. The Treasurer's Directions dictate recovery of overpayment backdated to 12 months. When overpayments occur for more than 12 months, recovery action occurs only for the last 12 months. This particular person was not asked to repay the full overpayment - that is, she can keep the overpayment from the period of 8 August 1988 until 24 November 1988.

It was explained to this person that she had 3 options for repayment. The first was a lump sum deduction from salary. The second was a cheque to the Receiver of Public Moneys for total overpayment. The third was 10% of gross fortnightly salary and this can be negotiated if necessary. The person was not told that she had to complete the payment by the end of the financial year. The person had been overpaid because of a communication error, but she will benefit by being allowed to retain the overpayment for the period from 8 August 1988 to 24 November 1988.

The salary error was unfortunate. Honourable members will know that we do not have a perfect system. Every care is taken to ensure that mistakes are kept to a minimum and, where errors do occur, all care is taken to fully explain the repayment options to the staff involved.

Secondary School Enrolments in Alice Springs

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, during the course of the sittings the member for Sadadeen asked me a question about secondary school enrolments in Alice Springs. In junior secondary, the mean total enrolment level reached a peak in 1984 and it has declined marginally since then. This decline is hard to explain because primary enrolments within Alice Springs have continued to increase slightly over this period. A slight fall in the retention rates into junior secondary has resulted because students in this age group have shown a tendency towards leaving the area. However, more noticeable is the trend of students moving to non-government schools. This trend has been particularly noticeable since 1989 with the opening of the St Phillip's College in Alice Springs.

In the senior secondary area, enrolments have increased in recent years, reaching a peak in 1988. However, despite another increase in retention rates being projected, the enrolment levels are expected to fall in 1990 because of small current class sizes in Years 10 and 11. These declines in the number of secondary school students are expected to be experienced only within the short term and, more generally, over the next 4 years, a 2% or 3% growth is expected.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I have effectively been called a liar by the member for Wanguri this morning. I would like to put on the record that I was telephoned by a teacher librarian this morning. I have met this lady only recently and she is teaching in a Darwin school. She said that she was approached by a lady claiming to be the secretary for the member for Wanguri and told that the story that I put over ...

Mr Bailey: My secretary's name is Andrew.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wanguri will remain silent during the member's personal explanation.

Mr COLLINS: The lady told me that she was approached by a person. That person claimed to be the secretary for the member for Wanguri and gave the information that I gave in a question that I asked of the minister this morning. I asked the minister whether the information was correct.

Mr Bailey: I keep a permanent file on the staff.

Mr COLLINS: If you want a statutory declaration, I will get you one of those too.

Mr Bailey: My secretary is male.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Loan to Texfern Pty Ltd

Mr REED (Primary Industry and Fisheries): Mr Speaker, I wish to supply some more information in relation to a question asked by the member for

Stuart. I can confirm that 2 officers of the department are involved in a company that operates the Middle Creek Buffalo Station. They are Mr K. Small and Mr D. Thompson. In applying for a buffalo development loan, both officers declared their interests and these were considered by the department and myself. Mr Small and Mr Thompson advised the Secretary of the Department of Industries and Development, as it was at the time, of their pecuniary interest in the matter. The secretary has advised that he sees no conflict of interest in relation their application.

The application was assessed on the selection criteria set down for the Buffalo Development Scheme, and I see no difficulty with the involvement at this time. It is encouraging to see people with expertise becoming involved in the industry and it would behove the member for Stuart to support the industry rather than continually criticise it. The more people with expertise that we can get into the industry, the better it will be for the industry in the Northern Territory. The member for Stuart simply wants to rise in this House on every possible occasion to criticise people in the industry who are performers and to support those who purport to be in the industry. The member for Stuart should be ashamed of himself. I believe that the people concerned require and should receive all the support that they can get because they are developing the industry and assisting the Northern Territory.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

16 May 1989

87. BTEC Payments to Mr Dunbar

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In the 'Letters to the Editor' section of the Sunday Territorian dated 23 April 1989 you stated that Mr B. Dunbar 'has received more than \$500 000 of BTEC funds to assist him in fulfilling the scope of his agreed program, as well as \$130 000 in low-interest BTEC loans'.

What were the -

- (a) various purposes under which these amounts were provided;
- (b) exact amounts involved;
- (c) works required from Mr Dunbar in respect of each of (a) and (b) above;
- (d) full details of the extent of the works carried out in respect of each of the above by Mr Dunbar as at 23 April 1989; and
- (e) details of outstanding works or moneys on behalf of Mr Dunbar or the Northern Territory government.

22 August 1989

90. Loans Converted to Grants

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Which organisations have, in the past 12 months, had loans from the Northern Territory government changed to grants.

In each case, what was the amount.

20 February 1990

**109. Power and Water Consumption
Communities in MacDonnell Electorate**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. How much -

(a) power; and

(b) water,

was consumed from 1 October 1987 to 30 June 1988 in the following communities -

Areyonga	Atitjere
Docker River	Finke
Hermannsburg	Ikuntji
Imanpa	Ipolera
Iwupataka	Kintore
Maryvale	Mt Liebig
Papunya	Santa Teresa
Wallace Rock Hole	Yulara.

2. Which authorities on these communities were charged.

3. How much did each of these pay.

4. How much, if any, was deducted from other government grants to those organisations in lieu of payment.

113. Mr L. Williams - Settlement

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

From which budgetary allocations was an out-of-court settlement paid to Mr Les Williams, Assistant Secretary, Department of Lands and Housing.

114. Liquor Licence Applications

Mr EDE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

1. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for new liquor licences have been -

(a) approved; and

(b) rejected,

by the Liquor Commission.

2. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for renewals of liquor licences have been rejected by the Liquor Commission.

3. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
4. For each year 1985 to 1988 how many applications for -
 - (a) new;
 - (b) renewal; and
 - (c) changes,to licence conditions were opposed by commercial or community interests.
5. Of the opposed proposals, how many were ultimately granted.

115. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

116. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

117. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

118. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

119. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

120. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.

2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

121. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

122. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

123. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

124. Perpetual Leasehold Pastoral Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. What are the names and respective areas of pastoral leases converted to perpetual leasehold since legislation was introduced.
2. Which of the above properties had recommendations by the Director of Conservation under section 48A(1) of the Crown Lands Act recommending the reservation of areas for public interest.
3. Which of these properties had reservations of part of the lands for the public interest advised under section 48(5) of the Crown Lands Act.
4. What was the size of each of the reservations.
5. Since 1983, how many lessees of pastoral properties have had notices served under section 24A(1) of the Crown Lands Act and how many of these notices have resulted in forfeiture under subsection (4) of section 24(a) of that act.

125. Northern Territory Supreme Court Appeals

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Against which verdicts of the Northern Territory Supreme Court did the Crown appeal in -

- (a) 1987;
- (b) 1988; and
- (c) 1989.

22 August 1989

92. Liquor Licences

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What were, by type, the number of liquor licences extant as at 31 December 1988 for each year since the Liquor Commission was established in 1979 in -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) balance of the Northern region.

2. Are holders of Special Licences required to provide a return detailing sales under the Special Licence.

3. How many applications for new liquor licences have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the commission in each year since its establishment.

4. How many applications for renewal of liquor licences have been rejected by the commission in each year since its establishment.

5. In each year since the Liquor Commission was established, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected.

6. How many applications for -
 - (a) new licences;
 - (b) licence renewal; and
 - (c) changes to licence conditions,were opposed by commercial or community interest. Of the opposed proposals, how many were ultimately granted, in each year since the commission was established.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

7. What was the volume of beer, wine and spirits respectively sold in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) the balance of the Northern region; and
 - (f) the balance of the Southern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
8. What has been the annual amount collected by the Northern Territory government in liquor licence and related licence fees since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
9. What was the wholesale value of beer, wine and spirits respectively purchased by licensees in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) the balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) the balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
10. How many liquor licences have been suspended or cancelled for breaches of licence conditions in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) the balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) the balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979 and what were their reasons for the suspension or cancellation.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

11. How many prosecutions of licensees were -
- (a) commenced; and
 - (b) successful,
- for the offences of serving alcohol to minors or to intoxicated persons in each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.
12. What was the per capita consumption by Territory residents of beer, wine and spirits respectively in -
- (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Alice Springs;
 - (c) Katherine;
 - (d) Tennant Creek;
 - (e) the balance of the Southern region; and
 - (f) the balance of the Northern region,
- for each year since the establishment of the Liquor Commission in 1979.

ANSWER

Much of the information sought is not available in table form. Extensive research and investigation of each individual file would be necessary to extract this information. Where possible available data has been provided, however should the additional information be required it would require setting aside an individual officer within the Commission for up to 10 weeks to provide it.

Question 1.

1979	Roadside Inns	32
	Clubs	63
	Off Licences	121
	On Licences	<u>69</u>
	TOTAL	<u>285</u>
1980	Roadside Inns	33
	Clubs	62
	Off Licences	112
	On Licences	<u>81</u>
	TOTAL	<u>288</u>

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

1981	Roadside Inns	33
	Clubs	55
	Off Licences	106
	On Licences	<u>97</u>
	TOTAL	<u>291</u>
1982	Roadside Inns	32
	Clubs	57
	Off Licences	102
	On Licences	<u>103</u>
	TOTAL	<u>294</u>
1983	Hotels	24
	Private Hotels	28
	Taverns	5
	Restaurants	44
	Vessels	3
	Construction Camps	6
	Stores	77
	Liquor Merchants	18
	Other Off Licences	4
	Clubs	69
	Roadside Inns	<u>31</u>
	TOTAL	<u>309</u>
1984 - On Licences		
	Hotels	29
	Taverns	8
	Private Hotels	23
	Restaurants	43
	Theatres	1
	Nightclubs	1
	Winerys	1
	Vessels	2
	Construction Camps	6
1984 - Off Licences		
	Stores	75
	Liquor Merchants	19
	Other Off Licences	3
	Clubs	68
	Roadside Inns	<u>33</u>
	TOTAL	<u>312</u>

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

1985 - On Licences	
Hotels	28
Taverns	12
Private Hotels	22
Restaurants	45
Theatres	1
Nightclubs	1
Winerys	1
Vessels	1
Construction Camps	4
Others	5
1985 - Off Licences	
Stores	76
Liquor Merchants	17
Others	2
Clubs	65
Roadside Inns	<u>34</u>
TOTAL	<u>314</u>
1986 - On Licences	
Hotels	28
Taverns	9
Private Hotels	29
Restaurants	42
Theatres	1
Nightclubs	1
Winerys	1
Vessels	3
Construction Camps	3
Others	15
1986 - Off Licences	
Stores	78
Liquor Merchants	15
Others	3
Clubs	59
Roadside Inns	<u>34</u>
TOTAL	<u>321</u>
1987 - On Licences	
Hotels	28
Private Hotels	28
Taverns	12
Private Clubs	1
Restaurants	43
Vessels	3
Construction Camps	5
Others	22

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

1987 - Off Licences	
Stores	78
Liquor Merchants	14
Others	3
Clubs	62
Roadside Inns Serviced	26
Roadside Inns Unserviced	<u>7</u>
TOTAL	<u>332</u>

1988 - On Licences	
Public Hotels	32
Private Hotels	29
Taverns	16
Private Clubs	1
Restaurants	47
Vessels	4
Construction Camps	6
Others	24

1988 - Off Licences	
Stores	75
Liquor Merchants	11
Others	3
Clubs	62
Roadside Inns Serviced	7
Roadside Inns Unserviced	<u>26</u>
TOTAL	<u>343</u>

Question 2.

Yes.

Question 3.

From 1 January 1989 to date, five (5) applications have been granted and seven (7) applications have been rejected. Extensive research and investigation of each individual file would be necessary to extract and provide information prior to 1989.

Question 4.

From 1 January 1989 to date, no renewals have been rejected. Extensive research and investigation of each individual file would be necessary to extract and provide information prior to 1989.

Question 5.

From 1 January 1989 to date, two (2) applications for change of licence conditions to provide for takeaway sales have been approved and three (3) have been refused. Extensive research and investigation of each individual file would be necessary to extract and provide information prior to 1989.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question 6.

From 1 January 1989 to date, (a) nine (9) applications were opposed by commercial and or community interest; (b) one (1) renewal application was opposed by community interests; and (c) one (1) application for changes to licence conditions was opposed by community interests. Five (5) of these applications were ultimately granted. Extensive research and investigation of each individual file would be necessary to extract and provide information prior to 1989.

Question 7.

Data is only available for Northern and Southern regions for the periods 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1989. The information has however been broken down into the fourteen (14) licence categories. These licence categories consist of -

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 01 | Public Hotel |
| 02 | Private Hotel |
| 03 | Tavern |
| 04 | Private Club |
| 05 | Restaurant |
| 06 | Vessel |
| 07 | Construction Camp |
| 08 | On Licence - Other |
| 09 | Storekeeper |
| 10 | Off Licence - Liquor Merchant |
| 11 | Off Licence - Other |
| 12 | Roadside Inn |
| 13 | Roadside Inn - Serviced |
| 14 | Club - Non Profit |

(See tables on following pages).

1.7.85-30.6.86	L I T R E S						ORDINARY	LOW
	WINE		SPIRITS	BEER		ALCOHOL	ALCOHOL	
LICENCE TYPE	Ord	Low Alcohol		Ord Bulk	Ord Packaged	Low Alcohol	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$
NORTHERN REGION								
01	919 486	1 156	189 222	883 237	6 121 924	166 681	14 877 706.47	243 379.97
02	24 496	88	5 904	2 917	74 252	2 666	316 510.67	2 847.40
03	182 010		55 104	576 292	1 422 215	51 682	3 920 751.83	66 267.59
04	3 053		2 765	7 209	13 342	1 278	93 143.76	1 824.14
05	117 105	28	11 520	2 451	126 115	8 007	969 402.16	11 182.25
06	2 836		269	1 296	6 461	277	21 018.24	492.00
07	3 274		931	3 483	61 362	954	110 831.51	1 362.75
08	18 915		4 635	8 328	358 282	2 011	736 062.52	2 916.94
09	1 496 346	1 318	181 208	106 700	7 337 461	244 506	15 372 038.36	388 176.43
10	78 570	79	18 109	12 443	1 109 778	105 990	2 147 396.68	147 936.66
11	609		167	66	166 797	612	256 959.39	878.18
12	70 236	48	19 887	21 181	810 065	6 313	1 631 165.50	7 313.45
13	28 903		16 273	23 190	370 492	4 656	759 366.18	6 437.32
14	228 415	255	75 171	658 998	2 990 763	157 582	6 963 305.10	183 816.08

1.7.85-30.6.86	L I T R E S						ORDINARY	LOW
	WINE		SPIRITS	BEER		ALCOHOL	ALCOHOL	
LICENCE TYPE	Ord	Low Alcohol		Ord Bulk	Ord Packaged	Low Alcohol	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$
SOUTHERN REGION								
01	465 467	72	71 250	224 333	1 738 767	18 891	4 809 106.14	24 433.73
02	27 069	15	5 465	6 054	72 881	1 769	320 914.43	2 502.65
03	29 833	180	10 475	22 230	174 323	2 880	517 309.38	5 441.00
05	20 047	401	3 010	921	27 944	297	187 070.86	855.69
07	173		70		16 596		26 087.63	
08	40 681	267	9 671	37 885	113 677	1 422	532 913.19	2 730.14
09	871 113	1 827	76 644		2 881 888	47 907	6 604 005.33	59 916.26
10	29 151		5 070	7 153	224 298	2 564	520 892.50	3 680.22
12	13 795	216	9 164	17 492	367 880	7 767	780 263.01	9 140.22
13	3 293		3 927	22 869	165 492	22 635	348 595.92	23 424.77
14	58 938		53 226	314 129	906 910	21 063	2 387 427.42	21 103.41
TOTALS	4 733 814	5 950	829 137	2 960 857	27 659 965	880 410	65 210 244.18	1 218 059.25

1.7.86-30.6.87

LICENCE TYPE	L I T R E S						ORDINARY	LOW
	WINE		SPIRITS	BEER		ALCOHOL	ALCOHOL	
	Ord	Low Alcohol		Ord Bulk	Ord Packaged	Low Alcohol	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$
NORTHERN REGION								
01	1 061 363	630	206 421	810 990	5 963 171	114 752	16 903 204.34	172 670.30
02	25 206		5 271	2 690	77 550	2 394	371 333.87	4 209.32
03	278 508		68 654	704 948	1 911 548	46 614	5 832 548.83	67 349.18
04	3 259		2 958	6 735	15 546	729	107 182.97	1 087.12
05	106 066	5	10 260	2 557	126 241	5 714	1 020 971.29	8 581.52
06	2 360		278		9 986		26 518.49	
07	6 153		4 169	3 945	139 462	954	313 595.33	1 516.51
08	19 110		5 801	417	478 014	9 942	1 059 254.09	7 592.41
09	2 479 453	2 815	246 988	54 915	6 492 619	201 276	16 197 455.37	318 258.90
10	77 397		52 884	15 819	913 792	51 680	1 970 973.14	78 992.41
11	378		63		144 837	1 098	242 809.26	1 741.40
12	93 538		22 774	13 925	1 002 823	12 358	2 367 442.35	16 825.06
13	36 734		8 949	19 912	434 594	4 941	894 561.18	7 931.98
14	274 263	126	73 547	386 671	2 988 446	119 120	7 303 683.77	169 551.52

1.7.86-30.6.87 LICENCE TYPE	L I T R E S						ORDINARY ALCOHOL	LOW ALCOHOL
	WINE Ord	Low Alcohol	SPIRITS	Ord Bulk	BEER Ord Packaged	Low Alcohol	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$
SOUTHERN REGION								
01	439 446	216	63 212	149 722	1 576 475	17 711	4 602 232.43	28 177.21
02	29 884	107	7 155	10 214	101 959	1 719	458 684.48	2 803.75
03	46 323		15 203	57 388	251 560	7 290	859 514.76	11 735.35
05	23 329	53	4 369	1 619	29 233	855	233 605.38	1 602.26
07	1 338		144		18 558	1 710	36 297.27	2 195.50
08	42 576	27	10 278	85 171	102 069	1 935	650 451.31	2 541.73
09	1 016 881	1 120	100 233	159 716	2 803 523	28 049	7 817 076.63	44 025.38
10	17 058		4 613	8 100	219 855	495	445 264.13	873.16
12	14 876	22	8 613	15 651	374 659	1 944	818 301.50	2 945.59
13	4 011		4 383	26 648	159 831	14 958	357 635.64	23 051.51
14	67 536	180	36 549	264 634	983 914	22 143	2 763 442.65	29 641.96
TOTALS	6 167 044	5 307	963 769	2 802 387	27 320 265	670 381	73 654 040.46	1 005 901.03

1.7.87-30.6.88

LICENCE TYPE	L I T R E S						ORDINARY	LOW
	WINE		SPIRITS	BEER		ALCOHOL	ALCOHOL	
	Ord	Low Alcohol		Ord Bulk	Ord Packaged	Low Alcohol	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$
NORTHERN REGION								
01	1 007 678	2 369	201 108	708 432	5 805 521	65 633	17 005 979.55	111 602.42
02	25 234		5 380	3 154	84 042	789	400 844.18	1 492.64
03	324 566		266 095	668 411	2 047 811	26 580	6 590 828.80	44 201.82
04	1 816		1 809	6 439	3 950		63 307.28	
05	103 162	168	9 658	1 984	131 734	3 444	1 119 869.38	6 315.30
06	2 787		214		14 634	9	42 877.69	15.39
07	3 383		3 568	4 685	108 393	459	239 723.06	766.70
08	23 059		6 602	46 004	425 916	3 690	1 003 274.48	5 866.61
09	1 559 465	1 471	190 789	168 368	6 362 237	141 721	17 390 776.53	243 196.50
10	77 547		14 693	732	797 136	15 714	1 824 444.30	25 228.70
11	942		39	48	132 359	1 341	239 871.53	2 265.88
12	84 081		23 743	30 312	1 150 187	7 471	2 668 083.96	12 315.34
13	29 700	129	11 903	10 503	420 695	4 653	1 034 671.44	7 946.53
14	261 733	102	66 424	330 156	3 031 684	93 237	7 707 813.72	147 871.42

LICENCE TYPE	L I T R E S						ORDINARY ALCOHOL	LOW ALCOHOL
	WINE Ord	Low Alcohol	SPIRITS	Ord Bulk	BEER Ord Packaged	Low Alcohol	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$
SOUTHERN REGION								
01	426 054	4 874	54 129	191 676	1 563 877	9 431	4 883 943.74	16 589.32
02	44 627	3	12 101	16 021	120 175	3 312	640 344.63	5 532.51
03	49 431	196	19 280	91 722	369 292	4 536	1 284 827.72	7 521.10
05	29 891	150	2 774	4 946	33 614	882	256 320.57	1 793.58
07	1 700		153		20 074	459	45 232.43	778.07
08	50 523	51	10 672	92 651	128 722	4 761	841 152.69	7 337.56
09	1 024 359	1 105	86 391	732	2 882 032	24 588	8 203 998.86	44 254.51
10	33 406		7 122	10 331	295 560	3 888	677 014.58	3 166.41
12	33 049		10 212	7 974	409 903	1 572	986 054.88	1 536.59
13	4 016		5 217	12 884	180 994	6 768	400 591.56	11 442.88
14	76 951	173	31 017	228 588	815 933	16 920	2 576 612.57	26 880.68
TOTALS	5 279 160	10 791	1 041 093	2 636 753	27 336 475	441 858	78 128 460.13	735 918.46

1.7.88-30.6.89

LICENCE TYPE	L I T R E S						ORDINARY ALCOHOL	LOW ALCOHOL
	WINE		SPIRITS	BEER		SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	
	Ord	Low Alcohol		Ord Bulk	Ord Packaged			Low Alcohol
NORTHERN REGION								
01	897 414	4 659	223 131	719 151	5 754 249	76 070	17 514 376.44	60 801.09
02	18 542		5 177	1 423	72 751	855	364 905.64	1 253.93
03	253 399		80 614	593 725	2 238 260	16 047	6 822 271.96	23 310.59
04	1 367		1 198	5 620	6 315		56 773.76	
05	97 602		9 312	1 918	141 612	2 293	1 205 425.78	3 365.10
06	6 658		1 045	765	7 091		27 663.17	
07	1 675		1 297	2 923	56 720	4 006	115 551.16	6 283.73
08	18 573		5 842	7 379	466 342	3 420	1 044 160.26	5 311.86
09	1 280 029	1 225	190 487	484 660	5 913 557	114 303	17 283 972.97	175 443.76
10	67 589		50 277	46 104	813 007	12 445	1 872 383.61	16 891.69
11	462		58		114 666		203 934.84	
12	68 796	34	22 049	70 434	934 584	4 853	2 281 613.88	8 369.58
13	38 528		16 657	18 444	464 412	2 843	1 181 326.10	4 394.62
14	245 737	109	68 847	353 160	2 907 819	66 106	7 357 131.51	93 197.03

LICENCE TYPE	L I T R E S						ORDINARY	LOW
	WINE		SPIRITS	Ord Bulk	BEER		ALCOHOL	ALCOHOL
	Ord	Low Alcohol			Ord Packaged	Low Alcohol	SUBJECT TO FEE \$	SUBJECT TO FEE \$
SOUTHERN REGION								
01	441 815	89	62 999	165 033	1 687 540	18 969	5 278 299.71	29 264.76
02	34 958		6 286	7 635	85 699	2 302	452 212.24	1 737.04
03	47 452		19 708	85 860	441 211	3 735	1 352 430.85	5 526.72
05	42 844	11	5 606	6 832	100 073	743	406 360.09	1 055.06
07	2 075		420	158	30 404	459	69 878.01	692.13
08	42 311		12 907	101 121	130 714	2 115	896 673.47	4 898.17
09	913 802	136	72 938	213 224	2 374 711	16 655	7 454 991.42	25 168.08
10	47 576		3 712	810	292 180	1 384	498 812.12	1 606.69
12	54 881		8 428	40 917	331 529	271	954 399.04	725.26
13	2 684		3 600	316	173 720	5 481	359 724.84	8 082.23
14	70 207	28	44 334	220 548	854 477	6 132	2 620 277.89	8 597.62
TOTALS	4 696 976	6 291	916 929	3 148 160	26 393 643	361 486	77 675 550.76	485 976.74

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question 8.

31 July 1979	\$ 1 459 965
31 July 1980	\$ 1 114 530
31 July 1981	\$ 1 976 163
31 July 1982	\$ 2 260 254
31 July 1983	\$ 2 907 430
31 July 1984	\$ 3 485 665
31 July 1985	\$ 4 035 724
31 July 1986	\$ 7 543 253
31 July 1987	\$ 8 524 572
31 July 1988	\$ 9 275 424
TOTAL	<u>\$42 582 980</u>

Question 9.

The information has been incorporated within the statistical tables provided in reply to Question 7.

Question 10.

During 1987 - One (1) only in Darwin.
 During 1988 - Nil.
 During 1989 - Nil.

Question 11.

For the period 1984 to 1989 - nil. Prior to 1984 data not recorded by this Commission.

Question 12.

Information is only available for the Territory as a whole.

Litreage totals for:

	<u>Wine</u>		<u>Spirits</u>	<u>Beer</u>	
	<u>Ord</u>	<u>Low</u>		<u>Ord</u>	<u>Low</u>
1.7.85 - 30.6.86	4 733 814	5 950	829 137	30 620 822	880 410
1.7.86 - 30.6.87	6 167 044	5 307	963 769	30 122 652	670 381
1.7.87 - 30.6.88	5 279 160	10 791	1 041 093	29 973 228	441 858
1.7.88 - 30.6.89	4 696 976	6 291	916 929	29 541 803	361 486

Australian Bureau of Statistics advise last census was conducted in 1986 and total population count for the Territory was 154 848. Estimates of population for following years are as follows -

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

1987 156 700
 1988 155 800
 1989 (ABS advised figures not available as yet
 therefore based on 1988 - 155 800).

Litres per Head of Population

<u>Year Ending</u>	<u>Wine</u>		<u>Spirits</u>	<u>Beer</u>	
	<u>Ord</u>	<u>Low</u>		<u>Ord</u>	<u>Low</u>
1986	30.57	0.04	5.35	197.75	5.69
1987	39.36	0.03	6.15	192.23	4.28
1988	33.88	0.07	6.68	192.38	2.84
1989	30.15	0.04	5.89	189.61	2.32

97. Emergency Evacuations from Titjikala (Maryvale) and Atitjere (Harts Range)

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many evacuations from each of these communities were there during the years 1986-87 and 1987-88.
2. What means was employed for these evacuations.
3. In how many of these evacuations were private vehicles from the community used.
4. At what rate were the owners of these vehicles reimbursed.

ANSWER

1. Evacuations from Harts Range
 During 1986-87 there were 13 evacuations.
 During 1987-88 there were 37 evacuations.
 During 1988-89 there have been 27 evacuations.

Evacuations from Maryvale
 During 1986-87 there were 7 evacuations.
 During 1987-88 there were 26 evacuations.
 During 1988-89 there have been 34 evacuations.

2. Emergency Evacuations from Harts Range (Atitjere)

During 1986-87:
 Road - St John Ambulance 12
 Air - Helicopter 1
 Road - Community member's vehicle No records kept -
 some halfway meets
 with ambulance.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

During 1987-88:
Road - St John Ambulance 36
Air - Royal Flying Doctor Service 1
Road - Community member's vehicle No records kept -
some halfway meets
with ambulance.

During 1988-89:
Road - St John Ambulance 3
Air - Royal Flying Doctor Service 24
Road - Community member's vehicle No records kept -
some halfway meets
with ambulance.

Emergency Evacuations from Maryvale (Titjikala)

During 1986-87:
Road - St John Ambulance 4
Air - Royal Flying Doctor Service 3
Road - Community member's vehicle No records kept -
some halfway meets
with ambulance.

During 1987-88:
Road - St John Ambulance 11
Air - Royal Flying Doctor Service 15
Road - Community member's vehicle No records kept -
some halfway meets
with ambulance.

During 1988-89:
Road - St John Ambulance 6
Air - Royal Flying Doctor Service 28
Road - Community member's vehicle No records kept -
some halfway meets
with ambulance.

The 1988-89 shift to aerial evacuation rather than road evacuations occurred as a result of Transport and Works upgrading the airstrip at Harts Range (Atitjere).

The Maryvale Community upgraded their airstrip, following encouragement from the department, to improve services.

Previously, due to the poor state of the airstrips, it was not possible to use Royal Flying Doctor Service aircraft for evacuations from the areas concerned.

3. Records are not kept concerning the ownership of vehicles used in evacuations. Arrangements are made between the onsite health workers and communities for each evacuation. These are different depending on families concerned and availability of vehicles. Community members concerned submit accounts to the department for reimbursement of vehicle expenses.

Where a request is received from a private individual for reimbursement, the account is processed in the normal manner after authorisation and is entered in the Government

Accounting System Ledger (GAS) under the name of the person to whom reimbursement is made. This means that it is not possible to identify the account by way of the service for which payment is made or by way of residential address of the payee. Further, given the many thousands of accounts paid each year, it is unreasonable to seek to identify such individual transactions by way of manual examination of the Computer Database.

The matter is further complicated by the fact rural health staff report that in the majority of instances individuals who use their private vehicle for partial or complete evacuation purposes fail to lodge a claim for reimbursement.

4. Where claims are lodged, the rate at which the owners of these vehicles are reimbursed is, on average, 41¢ per kilometre. This rate is calculated according to the cubic capacity of the motor. Four rates are available -

25¢ for 750 cc or less
33¢ for 750-1500 cc
35¢ for 1500-2000 cc
41¢ for 2000 cc or more.

10 October 1989

101. Brucellosis and Tuberculosis - Tarlton Downs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. On what date this year was a TB reactor found on Tarlton Downs Station.
2. When was the station notified that they had a confirmed case of TB.
3. What was the cause of the delay.
4. When was the station sent documentation to sign authorising the de-stock.
5. What was the cause of the delay.
6. Will the station owners be compensated for losses incurred due to the fall in prices, loss of condition and/or loss of production.

ANSWER

1. On 14 May 1989 an aged cow reacted to a tuberculosis test.
2. The station was notified that the lesion was confirmed on 15 August 1989.
3. To understand the period between detecting a reactor and confirmation of tuberculosis some understanding of biological systems is necessary.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

A reactor to a tuberculosis test does not mean tuberculosis but it initiates further actions. These are -

- (a) Post-mortem examination and collection of samples;
- (b) Examination of samples at the laboratory by -
 - i. smear;
 - ii. histology; and
 - iii. bacterial culture.

From the above, histology may give a positive result, but not always. When a definitive diagnosis cannot be made histologically a decision has to wait on the outcome of bacterial culture.

Because Mycobacterium bovic (the cause of tuberculosis) is a slow growing organism, cultures can take up to 6 months before a final result.

In this case the histology was not conclusive necessitating a bacterial culture. This culture took 3 months to give a result which for the organism involved is not unusual.

- 4. The documentation was never sent to the station but was handled by a third party acting for the station under a Power of Attorney. It was executed on 7 September 1989.
- 5. The period between the confirmation of tuberculosis, 15 August 1989, and the signing of the agreement 7 September 1989, was the period of time necessary to allow the following to occur -
 - (a) Determine and have approved the course of action to eradicate tuberculosis from Tarlton Downs;
 - (b) Draw up the legal document;
 - (c) Have the document approved by Tarlton Downs solicitors;
 - (d) Organise the valuation and subsequent marketing of the Tarlton Downs stock;
 - (e) Assemble the valuation panel to conduct the valuation; and
 - (f) Muster and transport the Tarlton Downs stock to Alice Springs.
- 6. During the period 14 May 1989 to 7 September 1989 Tarlton Downs were able to turn off to the meatworks any fat cattle without restrictions.

It is true that fat cattle prices fell during the time period but store prices remained relatively constant. In any case the store cattle were sold on the same market as Tarlton Downs were able to buy back on. In other words if the value of cattle had fallen the cost of replacing those cattle had also fallen.

Under BTEC policy compulsory de-stocking compensation is paid at the rate for equivalent disease free animals. The values for cattle are set by an independent CALM accredited valuer, the owners agent and an independent respected industry representative.

103. General Practitioners in the NT

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Does the Northern Territory government survey the availability of general medical practitioners in the Northern Territory.
2. If so, how many GPs work in the Northern Territory.
3. How many GPs working in the NT are -
 - (a) in private practice;
 - (b) publicly employed; and
 - (c) employed by community-based medical services.
4. In the case of questions 3(b) and 3(c), what are the employing agencies.
5. Of these GPs, how many live in -
 - (a) Darwin;
 - (b) Katherine;
 - (c) Tennant Creek;
 - (d) Alice Springs;
 - (e) Gove;
 - (f) Jabiru;
 - (g) Alyangula; and
 - (h) elsewhere.
6. In the case of question 5(h), where are they resident and by whom are they employed.

ANSWER

1. The Northern Territory government maintains comprehensive records of those medical practitioners who are publicly employed and the Northern Territory Medical Board maintains a register of every medical practitioner who is registered to practice medicine in the Northern Territory.

Some medical practitioners fail to comply with the provisions of the Medical Practitioners Registration Act which

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

requires them to notify the Board of their change of address. This means that if a practitioner leaves the Northern Territory and fails to notify of an address change, his/her name could remain on the register until the next 31 March when it would be deleted if the Registrar had not received an application to renew.

In providing an overview of the availability of general practitioners, however, the figures are the best available.

2. As at October 1989, details extracted from the Medical Board's registration records indicate that there were 793 medical practitioners registered to practice in the Northern Territory and of that number, 328 had professional addresses in the Territory.
3. Of the 328 medical practitioners who have professional addresses in the Northern Territory, indications from the records are that -
 - (a) 141 have registered as private practitioners since 1 January 1989;
 - (b) 162 have registered since 1 January 1989, as being publicly employed;
 - (c) 21 have registered since 1 January 1989, as being employed by community based medical services; and
 - (d) 4 have registered since 1 January 1989, as being employed by the Armed Services.
4. Of the 162 medical practitioners in public employment -
 - (a) 85 are at Royal Darwin Hospital;
 - (b) 34 are at Alice Springs Hospital;
 - (c) 21 are in the Darwin Region;
 - (d) 10 are in the Alice Springs and Barkly Regions;
 - (e) 7 are in the Katherine Region; and
 - (f) 5 are in the East Arnhem Region.

Of the 21 medical practitioners whose professional address indicates that they are employed by community based medical services -

- (a) 1 has registered since 1 January 1989, in respect of Anyinginyi Congress, Tennant Creek;
- (b) 4 have registered since 1 January 1989, with a Katherine address;
- (c) 2 have registered since 1 January 1989, with a Tennant Creek address;

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

- (d) 29 have registered since 1 January 1989, with an Alice Springs address;
 - (e) 3 have registered since 1 January 1989, with a Gove address;
 - (f) None have registered since 1 January 1989 with a Jabiru address;
 - (g) None have registered since 1 January 1989, with an Alyangula address; and
 - (h) Elsewhere - see Question 4.
6. See response to Question 4.

21 November 1989

104. Cooperative Housing Development Program

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

- 1. Which 'older areas in Darwin and Alice Springs' are being considered for the cooperative housing development announced by the minister in a media release, dated 19 September 1989.
- 2. Is it envisaged that the government will buy back the property.
- 3. How will the proposed \$165 000 be spent.

ANSWER

- 1. The areas proposed for assessment of redevelopment potential in Darwin and Alice Springs under the Cooperative Housing Development Program are 9 lots in Beetson Place, Rapid Creek, and 10 lots in Ballingall Street/Allchurch Street, Alice Springs.
- 2. The lots concerned are owned by the government and will be subject to design studies for redevelopment potential for public housing, utilising principles enunciated by the Joint Venture for More Affordable Housing. No buy-back arrangements or purchases of other property are envisaged at this stage. As part of the planning process, there will be close consultation with adjoining property owners.
- 3. The proposed expenditure is on the engagement of consultants and in-house resources for planning, design and documentation for the 3 projects involved in accordance with the table below -

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

1989-90 Funding			
	Commonwealth Contribution	NT Contribution (cash or kind)	Total 1989-90
1. Medium density Darwin	\$25 000	\$25 000	\$50 000
2. Medium density Alice Springs	\$30 000	\$35 000	\$65 000
3. Forecast methodology	\$25 000	\$25 000	\$50 000
TOTAL	\$80 000	\$85 000	\$165 000

**105. Appointment of Assistant Secretary,
Department of Lands and Housing**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. Was Mr Les Williams appointed as Assistant Secretary, Department of Lands and Housing in June 1988.
2. Was this appointment aborted.
3. Was an out-of-court settlement paid by the government to Mr Williams; if so, was the amount of the out-of-court settlement \$27 500.
4. Can the minister confirm that the out-of-court settlement was \$27 500.

ANSWER

1. Mr Williams accepted an offer of appointment on 14 July 1988.
2. Yes.
3. & The separation of Mr Williams from the NT Public Service was
4. the subject of a confidential agreement between Mr Williams and the Public Service Commissioner and therefore the terms of the agreement cannot be released.

106. Water Supply at Ulbanyali

Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What arrangements have been made for a water supply for families living at Ulbanyali in the vicinity of Kings Canyon who now have to cart water for several miles from Lila.

ANSWER

1. The production bore RN13983 failed on 27 August 1989 and a new production bore RN14153 8 m distant was commissioned on 10 September 1989.
2. Production rate is 1.0 litres/second pumping into 146 kilolitre ground level tank. The infrastructure meets the criteria defined in the 'interim Guidelines on Levels of Essential Services to Aboriginal Communities'.
3. Water quality meets National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines.
4. There is no need for water to be carted from Lila for domestic and health use.
5. No advice has been provided to the PAWA since 10 September 1989 of any water supply problems.

107. Water Reticulation Pipes - Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. Is it a fact, as reported some months ago, that leaking water reticulation pipes in Alice Springs are causing a costly and wasteful loss of water in the town. If so -
 - (a) what has been done or is planned to be done to detect these leaks;
 - (b) what has or is planned to be done to fix these leaks; and
 - (c) if the answer to (a) is nothing, would the government consider seeking advice from ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) on how the leaks might be detected.

ANSWER

Leakage from water reticulation pipes in Alice Springs is occurring and is a priority issue being addressed by the authority.

Tests carried out indicate the leakage rate is approximately 15% of annual demand.

This is significant but typical of results of water leakage studies carried out elsewhere in Australia.

An economic analysis has indicated it is cost beneficial to undertake a detailed leakage detection and control program. Specialist equipment is currently on order and works are scheduled to commence during the 1990 winter.

The equipment and methods the authority are adopting have been tried and proven elsewhere in Australia, however, we are certainly willing to examine new initiatives and would welcome

contact from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, the group named by Mr Collins.

108. Patients Assistance Travel Scheme

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Which applicants under the Patients Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) have had their applications refused during -
 - (a) 1987-88; and
 - (b) 1988-89.
2. For what reasons were these applicants refused.

ANSWER

1. Applications refused for assistance under PATS were -
 - (a) from 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988, 7169 applications for assistance under PATS were received, of which 151 (2%) were not approved; and
 - (b) for the period 1 July 1988 to 30 June 1989, 8275 applications were received and 88 (1%) were not approved.

Over the 2 year period 98.5% of the applications received have been approved for assistance under PATS.

2. The reasons that applicants were not approved during the period 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1989 are as follows -

	1987-88	1988-89
Requested retrospective travel approval (Applicants must have approval prior to travel)	29	14
Visiting NT specialists available at Centre/Region (Applicants must be referred to the nearest appropriate NT specialist)	6	10
Specialist visiting from interstate (An applicant requesting to travel interstate for medical treatment when a specialist of that speciality visits the Northern Territory, will not be given approval)	68	33
Cosmetic surgery (Approval is given only to repair trauma and congenital abnormalities)	0	1
IVF patients ineligible under PATS (Only IVF patients approved into an	8	6

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

IVF program prior to 29 July 1987 are eligible. These applicants are also excluded after the first successful live birth)

NT specialist available (Applicants must be referred to the nearest appropriate NT specialist)	20	15
On-site Medical Officers able to review treatment (Where possible, follow-up treatment is carried out locally. Applicants may be given assistance to receive treatment from interstate specialists where disruption to continuing treatment would be detrimental to them)	1	2
Costs are recoverable from another source (eg Workers Compensation, third party motor accident insurance)	2	0
Applicants required initial specialist review prior to referral (Referral to interstate specialists must be recommended by a NT specialist for specific treatment not available in the NT)	7	4
Applicants referred to a General Practitioner/Dentist (Referrals were not to a specialist)	7	3
Applicants residing less than 200 km (Eligibility criteria of PATS is that applicants must reside more than 200 km (radius) from the specialist. Off-shore islands, Bathurst Island and Groote Eylandt are exempt from this requirement)	3	0
Total of applications not approved under PATS	151	88

20 February 1990

110. Prisoners on Home Detention

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Which classes of prisoners are on home detention.

ANSWER

The Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction in Australia where home detention is used as an alternative to imprisonment.

Other jurisdictions use home detention as a means of an early release from prison for those prisoners assessed by departmental officers as suitable.

In the Northern Territory it is the court that sentences an offender to a period of home detention following an assessment by departmental officers.

Of the 110 offenders who have been placed on home detention, 85% were for convictions for driving while disqualified or drink driving.

There have been 3 offenders placed on home detention for dishonesty offences, 3 for assault, 3 for justice procedures and 1 for armed robbery and 1 for incest.

In the latter cases the circumstances were considered exceptional and the offenders were not considered a risk to either the victim or the community in general.

Of the 110 offenders placed on home detention, 8 were female and 12 were of Aboriginal descent.

**111. Use of Asbestos in Construction of Housing
Commission Dwellings in the
Northern Territory**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. What assessment has there been of the use of asbestos in Housing Commission dwellings in the Northern Territory.
2. What action, if any, is proposed to remove asbestos from these dwellings.

ANSWER

1. A preliminary survey carried out in August 1989 indicated that asbestos products, mainly in the form of fibre cement sheeting to wet areas and eaves, do exist in NTHC dwellings.

A further more detailed study of asbestos in NTHC dwellings is proposed for commencement in February 1990.

2. Where asbestos is found in NTHC dwellings and it is considered to be unsafe, it will be treated in accordance with prescribed Worksafe Australia safety guidelines. This will not necessarily mean that the substance will automatically be removed as all the factors associated with the condition and composition of the material will need to be taken into consideration.

Dwellings that contain asbestos cement sheeting products do not pose any risk to health provided that the material is in good condition and is not damaged, cut, sawn, sanded or drilled so as to produce dust.

112.

**Salary Package Paid to
Director of Mental Health Services**

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many people receive payment from the government by way of salary and wages which are secret in the manner of the salary package paid to the Director of Mental Health Services.
2. What are the other positions filled by people remunerated in a similar manner.

ANSWER

1. A number of public servants, particularly in specialist and technical positions, are employed under contract arrangements. In many cases these contracts will provide special terms and conditions. The particular terms and conditions which apply in these cases are, of course, confidential and are not disclosed by the government. In this regard, the Northern Territory government adopts the same practices and conventions as all governments in Australia.
2. The number of persons engaged under contract terms and conditions is quite large and covers a variety of fields and occupations. I do not propose to provide this information.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Last Thursday, the minister said he had not taken legal advice on the problems at Hengyang. Is he now aware that the Chinese workers' contracts signed in the Hengyang deal are illegal in Australia? Secondly, is he aware that, if they accept and exercise their rights under Australian awards, they will be in breach of their Chinese contracts? Thirdly, will the minister advise the workers whether they should break their Chinese contracts, and face punishment as set out in those contracts on their return to China, or abide by their Chinese contracts and breach the Australian awards that were agreed to yesterday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government's position is that any contracts held by Chinese guest workers that were agreed to in China are totally overridden by Australian awards and conditions. The Northern Territory government was not aware of the conditions laid down in these contracts until they were revealed during the past fortnight nor, as I understand it, was any federal government agency. The TDZ is not a signatory to those contracts. We have always said that Australian awards and conditions will be upheld in this country. I will take advice and advise the Leader of the Opposition later during these sittings on the ramifications of the contracts in China for the girls.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Is he aware that Labor Party politicians took part in a meeting with a Chinese national working at the Trade Development Zone just before she absconded from her place of employment and left Darwin for Melbourne, and is he aware of the nature and the outcome of that meeting?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am indeed aware of such a meeting and I invite close attention to this matter by the Leader of the Opposition. The meeting took place in the office of the Territory member of the House of Representatives, Mr Warren Snowdon, on Friday 2 February. The Chinese national concerned, Miss Huang, a guest worker at the Hengyang factory, left Darwin for Melbourne 2 days later. With Mr Snowdon at that meeting were the following: the Leader of the Opposition; a migrant resettlement officer; a de facto union organiser funded by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Ms Trish Crossin; an interpreter from the Migrant Resource Centre; and others at various times, whose names have been made available to me but whom I will not name in these circumstances for reasons which will become apparent.

During the course of this meeting, of which many members of the media are aware and which they describe as 'clandestine', a strategy was generated to cause maximum political damage to the Northern Territory government and the Trade Development Zone. That, however, is not a cause for concern on its own. What is of major concern is that an integral part of this conspiracy involved a deal being made with a Chinese national, who was in

Darwin under a skills transfer scheme, for her to secure permanent Australian residence.

This shabby deal involved the Chinese national adopting a public course of action on a number of allegations about employment and living conditions at the Hengyang factory and the provision of information and documentation along such lines to the Australian Labor Party. In return for this, Mr Snowdon offered his influence, as a member of the federal parliament, to secure permanent Australian residence for Miss Huang. This would involve him making approaches on her behalf to the federal Minister for Immigration, Senator Robert Ray. According to advice that I have sought, such an offer would appear to breach the provisions of the Commonwealth Migration Act 1958 in a very serious manner. Section 46 of that act states that 'a person shall not make a false or misleading statement about the person's ability or power or the ability or power of another person to induce or influence the making of decisions or of a particular decision under this act'. The penalty for conviction for this offence is \$5000 or imprisonment for 2 years or both. I am advised too that section 86 of the Commonwealth Crimes Act may also be relevant to the manner in which such an offence may have been committed.

I am further advised that the Commonwealth Crimes Act 1914 has particular relevance. Section 5 states:

Any person who aids, abets, counsels or procures or by act or omission is in any way directly or indirectly knowingly concerned in or party to the commission of an offence against any law of the Commonwealth, whether passed before or after the commencement of this act, shall be deemed to have committed that offence and shall be punished accordingly.

Mr Speaker, clearly the Leader of the Opposition is also involved in this clandestine affair. Let him deny it at his peril, because I have this morning placed the matter in the hands of the Federal Police. In doing so, I have advised the Federal Police that my office is available to supply them with substantiating detail.

This is a most serious matter. Let us leave aside for the moment the obvious inference of the conspiracy and go straight to the heart of the matter. On the face of it, and I assure the Leader of the Opposition that my information comes from a variety of sources, it appears that 2 Labor Party politicians acted to thwart the laws of this country for their own political ends. No doubt, the Leader of the Opposition will be on his feet many times during these sittings, talking about political accountability. I say to him that he should look to his own circumstances, because the Federal Police will be doing so. They may well want to know in what circumstances Miss Huang left Darwin, with what assurances and with what sort of connivance. They may well be interested in the roles of Mr Snowdon, the Leader of the Opposition and Ms Crossin in organising and facilitating Miss Huang's departure from Darwin, in further meetings that occurred and in their association with Miss Huang's actual departure on Sunday 4 February.

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! We have let the honourable minister go on in some detail, but standing orders are quite clear in this regard. If he wishes to impugn the character of another member of this House, he must do so by way of a substantive motion and, if he wishes to bring on such a substantive motion immediately, I am sure that members on this side of the House will be happy to take it on board and allow it to be debated rather than the minister continuing with this cowardly attack.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I find that the Minister for Industries and Development is answering the question. However, I would remind the minister that he has taken more than 4 minutes and I ask that he please finish as soon as he can.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I am happy to leave the answers to these sorts of questions to the Federal Police.

Mr Speaker, it is my intention to bring on a ministerial statement on this particular issue after question time so that we may have the debate on the Trade Development Zone out in the open once and for all.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

If the minister wants to make that statement outside the House, I will sue his socks off.

Mr Coulter: You are the one who brought that up, and I can serve a summons on you.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I say categorically that I have never attended a meeting with Miss Huang Hanying. I have never met her.

Mr Perron: Tell it to the police.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr Bell: That was an interesting interjection, Marshall.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, my question does concern Miss Huang Hanying, the woman whom the Minister for Industries and Development's Trade Development Zone Authority wanted to send back to China to suffer severe punishment. My question is: why did the Trade Development Zone Authority's immigration officer issue a written request for the visa of Miss Huang Hanying to be cancelled after she fled from Hengyang, and is it not a fact that that would have resulted in Huang Hanying's deportation to China where, under the terms of her contract, she would have faced, and I quote, 'severe punishment'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is my understanding that the letter written by Mr Rice was at the request of the Department of Immigration in Darwin ...

Mr Smith: That is a lie and you know it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that interjection.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I withdraw.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, as I said, it is my understanding that the letter written by Mr Rice was at the request of the Department of Immigration in Darwin. Its purpose was formally to advise the department of the circumstances of the Chinese worker's departure from Hengyang which

placed her in technical breach of her skills transfer scheme arrangements in Darwin. The letter should not be construed as any move by the TDZA to influence immigration authorities in any decision they may make about the woman's continuing stay in Australia, and there was never any intention in that regard. As I said, with regard to the contracts, as far as we are concerned, Australian terms and conditions will apply.

Trade Development Zone

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I ask the honourable minister if he is aware of this document from F.I.R.S.T IR Pty Ltd, dated 16 February 1990, to Mr Ray McHenry, the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority. It says: 'Thank you for your letter of appointment of 15 February 1990. Please find attached my report following the brief investigation you asked me to undertake'. Included in it is the advice from the Sydney public relations consultant on how to shift the blame for the Hengyang disaster on to the ACTU and the Commonwealth. It was commissioned by TDZA Chairman, Ray McHenry, last Thursday, the very same day that the minister was telling the media the buck for the disaster stops with him. I ask the honourable minister why he told the media one thing and then approved advertisements to tell the public something completely different?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there was a range of questions in that. If the honourable member would like to table that particular document, I would be happy to look at that.

Mr Speaker, as I said, I am happy to debate this matter on the basis of a substantive motion on a ministerial statement. Let us have the matter out in the open. However, if the honourable member thinks that my saying that the buck stops with me was contradictory to the words I used in saying that we made a conscious decision not to duplicate those services provided by Commonwealth and Territory agencies in respect of industrial relations, I would point out that we do not offer visas to Chinese nationals to enter into Australia. There is a department that is set up to do that. It is known as the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs. I cannot take responsibility for that. The Northern Territory government does not have a role to play in that particular area.

Mr Ede: The industrial relations ...

Mr COULTER: Industrial relations is a matter solely for the Commonwealth. We all know that. The Commonwealth minister has that role.

Pharmacy at Jabiru

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I understand that the pharmacy at Jabiru closed recently. How will residents of Jabiru have their prescriptions filled now?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there has been concern in Jabiru, and this was brought to my attention yesterday. Some citizens were expressing concern at a decision taken by the local supermarket to curtail the arrangements in respect of

prescriptions. I have had the matter addressed specifically by the department overnight. I must advise that it is true that there will not be a pharmacist available in Jabiru. However, the doctors there are advising the Community Health Centre on the appropriate range of drugs that should be held at the Community Health Centre for emergency purposes. These are being made available in that centre.

Arrangements for other prescriptions to be filled will be similar to those applying in other areas of the Northern Territory where no pharmacist is available. I will provide specific details to the honourable member when I receive written advice from the department. I have been advised verbally that, where there is no pharmacist, the community phones Darwin to arrange for prescriptions to be filled. These are sent to the community by the quickest available means. We are arranging for the necessary emergency drugs to be held at the Community Health Centre in Jabiru and similar arrangements apply in other larger communities. I understand that the arrangements at Jabiru are consistent with the arrangements that have been made to service the Pine Creek community, which also does not have a pharmacist.

I can assure the people of Jabiru that, within reasonable bounds, we will be ensuring that access to proper medication will be made available in their community. Equally, we must accept the fact that a decision has been made within that community that the size of the town's population and the range of services to be provided makes it uneconomical to maintain a pharmacy service there. I am certain that adequate services will be provided to that community in the meantime. Should any specific problems arise, I will be addressing them directly in order to ensure that reasonable services are provided in the community.

Berry Springs Wildlife Park

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Can the minister detail the plan for the future management of the Berry Springs Wildlife Park with regard to the participation of the Conservation Commission in future planning, budget considerations of salary and wages to be paid to Conservation Commission officers who will continue to work there, and the role of the future manager? If a management committee is to be formed, what will be its composition and, if no management committee is to be formed, how will the park be managed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is about a week ahead of final decisions being taken on this matter. However, I can advise her of the stage we have reached. We have been going through a transition from the construction phase to the operational phase and, certainly, a number of difficulties have been experienced in that process. In terms of on-the-ground management, an interim general manager has been appointed. Dr Ian Eberhard, formerly Assistant Director (South) of the Conservation Commission, took up duties at the park on Monday 12 February. Already, he has started to review and determine the organisational structures. There were problems in the transitional phases and we are now finalising the organisational structure that will apply in the long term. That structure will be determined within the next 10 days and staff are to be advised ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr HATTON: They certainly had not been advised last Friday afternoon, when I was at the wildlife park speaking to the staff and management. At that stage, they certainly had not been advised.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: But you make the decisions, don't you?

Mr HATTON: We are waiting on the recommendations of Dr Eberhard in relation to how he would propose to organise internally in terms of the maintenance and technical staff, zoo-keeping staff, administration staff etc to establish the flows in management. It is appropriate that we should wait for the person who is to manage the park to put forward his recommendations.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You said that he is the acting manager?

Mr HATTON: Yes. He may well become the permanent manager, but will be the acting general manager until at least the end of June.

In addition, the organisational and legal structure of the wildlife park is being finalised. A submission has been signed and is in the process of being forwarded to Cabinet for endorsement of the proposed legal structures and the relationship between the Conservation Commission and a separate entity which, together with a basis of management, is proposed to manage the park. I hope that the matter will be finalised within the next week, at which time I will ensure that honourable members are advised of the structures. I know that the matter needs to be resolved soon. I know that staff are keen to have organisational structures finalised, together with long-term staff matters. We are putting all of our efforts into finalising such matters as quickly as possible, to enable the park to settle into a proper operational phase.

Trade Development Zone

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, my questions are prefaced with this comment. The minister is on public record as saying that the Trade Development Zone Authority's problems with imported Chinese workers are confined to Hengyang. My questions are these. Does the minister recall his public assertion that Darwin International Textiles is an outstanding example of the excellence of the zone's monitoring procedures? Will the minister repeat that assertion here in the parliament?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will preface my answer by referring to some public statements that are to be made in the very near future, in particular by Sonia Laverty regarding her comments that DIT is not a very nice company. She has had a change of heart recently. She will be making a public statement retracting the criticism that she made of that company which I described as a 'model company'. I understand others will follow suit very shortly. I will say that from the outset.

Mr Smith: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr COULTER: You don't like that answer, do you? You will have said a few things that you will have to retract. You will join the queue.

Mr Smith: So will you.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, Darwin International Textiles has been operating within the zone for some 3 years. Like all new companies, it has had problems settling in. All new companies have such problems, not only international companies. However, the way in which it has gone about its business has indeed been a model. Criticism has been levied at it. Investigations into DIT are occurring as we speak but, before we condemn anybody, let us await the outcome of those independent inquiries.

Trade Development Zone

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

It was alleged in the media last week that improperly prepared lease documents between Hengyang and the Trade Development Zone Authority prejudiced the outcome of court proceedings between Hengyang and the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Can the minister confirm whether or not the lease arrangements in question were valid?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am most happy to set the record straight on this matter. The ABC's reporting of an action which it lost was indeed most interesting and less kind persons might even suggest that the outcome was deliberately misrepresented. Such persons might also suggest that the ABC's role in this whole issue has been less than objective, but that is a matter which it is more appropriate for its audience and peers to consider.

The simple facts of the matter are that Hengyang achieved its objectives in the court proceedings and the lease documentation was found to be valid at law. Red herrings about who signed what and when may have made a good story but had no real bearing on the factual outcome. In order, however, to satisfy all honourable members about the circumstances, I shall provide a brief background of events leading up to and during these proceedings.

Injunction proceedings were taken by Hengyang Darwin Pty Ltd against the ABC to prevent its trespassing inside the factory premises. Following those proceedings, on the 7.30 Report that night, the ABC reported that Hengyang was forced to withdraw its application for an injunction to prevent the ABC televising film captured on the premises during the course of its trespass. Because of deficiencies in the documentation between the authority and the company, the report was false. What in fact happened was that proceedings were brought seeking an injunction to prevent the ABC from trespassing inside the premises and an injunction to prevent the ABC from televising film captured during the course of its trespass. However, it became clear as the matter was being argued that, in relation to the second part of the application, the company had a good remedy in damages. In other words, the law pointed in the direction of saying that, if the ABC showed the film in question and it was defamatory, then the company was quite entitled to sue and, in that instance, would most likely be awarded exemplary damages. Because of that, the company made a perfectly proper decision not to persist with that leg of the application which would have been a waste of its time, the court's time and the ABC's time. Rather, it persisted with its application for an injunction for trespass and that was successfully obtained.

It is true that His Honour Mr Justice Rice questioned and queried certain aspects of the documentation but, in the end, he found that a lease did exist between the authority and the company. If he had not done so, the

injunction would not have been granted. I am advised that the judge's criticism of the document centred on the fact that, firstly, the lease annexed to the primary agreement was not executed and, secondly, the document was not stamped. On the principle of Walsh and Lonsdale, I am advised that the parties have a perfectly good, equitable lease between them and that, to the date of the court hearing, neither party had sought to resile from the terms of that lease. In other words, the company was confident that it had a lease agreement on the terms annexed to the primary agreement, and the authority was also confident about that. There was no dispute between the parties as to the efficacy of the documentation. To conclude from that that the document was gravely deficient is arrant nonsense. Therefore, the documentation was in order except for its non-execution. Of course, either party is quite free to rectify that at any time it wishes to do so.

As I have said, the facts speak for themselves. Objective reporting of this matter's factual outcome might have avoided the spread of further misconceptions about the operation of our Trade Development Zone. Sadly, the story which was issued reflects no credit on its authors. I believe that Territorians deserve better from their media.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Last Thursday, at the now infamous press conference, the honourable minister informed the media that Hengyang had been left in no doubt about its duties under Australian awards. In other words, it had been given the message about Australian awards. Coincidentally, last Thursday happened to be pay day at Hengyang. Were the Chinese workers given full pay packets last Thursday and were those pay packets made up in accordance with the award requirements and the severe instructions given by the honourable minister to the company?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, let me address that part of the question dealing with awards, before moving on to the matter of pay packets. Awards and the role of unions are made very clear to any participant coming into the zone.

Mr Smith: Did they get their proper pay last Thursday?

Mr COULTER: You are backing off the first one. You do not like the answers that I have been giving today, do you?

Mr Speaker, what is expected of participants coming into the Trade Development Zone is made quite clear to them. Information on industrial awards and unions is made available in English, Mandarin and Cantonese. Let there be no doubt about the fact that Mr McHenry has notified the directors of Hengyang of what is expected of them in the Trade Development Zone. He has not been derelict in his duty, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested at various times. No doubt, the Leader of the Opposition has received a piece of paper about his public comments on that matter.

Mr Smith: I have not.

Mr COULTER: Well, probably that was what the man was trying to deliver to you before you ran in here to hide.

Mr Smith: We want you to get an intelligent man who knows how to serve a writ properly.

Mr COULTER: You are going to get used to it.

Mr Smith: You cannot even get that right.

Mr COULTER: Their experience is increasing daily. At the rate you are going, we will have experts running around the Territory who do nothing else! Mr Speaker, let us get rid of that nonsense for a start.

In terms of pay and the manner in which pay is taken, there is a whole range of options. As far as entitlements are concerned, I would like to read from an address which has been given to the workers concerning their entitlements and is reinforced by my comments in this House today.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I asked a very simple question. I asked whether the Chinese workers at the zone were paid properly last Thursday, the very day on which the honourable minister gave the press an assurance that they would be paid properly. It is a very simple question.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the Minister for Industries and Development to answer the question as briefly as he possibly can.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I am unable to answer the question briefly because it is a very serious question. Indeed, my sources have indicated that Chinese workers were able to compare their salaries with those of other workers in the zone last week and were surprised to learn, in the instances that were pointed out to me, that they were the same.

Mr Smith: Why were they surprised?

Mr COULTER: Because you have been telling them that they have been underpaid.

Mr Speaker, let me go on. I cannot be brief in relation to this matter. I have to give the detail that is required, and let us not forget what is at stake here - \$39m-worth of investment. That is what has been put at risk, and I am sure that this Assembly will excuse me for answering the question in great detail.

Today, the solicitor acting for the company met with the workers at the zone. His main purpose was to advise them on their basic legal rights and the protections they are assured of as guest workers in Australia. The matter of salaries needs to be dealt with. The workers wish to be paid in US dollars rather than in what might be called coin of the realm. There have been some complaints about the pay regime and the way it was put together, but let us not underestimate one of the demands of the Chinese nationals. If we are here to look after Chinese nationals, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, it would be right to satisfy their needs wherever possible. They have made it quite clear that one of those needs is to be paid in US dollars. The answer to the request is not a simple yes or no. It is a matter of great complexity which is subject to thorough investigation by Coopers and Lybrand as well as the Department of Industrial Relations, which has offered an interim report. It has that in its terms of reference. These are the terms and conditions that were given to the girls:

You are not bound to keep working for the company. Under the relevant industrial award, if you have worked with this company for more than a year, you are quite entitled to leave the company by giving 2 weeks notice. If you have worked for the company for less than 1 year, you are quite entitled to leave the company by giving 1 weeks notice. If you choose to leave, the company would appreciate your giving appropriate notice to avoid disruption but, if you feel that your circumstances are such that you want to leave immediately, you are free to do so. If you choose to remain with the company, you have the following basic rights:

to be paid wages at the Australian award rate for each hour worked by you, including overtime;

your basic working week is 38 hours and any time worked in excess of that is classified as overtime;

to receive all your wages, including overtime, in Australian dollars each week;

any amounts to be deducted from your wages must be authorised by you in writing, including deductions for living expenses, food, accommodation and transport, and also any remittances to China;

if you want to keep having any deductions or remittances made, you will be asked to sign a form approved by the Department of Industrial Relations;

you are not compelled to live in the company's accommodation - you are completely free to live where you choose.

The company does not have a copy of the contracts you have signed with the Chinese government, but I understand from reports in the media that the contract may contain certain restrictions on you. Those are not restrictions imposed by the company, and the company assures you that it does not consider you bound by the terms of the contract and will seek to protect your rights under Australian law if they conflict with the terms of your contract

The company is awaiting the report from the Department of Industrial Relations as to whether you have in fact been underpaid in the past. If that is established, you will be paid immediately. You are entitled to union representation in Australia and, if you have any grievances or complaints, you should take them to your union representative. You are of course welcome to make any complaints direct to me, and I will ensure that your complaint is investigated by the Department of Industrial Relations.

The company is undertaking a review of its industrial relations practices and has sought expert help from industrial relations experts in this respect. You will be handed a copy of this address, translated into Chinese, as soon as possible and, in addition, the company is having prepared a basic guide to your rights as a worker in Australia. That guide will be translated into Chinese and handed to you shortly.

The company wants to succeed in Australia and, to do so, it needs your help. If it has made mistakes in the past, it will rectify them. It now needs your help to ensure that mistakes are not made in the future. The company wants to take account of your views and I would appreciate it if you could endeavour amongst yourselves to appoint at least 2 representatives to meet with the company on a regular weekly basis.

As guest workers, the company has an obligation under the Migration Act to not give you any assurances or promises that, if you leave the company, you will be entitled to Australian residency status. All it can do is assure you that you are free to leave it and work for anyone you choose, whether in the Northern Territory or elsewhere in Australia. Australia is a democracy and you have certain rights and freedoms whilst working as a guest in this country that cannot be taken away from you.

Mr Speaker, reinforcement is given unequivocally there by the company on those issues. As for the pay, we will be hearing more about that. Once again, let us wait until we get the facts instead of shooting from the hip. I am the one who is always accused of shooting from the hip, but let us be patient and wait for the proper investigations. The ACTU agreed to wait yesterday. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to do likewise and to show some patience. Instead of having writ after writ served on him for making outrageous statements, it might save him some money if he is a little more patient and awaits the results of the investigations.

Daily Hansard Format

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I have been informed that there will be a change in the format of the Daily Hansard for the current Legislative Assembly sittings. Can the minister advise why the Government Printer has adopted a format change and what the change will be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we come to a more mundane matter. However, it relates to a practical way of protecting the environment in the Northern Territory. Some weeks ago, I decided that we should consider whether we could print the Daily Hansard on both sides of the pages. The Daily Hansard is fairly substantial. I was rather surprised at the savings that could be made by printing it on both sides of the pages. As from tomorrow, it will be printed on both sides of the pages, resulting in a saving of some 54 000 sheets of paper in these sittings alone which would be the equivalent of 16 km of paper if we laid them out in a straight line. It really surprised me how much paper goes into the printing of the restricted Hansard for each sittings of this Assembly.

It is clear to me that there are many opportunities for government departments and others to save paper. I ask members to bear with me and the Assembly during this trial run of printing on both sides of the pages. I do not expect that there will be any noticeable difference, but the expense that will be saved will be very worth while. While members might find it difficult to hold the book open and read from both sides of the pages, it will be worth the effort because we will be saving not only on paper but also on costs for the Government Printing Office and the

Legislative Assembly. I believe that this is a good initiative which other departments and groups ought to be looking at because it is common to see material printed on 1 side of the paper only. The Northern Territory government is taking this step more and more often and I would encourage all others to do likewise.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, I hope that, at the end of question time, the minister will table the company's solicitor's advice to the workers. Has the Hengyang solicitor who provided the advice this morning to the Chinese workers, himself or through the company, approached the Chinese employment agency to determine whether the Chinese employment agency is prepared to alter the conditions of contract of the Chinese workers to bring them into line with Australian award conditions?

Mr Perron: Where is the federal government's role in this?

Mr SMITH: Who is running the Trade Development Zone? No one, and that is the problem.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand that the contradictions between what would normally be accepted in Australia and the contracts which have been signed between the girls and the employment agency have now been brought to the attention of immigration officials. I understand that that will be the subject of inquiries that they will be making with the employment agency.

Mr Smith: Now that is a bit of buck passing, isn't it?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, it is not just that contract for Trade Development Zone workers. Guest workers come into Australia from China for a whole range of reasons. Indeed, the Chinese government provides labour for a range of countries throughout the world with these contracts but, once again, the terms and conditions of their entry into Australia and their visas and permission for them to enter are given by the Department of Immigration - not the lawyer acting for Hengyang, but the Australian Department of Immigration. It is that department that decides under what conditions these people will enter Australia - and that is where the buck stops.

Commonwealth State Housing Agreement

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer to the recent announcement by the federal Minister for Housing that the revised Commonwealth State Housing Agreement had been signed by the Prime Minister. What financial implications for the Territory are in the revised agreement and have the concerns raised last year by the Chief Minister been resolved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am afraid that the Territory government's difficulties regarding the revised Commonwealth State Housing Agreement are anything but resolved. Unfortunately, it appears that the federal Labor government,

having failed to achieve support from the states and the territories for its plan to rewrite the agreement, is now preparing to resort to blackmail.

As is usual with the federal Labor government, what is being mouthed publicly is considerably different from what is happening behind the scenes. On 15 February, the federal Housing Minister, Hon Peter Staples, issued a media release stating that the Prime Minister had signed the new agreement. The media release contained many and varied platitudes, including a long list of benefits the new agreement would provide to Australia and these included claims that the agreement was 'paving the way for a significant injection of extra funds for public housing over the next decade'. That statement concluded with an appeal from the Prime Minister and Mr Staples for state Premiers to sign the agreement as soon as possible.

The new agreement may well pave the way for extra housing Australia wide, but that certainly is not the case in the Northern Territory, nor is it the case for the smaller states. A fundamental plank of the new agreement is the phased in introduction of funding allocated on a per capita basis and the effect of this is that the major states of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland stand to gain extra funds at the expense of the smaller states of South Australia and Tasmania, and of the Northern Territory. Western Australia is more or less line ball.

Mr Bell: It is per capita, Daryl.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, anyone - and this should include the member for MacDonnell - with a basic understanding of government in Australia would realise this is the wrong way about. It is the large states which have the greatest revenue base and are, therefore, less reliant on federal funds. But the opposite is true for the smaller states, and it is certainly true for the Territory.

Mr Bell: Give us the per capita figures, Daryl.

Mr MANZIE: In the Territory, we are hampered ...

Mr Ede: Per capita figures.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I am amazed. Interjections by the opposition ...

Mr Ede: Per capita figures - you know what they are. You are well briefed.

Mr MANZIE: I am amazed, Mr Speaker.

Mr Bell: That is what you were whingeing about last year, wasn't it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that this question time will be broadcast later in the day.

Mr MANZIE: I am amazed, Mr Speaker, that not only have members of the opposition failed to understand the significance of the signing of this agreement, but that they have the audacity to try to prevent me from providing information to Territorians, and I know why. When I have finished, Territorians will know why members of the opposition do not want this message to get out because it is the most shameful act that has been perpetrated on this Territory since self-government.

Everyone knows that, in the Territory, we are hampered in raising revenue ...

Mr Bell: Give us the facts.

Mr MANZIE: ... because we are not allowed to collect revenue for offshore mining or for ...

Mr Bell: Red herring.

Mr MANZIE: ... uranium mining.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for MacDonnell of standing order 51, and ask that he please read it.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As honourable members would know, we are hampered. We do not have the same revenue ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! In view of your drawing standing order 51 to my attention, I would like to draw to the attention of the honourable minister the standing order that says that answers must be relevant to questions. I fail to understand that the revenue-raising capacity of offshore oil can be relevant to the question of Commonwealth State Housing Agreement funds in the Northern Territory. I request that the Minister for Lands and Housing draw the attention of the people of the Northern Territory to the fact that by ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! For the benefit of the member for MacDonnell, I will read out standing order 51: 'No member may converse aloud or make any noise or disturbance which, in the opinion of the Speaker, is designed to interrupt or has the effect of interrupting a member speaking'. I find that to have occurred, irrespective of the new point of order that the honourable member has now raised. I ask the honourable member to allow the Minister for Lands and Housing to give his response in the honourable member's silence.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As I said, these particular restrictions by the Commonwealth prevent the Territory from raising revenue to a greater extent than occurs even in the smaller states. Not only are we disadvantaged because we are small in population terms, but we are hampered because of unfair restrictions that are applied by the federal Labor government to our revenue-raising efforts. This means that the Northern Territory and Territorians are particularly vulnerable to reductions in levels of funding and, in the case of the revised Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, the potential damage to our economy is massive.

The reductions we suffered this financial year, added to progressively larger cuts over the next 3 financial years, total almost \$100m. Those are the facts, for the benefit of the member for MacDonnell, and he should be aware of them. They have been spoken about in this House 3 or 4 times in the last 6 months, because this matter is so serious. But we do not get any support. We get nothing but denigration. Territorians are being ripped off to the extent of massive amounts of money, and we get derision and laughter from the member for MacDonnell and his ilk. Mr Speaker, I find that absolutely shameful.

We are looking at a reduction of \$100m over the next 4 financial years, in relation to housing alone. When those reductions are complete, our housing funding will be at a level \$45m per year less than it was in 1988-89.

In light of the severe problems caused by cuts in federal funding in recent years, and we are all well aware of those cuts that have been made since 1983, since the federal Labor government - and we are getting a big smile over there. He thinks it is funny that, since 1983, since the federal Labor government has had control of the purse strings in Canberra, we have lost \$1000m. We receive \$1000m less than the Memorandum of Understanding laid out for us to receive in the Territory - not members of this House, but Territorians. And he thinks it is a joke. Well, it is a joke, isn't it, for the people in the community who do not have jobs? And it is a joke for the builders who are struggling, and for people in Aboriginal communities who do not have facilities.

Mr Smith: And you are a joke as well.

Mr MANZIE: If you think it is a joke, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves, all of you. It is a most serious matter. I cannot understand how anyone with even an inkling ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! It is very difficult to ask that members of the opposition listen in silence when we are subject to such virulent abuse. Surely, Mr Speaker, if you are going to ask for us to act responsibly, you should also ask the honourable minister to do the same.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable minister to answer the question, to the point and as quickly as possible.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

For the benefit of members opposite, I was trying to point out that this is not a matter that is to be taken lightheartedly. It is not a matter to be laughed about. It is a very serious matter. People in our community understand the terrible privations that have been forced on Territorians by Labor policies and by cuts in federal funding which commenced when Senator Walsh said quite clearly that he would depopulate the north. He said he would do it using an economic machine-gun, and he is trying pretty hard. However, Territorians know how to send a message. I am sure that honourable members, at least those with some common sense, can easily visualise the hardship these cuts will cause to the Territory and Territorians. We certainly have not taken this lying down. The Chief Minister and myself have taken the matter up with members of the federal government. In simple terms, we are seeking a guarantee that, if housing funds for the Territory are reduced as a result of the new per capita funding, the shortfall has to be made up using allocations through other sources.

Mr Bell: The per capita funding to the Territory is 8 times the national average, Daryl, and you know it.

Mr MANZIE: That is the sort of drivel that we expect from the member opposite. He wants to talk about our funding.

Mr Bell: Come on, give us the figures!

Mr MANZIE: It does not matter that we produce 7 or 8 times the per capita earnings in imports.

Mr Smith: What a lot of nonsense!

Mr MANZIE: 10% of Australia's total imports come from the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: Imports?

Mr MANZIE: They are produced by 1% of the population.

Members interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Exports!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Attorney-General has made his point and I believe that he should conclude.

Mr MANZIE: I agree utterly, Mr Speaker. However, I think that, if the member for MacDonnell is going to interject that we receive too much funding, that we are overfunded, it should be brought to his attention that not only are we not overfunded, but we have problems in outlying areas - areas that he represents - because we do not have the funding. That is because the federal government took the money from us, and I certainly believe that the community has to be aware of the attitude that people like the honourable member show towards funding for Territorians.

We have been unable to secure an undertaking from the federal government despite an assurance from the Prime Minister to the Chief Minister at the Premiers Conference last year that the Territory would be taken care of in this regard. I raised the matter with Mr Staples and he referred me to the federal Treasurer. The Chief Minister wrote to the federal Treasurer and, surprise, surprise, he was referred to Mr Staples. The Minister for Transport and Works, acting on my behalf, wrote again to Mr Staples on 20 October pointing out major issues of concern to the Territory which needed to be addressed satisfactorily before the Territory government could sign the agreement. I raised those issues with Mr Staples in person on 24 October. No formal response to those approaches has been received. On 6 February ...

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! You have asked the honourable minister to answer his question directly and to the point. He is still parroting off 4 sheets of scrap paper that he has in his hand. I would suggest that ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I find that the honourable minister is answering the question as requested.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I share the concerns expressed by the member for Nhulunbuy. The details of the answer to this question are quite complex and they involve matters which refer to unfair acts by the federal government. I think that it is important that the Territory community understands the full repercussions of the cuts and the sort of background behind the work that has been done by the government so that people can see that we have been trying diligently to make representations to the federal government.

The federal minister informed me in his letter that the Housing Act of 1989, to which the revised CSHA is a schedule, received royal assent on

17 January. He went on to say: 'The effect of the 1989 Commonwealth act is to require states to sign the agreement before 31 May 1990 if they are to receive a payment from the Commonwealth in 1990 or 1991'. In other words, sign on the dotted line or you will miss out next financial year. But there is more to the sorry saga than a blatant threat. The federal minister goes on to say that he has approved an advance on 1 February of the funds which would normally flow to the Territory on that date. He is providing an advance, but he adds: 'This arrangement is on the expectation that the Northern Territory will sign an agreement in the above form by 1 March 1990'.

Mr Speaker, this puts the Northern Territory government in a totally untenable position. On the one hand, we are faced with an agreement which would have a potentially devastating effect on the Northern Territory economy, without any guarantee that the loss of those funds will be made up by the federal government. On the other hand, we are being told that, if we do not agree to sign the revised agreement, the federal government will pull the plug on all our housing funding, possibly as early as next week. I view that situation very seriously indeed, and I believe all members of this House and all members of this community should view that as most serious. At the first opportunity, I will be writing to Mr Staples again to seek a commitment that we will not be disadvantaged financially through the new agreement. Honourable members will recall that, last year, I wrote to federal Labor members about this, and I received letters in reply. I received a letter from Senator Collins to the effect that he had been assured that the Territory 'will not be disadvantaged in any way in terms of its housing needs by any proposal from the Commonwealth government'. He added: 'I can assure you we will continue to actively monitor the situation to ensure this does not occur'. He has been doing a lot of monitoring from a long distance diary. We have just been told: 'Either get your leg chopped off or we will chop your head off'. What about the member for the Northern Territory? What was his contribution? 'Keep me informed. I am sure everything will be all right'.

We will not let this matter rest there. Threats of this type are unbelievable in today's society but they typify the federal Labor government's attitude to the Northern Territory and to people in all remote areas of Australia. The federal government does not want to know about us. While it pumps money into the rest of this country, it does so at the expense of Territorians.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer to the investigation carried out at Hengyang by his press secretary. The press secretary reported evidence of extreme coercion being applied to Chinese women workers. Is the minister aware that extreme coercion is a criminal act? If he is not, I refer him to section 200 of the Criminal Code for a start. Secondly, has the evidence gathered by his press secretary been laid before the Northern Territory Police Force for investigation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it has been difficult to prove or disprove allegations about harassment or the use of standover tactics. The words which the Leader of the Opposition has chosen to use here for his own purposes today, I have never used about Hengyang management. However, investigations have established that staff relations are less than desirable. On the balance of probability, it appears that allegations of intimidation of Chinese workers have some credibility. Hengyang has been directed to cease any such practices and to employ a staff relations officer.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware and as I said in this Assembly on Tuesday, these allegations are being investigated by the Department of Industrial Relations and we will await the outcome of those investigations.

Trade Development Zone

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Have the protestations from the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable federal member convinced the minister that neither of the aforementioned knew anything about the flight south of a particular TDZ worker or an employee of Hengyang?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to continue my observations about the Australian Labor Party's shabby and shameful conduct in relation to Chinese guest workers at the Trade Development Zone. If honourable members opposite are expecting any lightening of the load, then they had better think again. I made it clear publicly yesterday that, because of a simple and honest clerical error, incorrect dates were attached to the general allegations that I levelled against the Leader of the Opposition, the federal member of the House of Representatives, and others. I regret that error, and it is obvious that it was no more than a clerical error, because it is an established fact, which was widely reported at the time, that Miss Huang departed from Darwin for Melbourne on Sunday 28 January and not a week later, on Sunday 4 February.

Having said that, let us refresh our memories on this matter. As an overview, I believe without doubt that a conspiracy has existed to cause maximum political damage to the Territory government and the Trade Development Zone and that part of the conspiracy has involved an offer of influence in gaining permanent Australian residence for Chinese guest workers, including Miss Huang. Sadly for the Leader of the Opposition, many other people believe that conspiracy has existed as well, including members of the media who were fed information on a preferred basis. You see, you

cannot have it both ways, Mr Speaker. You cannot be a primary source of information and then claim to know nothing about it. This matter is now the subject of an investigation by the Federal Police and yesterday my office provided Federal Police officers with certain information. Without in any way pointing to the information, and without suggesting to those officers the way in which their inquiries should be conducted, I make the following points for the benefit of honourable members.

Firstly, considerable attention should be paid to the activities of Ms Trish Crossin, who is the pivotal figure in this exercise, as I said in this House 2 days ago. Ms Crossin, the wife of the Secretary of the Northern Territory Trades and Labor Council, occupies an odd position as a person funded by the taxpayer, through a community-style Commonwealth grant, to look after the resettlement of migrants. Nevertheless, as I explained 2 days ago, she appears regularly in various other forms, including as an organiser for the Miscellaneous Workers Union and as a political confidant of the ALP. Ms Crossin put herself in a close advisory position to Miss Huang before she left Darwin, and I understand there may well be connections between Miss Huang, other Chinese guest workers, certain members of the pro-Fretilin anti-Indonesian Timorese community, and the local Labor left wing.

Members interjecting.

Mr COULTER: It is a great laughing matter, Mr Speaker.

Mr Leo: Reds under the bed, Barry.

Mr Bell: What about the Ayatollah?

Mr COULTER: Thank goodness this is being broadcast and members of the community can hear the mirth of honourable members opposite.

Mr Leo: You are low and pathetic.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Of course, Labor's left wing includes the federal member for the Northern Territory as a leading light.

According to my information, on 26 January and before, Miss Huang and Ms Crossin had crucial discussions about Miss Huang's future and what she might do and say as a result of those discussions. I do not for one moment believe Ms Crossin was acting on her own without consultation with the union movement and the Labor Party. In any event, on 28 January, Miss Huang left Darwin for Melbourne with Ms Crossin's active assistance. The next day, according to my information, Ms Crossin went to a meeting with the federal member, Mr Snowdon, in his office. She found the Leader of the Opposition present.

Mr Smith: What is this? The 29th? It is 29 January now, not the 26th?

Mr COULTER: I understand Chinese guest workers also attended that meeting ...

Mr Smith: It is the 29th now, not the 26th? Is that right?

Mr COULTER: ... as did certain other people.

So we are being semantic here, are we?

Mr Smith: Well, is it the 26th or the 29th?

Mr COULTER: Do you deny that the meeting took place?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I must ask the honourable minister to clarify his remarks. Otherwise, I will have to accuse him of misleading the House. He made a personal explanation saying that the meeting was on 26 January. He is saying now that it was on 29 January. He has to get it right and tell us when the meeting supposedly took place.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, there were many meetings.

Members interjecting.

Mr Ede: Who was there?

Mr COULTER: The Leader of the Opposition can deny that he was there on 29 January with the federal member if he wants to.

Mr Smith: What a beauty!

Mr COULTER: There was a meeting on 29 January and the Leader of the Opposition was there. I am not saying anything more than that. That will be the subject of investigations.

Mr Speaker, according to my information, on the next day, 29 January, Ms Crossin went to a meeting with the federal member, Mr Snowdon, in his office and she found the Leader of the Opposition present. I understand that Chinese guest workers also attended that meeting, as did certain other people, at least at intervals. I believe that, as a result of that meeting or perhaps series of meetings, the plot to stick it to the Territory government and the Trade Development Zone was finalised. I believe that plot was hatched in the previous week, dependent as it was on the obtaining of documents and on a public course of action being followed by Miss Huang, whose story changed instantly from a romantic entanglement and conflict with her employer to one of payment, award conditions, and extreme violations of civil liberties. Any reasonable person will see that the latter story meshed in perfectly with the tactics and strategy of the Labor Party and the union movement. Any reasonable person will also have noted the care and attention with which the strategy was handled, with elements doled out for public consumption bit by juicy bit.

That is not the end of this sordid story of political manipulation of the Chinese guest workers. If the Leader of the Opposition feels so much like telling his story, let us hear him tell it. Let us hear him tell it without being cute and coy about particular dates and times and without relying on semantics for excuses. Let him tell us about other meetings that he might have had with Chinese guest workers and about what he knew was taking place at meetings and who was there with his knowledge and connivance. Let him tell us about the 3 Chinese guest workers being kept on the backburner, ready to run at the strategic time. Let us hear him tell us about the curious advice certain Chinese guest workers have received about obtaining political refugee status and let us hear him talk about any meetings conducted with Miss Huang's boyfriend, what was said at such

meetings and whether any deals were concluded. Let us hear about all the meetings, all the conversations and all the team talk.

Let him deny the parameters of the conspiracy, because he cannot, nor can the Northern Territory federal member of the House of Representatives because he is in it up to his neck. It may well be that they saw in advance the problems that were likely to occur and that they took particular care not to place their bodies in certain places and positions at certain times. However, I do not have a shred of doubt that they have participated actively in the shaping of this sinister scheme.

Mr Smith: You do not have a shred of evidence, either.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the Federal Police investigation is now under way. I passed the matter over to them because I had reason to believe it was possible that federal laws had been breached. We have every good reason to believe that a conspiracy has existed. I am happy to abide by the findings of the investigation.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Has he thought of getting help for this problem that he has - this conspiracy problem? Secondly, I refer the minister to the investigation carried out by his press secretary at Hengyang. Let us get down to some real facts. The press secretary reported ...

Mr Coulter: You have lost your mirth all of a sudden. It is no longer a laughing matter.

Mr Ede: This is not.

Mr Coulter: Don't lose your concentration.

Mr SMITH: I can give you the address of a good psychiatrist.

Mr Speaker, the press secretary reported that individuals at Hengyang were involved in financial skimming practices. Is the minister aware that this is a criminal act under section 210 of the Criminal Code, and has the evidence obtained by his press secretary been laid before the Northern Territory Police Force for investigation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I said on Tuesday, what we need is facts. The investigations into those allegations are continuing. As we said, charges may well be laid, but we need facts. We need information. The key words are 'may well be laid'. Those investigations are continuing.

Northern Territory University

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

A number of complaints have been received about the operation of the Northern Territory University. In particular, I refer to the late availability of the handbook and the slow notification of entry acceptance to students. Is the minister aware of this concern and what action has been taken to improve the situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I am aware of the concerns that he refers to. A number of students have been disadvantaged as a result of some of the problems that are being experienced with the operation of the university at this time. Those concerns have been relayed to the Vice-Chancellor and he is also concerned about the late presentation of the handbook which is so necessary when students are planning for their studies.

The real answer is to address the question to the university because I have always made it very clear that it is an autonomous institution which manages its own affairs. However, I can understand that some people are saying that Northern Territory's taxpayers' dollars have gone into the university and that they have a right to complain and make representations to the Minister for Education and expect him to take some action on their behalf.

The Northern Territory government will contribute something like \$7m this year to the operation of the university. That does not happen in any of the states. We will continue to fight in relation to this matter. It was interesting, last night, to hear the Labor Party proposing that it would introduce the equivalent of another 10 universities to cater for the demand in Australia whereas we cannot obtain full funding for our university from the federal government. That is a disgrace and I hope that it is an issue that will be taken up.

People have been complaining to my office in the belief that we have responsibility for this particular sector. All I can do is refer them to the university. I have made it very clear that the university is its own body and that I do not intend to interfere in the processes put in place by the University Council and administered by the Vice-Chancellor of the university. The issues which have been raised with my office are serious. Students did not have the opportunity to have a handbook and, whilst the enrolment forms indicated that everything was to be completed by 13 February, handbooks did not even become available until 19 February. There were real problems and concerns which need to be addressed.

In relation to student applications for positions, the slow notification of acceptance of students created a real problem. We need to lift student numbers at the university and every effort should be made to ensure that we retain the good students that we have, otherwise we will end up losing our good students to universities in other states. It is important that such concerns be dealt with. I might add here that complaints were made to my office concerning the way in which general inquiries were handled by the university. All of these matters have been relayed to the Vice-Chancellor by myself, not with a view to interfering but in an attempt to resolve the issues which were of concern not only to me but to him also. He indicated to me that what had occurred, particularly in relation to the handbook, was not acceptable to him. I will be meeting with the Vice-Chancellor following these sittings to touch on a number of the specific issues which have been raised.

Mr Speaker, it is important that we work together to ensure that our university operates in a satisfactory manner. It is there for Territorians and we must ensure that we are able to get the full student numbers which are necessary for us to obtain eventual full funding from the federal government. As I said, it is a pity that the federal government has not

seen fit to contribute to our university in the way it does to the states at this time.

Mr Speaker, if honourable members are interested to hear about student numbers, perhaps someone will put a question to me on that subject. If people are not interested, that is of concern to me, because we are talking about dollars and funding. It is important that we stick to our targets and try to get our student numbers. I am trying to answer the question fully and provide the information. If someone wants to ask me that question, I will answer it at that time, but I am disappointed that the Assembly is not interested in those figures.

Official Road Signs

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the new policy of disposition of private road signs on highways under the control of the Department of Transport and Works, will the Department of Transport and Works give careful thought to the spacing and number of official signs so that the increasing official visual pollution may be examined with a view to rationalisation for a sensible decrease in their number?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am well aware of the member for Koolpinyah's views on the appropriate level of road signage.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: There are too many of them.

Mr FINCH: That is a view held by the member for Koolpinyah. In the past, I have asked her for specific examples, and I think there was one such example which was pursued by Transport and Works officers.

Through the new road sign policy, we have ensured that the distribution is in accord with proper road safety measures but, at the same time, we have provided a balance between signs indicating the location of private businesses and those carrying traffic flow directions in relation both to access and to road safety. This issue is not really one of great moment. If the honourable member has a specific difficulty, she need only write to myself or to the department direct. I am sure that each case can be reviewed on its merits.

ATSIC and Local Government

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which is due to start on 5 March, will cause some problems for local government in the Northern Territory. What are those problems?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a very good question. As we know, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission is due to be commenced on 5 March, a fact that is causing concern not only in the Territory, but right around Australia as was expressed by ministers in Hobart last week. There is considerable concern that traditional funding sources that were available to

Aboriginal people may be and, in some cases, are likely to be, cut off as a result of the new ATSIC proposal.

Recently, the Community Government Association wrote to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs seeking advice as to whether all community government councils would be eligible for funding via ATSIC. The answer it received was that, in some cases, they may not be eligible for funding through ATSIC. That is of real concern to me. In the Northern Territory, local government is one of the major sources through which funding flows to Aboriginal people and, if local governments - in this case, community governments - are not in a position automatically to receive through ATSIC funds that they would normally expect to obtain from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs or the Aboriginal Development Commission, then there is real cause for concern.

Only recently, Yami Lester, who is well known to many people from the Centre and right throughout the Territory, was told by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs that its officers did not have full knowledge of what the situation would be with funding once ATSIC was in place. Last week, I asked the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Gerry Hand, whether this was the case, and whether he was sure that ATSIC would be able to provide funding for local government. He waffled around the question. Of course, he had to do that, because he will not control the ATSIC commissioners.

At that meeting, he announced the appointment of commissioners, and I offer my congratulations here to Gus Williams who, I believe, is a very good choice on the part of the minister, although it may be that he perhaps should have not made those appointments at this stage, because he is in a caretaker situation. It is quite likely that, on the election of a Liberal National government, that legislation will be rescinded and those people will be out of a job.

Mr Ede: Ah! Gus will be happy to hear about that.

Mr McCARTHY: It is quite possible that that could happen, Mr Speaker, because it is the case that this federal government is now only a caretaker government. But, let us get back to the point.

The facts are that a community government, the major area through which funds are provided to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, may be cut off from ATSIC funds. There is no control through the federal government or the minister to ensure that Aboriginal people receive the funds that they are currently entitled to. That should be of concern to members opposite, because their constituents are likely to suffer from this unless they have guarantees from the current minister.

Community government is a Territory responsibility. Nevertheless, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has continued to retain section 3 of his act, allowing for councils to be established under federal legislation in opposition to councils established in the Northern Territory. We are seeing it happening now at Elliott and Borroloola. There are efforts to do it at Belyuen and everywhere else that we attempt to set up community government. Those councils will be funded automatically through ATSIC even though they are non-elected councils. They represent only their councils, yet they are eligible for this funding. Community government councils are not automatically eligible. I think that that is disgraceful. Members opposite should be telling their constituents that ATSIC is bad news for them. However, they do not have the guts to do that because they are pandering to the federal government and to the federal minister who has pushed this

through regardless of the feelings of Aboriginal people, not only in the Territory but around the country. It is disgraceful and they stand condemned for it.

Katatjuta Road to the Olgas

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Reluctantly, I draw the minister's attention to his bizarre posturing in relation to the Katatjuta Road, often referred to as the Olgas Road. Is the minister aware of one highly authoritative source which paid glowing tribute to the environmental planning of the road, and is he aware that that tribute included the following statements: 'The range of the negotiations allowed everyone involved to voice an opinion. The route has been determined almost entirely by environmental considerations and all the environmental issues have been sorted out'. Is the minister aware that I am quoting from last October's issue of the in-house publication, *The Journal*, published by his own Department of Transport and Works?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will respond to that question fairly briefly by saying that I am not aware of that source. Here again, we have a feeble attempt by the member for Wanguri, the shadow spokesman for the environment, together with his mate, Warren Snowdon, and the Australian Conservation Foundation, to try to flick pass the buck in relation to the desert oaks. Quite simply, the allegations by Warren Snowdon, which have been supported by the member for Wanguri, that the Department of Transport and Works should carry the responsibility for this entire matter is nonsense. For a start, to suggest that the Department of Transport and Works had access even to a copy of the environmental impact assessment is totally wrong.

Let us go right back to the start. The involvement of the Department of Transport and Works in this project was purely to provide the technical input into the depth of the pavement and the geometry of the alignment based on a route determined exclusively and consciously by ANPWS. On site, it had total authority - as one would expect it to have - for aligning the route to meet the environmental conditions laid down in its EIA. It failed to meet those conditions or even to stick to the route that had been distributed selectively to a handful of interested parties. The Conservation Commission was the only NT government body to receive a copy of the route. The Department of Transport and Works did not. Probably, what the department based its statement on, and certainly what I based my statement in December on, was the ill-placed confidence that the body responsible for management of the park would follow its own environmental assessment conditions.

The fact that 150 mature desert oaks, most of which were at least 50 years old and some of which were 200 years old, have been bulldozed is of no interest to the member for Wanguri. We have not even heard from the local member, the member for MacDonnell. While they were both down there last week, I invited them to have a look. Let them tell the people what they think about those 150 trees being bulldozed. The alignment proposed by the Department of Transport and Works did not involve the removal of a single mature desert oak - not one. We will hear much more on this subject. The hypocrisy of the Labor Party ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I have been ruled out of order for the use of the word 'hypocrisy'. I believe that the Minister for Transport and Works should be required to withdraw the word.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I was referring to the hypocrisy of the Labor Party. I made no reference at all to a member of this House.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the total hypocrisy of the Labor Party was evidenced by that big launch of a billion trees for Greening Australia. Senator Richardson and the Prime Minister's wife expressed this as they planted some gum trees over on the east coast - gum trees that will reach maturity in 5 or 6 years. At the same time, 150 trees under the control of the federal government within the Northern Territory have been bulldozed unnecessarily to save some mulgara rats. It did not save the rats, and that is a separate issue. Ironically, the rats were also found in the area of the new route.

I have seen television coverage of Senator Collins, Warren Snowdon and a host of other environmental pretenders planting gum trees. Meanwhile, they turn their backs on 150 mature desert oaks, some of them more than 200 years old. That is an absolute crime. If any good has come out of this matter, it is twofold. Firstly, the Labor Party's hypocrisy on environmental matters has been shown up and, secondly, the Aboriginal community in the area has gained some firewood. Overall, however, the loss of the trees is an absolute shame. The conditions of the ANPWS contract required that the trees be laid aside for collection by the Aboriginal people. Now, the ANPWS is seeking to issue a contract for \$5000 to the Aboriginal community to take away those 150 trees, many of them more than 100 years old, and to cut them up for firewood. What a shame!

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is it correct, as Senator Tambling told me some time ago, that the federal Attorney-General stated that he would not ratify that convention unless the Attorneys-General of all states and the Territory agreed to sign it too? Further, is the Attorney-General aware that there is widespread difference of opinion concerning the ramifications of that convention, and is he prepared to have the issue debated in this House so that the matter can be given some publicity before the convention is signed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a fact that the Prime Minister advised the Chief Minister in January this year that the federal government intended to sign the convention on the rights of the child in the near future. Signing the convention involves a commitment in principle to act consistently with the basic purposes of the convention. I am pleased to be able to advise members that it does not involve the assumption of specific legal obligations. Subsequent formal ratification is required to complete the process and the Prime Minister's advice was that consultation between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments would be undertaken prior to ratification, and that consultation would also take place in the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

I certainly hope that that consultation will occur and that it will occur in a fruitful manner. I hope that it does not take the form of the consultation which was supposed to take place in respect of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Really, that consultation was non-existent. Possibly, the federal Labor government may have learned something from its

mistakes in a number of areas in terms of pseudo-consultation. I think that the federal Minister for Housing is having problems with pharmacists as well, due to his method of consultation.

I am very aware that there is concern in the community regarding the possible adverse effects which ratification of this convention could have on family life. The main cause for concern appears to be that the convention confers rights on children without also conferring obligations and responsibilities. There is concern also that it may be destructive to family life. I am pleased to be able to advise that, to my knowledge, this concern is without foundation. It is true that the convention confers rights on children. However, they are not unfettered rights and they do not disregard parents' rights to influence their children's decisions and lives. For example, article 14.1 confers rights on a child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. However, that is modified by article 14.2 which provides that rights and duties of parents to provide direction to the child shall be respected by state parties.

I think that the main problem in relation to the signing of this convention is that, in fact, Australia would be abrogating its sovereign right to deal with its own matters itself. Unfortunately, there have been examples of the federal government signing international treaties and subsequently enforcing constraints provided by those international treaties on states, thereby overriding the rights of the states, and parliaments such as this, to settle matters according to the wishes of people in their jurisdictions. I believe that is the major danger of any ratification or signing of an international agreement, especially when the parties to such agreements are, in the main, people who have no consideration at all for the human rights of others. Unfortunately, we frequently see signatories to international agreements flaunting those agreements whilst, in Australia, we are held to courses of action which often the majority of the community does not support. I believe that the matter is one that would be suitable for comment in this House. I certainly look forward to hearing some comment, perhaps in an adjournment debate, and we could possibly consider a full-scale debate on the matter. I would certainly like to hear comment from the member for Sadadeen in an adjournment debate, as to the importance of the matter.

Central Australian Honda Masters Games

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TOURISM

What is the current situation with regard to bookings for the Central Australian Honda Masters Games which, I understand, are to be held in Alice Springs later this year, and what level of interest has been shown by sports people throughout Australia in participating in these games?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Araluen for the question. As honourable members would be aware, in 1988, the Honda Central Australian Masters Games brought 1500 competitors into central Australia and, as a result, the economic benefit to the community from motel accommodation and spending elsewhere was estimated to be around \$1.4m. This year, there will be 27 events. Equestrian events have been introduced and early bookings indicate that there will be some 3000 competitors in central Australia this year, plus family members who accompany those competitors. They will come from all over Australia, and the Northern Territory is very grateful to the major sponsors, particularly Honda. This is the third games to which Honda

has contributed, and we expect that the economic benefits to central Australia during October will be quite significant.

Darwin Palmerston Access Highway

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I draw the minister's attention to his sudden and unexpected interest in roads and their environmental impact. Which public bodies and community groups were asked to comment on the major road development project between Palmerston and the Darwin central business district? I refer to the massive project which will involve realignment of Tiger Brennan Drive and the construction of the Frog Hollow/Darwin Primary School exit route. Which public bodies and community groups responded? What were those responses? Was an EIS ordered or conducted and, if so, what were the results, and why have they not been made public?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Wanguri for his question. It gives me the opportunity to remind the honourable member that his new-found interest in the environment is not something that applies to this House. Not only the majority of my colleagues but I myself have practised conservation of the environment for a long time. In my case, that goes back almost 30 years. As one responsible for the construction of the majority ...

Mr Ede: Big holes.

Mr FINCH: In many instances, it was big holes, for the benefit of the member for Stuart. Whether we were building water mains or roads, in all of my early days in engineering, it was a matter of seeking a balance between the competing forces and taking a responsible attitude. As you would be well aware, Mr Speaker, having been a Minister for Transport and Works yourself, in taking a responsible attitude, the Department of Transport and Works is second to none. The other day, even Bob Ellis, the spokesman for the Green Independents, acknowledged ...

Mr Bailey: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr FINCH: ... that, in the case of the desert oaks, unfortunately Fred Finch was right, and secondly ...

Mr Bailey: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wanguri took 45 seconds to ask his question and I would ask that he allow the honourable Minister for Transport and Works to answer that question without interruption.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it was quite clearly acknowledged, and correctly so, that probably the Department of Transport and Works, of all of the road authorities in Australia, has the best track record in ensuring that the environment is impacted on to the absolute minimum in regard to the much-needed road network that has to be developed for the sake of the Northern Territory. That is a track record that the department is proud of, and I will not have any Johnny-come-lately environmentalist trying to denigrate that very good work.

In regard to Tiger Brennan Drive, once again the member for Wanguri got it wrong. It was rather disappointing that, when members of the the media

were given the correct version of the Frog Hollow issue, they failed to run that very story, and allowed the member for Wanguri to get away with his fabricated version and allowed the spokesman for the Australian Conservation Foundation to get away with a nonsense statement.

In regard to Frog Hollow, that was a matter for proper forward planning. It was a planning issue that went before Cabinet some 3 or 5 years ago. The proposal went through all of the advertising processes. In fact, the responsibility for what happens with Frog Hollow lies with the Darwin City Council. It is responsible for the CBD and, correctly, it had an involvement as well. For all of our road projects, we do go through a proper environmental assessment and take the appropriate steps that are recommended for the circumstances.

In regard to Kakadu, for example, we went through a full EIS for the Oenpelli road, despite the comments made by Mr Krockenberger. In regard to Frog Hollow, the road preference has been put forward by the design engineers for determination 5, 10, or maybe 20 years down the track. That is forward planning and it is all good stuff.

Mr Hatton: When the population grows by 40%.

Mr FINCH: When the population of Darwin reaches a certain point, and I think 130 000 is the figure, we will have to address the options available then and, of course, the options will change. Even as we have given an indication to the Uniting Church, further up in that area, that its particular circumstances will not be affected, so we have held the precise options on the so-called Frog Hollow area off until they need to be determined, but at least we have done some forward planning on what the worst-case scenario could be.

Let me say it clearly again for the honourable member and for all of those people who may take an interest in Frog Hollow. Frog Hollow has been set aside as a park. The road preference to which the honourable member was referring does not even go through Frog Hollow anyway, regardless of the fact that it is only 1 of a number of options which will be properly debated by Cabinet, by government and by the city council in a decade or 2 decades time. Once again, the honourable member has got it wrong.

Performance of Warren Snowdon as a Federal Member

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the Chief Minister aware of recent claims by the Labor MHR, Warren Snowdon, that he has done a better job than any of his predecessors in representing the Northern Territory, and will he comment on the accuracy of those claims?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was surprised and rather amused to learn that the Territory's member of the House of Representatives should make such a claim. I thought it rather denigrated his predecessors and, of course, his predecessors have not all been on the other side of politics either. I guess that ego is one of those things that he does have a lot of, but it seems that it is all that he has. I would not mind so much that he claimed to be the best ever representative of the Northern Territory in parliament if, in fact, Mr Snowdon had achieved anything of significance for the Northern Territory during his term in Canberra, but the fact is that he

seems to have one talent only and that is to be in the right place when there is a television camera around a federal minister. You will always find a little elf on the shoulder, as it were, and ...

Mr Coulter: He single-handedly negotiated the Timor Gap agreement.

Mr Smith: Two airports, one Olgas road.

Mr Coulter: The Timor Gap deal. Oh, leave us alone!

Mr Smith: Tindal stage 3. It is not a bad list for starters.

Mr Coulter: And you believe that, do you?

Mr PERRON: In a moment, I would be pleased to take on the matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition as being projects which we should attribute to the hard work of our MHR, such as airports and the like, but to start with, I think that his record in regard to defending the Territory's funding position is one that we should bear in mind, particularly when we reflect on the federal member's claim that he has been the best ever. In the time that he has been exercising his much-heralded influence in Canberra with his colleagues, the Territory has gone backwards.

Since he was elected, every Territorian has been denied about \$3200 in federal funds, and that is for each man, woman and child in the Territory. You can imagine Mr Speaker, what we could have done in the Territory if we had had that money - about \$500m in 1990 dollars - but we did not get the chance to use it at all. In real terms, our per capita funding has been slashed by 20% since Mr Snowdon started representing Territorians. In the 1986-87 financial year, that is the year before Mr Snowdon was elected, federal payments to the Territory amounted to \$985m. Adjusted for inflation and population to maintain the same level of services to Territorians in 1987-88, which was that was Mr Snowdon's first year as our representative, we would have needed \$1062m. We received \$966m, a shortfall of \$96m in the first year of Mr Snowdon's representation. By the same token, to maintain the pre-Snowdon levels of service in the 2 subsequent financial years, we needed \$1138m and \$1233m respectively. Instead, we received \$989m and \$1004m respectively, shortfalls of \$149m and \$229m. I think it is important for me to use these figures even though, no doubt, when speaking of hundreds of millions of dollars one loses many of the listeners. However, it will be on the Hansard record.

As I mentioned, about \$500m in today's dollars have been denied to the Territory since Mr Snowdon has taken up representation for us. We cannot afford another 3 years of this sort of representation. As for the airports, the army barracks, and in so many other areas where he may try to take credit, they have had nothing to do with Mr Snowdon. As a matter of fact, members opposite may care to forget that it was the Fraser government that initiated the Tindal project. If members opposite care to check the record, they will find that that is absolutely true. To claim kudos for Darwin's redeveloped airport and for the upgrading of the airport at Alice Springs, Mr Snowdon would need to have the most enormous hide. We do not have those facilities yet. We thought we were about to get them some 4 years ago, when the Prime Minister himself turned the first sod at the Darwin Airport. If one thought any projects would be sacrosanct, it would be those projects on which the Prime Minister himself turned the first sod. But no, after about \$20m had been spent, it was cancelled.

Members opposite cannot expect Territorians to accept at face value that the Darwin Airport redevelopment project - commenced prior to a federal election and about 1 year later than our federal representative told us it would commence - will ever be completed. I have been in politics a long time and I have watched Mr Hawke closely ever since he has been in office. I will believe that Darwin will have a redeveloped airport when it is completed and not before, because of the track record of the Prime Minister and the last false start.

Mr Ede: The Coalition has decided to sell all domestic and international airports.

Mr Coulter: They will not get a lot for Darwin Airport.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I made the comment the other day that Mr Snowdon has done a reasonable job of getting himself a name for having been everywhere and done everything by announcing projects that the federal government would have undertaken in the Northern Territory if the Territory were represented by a monkey in Canberra. It is true, and any reference to the ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister should withdraw the inference that the member for the Northern Territory is performing at no better level than a monkey would perform.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I refer the Leader of the Opposition to standing order 62 which is quite comprehensive. The Chief Minister referred to a monkey being the representative of the Territory in parliament, but did not refer to the incumbent member.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I am sure that, during the course of the current federal election campaign, Territorians will be reminded over and over again of the things that the Northern Territory does not have as a result of Mr Snowdon's representation of our affairs in Canberra over the past period. I reject his boast that he is the best federal member that we have ever had. In fact, I think he is the worst and we simply cannot afford him, financially or otherwise, for another 3 years.

Trade Development Zone

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

When did he become aware of the allegations made by the Minister for Industries and Development concerning certain events associated with the operations at the TDZ? Does he now support the Minister for Industries and Development's allegations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the first part of the question was somewhat nonsensical and is impossible to answer.

Mr Leo: Mr Speaker, I will repeat the question.

Mr PERRON: Try it again.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member may repeat his question.

Mr LEO: When was the Chief Minister aware of allegations that the Minister for Industries and Development made against persons in the Northern Territory and persons in this parliament in relation to certain events associated with the TDZ and an operator, and does the Chief Minister support his minister in respect of those allegations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, let me assure the honourable member opposite that I have been aware of the Minister for Industries and Development's activities and information that he has gathered in the course of the recent heightened interest in matters related to the Trade Development Zone. I am very pleased with the way the minister is handling his portfolio.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I preface my question by informing the House that, as of 8 o'clock this morning, the police had still not received from the minister information gathered by his press secretary relating to alleged criminal activity in the Trade Development Zone. Do the financial skimming allegations laid by the minister's press secretary against a company in the Trade Development Zone revolve around that company's failure to account for the \$104 per week the company withheld from each Chinese worker for food and household supplies and, since the Northern Territory Police Force is the only authority empowered to investigate criminal allegations, why does the minister continue to withhold the information from the Northern Territory Police Force?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is well aware that charges of skimming or any other allegations - and a truckload of them have been levelled during the course of the debate on the Trade Development Zone and, in particular the actions of Hengyang - are being investigated by a firm of chartered accountants, Coopers & Lybrand, and by the Department of Industrial Relations. Those investigations are not complete at this time, The Leader of the Opposition will have to be patient and wait until we have the facts. He will then know whether or not there are charges to be answered.

I am not slowing down those investigations. On the floor of this Assembly, during the course of the debate last week, I explained what we are doing to accelerate those investigations and how much help we are providing to those people in the course of their inquiries. They are not being hampered in any way, and we will have to wait until we have the facts. It is facts that have been lacking in this debate in relation to the allegations that have been levelled by the opposition.

Mr Smith: What was your press secretary operating on then? Fantasy, perhaps.

Mr COULTER: I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that my press secretary and the ministerial officer responsible for the Trade Development Zone were among the first to be interviewed by the Federal Police on their findings during the investigations into the charges laid against Hengyang. I understand that that interview with the Federal Police lasted for in excess of 1 hour. We are cooperating fully to get to the bottom of the allegations that have been levelled.

AIDS Policy of Department of Education

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Some time ago, school staff and school councils were asked for ...

Mr Coulter interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Industries and Development will allow the member for Jingili to ask his question of the Minister for Education without interjecting so that the Minister for Education is able to understand the question.

Mr SETTER: Some time ago, school staff and school councils were asked for input to the development of its AIDS policy by the Department of Education. What is the current situation and the current status of the policy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as has been mentioned, for some time the Department of Education has been looking at developing a policy on HIV AIDS in the schools. The policy has been developed following a great deal of consultation with a wide range of groups and the Department of Health and Community Services. The groups that have been involved in that process are the school councils, the Council of Government School Organisations and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. The groups that I have mentioned have been involved in perusing the proposed policy, which was widely circulated throughout the Northern Territory, and the input from those particular groups has been taken on board in the formulation of this policy.

Mr Speaker, I table the policy for the information of members.

The document adopts the recommendations of the AIDS Task Force which was set up to look at this specific issue. It begins by commenting generally on the disease HIV or AIDS. It talks about the general symptoms. It also refers to the provision of information and the various advisory and counselling facilities which are available. It touches on hygiene in schools and first-aid procedures, and provides guidelines for people who have the disease and are employed in or attending schools.

The development of this policy is consistent with the development of AIDS policies throughout Australia. That needs to be made very clear. The document's terminology is consistent with that used elsewhere. I should also mention here that I believe that other departments will be putting forward or developing policies in relation to AIDS in the near future. I refer particularly to an AIDS policy relating to the public service, which the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government will present at some stage.

I am sure that honourable members would be aware that the Northern Territory Department of Education has integrated AIDS education into its comprehensive health curriculum. That has been done by adopting the curriculum resource material from Victoria. The material is titled 'Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention Education'. That has been in place for some time. Teachers will be attending in-service programs this year in respect of AIDS education which will be run by the Department of Education, assisted by the Department of Health and Community Services. Those in-service programs will relate to all regions throughout the Northern Territory and will involve primary and secondary school teachers and school nurses.

The final point that needs to be made is that the policy that I have tabled today will be reviewed every 6 months in conjunction with the Department of Health and Community Services. When changes in medical knowledge indicate that policy changes are necessary, the AIDS Task Force will be convened to recommend possible amendments to the policy. The document that I have tabled this morning will be distributed to schools and school councils throughout the Northern Territory.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, under standing order 54, I wish to make a personal explanation. It pertains to a question asked of me on Thursday of

last week by the member for Wanguri. The question related to desert oaks and honourable members ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable minister to leave his personal explanation until later. It should have been done earlier and not during question time.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In a previous answer, the minister stated that the Federal Police were investigating allegations against Hengyang. Subsequently, I checked that statement with the Federal Police. They deny that they are undertaking an investigation into Hengyang. Could the honourable minister supply this House with the information source on which he is relying?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I apologise for any inconvenience that that may have been caused. Of course, they are investigating the Leader of the Opposition. The point that I was trying to make was that the information that was brought to the attention of my press secretary had been made available in this case.

Mr Smith: You cannot get anything right.

Mr COULTER: We will see who has got everything right, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: Yes, we will.

Mr COULTER: We will see in the case of the Leader of the Opposition and the federal member of the House of Representatives. They had a great week last week, Mr Speaker, but I can assure you that the tide is turning and that information is now being provided on a very regular basis.

Members interjecting.

Mr COULTER: They can laugh as much as they like, Mr Speaker. I am not making anything up. I am acting on information which has been provided to me. The Leader of the Opposition can be as coy as he likes. He can play with semantics, and the member for the House of Representatives and Ms Trish Crossin can be as coy as they like and can indulge in semantics as much as they like when they say that they did not attend a particular meeting and were not in a particular place at a particular time. All that will come out in the wash and the Leader of the Opposition will look very silly.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition will not be here when the police report is handed down, because his resignation will be demanded forthwith.

Improvements at Darwin and Alice Springs Turf Clubs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

The Bennett Report was adopted in mid-1989. It identified many areas in which changes for the better could be made and I ask the minister whether he can advise the House of what improvements have been made at both the Darwin and Alice Springs Turf Clubs since the report was adopted.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, since being given responsibility for this portfolio, I have taken the opportunity to visit both the Alice Springs Turf Club and the Darwin Turf Club to see at first hand the improvements which have already been proceeded with. I must admit that I was most impressed in both cases. Mr Chris Nolan, who is now the secretary/manager at the Alice Springs Turf Club, has done an absolutely amazing job, together with his committee, in improving the facilities at and the aspect of the Alice Springs Turf Club. To date, some \$90 000 has been granted to the club to construct a jockeys and stewards facility. The club has done very well in spending that money. It used its own resources and, on a subcontract basis, built an excellent facility that was opened recently by the member for Araluen who, at the time the project was instigated, was the Minister for Racing and Gaming.

Since then, the Racing and Gaming Board has approved another \$149 000 for the construction at Pioneer Park of public toilets, kiosk facilities, a TAB extension in the public area and refurbishment of the members' bar. I was there the other week. Work has commenced on the toilet block and will be substantially complete in time for the club's major carnival later in the year. The president, Mr Les Lloyd, and his committee are to be congratulated on their efforts on behalf of all racegoers and people interested in racing generally.

In regard to Darwin Turf Club, the board recently approved developments at Fannie Bay racecourse totalling just over \$0.5m. Those facilities will include new canteen facilities. Racegoers would be well aware that the canteen facilities that have been used there to date are stretched to the limit and upgrading has been long awaited. There is to be a double swabbing stall, a new stable complex of some 24 stalls and a security yard. Very importantly, there is to be bitumen sealing and lighting of the public car park area. That sealing is for the benefit not only of racegoers but also for local residents for whom dust has been a problem at some times of the year. All in all, Mr Paul Cattermole, the secretary/manager there, has Fannie Bay racecourse looking as pretty as a picture. The work that he and the president, Mr Ted Bailey, and their committee have done is excellent. They have used their limited resources to good advantage. The Racing and Gaming Board has endorsed their good work as part of the Bennett Report by giving them further grants to improve their facilities.

Allegations Relating to Education System on Groote Eylandt

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Mr Speaker, I draw the minister's attention to wide-ranging and serious allegations relating to what is called an 'old boys' network' on Groote Eylandt. The network is accused of everything from intimidation to sexual harassment. Has he now seen or read the report on those allegations or does it remain locked away, as claimed, with departmental staff? In view of the calls for an inquiry from teachers, unions and others, will the honourable

minister, as a first step, provide a copy of the report to the various parties involved and will he undertake to review the decision of the Secretary of the Department of Education not to take any further action on this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the issue that was raised on the 7.30 Report last night has received a great deal of comment generally. At the outset, I must say that much of that comment has been generated by the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, Col Young.

Mr Smith: To his credit.

Mr HARRIS: We will see about that in a little while. For an opposition which is supposed to be responsible and which is supposed to be looking after the interests of people who teach in our schools ...

Mr Ede: I brought this to your attention privately 3 months ago, didn't I, Tom?

Mr HARRIS: You should just listen.

Mr Speaker, I believe that what we are hearing are the words of a disgruntled General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. I say that at the outset because there are many teachers in the Northern Territory Teaching Service who are becoming a little concerned about Col Young's attitude towards his job and his position. It is very important that teachers and the department work together to provide the best possible service to people in our communities.

What we have so far is a comment made by the federation which was covered last night on the 7.30 Report. It really is a nonsense. I do not mind investigative reporting by journalists such as those on the 7.30 Report. I do not like it, on many occasions, but I accept that it is part of the normal democratic process. However, it is a pity that often those programs do not present the full facts of the case.

Mr Smith: Why didn't your secretary provide ...

Mr HARRIS: May I just say, Mr Speaker, that the 7.30 Report was aware of a note which had been signed by 22 teachers on Groote Eylandt yesterday. I will read that note because it was not even mentioned in last night's report. I am annoyed about that because these are the sorts of matters that should at least be mentioned in such reports. I do not mind spears being thrown at me, but they should get it right so that the public has the opportunity to realise what it is all about. The note reads:

We, the staff of Alyangula Area School, following claims and allegations made at a special meeting of the school on Monday evening, 5 February 1990, wish the following known:

1. as a staff, we are united in our efforts to provide the best possible education for the children in our care;
2. we have every confidence in the Education Department and its handling of recent matters on Groote Eylandt;

3. as a staff, we are contented with the administration of Alyangula Area School and urge disregard for claims to the contrary; and
4. our support for, and confidence in, our principal, Peter Clarke, is total and unqualified.

That note is signed by 22 teachers. That was one note that had come to my attention which gave support for the actions that had been taken by the Secretary of the Department of Education. Further to that, this morning I have 3 letters which were forwarded to the secretary of the department. I will read them out because they are very important and add some substance to what I was saying about the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, Col Young. This letter is addressed to Geoff Spring, and it reads as follows:

Dear Sir,

We, the undersigned staff of Umbakumba School, in light of allegations made on the ABC 7.30 Report on 26 February 1990 wish the following to be known as a matter of urgency:

1. we have every faith and confidence in the current system of selection of and the performance of the principal and senior staff at this school and those of our sister schools on Groote Eylandt;
2. we totally refute allegations made against the staff members of each of the schools on Groote Eylandt;
3. we totally refute the nature of allegations made against senior departmental officers; and
4. we unanimously believe that the teachers of Groote Eylandt have been grossly misrepresented by the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation to the detriment of the teaching service officers and the provision of education in the 3 schools.

That was signed by all 6 teachers at Umbakumba. There is a letter from the Alyangula school which covered the same points and made the same comment in relation to Col Young.

Mr Ede: Will you table it?

Mr HARRIS: I am happy to table that letter. The third letter is from the Angurugu Community Education Centre, and it says:

We, the undersigned staff, the Angurugu Community Education Centre, in light of allegations made on the ABC 7.30 Report on 26 February 1990, wish the following to be known as a matter of urgency:

1. we have every faith and confidence in the current system of selection of and the performance of the principal and senior staff of this school and those of our sister schools on Groote Eylandt; and

2. we unanimously believe that the teachers on Groote Eylandt have been grossly misrepresented by the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation to the detriment of the teaching service officers and the provision of education in the 3 schools.

Mr Speaker, what really annoys me about this exercise is that I had a meeting recently with representatives of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation and that matter was not raised on that occasion. That was only a couple of weeks ago. It was not raised because the federation knows that I do not become involved personally in staffing matters. How would I stand, as a minister, if it were found that I was transferring people from one point to another? That would be great ammunition for the members of the opposition. They would say it was ministerial interference. Confidence within the teaching service, indeed within the public service, would be shattered if it were known that a minister was interfering in staffing matters. I have made it very clear that I will not become involved in staffing matters. That is rightly the responsibility of the Secretary of the Department of Education. Under the law, he is required to investigate any concerns or allegations that are made, and he has carried out that duty in a proper and correct fashion. There is no question about that.

The Department of Education has gone to great lengths to put the matter straight in relation to the allegations that have been made. My only interference in the exercise, if it could be called interference, followed from a call from the Manager of the Groote Eylandt Mining Co, indicating that the Northern Territory Teachers Federation had called on mining unions in the area to go on strike to support its cause. I became involved only on the basis of asking the Department of Education to send officers to Groote Eylandt at 4 hours notice in order to attend a public meeting to have the matter straightened out. It was straightened out, and industrial action on the island was averted.

Something has to be made very clear to the opposition, whose members do not seem to get the message. In order for appropriate education to be provided, a stable and harmonious teaching environment is required. There are personality problems in many schools. However, contrary to what has been promoted by the General Secretary of the Teachers Federation, I need to make it clear that, in this case, transfers have not come about as a result of disciplinary action. That has to be placed on record. The fact is that we have provision for compulsory transfer. It happens throughout the Territory. Naturally, the Northern Territory Teachers Federation is opposed to compulsory transfer. As I have indicated to you, Mr Speaker, the system is in place. It is nonsensical to suggest that any transfer of teachers from Groote Eylandt or anywhere else has occurred as a result of disciplinary action.

Mr Ede: Has there been any counselling of the teachers involved?

Mr HARRIS: All right. We get back to the issue of whether any counselling has been involved.

Mr Ede: Of compulsory transferees.

Mr HARRIS: As a result of this exercise, and as a result of the report, which has supposedly been locked up where no one can see it, 10 people from the Department of Education have been counselled: 5 senior officers, 3 principals, a superintendent and an assistant. To say that nothing has happened is nonsense.

Mr Ede: Compulsory transferees were never counselled.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, as I have made very clear, we must try to consider the whole environment. After all, children's education is at stake and a stable learning environment is needed. People may have problems in the community. I am not talking about personal problems, which are their business. The bottom line is that schools must run effectively and efficiently. We try to operate a system which enables that to happen.

I want to make it very clear that the Secretary of the Department of Education has carried out his responsibilities correctly in this exercise. There is no question about that. I repeat that I will not become involved in staffing matters. There are appropriate courses of action which can be taken by teachers if they are not satisfied that the Secretary of the Department of Education has done the right thing. I am happy to receive letters or comment from them but, as I said, there is no substance to many of the allegations at this stage. Some of the allegations are true, but are not of a nature which relates to anything which can be defined as misconduct under the Northern Territory Teaching Service Act. That is a fact. Many allegations relate to the private lives of people. That is a matter for the individuals concerned and, indeed, some people are taking action against those who have made particular allegations. I make no further comment in relation to that.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Many of the allegations are based on hearsay. Members of the opposition do not seem to want to hear this either. Many of the people on both sides realise that wrongs did occur, and they have apologised. That should be the end of the matter.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: If you are saying that, after people have apologised and said they were sorry it all happened, they should be sacked or transferred, one can only wonder about the type of system that would exist under a Labor government. It would be a disaster in terms of confidence in the community.

Mr Speaker, there is only one outstanding matter which, I am led to believe, relates to sexual harassment. That matter is being investigated and will be investigated further.

In answer to the honourable member's question, the report is not available. Action has been taken in relation to the matter. The General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation has been involved in a disgraceful exercise. He has been promoting all this nonsense in an attempt to create a furphy that the Department of Education has a network which is moving people around and is looking after only those who have a particular interest. That is a load of nonsense and the record needs to be corrected on that. I am happy to field any questions in relation to this or anything else. However, I stress that, as the Minister for Education, I will not become involved in matters which should properly be addressed by the Secretary of the Department of Education.

Member for Wanguri's Question on Katatjuta Road

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Since being questioned by the member for Wanguri in relation to information contained in a publication of his department, has he familiarised himself with the contents of that publication and, if so, does it support the member for Wanguri's allegations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Education has just demonstrated very clearly that opposition members have a capacity for not listening to and not understanding what they hear or read. Honourable members may well recall the very sarcastic nature of the member for Wanguri's questioning last Thursday in respect of the desert oaks and the Olgas road. When I obtained a copy of the document to which he referred, I found that the member for Wanguri had deliberately and maliciously misled this House.

Mr Speaker, what the member for Wanguri was attempting to do in support of his federal colleague ...

Mr EDE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As you know, allegations of this nature, directed against a member of this House, must be dealt with by way of substantive motion. If the honourable minister wishes to do that, I will be quite happy to take the matter on board. Otherwise, however, he is not permitted to make allusions of that nature in this House.

Mr SPEAKER: I advise the Minister for Transport and Works that he must withdraw the words 'deliberately' and 'maliciously' or move a substantive motion under standing order 61.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, after some deliberation, I had not intended to move a substantive motion in regard to the misleading of this House, and a reference to the Privileges Committee. However, under the circumstances, I must now do so. In speaking to that motion ...

Mr Smith: It has not been moved. Move it.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I move - I wish to raise a matter of privilege involving the member for Wanguri.

Mr SPEAKER: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr FINCH: In a question he put to me on Thursday, in a futile attempt to pass the buck to the Department of Transport and Works and, of course, to myself for the malicious ...

Mr TUXWORTH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Could I get a point of clarification from you, Sir? Is question time now terminated, and we are debating a censure motion?

Mr SPEAKER: There is a motion before the Chair, brought by the honourable Minister for Transport and Works against the member for Wanguri for misleading the House. The honourable minister is now speaking to his motion.

Mr Ede: But what is the motion?

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister might repeat his motion.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I apologise. I did not hear any motion, and I was listening to hear that.

Mr SPEAKER: Leave was granted for the honourable minister to move his motion.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the honourable minister has raised a matter of privilege, and he is seeking the opportunity to put the matter. The honourable minister did not put a motion. He raised a matter of privilege and is presently seeking to speak to explain that matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Transport and Works must move a substantive motion if he means to raise a matter of privilege against the member for Wanguri in relation to his misleading of this House. The Minister for Transport and Works is able to move a motion to censure the member for Wanguri for misleading the House. I understand that that is what he is doing.

Mr Smith: No, he is not. He has changed his mind, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will take it easy too. The minister is able to move his motion. I understood that he had moved his motion.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move that the member for Wanguri be censured in relation to a matter of privilege.

Mr SPEAKER: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

MOTION
Censure of Member for Wanguri

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I move that the member for Wanguri be censured for deliberately and maliciously misleading the Assembly during debate on Thursday 22 February 1990.

In question time last Thursday, the honourable member quoted from a document from the Department of Transport and Works, the October issue of the in-house publication *The Journal* and, in so doing, he attempted to transfer responsibility for demolition of 150 desert oaks by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service to the Department of Transport and Works. To quote from the *Daily Hansard*, the honourable member said: 'Is the minister aware of one highly authoritative source which paid glowing tribute to the environmental planning of the road, and is he aware that that tribute included the following statements ...?' The honourable member then went on to quote, allegedly from the said document.

At the time, I indicated that I was not familiar with the words spoken by the member for Wanguri and I was ridiculed for so doing, but there was very good reason why I did not recognise the words spoken. The reason was very simple, because not only was the member for Wanguri very selective in his quotation, using part sentences and including some words of his own but - and I will table the document, he had taken totally unrelated matters from 3 separate parts of the article and pulled them together to express a totally different meaning for the purpose of trying to shift the blame to the Department of Transport and Works.

In the first instance, one-third of his quotation was part of a sentence which pertained to the negotiations between myself and the federal Minister for Transport and Communications, Mr Brown, and our various officers in coming to terms on the funding for the project, the \$8m which was made up by the Department of Transport and Works. The range of negotiations allowed everyone involved to voice an opinion and, of course, they did so. That part of the quotation pertained to the negotiations on funding, because it has been demonstrated quite clearly that there were no negotiations in regard to the environment.

The environmental issues were totally the domain of the ANPWS, as has been explained already. In fact, in the environmental impact assessment stages, the Department of Transport and Works had no input. Despite allegations by Mr Snowdon and by the member for Wanguri, the department did not receive a copy of the environmental impact assessment to comment on. Even when the department was commissioned to do the design, and consultants were commissioned under a sub-consultancy to do the design, no one was given a copy of that environmental impact assessment which laid down specific saving provisions for the desert oaks and a specific route allocation. It was clearly demonstrated that those negotiations all related to funding, towards which the Territory government had to contribute over \$1m in order to embarrass the federal government into doing something about the disgraceful state of the road to the Olgas.

In the second part of the honourable member's quotation, again he used parts of sentences, skipping a few phrases, and he said that 'the route has been determined almost entirely by environmental considerations ...'. He then ran the same sentence into a third component in the article, a column across and several paragraphs further on, and gave another partial quotation to indicate that all environmental issues had been sorted out.

In regard to the second component, that phraseology refers to the mulgara rats and, in the original, the words 'the route was determined almost entirely by environmental considerations' were followed by 'and authorised by the Uluru National Park Board'. Once again, that emphasised that the authority for the route was with the ANPWS and the board of management of the park. The second part of the honourable member's offering had nothing to do with anything except the rats. The third part - 'while all the environmental issues have been sorted out' - was contained in a sentence that pertained to an emergency landing strip for aircraft on the new road. It had nothing to do with issues relating to the desert oaks which were part of the honourable member's sarcastic introduction to his question.

Mr Speaker, you can see that there was a futile attempt to transfer responsibility unfairly and totally without foundation to myself and the Department of Transport and Works. The member for Wanguri has a habit of misquoting and deliberately misleading. He demonstrated that in respect of Frog Hollow. He demonstrated it during his election campaign when he said a property in Rocklands Drive was part of the Casuarina Coastal Reserve. He misquoted deliberately in an attempt to get his point across. If the member for Wanguri has to rely on misquoting and misleading this House and the general public, he will not go anywhere.

Mr Speaker, I had no desire to impose on you, the Clerk and others the extra work required to deliberate on this matter of privilege because I did not believe that the member for Wanguri warranted it. However, it is important because not only this House but the listening public heard the fabrication, the part quotations from and the selective misrepresentation of

an article written in good faith by the Department of Transport and Works. As I said on Thursday, it was based on the not unreasonable expectation that the custodians of a national park would follow their own environmental advice and do the right thing.

The honourable member's pathetic and apologetic contribution to the debate in relation to the ANPWS the other day demonstrated that he had nothing of substance to say about the matter. His actions, along with those of the so-called environmental groups, have not demonstrated a scrap of responsibility in relation to this issue. That irresponsibility is shared by ABC television which has sat on an exclusive film. It has not released it for public consumption around Australia, as was required of it, despite the fact that it was filmed at the taxpayers' expense. No wonder the member for Wanguri is clutching at straws of fabrication to make his point. No wonder the federal member, Warren Snowdon, refuses to debate on the 7.30 Report with me this fundamental and simple issue of the desert oaks. I have no hesitation now in proceeding with this motion.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the reason that I rise first is that we have some discipline on this side of the House. We know from one moment to the next what we intend to do in the Legislative Assembly. We do not allow ourselves to be caught in the ridiculous position that honourable members opposite have been caught in.

Let me start by saying, Mr Speaker, that censure motions are pretty serious. They are the one means that this House has to place on the record its concern, its dismay and, at times, its disgust with the actions of particular members. Such a motion should not be used lightly. In his contribution, the honourable minister said - and I noted it down - that he did not believe it warranted it. He actually stated that he did not believe that this issue warranted a censure motion, and his actions today have demonstrated that. First, he attempted to make a personal explanation and, in so doing, revealed his ignorance of the rules of this parliament. He was ruled out of order. He then set up a dorothy dixer. Again, he was ruled out of order, when he attempted to make an accusation that was more in the nature of a substantive motion than an answer to a question. Then, in a desperate and final attempt to justify himself, we had a censure motion which he himself did not believe was warranted.

This is the most pathetic attempt we have seen from any member to move a censure motion in this House. Let us look at this statement, and I will not go into this in any great detail because the member for Wanguri will do that. What we have is the member for Wanguri, during question time one day last week, drawing to the attention of the Minister for Transport and Works that there was a statement, of which he was unaware, in his own department's publication, The Journal. The relevant extracts indicated very clearly and precisely that there had been extensive negotiations between the 2 government authorities and that there had been agreement. I will quote 1 paragraph: 'As a result, the new road route has been determined almost entirely by environmental considerations ...'

Mr Finch: Finish it!

Mr SMITH: ... 'and authorised by the Uluru National Park Board'. There is no question of the member for Wanguri misleading this House. All we are involved in is a mischievous misuse of this House's time. The Minister for Transport and Works is attempting to assume the mantle of the Minister for Industries and Development in his efforts to shoot holes in his foot as

often and as large as possible. That is what has happened in this debate. It is a waste of time.

Mr BAILEY (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the Minister for Transport and Works rose to speak on what to me seems to be such a pathetic issue. A question was asked last week in this House that included a number of quotations from a document. Unfortunately, the way Hansard may be ...

Members interjecting.

Mr BAILEY: In my question, I referred the honourable minister to a number of quotes that were taken directly from this document.

Mr Finch: Part quotes.

Mr BAILEY: A quote is a quote, whether it is a whole sentence, part of a sentence or 3 or 4 words.

Members interjecting.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, speaking as an ex-teacher, we used to refer at times to certain students as 'animals'. I have never seen students behave the way honourable members opposite are behaving.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wanguri will withdraw the remarks relating to honourable members of this parliament as behaving in an animal-like fashion.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I withdraw unreservedly. I was not referring to them as animals.

Mr Speaker, I refer the Minister for Transport and Works to the document. Perhaps he can read the document, read Hansard and watch my lips as I read it - and I am sure that that is a quote from somewhere else. If he looks at the fourth paragraph, it states: 'The range of negotiations allowed everyone involved to voice an opinion'.

Mr Finch: Relating to what?

Mr BAILEY: Relating to the road. The quote is: 'The range of negotiations allowed everyone involved to voice an opinion'. What is wrong with that? What word is out of place? What is incorrect with it?

The next statement is that 'the route has been determined almost entirely by environmental considerations and all the environmental issues have been sorted out'. Those are the quotes.

Mr Finch: Tell us about the rats.

Mr BAILEY: What about the rats? What are you talking about? That is all you are worried about. The censure motion alleges that I misled this House. What a load of rubbish!

Mr HATTON (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Wanguri are equivalent to saying that you can quote the Gettysburg Address from the Oxford Dictionary. That is about what he has done. He has picked out words from here, there and somewhere else and put them together into a statement clearly designed to give an impression in this House that a specific

attitudinal position had been adopted and negotiations had occurred involving the Department of Transport and Works, and that statements had been published by that department which the minister did not know about. We know now why the minister was not aware of that. It was not recorded. The member stated: 'The range of the negotiations allowed everyone involved to voice an opinion. The route has been determined almost entirely by environmental considerations and all the environmental issues have been sorted out'. Those are the words from the Daily Hansard. That reads as a straight sentence.

When we refer to the article, Mr Speaker, what do we find? I will read the paragraph before this statement. It says: 'The project, covering more than 40 km and costing \$8m of joint Northern Territory and federal funds, is due to begin in October'. It was due to begin in October. It had not even started at that stage. The article continues:

NT Minister for Transport and Works, Fred Finch, and federal Minister for Transport and Shipping Support, Bob Brown, jointly announced the project after negotiations were complete.

The range of the negotiations allowed everyone involved to voice an opinion, even the apparently rare mulgara.

A small furry thing, 20 cm long, the mulgara exercised its power by moving the road 5 km to a new alignment when ANPWS officers discovered a mulgarian nest on the first alignment.

Director (Roads Design), Kevin Williams, and Southern Region engineers, Julie Dawson and Bob Phillips, discussed the problem and a good many more which arose.

As a result, the road route has been determined almost entirely by environmental considerations and authorised by the Uluru National Park Board.

That last sentence is the second part of the quotation read by the member for Wanguri. It took us a while to find it. We need to move on by another half page or so to find the other matters to which the honourable member referred. I will read the whole of the text because it is the only way to put the matters in context.

The ANPWS was closely involved in the design process and heavy constraints were placed on the survey, design and construction of the road to accommodate the environment.

The design included a gradeline sympathetic to the environment and the sandhills have been avoided.

Negotiations covered the individual trees which are to be retained, and all stands of trees will remain so that bush clearing for the roadway will be absolutely minimal.

Design Project Engineer (Alice Springs) Bob Pemble said a program of sinking bores was now in place to provide water for construction.

Construction of the new Olgas road promises to be a state-of-the-art operation.

There are to be no borrow pits in the park, so gravel will be hauled long distances for the earthworks.

No offlet drains will be allowed, but Roads have come up with an innovative drainage design taking advantage of internal drainage systems in the land covered.

The construction crew will have to camp outside the national park and access for construction will be limited to the cleared formation area.

And the conditions of construction will not be the only challenge to the Roadies and their contractors.

We come now to the last part of the member for Wanguri's quotation:

While all the environmental issues have been sorted out, the Uluru National Park Board is considering a proposal for a section of the new road to be available for emergency aircraft landing, if the Connellan Airport runway were to be out of commission.

That is substantially different to the member for Wanguri's quotation:

The range of the negotiations allowed everyone involved to voice an opinion. The route has been determined almost entirely by environmental considerations and all the environmental issues have been sorted out.

Mr Bailey: It is 3 sentences. The little dots ...

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I note that there are little dots in between. They are recorded as 3 sentences but there is a clear impression that they are consecutive sentences.

The member for Wanguri was making the point that, somehow, the Department of Transport Works had been fully aware of this, had agreed to it all, and was in fact boasting about what a wonderful job it had done. That was far from true. The article was written before the road construction had even commenced. Clearly, the quotation was taken out of context and was designed to mislead this House. Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, the chaos continues. I am wondering when the Leader of Government Business will show some leadership in this House. We had chaos from him last week and I suppose that we cannot expect much more than that. Last week, we saw the Minister for Transport and Works trying to be the stalking horse for a hack in the run-up to the next federal election. Today, he has put forward this trite nonsense, and that is the only way one can describe it. It is absolute nonsense. If the Leader of Government Business is unable to control himself, I ask simply that at least he try to control the pathetic collection which surrounds him.

Mr Speaker, question time has been wiped out today with what is nothing more than absolute nonsense. The minister knows, as everybody in this House knows, that if he is concerned that a member may have misled the House, the matter should be referred to the Privileges Committee. That is no problem. It can be done in a snap. Instead of doing that, however, the minister brought on a motion of censure against my colleague. The minister is wasting the time of this House. I can only say that the conduct of this House has deteriorated significantly during the last 12 months. I suppose

poor old Helen Galton has a real problem. Who is going to do her work for her? But, for heaven's sake, can't the CLP get somebody better than this? The Minister for Transport and Works could not move a thoroughbred, let alone a hack. He has wasted the time of this House. He has wasted question time. He has abused the processes of this House.

Mr Finch: What about the motion?

Mr LEO: The motion is an absolute nonsense. The minister is an absolute nonsense. The motion should be defeated and seen for the piece of ridiculous grandstanding that it is.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I rise to make a few comments. I find it most distressing that we have seen this performance from the opposition this morning. The member for Wanguri said that the minister's reason for this motion was 'pathetic'. I find it disturbing that the member for Wanguri finds the search for truth pathetic, because truth is the essence of the operation of this parliament. When a member deliberately misleads the House, there is provision for a censure motion such as this and other steps and procedures, the end result of which can be the dismissal of that member. It is a serious matter and to describe it as 'pathetic' shows that the member for Wanguri's attitude to this parliament is indeed the wrong attitude and is in need of change.

Mr Speaker, the people who are responsible for changing the attitude of the member for Wanguri are people like the Leader of the Opposition. Members opposite should take him aside and explain parliamentary protocol to him. However, what do we see instead? We see them defending him when he has been caught out misleading the parliament. It is very clear that he quoted selectively from a document. He took a line from each of 3 columns on a page, and threw the 3 lines together in order to try to create an impression which, in fact, was totally the opposite of what the article actually said.

Mr Bailey: Rubbish! Read the article.

Mr MANZIE: Lately, we have heard the Leader of the Opposition claiming that he has the answer for the Territory. This is the new-look ALP, with men of integrity and honesty. The Leader of the Opposition says: 'If they do the wrong thing, I will dismiss them immediately. Look at this! I dismissed the candidate for Nightcliff because he used party letterhead improperly'. That was a bit selective. The Labor candidate for Koolpinyah was rather free in his efforts at plagiarism, but no action was taken. Those examples in the last couple of months show the dangers of the attitude which the Leader of the Opposition has adopted. He says that he is clean but, in fact, behind the scenes, the opposite is the case. If he is fair dinkum about his pursuit of the truth, his colleague has given him a perfect example of someone deliberately manufacturing untruth. He deliberately collected several quotations and put them together to mislead the House.

The member for Wanguri has done this before. He has done it with the Frog Hollow matter. As we know, Frog Hollow is a park which is in the hands of the Darwin City Council. However, the member for Wanguri tried to convince the community that a road was to be put through it. That is a good example. Another good example occurred during the Wanguri by-election campaign, when the honourable member tried, with partial success, to convince the community that a particular block of land on Rocklands Drive was part of the Casuarina Coastal Reserve and was to be built on. In fact, it was a privately-owned block of land, purchased about 8 years before. The

impression that he tried to create was, quite definitely, a lie. - It was untruthful and, Mr Speaker, the member for Wanguri ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable Attorney-General has referred to a matter which is in no way the subject of this motion and I believe that he should be requested to return to the matter before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: I would ask the honourable Attorney-General to confine his remarks to the motion.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I shall do so.

The member for Wanguri must learn very quickly that the parliament is a place where truth is important. He has to conduct his business in this House in a far more appropriate manner, not as he conducts it out on the street. If he cannot do that, he will be censured in this House. His actions will be brought to his attention and to the attention of the community.

I will close, Mr Speaker, with a quotation based on the rules which the member for Wanguri considers to be quite acceptable in this House. He said a few minutes ago that it is okay to quote selectively. Therefore, I will quote the member for Wanguri: 'This Assembly condemns the uncooperative and confrontationalist attitude of ... the federal government ... on Tracy Village Social Club in the precinct in my electorate'. Following the member for Wanguri's rules, that is a selective quotation from the Hansard of 22 February 1990.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the motion be put.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 16

Noes 8

Mr Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dondas
Mr Finch
Mr Firmin
Mr Harris
Mr Hatton
Mr McCarthy
Mr Manzie
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Poole
Mr Reed
Mr Setter
Mr Vale

Mr Bailey
Mr Bell
Mr Ede
Mr Floreani
Mr Leo
Mr Smith
Mr Tipiloura
Mr Tuxworth

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 16

Noes 8

Mr Collins

Mr Bailey

Mr Coulter

Mr Bell

Mr Dondas

Mr Ede

Mr Finch

Mr Floreani

Mr Firmin

Mr Leo

Mr Harris

Mr Smith

Mr Hatton

Mr Tipiloura

Mr McCarthy

Mr Tuxworth

Mr Manzie

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Palmer

Mr Perron

Mr Poole

Mr Reed

Mr Setter

Mr Vale

Motion agreed to.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that any further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Trade Development Zone

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, because it is necessary to preface this question with a few short facts, I seek your indulgence. The minister has stated that he will not refer allegations of criminal activity in the Trade Development Zone to the Northern Territory Police Force pending the outcome of the DIR investigation. On the other hand, the DIR says that it has neither the powers nor the brief to investigate criminal allegations. I possess a transcript of parts of the media briefing by the minister's press secretary in which allegations were recorded of extreme coercion, financial skimming and intimidation against workers at the zone. I have asked the minister to inform police of these matters and he has refused. Subsequently, I have taken, and I accept, legal advice that, while the law does not compel me to put this information in the hands of the police, there is a strong moral obligation on me to do so. I wish to advise the honourable minister that I have this morning followed that advice. Will he ensure that his staff cooperate fully and provide details of their allegations in any inquiries that the police may choose to conduct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer is yes.

Commonwealth Employment Service

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Can he confirm a report that I received last week that the federal government intends to extend the concept of user pays to the CES, and the annual charge to the Northern Territory government is likely to be in the region of \$50 000 per annum in future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm that the user pays system has been extended to the CES. We received notification in January that, as of 1 January, we would be expected to pay for services provided by the Commonwealth Employment Service. For some years, the Northern Territory government has had a policy of recruiting through the CES for all its base grade positions. Obviously, that notification forced the government to consider its position vis-a-vis the CES given that, in the past, that service was provided at nil cost, and the confirmed price for this calendar year was \$50 000, but expected to rise in future years perhaps to considerably more than that, based on 50%, in their view, of what it costs to recruit those base grade positions to the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory government has decided to use that system for the present and at least until the end of this year. We will look at the situation again in the latter half of 1990 to decide whether, in fact, it is worth our while to continue using that service. One wonders what the Commonwealth Employment Service would do if the Northern Territory government said that it would not pay. Would the CES refuse to send people to the Northern Territory government for jobs that are available if we did not pay? I wonder just what the CES would do in that case. Because it is funded by the taxpayer, I believe that it has an obligation ensure that people who go there looking for jobs, should be sent to the best job

available for their skills. Obviously, the public sector in the Northern Territory is best equipped to pick up those people. What would happen, Mr Speaker, if we said that we will not respond to the threat that, if we do not pay \$50 000, the service will not be provided. Obviously, the CES cannot do that. However, we have decided to play the game until such time as we are able to determine whether we are getting value for money. If we find that we are not, we may consider other means.

X-Rated Videos

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The Attorney-General would be aware of moves which may result in the banning of X-rated videos in the ACT. He may be aware also that the pornographic industry has stated its intention, if that occurs, to move to the Territory, which is the only remaining place in Australia where pornographic movies are not banned. What is the government's attitude to this threat?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government and I have made it very clear that, if such eventualities arise in Canberra, we will move to introduce legislation to prevent the X-rated video manufacturing industry setting up and operating in the Territory.

Proposed Funding Cuts by Federal Coalition

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the Chief Minister and Treasurer aware that, on ABC radio this morning, the federal Leader of the Opposition said that, if elected, he would cut federal funding by \$2700m? Has the Chief Minister costed the extent of those cuts as they would affect the Northern Territory budget and economy? Is he aware that cuts outlined in the Liberal and National Party economic plan, on a per capita basis, would result in cuts of over \$11m to the Territory budget, over \$22m in Aboriginal affairs, more than \$6m in unemployment benefits and so forth? I have copies of the total list if honourable members are interested, and it would result in total cuts of more than \$50m per year to the Territory economy. Is the Chief Minister prepared to advise small businessmen that, in the unlikely event of a Liberal and National Party victory, the proposed federal funding cuts will have a disastrous effect on the continued viability of Territory small business?

Mr SPEAKER: The Chief Minister can take his time in answering this question because I felt that it was very long-winded. The member for Stuart should not chide the Chief Minister during his reply.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, really, the honourable member has posed the question which confronts the Australian people at present: do they want more of what they have had for the past 6 or 7 years or do they want change? In my view, a clear message is coming through: people want change. They have had enough of the tax policies of the present federal government. It has introduced a fringe benefits tax, a capital gains tax, taxes on superannuation, Medicare levies and so on. The list is a mile long. The petrol tax stands at 29¢ per litre today, and it is levied by a government which, in previous election campaigns, promised a cut in petrol prices. Of course, petrol

prices are a very significant factor in Territory life because of our high reliance on long-distance transportation.

Australians are fed up with the fall in living standards which they have suffered under this federal government and with the fact that the government has continually taken away from them responsibility for looking after their own lives, responsibility which they would prefer to have themselves. They want to get the government's hand out of their pockets as far as taxes are concerned and they want the government to stop doing everything for citizens because of its belief that they do not have the responsibility or the brain power to look after their own affairs. They want some individual freedom and they want the government to get out of their pockets.

Clearly, there will be some pruning of federal government expenditure, and who would deny that there are areas of federal expenditure which could well do with some very savage cuts? For years, we have all heard of the preposterous spending scandals which this federal government has been involved in, including paying for poetry writers for the Painters and Dockers Union and the like. There is a list as long as your arm - surfboards for women, the promotion of the lesbian movement and whatever.

The way this federal government has used Australian taxpayers' money has been a scandal. Nevertheless, it continues this relentless pursuit of taking more from them when, in fact, it should be taking less. Clearly, the Territory will be far better off under a Coalition government than it is under this federal government. At least, we will be creating some enterprise in the Northern Territory and in this country so we can get out of the hole that the country is in. We will have some development. We will not see continuing procrastination on airports and projects like Coronation Hill. We will have uranium mined in this country under a sensible policy instead of this nonsense about South Australian uranium being good and Northern Territory uranium bad. That is the type of hypocritical drivel that Territorians have had to put up with now for years. I can see a big wave coming across this country and across the Northern Territory when we rid ourselves of the apologists that we have had in Canberra - apologists for the federal government at every opportunity.

I was very pleased to hear Mr Peacock's advice to Territorians this morning. He accepted the principles of the full self-government package that I placed before the Prime Minister a year ago and in response to which I received just one letter referring me to the Minister for Territories, Mr Holding, indicating that he would respond on the Prime Minister's behalf, and I have had no response. What was I asking? I was asking to establish a committee of public servants to work out a timetable for full self-government. The Hawke government has not been prepared to make even that concession to Territorians, that it would set up a committee to examine the matter. At least, it could have done that, but not even that has happened in 12 months. That is the attention this federal government is giving to the Northern Territory's individual needs.

We have a commitment that the Northern Territory government can talk to the federal government about the formal repatriation of the Land Rights Act to this government and about the repatriation of national parks, and yet this preposterous federal government authority, the ANPWS, whose bungling handling of national parks is a disgrace, demonstrates the very reason why Territorians sought self-government in those years of Commonwealth control. All we hear from our parliamentary colleagues opposite is apologies. They do not want the ANPWS out of the Territory. They do not want the Territory

to gain control of the Land Rights Act. They do not want uranium to be mined, nor do they want Coronation Hill to be mined. What are they doing in this House, supposedly representing Territorians? They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Seismic Array at Alice Springs

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the Commonwealth government agreed to relocate the seismic array at Alice Springs to make way for urban expansion which is expected in the future in the Undoolya area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is an important matter because not only does it raise the subject of federal constraints on Northern Territory development, but it raises the attitude adopted by the federal government towards the Northern Territory. We have had a most unsatisfactory dialogue with the federal government over the relocation of the seismic array at Alice Springs. For those honourable members who are unaware, the seismic array is a device owned by the Commonwealth which monitors earthquakes, and possibly nuclear explosions, around the world. It is a sensitive piece of equipment that is located in central Australia.

Honourable members may recall that, in March last year, the Prime Minister called a special Premiers Conference on Housing. At that conference, I raised the issue of the seismic array adjacent to Alice Springs and the possible disruption to the array which future housing development at Undoolya might generate. At that meeting, the Commonwealth was putting on a brave face to try to save Australia from the housing crisis by offering Commonwealth action and Commonwealth land to facilitate land availability for urban expansion right across Australia. Very rightly, we raised the subject of the seismic array and the expansion of Alice Springs.

Mr Bell: When was that, Marshall?

Mr PERRON: In March 1989.

Mr Bell: The first time?

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, in fact, the matter had been raised at some earlier time.

Mr Bell: Eight years ago.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, this matter has been raised on a number of occasions and, in August 1988, I wrote to the Prime Minister setting out a very clear case for the relocation of the seismic array and seeking the Commonwealth's cooperative involvement. The principal focus at the Premiers Conference was to identify constraints on the provision of housing right across Australia, particularly federal constraints. The seismic array was raised as the Territory's example of a constraint. Its impact on the future of Alice Springs is an important issue to us, and we sought the Commonwealth's cooperation. At the conference, I was invited to follow the matter up and I did so by sending a letter to the minister responsible, the Minister for Administrative Services. Mr Speaker, I table the letter I wrote to Hon Stewart West in that regard. Obviously, I overestimated what I

thought was genuine intent by the Commonwealth at that conference to meet the reasonable needs of the states.

I received advice from the Commonwealth wherein it stated categorically that it was not prepared to assist in meeting the relocation costs of the seismic array and that its relocation would have to be effected at Territory expense. The spirit of cooperation, which we understood was being sought through the special Premiers Conference on Housing, had clearly not been taken to heart by the Commonwealth. We were simply being fobbed off.

I have now advised the Commonwealth that, as a result of its attitude, the Northern Territory is faced with having to proceed with the urban development at Undoolya at a time dictated by ourselves and, if that course causes a significant degradation in the performance of the seismic array, that will be a problem that the Commonwealth will have to address itself. I am not sure whether the federal government quite knows which minister is handling the seismic array issue, but I was advised to write to Hon Peter Cook, Minister for Resources, on this matter.

We have now advised that, since the Commonwealth will not accept the spirit which was put forward at the Premiers conference of its helping the states to come to grips with urban expansion problems, the Northern Territory will proceed anyway. We have forewarned the Commonwealth that, if its seismic array is disturbed - and we have had unofficial advice that urban development near it probably will render it useless - the Commonwealth will simply have to pick it up and move it. The seismic array itself does not impinge physically on the areas into which we need to expand for urban development. We can proceed without Commonwealth cooperation, but it is sad that an issue which is of no great moment to the Commonwealth is met by this attitude that it is only the Northern Territory and why should it bother with us.

Subdivisions at Mataranka

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

When reading the annual report of the ADMA, I noted an item that said that land had been subdivided in the Venn and Flemming subdivisions at Mataranka but was still not settled. Could the minister give an indication of why this would be so, and what plans he or his department has to sell these areas so that more farmers can go on the land?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, is the honourable member saying that land was available and set aside, but is not available.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: No. It has been subdivided but not sold.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, I am aware that land has been set aside and some subdivision has occurred. Indeed, some land has been sold and further negotiations are under way. I will have to pursue specific details for the honourable member. However, I know that recently a cashew farmer has taken up some land in the Venn subdivision. I was there a couple of weeks ago to look at the stock that he has in his nursery and at his plans to develop the land that he has taken up. I will provide details to the honourable member later.

Coalition Policy on Unemployment Benefits

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I draw the minister's attention to the Peacock policy which plans to cut dole payments after 9 months. Does he realise that such a policy would force many of his constituents and mine back on to rations to survive? Does he approve of this or will he make representation on behalf of our constituents about the policy change now that Mr Peacock is here?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I wonder whether the honourable member has heard his own Prime Minister's policy of recent times which goes further perhaps than the current federal opposition's policy that he refers to. One of the things that this government is doing to address the problems on Aboriginal communities, rather than go down the line of continual unemployment benefits, is to tackle the real problems of employment and training in communities, and we are doing that with vigour. That is the way to overcome the problem.

For the benefit of the honourable member opposite, a federal Coalition government, while cutting out the dole after 9 months, would allow for special categories of people where no work was available and where there were real problems in finding employment, which is the sort of situation that exists in Aboriginal communities, and they would be picked up. I have that as a guarantee, and I can assure the honourable member that his own mate in Canberra, the Prime Minister, has a policy which is far more devastating to people in the communities than would be the policy of the Coalition.

Mr Ede: \$52m in cuts for Territory!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

In-vitro Fertilisation Services

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

There is a demand throughout Australia for in-vitro fertilisation services and I know that there are many Northern Territory couples - indeed, I have had a number of them visit me - for whom this represents possibly the only chance for them to have their own child. What is the government in the Northern Territory doing to assist such couples?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that the issue of in-vitro fertilisation has been a highly emotional one in the Northern Territory for some time. Honourable members will be aware that some people in the Northern Territory are receiving access to IVF by way of the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme but, as a result of budget restrictions and other priorities, new admissions to the PAT Scheme for IVF were cancelled in 1987. The government has continued to investigate this very significant area for women, and families generally, and has been working to develop a policy. Honourable members will be aware that, in this year's budget, a new initiative provision of \$100 000 was allocated to do something in respect of IVF. Prior to

advising honourable members exactly what is proposed in that area, I must say that a number of issues need to be addressed.

First, there is a body of folklore about IVF that needs to be clearly established. It is a lengthy process and a process that has a very low success rate ...

Mr Smith: And it is very costly.

Mr HATTON: And it is extremely costly. It is extremely time-consuming and, in many cases, very harrowing for people who go through it. Nonetheless, it is a facility that some families believe is the only option available that offers them any chance of having a child. You can appreciate, Mr Speaker, that it is a very emotional matter for couples who are desperate to have children and who, through natural circumstances, are not able to procreate their own children in the normal manner. We are concerned, for example, that people who decide to go into an IVF program be fully aware of the implications, that they understand what they are going into, and that the choice they make is an informed choice and a choice free of pressure.

Articles on this issue appeared recently in 'Choice' and concern was expressed that some clinics are somewhat fudging the figures as to the likely success rate and the ease with which such programs could be carried out. There appears to be some underplaying of the risks involved, including such risks as the increasing probability of congenital abnormalities that appear to be occurring as a consequence of the IVF programs. Nonetheless, the government is working on a program. Recently, a specialist obstetrician and gynaecologist was appointed to the Royal Darwin Hospital and this person has a particular interest and a background in relation to infertility and IVF.

In order to develop our approach to this, we propose to take a number of steps. First, we are in the process of preparing an IVF handbook and brochure. Initial research on the brochure, IVF and related procedures has already been completed and additional information is being sought from the Fertility Society of Australia and from organisations with IVF and related programs, to provide written material to people who are considering going into an IVF program. We will be holding an IVF seminar in Darwin. That is set tentatively for April of this year. That seminar will debate the matter and explain some of the basic issues surrounding the subject in a move towards the development of understanding within the IVF support group community in the Northern Territory. The brochure and handbook will provide a mechanism to enable people to become aware of what is occurring in IVF, the sort of issues involved in making the choice to go into IVF or not, and whether to look at other options that might be available to a family seeking to have children. We are forming a ministerial advisory committee on reproductive technology. That will follow on from the IVF conference. It will advise on alternative procedures that can be developed on the whole range of reproductive technology and will look at the cost of those programs. The cost of the handbook, the seminar and the development of the advisory committee should be in the order of \$30 000.

Further, we are engaging in a pilot study in the form of an Infertility Clinic at Royal Darwin Hospital. The Infertility Clinic will assess both male and female partners to identify the cause of infertility and determine whether the problem can be managed locally. It will identify the percentage of couples requiring assistance from GIFT or IVF programs and will evaluate the numbers requiring IVF assistance. It is intended that the experience of

the Infertility Clinic will give a realistic indication of demand for the IVF service and other reproductive medical techniques in the Northern Territory. The cost of operating the clinic during the next 6 months is estimated to be in the order of \$70 000. This assessment will enable the government to decide whether it is prepared to establish a commercially-viable IVF program in Darwin. The Darwin Private Hospital has been involved in negotiations during the last several months to determine whether it wishes to participate in or develop an IVF program in Darwin or, alternatively, to determine whether some of the preliminary procedures associated with IVF could be carried out in Darwin with programs to be completed at approved clinics interstate.

Importantly, such initiatives would reduce dramatically the time for which women would have to be away from Darwin, thus splitting up the family and causing disruptions. Sometimes, these procedures involve spending several months away from home ...

Mr Collins: Alice Springs?

Mr HATTON: Alice Springs as well. If we could have such a service in Darwin, obviously Alice Springs people would have access to it and would receive PATS assistance. I know that would mean travelling away from home, but we cannot have such a service in every town in the Territory.

Mr Collins: Fair enough.

Mr HATTON: We will be lucky to have 1 in the Territory.

Indeed, it may be more appropriate to provide PATS assistance for people to go through the process interstate. The research will identify the most appropriate and cost-effective method of providing assistance to people to enable them to make an informed choice after being properly counselled and made aware of the implications of any decisions which they may take. It will determine whether, following those decisions, there is an appropriate and cost-effective method of introducing IVF facilities to the Territory.

I do not need to outline to honourable members the significant moral and legal questions which inevitably arise in relation to some reproductive technology matters. Suffice it to say that the medical technology is available and that some people are demanding access to IVF services. I do not believe that it is appropriate for the government to adopt a particular moral stance in relation to the accessibility of such services, which are provided generally in the major cities of Australia.

Mr Ede: What about the people who are demanding appropriate and very basic health services out in the rural areas?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, we will be dealing with those matters later.

Mr Ede: Later! So we will get the ice-cream first and the main course later.

Mr HATTON: You have a matter on the Notice Paper and we will debate it fully today. I look forward to that debate with glee. It is about time that some of the nonsense promoted by opponents of the public health system was dealt with. People need to know exactly what is going on and more about the excellent services they are receiving from the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services. I look forward to that debate with glee.

Mr Speaker, the legal aspects of establishing an IVF service must be examined. Initially, enabling legislation would be required to establish an IVF program. However, it would be preferable to seek advice from the Department of Law on the legal implications and related issues if a local IVF program is to occur. These issues would include the maternity and paternity of IVF children. That needs to be legally determined. In the interstate situations in which it has not been dealt with, complicated legal consequences have arisen. States such as Western Australia have been forced to introduce specific legislation to deal with that. Other issues include the ownership and control of human reproductive tissue, the regulation of IVF practices and research, and the common law status of the human embryo in the IVF process.

In that process, new Northern Territory legislation may be required, not dissimilar to the Infertility Medical Services Amendment Act of Victoria or the Reproductive Technology Act of South Australia. Non-legislative means could be used to regulate the practice of IVF until related comprehensive legislation can be enacted. Importantly, we will be researching the legal implications in advance of taking any decisions.

That is the program which we will be adopting during the next 6 months to develop a clearly defined strategy and approach to this important issue for women. I might say that it is important not only to non-Aboriginal women. There is significant interest in these programs among Aboriginal women throughout the Northern Territory. In the meantime, we are very conscious of the fact that a number of Territory women are on programs interstate or seeking to become involved in interstate programs, and that time is vitally important for them because of age and other factors.

We have changed the policy on the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme in the intervening period so that those women who otherwise could not obtain access to PATS to go interstate for IVF will now have access to that assistance. There are a number of limitations on that which relate to the person seeking to have a first child, their obtaining appropriate counselling and having the appropriate specialist gynaecological support indicating that the program is appropriate for them. I am pleased that we have something under way finally to deal with this emotive and important issue for women. Women are no longer frozen out from access to important medical technology which may assist them to have a child. In 6 months time, there will be a complete review and the final decision will be made in respect of the long-term direction.

Palmerston Darwin Bus Services

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I understand that recently the minister received a petition from residents of Palmerston requesting that Buslink take over the Palmerston/Darwin bus routes from the Darwin Bus Service. What is the minister's approach to the possible privatisation of those routes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I received a petition bearing the signatures of 560 residents of Palmerston which were collected within 2 days of the last wildcat strike by the Darwin Bus Service. I have had considerable representation from the member for Palmerston himself who shows a interest in trying to improve the bus services throughout the whole of the Northern Territory, but particularly in his area. The bus service is always keen to

pursue measures which might improve its efficiency. We have come a long way in the last 5 years. The level of underwriting by the taxpayer of the public transport system has improved. The service has improved in terms of the delivery of service.

The recent wildcat strike left pensioners, students and other passengers stranded. With Buslink still running, they could get from the suburbs to the interchange but, unless they wanted to go down to another suburb or keep travelling in circles, that was as far as they could go. I called it a 'wildcat strike' deliberately. It was one of those situations in which not even their own union could talk sense into the renegade drivers who raised the issue of running times, which I believe was a furphy.

I can report to honourable members that, following some agreed procedures on how we time the runs, there has been an assessment of some 122 runs. As we said from the start, if we find that any run requires additional time, we will implement that additional time. Of the 122 runs, we found that 9 runs require a small additional amount of running time. We found also that 42 runs required less running time. It has been a very worthwhile exercise which will lead to further efficiencies in the Darwin Bus Service runs.

There is a bit of a rumble in the streets at the moment, I understand, for the 5-minute normal buffer allowance, the safety margin between running times, to be extended to 10 minutes. That is not on and is quite outside the spirit of the agreement entered into with the Industrial Relations Commission when determining appropriate running times.

Certainly, we will look seriously at the request by Palmerston residents. The residents have identified a number of attractions such as familiarity with drivers and the same bus possibly running from the suburb through the interchange and out. Whilst on the subject of the interchange, I mention that we will be proceeding very soon to build a brand new \$950 000 interchange at Palmerston. That will help to improve circumstances for Palmerston travellers.

In addition to those matters that the residents themselves have raised - and the bus service will consider those - there are some other issues. We now have some 51 runs which will require rescheduling, and we will have to go through the massive exercise of rescheduling all the runs undertaken by Darwin Bus Service. Thus, it is an appropriate time for us to look at whether we should be further utilising the Buslink services. Over the next 2 years, some 10 new buses are to be purchased at a cost of \$2m. The government will take this appropriate opportunity, through its bus service, to assess whether it should comply with the request of Palmerston residents. On the surface, whilst we need to look at operating costs, there does seem to be a fair bit of merit in the proposal for the residents and for the further efficiency of the bus service.

Darwin Police Cells

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister has decided to reopen the city lock-up following complaints from the shopkeepers in the Mall. As the Chief Minister knows, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody strongly recommends that intoxicated Aboriginal people should not be locked up. Will he make it clear to the police that the lock-up should not be used as a detention centre for intoxicated Aboriginal people?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, from recollection, the proposal by the police to use the old police cells in the Darwin central business district, when they move in a few months time to the building that they occupied formerly, involves holding for reasonably short periods of time those persons who are taken into custody, for whatever reason, before they are transferred to Berrimah. I do not know what 'reasonably short periods' means. No doubt, that would be determined by the dictates of the day and manning etc.

I can assure the honourable member that the Northern Territory has come through the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Inquiry to date with a good record. In fact, in some respects, we far exceed the record of the states. The Commissioner of Police is certainly very interested personally in and involved in changing procedures, wherever possible, to minimise the chances of persons killing themselves or being injured in any way whilst in police custody. To that end, we are examining the possibility of improvements in cell design and in video monitoring of persons held in cells. We are examining options such as having non-police carry out the task of monitoring prisoners in cells so that trained police are not simply engaged in watching cells but are fulfilling the role that the community expects of them. I can assure the honourable member that the cells in the CBD will be used with due care. The police in the Territory will fully accept their responsibility in regard to the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Allegations Relating to Education System on Groote Eylandt

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

On Monday night and again last night, the ABC 7.30 Report presented evidence to support allegations made by the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation that some sort of 'old boys' network conspiracy existed on Groote Eylandt. Does the minister believe that the letters and beer coasters presented by that program warrant the supposed outrage displayed by that program's presenters?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the issue in relation to Groote Eylandt has been discussed in detail. However, there are 2 matters that need to be presented fairly and which were not presented fairly. I need to clarify those matters in this forum. I indicated to honourable members yesterday that we had provided documentation to the 7.30 Report which made it clear that there were people who were satisfied with the operations of the department and how it had proceeded. We indicated yesterday, prior to a program, that there was concern about a certain beer coaster to which the honourable member has just referred.

First, I will deal with the text of a file note from Ian Cluney which was presented on that program. The presenters should check the facts. That appeared on the program because the school council chairman had asked Ian Cluney, who had attended a meeting on Groote Eylandt, what had been the secretary's reaction to that report. What he had prepared in line with that request from the council chairman was expressed in the exact words that appeared in quotes and which were included in that file note. The line at the bottom - which reads 'I trust that this meets with your requirements' and was said to savour of an 'old boys club' comment - related purely to the

fact that the chairman had requested the information and the information was provided in response to that request. That is a point that needs to be made.

The second matter related to bills for money being written on the back of beer coasters. That allegation was correct, but let us not present only half of the facts. Let us not present only the beer coaster. Let us look at how that came about and what was written above that on the page. Mr Speaker, I will table that document for the interest of honourable members.

The Principal of the Alyangula Area School, Mr Peter Clark, wrote such a bill to the local Lions Club after it was agreed that the club would support the school by providing dental hygiene equipment for the students. The bill was written on a coaster, on the spot so to speak, and was presented to the meeting of the Lions Club shortly after that agreement was reached, and the club approved payment and drew a cheque at that meeting. Rather than finding that method of invoicing offensive, the Lions Club found it sufficiently novel and noteworthy to include the story and a copy of the invoice in the next issue of the Lions Combined District Newsletter.

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: All I am saying is that all the facts must be presented. Do not omit sections. The words at the top of that page, relating to the beer coaster, which was in fact a bill, read as follows: 'Can you top this? The friendly little club on Groote Eylandt received a bill for a project' - and this is from the Lions Combined District Newsletter - 'which we support to put a toothbrush in the hands of every schoolchild. The bill was written on the back of a coaster down at the golf club, handed to one of our members, presented that night at our business meeting, a cheque drawn and delivered the next day'. That was for the benefit of the children at that school even though the way it was presented was wrong.

Over the last couple of days, I have urged that those involved in preparing and presenting programs, which will have an impact on the public, need to present the facts fairly and in a professional manner. I am not saying that aggressive reporting should be stopped. In fact, I have supported that. Some of us do become aggressive at times, and I am not precluded from that as honourable members would be aware. In fact, yesterday I terminated an interview with a reporter from the 7.30 Report because I was annoyed by his approach and his attitude in relation to questioning.

Mr Vale: What did he say to you?

Mr HARRIS: A comment was made by that reporter as I left. The exact words, as witnessed by a number of people were: 'You are dead tonight'. That leaves a lot to be desired in so far as a professional approach is concerned.

Harry Giese Early Intervention Unit

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is the minister aware of an industrial relations conflict within the Harry Giese Centre Early Intervention Unit? As it receives significant grants-in-aid funding from his department, will the minister examine the detail of the current dispute to see if conditions for grants-in-aid are being fulfilled and, whether or not that is the case, will the minister use

his influence to try to settle this dispute as soon as possible so as to minimise any possible disruption to the very important programs for the children at that centre?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this morning, I became aware of an impending industrial dispute at the Harry Giese Early Intervention Unit. I compliment the honourable member, who took it up as the local member, and I thank him for asking the question. People need to understand that our relationship with organisations such as Carpentaria, which operates the Harry Giese Centre, is one of a funding organisation providing an arrangement through a grant-in-aid for the provision of specific services to the community. We are providing financial support to independent, community organisations to provide services the availability of which we believe to be important to the community. It is not an employer/employee relationship. Our position is very much that of a funding organisation. Therefore, our responsibilities are to ensure that the centre is meeting any conditions associated with the grant-in-aid and those include the provision of services and any other rules that may apply. In this instance, I would be surprised if that did not include a provision that any employees would be paid appropriately under the relevant awards or industrial determinations that refer to their employment.

In so far as the department's contractual arrangements with the organisation are concerned, we will check to confirm those arrangements. However, if there are industrial problems that go outside of that arrangement, it would be appropriate for the relevant trade union involved to be advised and, more particularly, that matter should be referred to the Department of Industrial Relations if there are any award breaches or otherwise.

Certainly, to the extent that it is appropriate and proper for our department to intervene, without cutting across the rights of the organisation or the employees involved, we will ensure that, in terms of our obligations, the matter is properly dealt with. I urge the people involved not to go to the stage of open industrial conflict, but rather to seek an opportunity to negotiate appropriate settlements and to use the relevant facilities of their own organisations or of the Department of Industrial Relations or, if necessary, to consult the Industrial Relations Commission on a process by which to resolve the dispute so that the people who are being serviced by the organisation do not suffer as a consequence. I will investigate the matter. I will not go further than is properly my responsibility, but I will go that far.

Supreme Court Sentences

Mr FLOREANI to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The Attorney-General has received a letter from a number of Alice Springs citizens concerning recent judgments handed down by the Northern Territory Supreme Court, where the presiding judge has given short non-parole sentences to persons convicted of serious offences. The letter calls for a much tougher stand by the courts: tougher penalties, longer non-parole periods and the introduction of minimum sentencing provisions. Can the Attorney-General advise what he intends to do about the concerns expressed in the letter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately I have not received the letter. However, I am certainly well aware of the existence of such concerns. They have been expressed by members of this House. The member for Araluen has been most vocal in bringing the concerns of the community to my attention. I hope that the member for Flynn is not under the impression, in any shape or form, that I have any responsibility for influencing judges or sentences handed down in our courts. I hope that he does not suggest that, at any stage, any parliamentarian should ever be in a position to carry out such a role. Recent references have been made to sentences which can be imposed for offences such as rape, which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The question of minimum sentences obviously needs to be looked at by this House. I made it very clear last year that we are reviewing sentencing and I hope to be in a position, as I said earlier during these sittings, to present legislation on sentencing at the next sittings.

The media enables people in the community to put forcefully any concerns which they may have in relation to what they may perceive as leniency in sentencing. The legal system allows also for appeals in situations in which the prosecution or the Attorney-General have particular concerns. In many circumstances, such appeals are lodged. Unfortunately, the results of those appeals often do not receive the sort of publicity that the original sentences received. When sentences are doubled or tripled as a result of appeals, they do not seem to attract the same sort of attention. The same applies in many cases in which severe sentences are handed down. Unfortunately, reporting of these cases is not such as would create some balance in the community's perception of what is occurring.

I certainly have personal concerns that sentences sometimes appear not to be as tough as they should be. I believe that crimes of violence deserve punishment. I might be alone in that view, but it is one that I hold. I do not mind stating it very clearly. I believe that, especially in relation to crimes of violence, offenders should receive some punishment by way of sentencing. I am certainly aware of the issue raised by the honourable member. It will be brought to the attention of the House at the next sittings and all members will have an opportunity to participate in debate in relation to sentencing and legal provisions pertaining to sentencing options.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Alice Springs Bus Service

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, during last Thursday's adjournment debate, the member for MacDonnell raised a question relating to the Alice Springs Bus Service and student concessions. I would like to give him a brief answer. The advice which the honourable member received from the Mayor of Alice Springs was incorrect. The basic agreement involving the Alice Springs Bus Service and the Northern Territory government is such that the service must provide the same fare structure as applies for the Darwin Bus Service. There are 5 separate student-type classifications, which I will briefly outline for the honourable member.

Firstly, a free travel pass is issued to all school students who meet eligibility criteria laid down by the Department of Education. Such a pass covers travel between 6 am and 6 pm on school days. Reimbursement for that function is provided by the Department of Education, and that is the only funding provided by that department. The bus service itself provides funds

to assist those students who are ineligible for normal student passes. It provides a student term ticket for \$25, which entitles such students to unlimited travel at all times during the day. Other students, who are ineligible under the first classification, can obtain a concessional rate of 30¢ if they wish to travel between 6 am and 6 pm on school days. Secondary students with proof of status can travel for half adult fare outside that 6 am to 6 pm period. Tertiary students with proof of status can travel for half adult fare at all times.

ASBUS will be meeting early next month and the question of fares will be clarified. As the underwriter of the operating cost for the bus service, the government expected that it would run on the same fare structure as that in Darwin, including concessional rates. That advice will be delivered to ASBUS so that it can restructure. As I mentioned, whilst the level of anticipated underwriting has risen for other reasons, the fare criteria must be met.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

20 February 1990

114. Liquor Licence Applications

Mr EDE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

1. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for new liquor licences have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
2. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for renewals of liquor licences have been rejected by the Liquor Commission.
3. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
4. For each year 1985 to 1988 how many applications for -
 - (a) new;
 - (b) renewal; and
 - (c) changes,to licence conditions were opposed by commercial or community interests.
5. Of the opposed proposals, how many were ultimately granted.

115. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

116. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

117. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

118. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.

2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

119. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

120. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

121. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

122. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

123. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

1 May 1990

127. Tourist Commission's Advertising Budget

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What was the Tourist Commission's budget for -
 - (a) television advertising;
 - (b) print advertising;
 - (c) international marketing; and
 - (d) trade shows, during -
 - (i) 1987-88;
 - (ii) 1988-89; and
 - (iii) 1989-90.
2. Which advertising agency(ies) is/are retained or have been retained.
3. On what basis is/are the agency(ies) chosen.

4. Is there a tendering process.
5. If there is no tendering process, why not.
6. What is the nature of the tendering process.
7. Are tender documents public.
8. If there is a tendering process and that tender documents are prepared, is the amount of air time thus prescribed.
9. What amount of air time was prescribed during each of the years listed above.
10. If air time was not prescribed during these years, why not.
11. What was the value of that air time.

128. Registration of Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

With reference to your answer to Written Question No.102, relating to Aboriginal Health Workers employed in certain Aboriginal communities, how many of those health workers were -

- (a) registered under the Health Practitioners and Allied Professionals Registration Act; and
- (b) not registered under that act.

16 May 1989

87.

BTEC Payments to Mr Dunbar

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

In the 'Letters to the Editor' section of the Sunday Territorian dated 23 April 1989 you stated that Mr B. Dunbar 'has received more than \$500 000 of BTEC funds to assist him in fulfilling the scope of his agreed program, as well as \$130 000 in low-interest BTEC loans'.

What were the -

- (a) various purposes under which these amounts were provided;
- (b) exact amounts involved;
- (c) works required from Mr Dunbar in respect of each of (a) and (b) above;
- (d) full details of the extent of the works carried out in respect of each of the above by Mr Dunbar as at 23 April 1989; and
- (e) details of outstanding works or moneys on behalf of Mr Dunbar or the Northern Territory government.

ANSWER

The letter referred to by the honourable member was written in the context that Mr Dunbar had benefited from assistance available under BTEC and that, at that time, he had not met his obligations under the campaign. Indicative figures were quoted to illustrate a point, in response to certain allegations made against me by Mr Dunbar.

The fine detail of any assistance provided to Mr Dunbar is a confidential matter, between the government and Mr Dunbar.

I would make the point that since this issue was first raised Mr Dunbar has entered into a legal agreement relating to the BTEC program and is meeting his obligations under that agreement.

22 August 1989

90.

Loans Converted to Grants

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Which organisations have, in the past 12 months, had loans from the Northern Territory government changed to grants.

In each case, what was the amount.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

ANSWER

The following loans have been converted to grants -

Anti-Cancer Foundation	\$ 10 000
King Cobra Rod & Custom Club	\$ 235 000
Cyprus Community of the NT	\$ 100 000
Darwin Rugby League	\$ 8 528
Pioneer Football Club	\$ 30 800
NT Riders and Drivers Association	\$ 560 796 + interest.

20 February 1990

109. **Power and Water Consumption
Communities in MacDonnell Electorate**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. How much -

(a) power; and

(b) water,

was consumed from 1 October 1987 to 30 June 1988 in the following communities -

Areyonga	Atitjere
Docker River	Finke
Hermannsburg	Ikuntji
Imanpa	Ipolera
Iwupataka	Kintore
Maryvale	Mt Liebig
Papunya	Santa Teresa
Wallace Rock Hole	Yulara.

2. Which authorities on these communities were charged.

3. How much did each of these pay.

4 How much, if any, was deducted from other government grants to those organisations in lieu of payment.

ANSWER

1. The following quantities of power and water were sent out/produced for the period 1 October 1987 to 10 June 1988 -

<u>Community</u>	<u>Generated (kWh)</u>	<u>Water Produced (kL)</u>
Areyonga	400 448	60 000
Docker River	338 944	62 000
Hermannsburg	788 966	100 000
Imanpa	Not Operational	20 000
Iwupataka	No Station	14 000
Maryvale	No Station	15 000
Papunya	833 038	72 600
Wallace Rockhole	75 272	21 000

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Atitjere	No Station	30 000
Finke	252 219	44 300
Ikuntji	173 460	18 000
Ipolera	No Station	Not metered during period
Kintore	373 158	33 000
Mt Liebig	No Station	Not metered during period
Santa Teresa	828 800	108 600
Yulara	10 575 300	Not available. Records destroyed in 1988 fire.

Water production has been rounded to nearest 100 kL and it should be noted that production in most cases is likely higher due to vandalism of meters.

- For electricity, charges were levied to government departments and houses occupied by government employees, statutory authorities, and community council facilities. For water and sewerage, charges were levied to government departments and houses occupied by government employees, and statutory authorities. All charges are at normal gazetted tariffs.
- The authority is not at liberty to disclose billing information about specific customers.
- Nil.

113.

Mr L. Williams - Settlement

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

From which budgetary allocations was an out-of-court settlement paid to Mr Les Williams, Assistant Secretary, Department of Lands and Housing.

ANSWER

An Instrument of Retirement for Mr Leslie Williams was issued by the Public Service Commissioner on 7 September 1988.

The settlement was paid out of the Department of Lands and Housing, Salaries and Allowances budget allocation within the Corporate Management Activity.

124.

Perpetual Leasehold Pastoral Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

- What are the names and respective areas of pastoral leases converted to perpetual leasehold since legislation was introduced.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

2. Which of the above properties had recommendations by the Director of Conservation under section 48A(1) of the Crown Lands Act recommending the reservation of areas for public interest.
3. Which of these properties had reservations of part of the lands for the public interest advised under section 48(5) of the Crown Lands Act.
4. What was the size of each of the reservations.
5. Since 1983, how many lessees of pastoral properties have had notices served under section 24A(1) of the Crown Lands Act and how many of these notices have resulted in forfeiture under subsection (4) of section 24(a) of that act.

ANSWER

1. The names and areas of pastoral leases converted to perpetual leasehold, as at 31 January 1990, since the introduction of legislation are -

<u>Names</u>	<u>Areas (km²)</u>	<u>Names</u>	<u>Areas (km²)</u>
Burrumurra	2205	Yambah	2315
Undoolya	1473	Alexandria	8391
Alroy Downs	4332	West Ranken	2852
Dalmore Downs	4776	East Ranken	1430
Jervois	2750	Soudan	2244
Tanami Downs	4206	Adder Block	1199
Owen Springs	3646	Ooratippra	4190
Deep Well	1640	Austral Downs	2009
Mt Keppler	270	Brunette Downs	12254
Riveren	1855	Avon Downs	3939
Umbeara	3444	Rockhampton Downs	5085
Wave Hill	5493	Banka Banka	3315
Cattle Creek	7085	Brunchilly	3235
Mount Wedge	3230	Phillip Creek	3756
Mt Riddock	2503	Newcastle Waters	3409
Huckitta	1830	Powell Creek	4195
Helen Springs	5062	Tandyidgee	2749
Lake Nash	8487	Georgina Downs	3477
Neutral Junction	4632	Bond Springs	2595
Love Creek	3670	Benmara	4511
Elkedra	5446	Rocklands	3594
Hamilton Downs	1595	Atartinga	2235
Lucy Creek	4057	Ringwood	2280
Tipperary	2098	Rosewood	2770
Elizabeth Downs	2055	Narwietooma	2725
Litchfield	1470	Singleton	2949
Marqua	4410	Hodgon River	1110
Tarlton	3034	Balbarini	1460
Orange Creek	2377	Camfield	2772

Total

198 176

2. Of the properties listed in response to part 1 of the question, the following had recommendations by the Director of Conservation under section 48A(1) of the Crown Lands Act -

Owen Springs
Mt Riddock
Huckitta
Hamilton Downs
Tipperary
Litchfield
Orange Creek
Narwietooma
Singleton
Camfield

3. Of the properties listed in response to part 2 of the question, the following had areas excised at time of conversion -

Huckitta
Hamilton Downs
Tipperary
Litchfield
Orange Creek

4. The size of each area taken out at conversion is as follows -

Huckitta	-	190 km ² approximately
Hamilton Downs	-	100 km ² approximately
Tipperary	-	470 km ² approximately
Litchfield	-	134 km ² approximately
Orange Creek	-	25 km ² approximately

5. Since 1983, 44 notices have been served on lessees of pastoral properties under section 24A(1) of the Crown Lands Act.

None of these notices have yet resulted in forfeiture under subsection (4) of section 24A of the Crown Lands Act.

However, one forfeiture action is in process as a result of default action commenced under section 24A(1).

125. Northern Territory Supreme Court Appeals

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Against which verdicts of the Northern Territory Supreme Court did the Crown appeal in -

- (a) 1987;
(b) 1988; and
(c) 1989.

ANSWER

Criminal Appeals

- | | | | |
|-----|------|--|-----|
| (a) | 1987 | R v Ireland
R v Anzac
R v Allison
R v Scanlon
R v Hogon
R v Towns | = 6 |
| (b) | 1988 | R v Lintern | = 1 |
| (c) | 1989 | R v Jabaltjari | = 1 |

Civil Appeals

- | | | | |
|-----|------|---|-------|
| (a) | 1987 | NT of Australia v Skywest Airlines
Secretary Department of the Chief
Minister & Public Service Commissioner
for NT & Nicholas Dondas v Boswell | = 2 |
| (b) | 1988 | | = Nil |
| (c) | 1989 | Commissioner of Taxes v Liveris | = 1 |

1 May 1990

**126. Funding of Electricity Supplies in
1989-90 Budget**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In respect of the Minister's letter of 19 January 1990 regarding the electricity supply to Mt Liebig -

- (a) which communities or projects were given 'the priority of more urgent community needs within confines of funds available'; and
- (b) which other communities or projects were considered by Cabinet in respect of the provision of electricity supplies but were not given priority.

ANSWER

1. SOUTHERN REGION

- (a) Power station and reticulation system construction was approved in 1988-89 budget to 6 communities being -
 - . Maryvale (Titjikala)
 - . Nyirripi
 - . Napperby (Laramba)
 - . Alcoota (Engawala)
 - . Stirling (Willowra)
 - . Ammaroo (Ampalatwatja)

These stations were all commissioned during the current financial year.

Total Project cost of \$1 425 075.

In addition the following augmentation works were approved in 1989-90 to existing community power stations to ensure appropriate level of service reliability -

- . Willowra
- . Areyonga
- . Haasts Bluff (Ikuntji)
- . Santa Teresa (Lytyentye Purte)

Total Project cost of \$487 000.

- (b) Other communities considered for electricity supply or major projects but unfunded in 1989-90 were -

- . Mt Liebig - power generation and distribution -
value \$450 000
- . Finke (Aputula) - replace existing power station -
value \$400 000
- . Docker River (Kaltukatjara) - generation
augmentation -
value \$140 000
- . Hermannsburg (Ntarria) - generation augmentation -
value \$250 000

2. TENNANT CREEK REGION

- (a) Power station and reticulation construction was approved in 1989-90 to 1 community being -

- . Canteen Creek (Orwaitilla)

Total Budget Provision \$150 000

This installation will not be commissioned until the 1990-91 financial year.

- (b) Another community considered for electricity supply or major project but unfunded in 1989-90 was -

- . Lake Nash (Alpurrurrulam) - Sewerage System

Total Budget Provision \$430 000

Allegations Relating to Police Corruption

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I preface my question by pointing out to the Chief Minister a fact that somebody else in this Territory has been able to ignore: at present, a storm of corruption allegations is gathering over the Northern Territory. I point out to the Chief Minister that it has the force to blow away the reputations and the integrity of both innocent and, if there are any, guilty people, and that the half measures taken so far have not reduced but have increased the potential for damage to individuals and institutions. I give 2 examples. Last night, the most senior and one of the most respected police officers in Australia, let alone the Territory, found his name on the line. Last night, one of the most senior members of the Country Liberal Party found his name on the line as well. In that context, I ask the Chief Minister if he will do his duty and establish a formal and open judicial inquiry so that the allegations that are circulating can be put to a public and open test?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the Leader of the Opposition on this matter and I seek his indulgence, as we gave to his question, and commence with a brief preamble. Firstly, I would like to address the question of whether or not the Territory fits the pattern which existed in Queensland when a Royal Commission was held there. The Leader of the Opposition has made a number of references in the media to the situation in the Territory being very much like that in Queensland. That is not the case. However, it is certainly relevant to the points that he is raising here today. The point that he is making is that, in his view, a full and open public inquiry, which is the term being used, would be a more sensible course of action in the interests of everyone concerned than the course that the government has proposed in regard to allegations that have been made.

The chorus of calls by some sections of the media and some political figures for a wide-ranging public inquiry into police corruption in the Northern Territory reflects poorly on those making the calls. These are little better than opportunistic attempts to use the Queensland post-Fitzgerald environment for selfish political objectives rather than a genuine effort to promote the interests of the community at large.

In the statement which I made to this Assembly last August, I pointed out that the Fitzgerald Inquiry was set up in the light of particular circumstances in Queensland and its revelations and ultimate recommendations were generated by those circumstances. I emphasised that it would be a grave mistake to apply those results to the Northern Territory in an unthinking and uncritical way. Other members of this Assembly did not take a contrary view during debate on that statement. In particular, I pointed out that Fitzgerald's central theme was that corruption in Queensland was a consequence of an electoral system which permitted a government to remain in office even when it had lost the support of the majority of constituents and which appeared to permit and protect the improper conduct in public administration, including the administration of law and order. It cannot be said that the Northern Territory fits this mould in any way.

In that same statement last August, I said that the Northern Territory is generally acknowledged to have the best police force in Australia, and I am proud to make that claim again today. Nothing has changed which would alter that view. Those who believe that they shape public opinion, such as

the Leader of the Opposition, need to beware. The greatest disservice that they can do is to erode the high degree of confidence which the community has in our police force merely in order to make cheap political capital or to boost readership or the viewing audience, when the events in question simply do not justify the calls that they make.

It would be useful to reiterate a few points which I made in my statement on the Fitzgerald Inquiry. In the Northern Territory, we do not have a huge, inappropriately-structured police force. Our police force comprises some 700 officers as compared to the Queensland force of about 5300. Clearly, it is much easier for responsible officers to be aware of what is going on in a force the size of ours. It is also particularly significant that we have already a force which is structured and organised in a way that is similar to that recommended by Fitzgerald for Queensland. Our force operates under a geographically-based regional system. We have taken significant steps to implement a community-based policing strategy and a number of issues relating to the civilianisation of the force are under discussion. We give a very high priority to recruitment and training issues within the police force. The most up-to-date techniques are used. A great deal of attention is given to the screening of new recruits and professionally-designed aptitude and psychological testing is used in recruitment and selection processes. We have education-based induction and in-service programs, and encouragement is given to members of the force seeking relevant tertiary qualifications or requiring supervisory or management development. We have a merit-based promotion system in line with the recommendations made by Fitzgerald in Queensland. Similarly, our policy in relation to transfers of police is in line with Fitzgerald's recommendations.

We do not have entrenched crime in the Northern Territory, hidden within a large population. It is significant that our population is a mere 156 000-odd as compared with Queensland's population of 2.8 million. The social framework is fundamentally different. In Queensland, prostitution is illegal, yet it was permitted and practised openly by criminal elements. Prostitution is not illegal in the Northern Territory. The existing joint investigative procedures which are in place between the Ombudsman and the Commissioner of Police offer very satisfactory and objective testing of internal investigations by the police force and are acknowledged as the best Ombudsman police arrangements within Australia.

I could go on, Mr Speaker, but I think the point has been amply demonstrated. The structure of the Northern Territory Police Force and the various operational and administrative procedures which are in place guarantee an effective, responsible police force. There is absolutely nothing in the recent allegations which casts any doubt on the suitability and adequacy of the arrangements or on the integrity and standing of the Northern Territory Police Force as a whole.

Circumstances do arise when internal police investigations of individual police need to be carried out. We have securely in place an effective and proven system for such investigations. Most recently, the government decided to introduce the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions along the lines of those in most other jurisdictions in Australia. This further strengthens the general area of law and order and establishes an independent and adequately resourced unit to undertake such action by way of review and prosecution as it sees fit.

I believe the police force is to be commended for the way in which it is dealing with the various matters which have been the subject of recent

comment. Certainly, the force has the total support and the confidence of the Northern Territory government because it deserves that support. I urge the Leader of the Opposition to take the right and proper course on this matter and to accept the offer of a full briefing made by the Commissioner of Police. His call for a Fitzgerald-type inquiry is shabby grandstanding which does him no credit. He has used the argument that he is trying to protect rank and file, honest police officers, and indeed that is exactly what I am doing.

Mr Smith: Sure.

Mr PERRON: I am trying to protect the high-standing and reputation of our police force. That will not be done by the imposition of an atmosphere that suggests the entire 700 members of our police force ought to be the subject of investigation. There is no allegation against those people.

What I ask the Leader of the Opposition to do - and, as Leader of the Opposition, he has a responsibility to do it - is to accept the briefing that has been offered to him by the Commissioner of Police. He has a responsibility to look into the matters which are the subject of the allegations in order to decide for himself whether our proposal to engage Mr Mulholland is appropriate. I am happy to discuss his terms of reference because the Leader of the Opposition is clearly unaware of what they contain and, until such time as he knows what the allegations are, what the police are doing about them and what the Territory government has done by way of a brief for external oversight, he is in no position to say that, irrespective of the facts, he wants a full and open public inquiry. That is an irresponsible course of action.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr PERRON: If you do it after you have studied the facts, that is okay. However, your statements today in the media show clearly that you do not understand the brief that has been given to Mr Mulholland.

Mr Smith: Why don't you tell the public of the Northern Territory what it is?

Mr PERRON: Do you want me to go on and give the brief?

Mr Smith: Sure.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, with the concurrence of the Assembly, I would be pleased to talk about the matter of Mr Mulholland's brief.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Why don't you make a statement?

Mr PERRON: I cannot do that at the moment. It is question time.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition wants to know the details of Mr Mulholland's commission and I will provide them to him. However, the amazing thing is that he has been nailing his colours to the wall and grandstanding for about 4 days with his calls for an open public inquiry.

Mr Smith: Yes. The public wants to know.

Mr PERRON: He does not really know what has been done and he should surely start from a position of knowledge.

Mr Smith: Yes. So should the public of the Northern Territory.

Mr PERRON: Even worse, he has refused to accept the information that is being offered to him on the basis that he should not know any more than the rest of the public knows. Mr Speaker, really he should consider his position as Leader of the Opposition, which is an important position in the administrative and governmental structure of this country.

Mr Smith: Yes. It is so important that you offered me a briefing after you had made the whole thing public. That is really statesman-like.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has said that he wants a full and open public inquiry to 'get to the bottom of these matters'. Those are his words. Not only does he not know what the matters are, he does not want to find out. If ever there was a clear demonstration that his interest in headlines is really greater than his interest in justice, then I am sure that is it. It is true. Although he admitted that he did not know what Mr Mulholland's brief was and refused to be told, the Leader of the Opposition assumed that the brief was, and I quote him from a recent press release ...

Mr Smith: From your press release.

Mr PERRON: A quote from a radio item.

Mr Smith: Your press release tells us what the brief was.

Mr PERRON: 'The brief was simply to analyse the files as they exist at present and to see if the investigations that have been done so far have been appropriate'. He is very wrong if he assumes that that is what the brief is.

Why did the Leader of the Opposition leap into print after rejecting the offer of a full briefing? I guess we can each draw our own conclusions about that but, perhaps after I read Mr Mulholland's terms of reference, which I have right here, and the Leader of the Opposition has had a chance to ponder them, he might rethink his refusal to accept a briefing and base his judgment on whether or not a public inquiry is called for on the facts, not on assumptions.

Mr Mulholland has been briefed to advise in relation to the manner, direction and effectiveness of investigations by Northern Territory police in relation to:

- (a) the investigation and prosecution of certain former police officers charged with drug-related offences;
- (b) the investigation of a complaint concerning possible criminal offences against a certain police officer by another officer; and
- (c) the investigation of an alleged incident involving a police officer and a member of the public.

Mr Mulholland has been further briefed that, if he considers that any advice that he may give in relation to this matter has not been accepted for good or apparent reasons, or if he is satisfied that there has been any impropriety in regard to the handling of this matter by either the Police Commissioner or police officers, or any government minister, including the

Chief Minister and Attorney-General, or the Secretary of the Department of Law, he is authorised to make public his concerns.

Mr Speaker, I table a copy of that for distribution to honourable members who may care to have it for their reference. All those who have commented on this matter to date - the member for Barkly, the Leader of the Opposition and others - have indicated complete support for and confidence in Mr Mulholland QC from Queensland and, indeed, the Leader of the Opposition said that the Premier of Queensland supports Mr Mulholland as a man totally beyond reproach. We have a situation where he has been given a very wide brief, not simply to examine investigations as they are at present but also to oversight those investigations. He can seek that the police follow up other leads, other avenues, talk to other people or whatever. Under the terms of reference which I have indicated, if he is dissatisfied or he believes there might be any person obstructing the course of investigations, or that any authority from the Chief Minister down is in any way interfering or perhaps involved in these matters, he has complete authority to make his concerns public.

I give an undertaking to the Assembly that the final report of Mr Mulholland will be made public. The only material which will be withheld will be that which could prejudice the fair trial of any person or information which is highly sensitive criminal intelligence which relates to ongoing serious police investigations. However, all material provided by Mr Mulholland, including that qualified material that I just mentioned, will be made available to the Leader of the Opposition. Nothing will be withheld. Full briefings will be made available to the Leader of the Opposition as Mr Mulholland's work progresses.

Mr Smith: By whom?

Mr PERRON: I give a commitment that the government will implement any recommendations made by Mr Mulholland whatever they may be. If he advises that a course of action cannot be pursued as a result of any party having inadequate powers, I give an undertaking to the Assembly that I will address that matter in an appropriate way. Of course, that matter will be public at the time and, therefore, there will be no possibility of a cover-up.

I conclude my comments about the Leader of the Opposition's role by again urging him to take a responsible attitude. In a section of his report, entitled 'Political Neutrality', Mr Fitzgerald commented on the need to maintain public confidence. Referring to the Queensland situation, he said: 'Encouraging the provision of information to the leaders of the opposition parties was a part of the vital maintenance of independence and integrity'.

Mr Smith: That is right. Mr Fitzgerald had a full and open inquiry, established by parliament.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, Mr Fitzgerald was talking about the provision of information to opposition parties by the government, information which was not necessarily available in the public arena.

Mr Smith: I would be quite happy if Mr Mulholland was given the same terms of reference.

Mr PERRON: If the Leader of the Opposition is saying that he intends to do his job without making available to himself information which is not generally available to the public, he is doing the public a great

disservice. He cannot expect to do his job when he has only that information which is available to the broad community. Surely the man can be trusted. Surely he has some integrity!

Mr Smith: It is not a private club that we are operating in the Northern Territory. It is not you and I operating a private club. There are people in the community who want to know what is going on.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I look forward to the Leader of the Opposition's response to my appeal to him. In the light of the information that he now has on Mr Mulholland's wide terms of reference and the knowledge that he will be offered briefings during the course of what Mr Mulholland is doing, the Leader of the Opposition should be prepared to accept those briefings. I am not trying to bind him in any way. Obviously, I cannot do so. He can say whatever he likes inside or outside of this House. However, I ask him at least to base his comments on some facts. What possible grounds does he have for not doing that? He should not stand there and say that the only thing the public will be satisfied with is a full and open public inquiry. You do not take such dramatic steps when you are investigating matters which are normally handled routinely by the police in-house. I point out that the Northern Territory Police Force has an excellent record of in-house policing.

Official Telephone Taps

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I preface my question by drawing to the Chief Minister's attention the stringent requirements on the official tapping of telephones, the framework of federal legislation that operates in that regard and the concomitant Listening Devices Bill that is before this Assembly at the moment. Have official phone taps been placed on the private telephones of at least 2 journalists investigating corruption allegations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have to confess that I am not familiar at the moment with the procedures of implementing phone taps in the Territory to the extent that it might involve my approval as Minister for Police.

Mr Smith: All we want to know is whether there are any phone taps.

Mr PERRON: Are you talking about federal ...

Mr Speaker, let me say this categorically. I have no information whatsoever, nor have I ever authorised or had sought from me any authorisation that I might have the power to give for the tapping of the phone of any person.

Alleged Ministerial Interference in Running of Schools

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

There was an item in the media recently regarding a press release issued by Mr Col Young, the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, accusing the minister of interference in the normal running of schools. Is there any truth in Mr Young's statement, and is the minister guilty of interference in the running of schools?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I apologise to honourable members for having, once again, to raise the subject of the performance of the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, Col Young. Unfortunately, he has transgressed once again and has misinformed the public and teachers on an issue relating to the staffing of schools. It is a very serious matter, and the record needs to be corrected.

On Friday 27 April, the General Secretary of the Teachers Federation issued a media release stating that the minister had interfered in the running of the schools at 'the whim of a powerful individual'. Mr Young referred to a situation where the wife of a Newcastle Waters Station manager had demanded, in his words, of myself as Minister for Education, that a teacher be placed at the Newcastle Waters School while the regular teacher from that school was attending a conference in Tennant Creek. I make it quite clear to honourable members that I had given no direction whatsoever in relation to this particular matter. In fact, I did not become aware of the situation until 27 April. Sally Warriner, whom I know, wrote a letter to me. That was faxed to my office and, for honourable members' information, I will table the transmission report in relation to that particular letter because there was only the cover sheet. It has the times, the number of pages sent and whom it went to. There was no instruction from my office or from me whatsoever in relation to the positioning of a teacher at Newcastle Waters. Once again, the General Secretary of the Teachers Federation has misinformed the public totally.

In relation to the so-called demands that were made by Sally Warriner of me, I will read the letter for the record and so that the public listening can understand what we are talking about. I quote the letter:

Dear Tom,

We are again in the situation here at Newcastle Waters where our school is closing down for 2 days this week while our teacher attends a head teachers' conference. I refer to your letter addressed to our P and C, dated 22 January, where you state that it is not possible for the aide to take charge of the school in the absence of the teacher. You suggest that the Elliott School relief teacher may be able to relieve at Newcastle Waters if necessary. Unfortunately, there is usually not a relief teacher available in Elliott. However, the Elliott School has 1 head, 5 teachers and 6 teacher aides with a better teacher/aide to student ratio than ours. We feel that, rather than allowing our school to close down on these not infrequent occasions, we may warrant a relief teacher from the Elliott School who are in the position where their aides can and do take charge of a classroom and the children do not miss valuable school time. I would appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Regards,
Sally Warriner.

So much for the demands of a person in relation to a concern that has been raised on the matter of the school.

Mr Young added that no other teachers from small schools who attended the conference were replaced but, in contrast to Newcastle Waters, the other teachers came from Aboriginal schools. Again, he is trying to introduce a

racial aspect and suggest that we are looking after only the interests of non-Aboriginal people. That is a load of nonsense, and he knows it. Assistant teachers are different from teacher aides and he knows that. Most of the other schools do have assistant teachers to take over the classroom when the teacher is away for some reason.

I made it very clear at the last sittings of the Assembly that I would not interfere in respect of the staffing of schools. Procedures are in place for that. The action of Col Young in saying that the minister 'has been found out' and that the minister has done this, when the minister had not even been notified personally about it, is a disgrace. His action has caused a great deal of concern in the Newcastle Waters community. He had them believing that I had directed the Regional Superintendent to take the action that he took. I deny that categorically. Naturally, the teacher was upset. Anyone would be upset if the minister was seen to be interfering in this very sensitive area of the staffing of schools. I remind all those people involved that anyone has a right, where they have a concern about the education of their children, to contact my office or indeed to contact any member of this Legislative Assembly on those particular matters.

Mr Speaker, I table the letter. The transmission report of that letter went from my office to the Regional Superintendent for consideration. No direction was given by myself or my staff in relation to the action to be taken. Once again, I apologise for having to raise the issue of Col Young, but again he has transgressed in a matter of very grave concern to the people of the Northern Territory.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme for Rural Areas

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the Chief Minister's stated views that he and his government support law and order in the Northern Territory community, why has he not considered adequate budgetary provisions to the police force to make more positions available to administer an extension of Neighbourhood Watch to the rural areas? I refer in particular to the Darwin rural area where I have tried to start such a scheme but, to the detriment of that community, cannot proceed much further because of lack of resources allowing adequate police staffing and equipment for this scheme.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thought the preamble to the honourable member's question was a little barbed. That is a little uncharacteristic of the member for Koolpinyah. However, in regard to the expansion of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I have not joined the CLP, don't forget.

Mr PERRON: I see.

The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is very successful in those areas in which it is operating. It is being implemented progressively in various areas throughout the Territory in a careful and planned way in order not to get ahead of resources. I do not think it is simply a matter of redeploying a few more police officers or whatever would be required and saturating the whole of the Northern Territory. The police have a strategy in respect of the expansion of the scheme. Usually, it is expanded from areas where it exists to adjacent areas. However, in a couple of cases, we have jumped a

couple of suburbs and started in another area. We have commenced this scheme in Alice Springs recently.

I am not sure whether the crime statistics as reported would indicate that the rural area of Darwin has the same problem with break-ins and similar criminal activities. I would be surprised if they are at a similar level to those in the suburbs. The people in town live on much smaller blocks than do people in the rural area. However, I do not detract from the honourable member's wish to have a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the rural area. I will have a look at her bid in that regard. However, I think that the priority locations to date have certainly been the more densely-populated areas of the Northern Territory.

Charges Against Police Officers

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

I draw the minister's attention to statements made by the Commissioner of Police at his media conference yesterday. The commissioner indicated that it was an accepted practice to allow officers under investigation for illegal activities to resign rather than be pursued and charged. Does the Chief Minister accept that this practice, which does not apply to the community in general, establishes the principle that there is one law for the police and another for the rest of the community?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not accept that that is what it does. I have a couple of notes here that I might read to honourable members in order to put into context the comments the Commissioner of Police made on television. In regard to a police officer whose suitability to remain as a policeman is suspect, there have been occasions where police who may have had charges laid against them have resigned, and a decision taken not to proceed with those charges. I am advised that this is not an unusual practice in police forces elsewhere as well. Indeed, I do not make the allegation, but it may be a practice that happens occasionally in private enterprise where an employer accepts a resignation rather than proceeding against a person for some misdemeanour. The prime concern of the Commissioner of Police, as it should be of every member in this Assembly and the community, is the removal from the police force of any unsatisfactory personnel.

Mr Ede: I thought his primary concern is to uphold the laws of the Northern Territory.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, if honourable members care to listen to the rest of my remarks ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Chief Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I am advised that the situation applies only where minor offences are involved and there is a possibility that a conviction will not be secured. It is not a case of people being allowed to get away with anything. In some cases, the option of resignation, which is entirely in the hands of the police officer, could be considered at times to be a harsh penalty compared to prosecution.

Mr Smith: Do you give that option to public servants?

Mr PERRON: In cases outside the police force, an employee might be fined \$50 for an offence yet go back to work the next day. The cost to a member of the police force who resigns is his career. I point out that resignation is voluntary. It is hardly bringing upon yourself a situation where no penalty applies. I point out to honourable members that, as the community would expect, any officer of the police force who is convicted of an offence of dishonesty or assault of any magnitude is dismissed forthwith. Such people are unsuitable to be members of the police force. Yesterday, in the media, the Commissioner of Police referred to a situation in which the offence is minor and may not be proven in a court. Honourable members will be aware that, on many occasions, charges are dismissed for various reasons or cannot be sustained. If a police officer offers to resign in such circumstances, that resignation is accepted.

Stella Maris Seafarers Centre

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

There has been quite a lot of media hype about the Stella Maris Seafarers Centre in recent times. Is it a fact that the government is trying to force Stella Maris to relocate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, some incorrect information has been conveyed by the media in relation on this matter. The Stella Maris hostel is on land leased from the government. Originally, the land belonged to Australian National Railways and, subsequently, it was passed to the Northern Territory government with a suggestion that it be leased to the Stella Maris organisation. When the lease was given to the Stella Maris organisation, it was made very clear that there was no intention of ever providing ownership of that particular land. There is no suggestion at all that the Stella Maris people should move. There is no suggestion that a tourist development will be built on the site, nor is there any suggestion that members of the CLP will gain any benefit from the relocation of Stella Maris.

These suggestions have been broadcast openly to the community and they are totally untrue. The facts are that Stella Maris was offered a 10-year lease in 1988. It refused that because it wanted permanent ownership of the land. It was told that that particular piece of land was not available, but that other land could be made available on a permanent basis. That offer was accepted and a number of blocks of land were looked at. Originally, one was accepted but, subsequently, that acceptance was withdrawn because of developments occurring around that block, and quite rightly so.

At present, we are looking for other blocks that may be suitable. At the same time, an ongoing 10-year lease is available to Stella Maris. It still has not been accepted. There is nothing on the horizon. The fact is that it is a valuable piece of land, and it was made very clear to Stella Maris at the outset that it would never be able to own it. However, we are encouraging Stella Maris and offering financial assistance, through the Department of Health and Community Services and, I believe, the Department of Industries and Development, in relation to redevelopment on another site.

The inferences that were made and, unfortunately, the uninformed calls from the member for Koolpinyah gave an incorrect picture ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: They are not uninformed.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it was very unfortunate that nobody made contact with me to ask what the situation was.

I would like to assure the community that there is no move to remove Stella Maris, and it is very clear that the executive of Stella Maris is fully aware of the situation and could have explained the facts to its members and to the member for Koolpinyah.

Lawlessness in Alice Springs

Mr FLOREANI to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Last weekend, the Gap Motel in Alice Springs was vandalised, bus windows were smashed, shade cloth was slashed and the damage is estimated to cost \$10 000. This case is typical of many in Alice Springs and other centres throughout the Northern Territory. Has the government any long-term plans to combat the lawlessness which appears to be on the increase and which is affecting the lives of many Alice Springs citizens?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not know what the honourable member is suggesting that we should do. The government must ensure that we have legislation in place, an effective police force and an effective and efficient court system. Apart from that, there is very little that can be done unless the honourable member is suggesting that we form vigilante groups in the community.

A number of other matters are being examined. The honourable member is aware of proposals relating to liquor sales, policing, provision of lighting in various areas around town and the formation of community groups to participate in attempts to solve the problem at the community level. However, there is no magic panacea. To suggest that, somehow or other, the government can conjure something up is indeed foolhardy. I urge the member for Flynn to stop trying to look for magic solutions that can be pulled out of a hat and to involve himself in attempts to find a community solution to this community problem.

Sewage Treatment Plant in Alice Springs

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

About 18 months ago, Cabinet approved the construction of a new sewage treatment plant in Alice Springs and the upgrading of the treatment system generally. Can the minister give us any details about the progress of this major capital works program which is extremely important to the people of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. It concerns a matter of great importance for the people of Alice Springs. Some honourable members opposite will agree because they have made it a big issue. In fact, in the Flynn by-election, the opposition claimed that upgrading work would never be done and that virtually the entire population would perish as a result of contracting terrible diseases. Some 18 months down the track, construction work has been proceeding quietly and efficiently and those who shamefully sensationalised the issue have egg on their faces.

A capital works expenditure of \$2.7m was approved by Cabinet in September 1988. It was for construction of a new treatment pond at the Commonage, a new pumping station and rising main at the Commonage, rehabilitation of the old lagoons and improved local disposal of effluent. Construction of the rising main has been completed and the contract for construction of the ponds was let early last month to a local contractor, Bernie & Rhodes, for \$1.4m. Completion is expected at the end of the year. Design work on the pump station has just been completed. Tenders are being advertised about now and construction is scheduled to finish by January 1991. Contracts for the supply of associated mechanical equipment and pumps have already been let. A monitoring program is in place to determine the effects of the revised effluent disposal strategy on the soils and ground water of the Commonage. The funds have been allocated and contracts are in place. The work will be completed in the very near future. I assure the people of Alice Springs that the new system will utilise the very latest technology and will be of great benefit to the town.

Mulholland Investigation

Mr BAILEY to CHIEF MINISTER

When is Mr Mulholland due to arrive in the Northern Territory, in the course of his investigations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot provide that information to the honourable member. I understand that work is certainly proceeding on the information that has been transmitted to Mr Mulholland. I do not know ...

Mr Smith: You do not know whether he is coming or not?

Mr PERRON: I do not know when he is coming to the Northern Territory.

Mr Smith: Is he coming to the Northern Territory?

Mr PERRON: I will let you know.

Mr Speaker, let me obtain some information for the honourable member on the expected modus operandi of Mr Mulholland who, at this stage, as honourable members are probably aware, has other very important matters on his plate. Like other men of his standing, Mr Mullholland does not operate alone either. I understand that work is proceeding on the brief at this time, and has been for some time, and I can provide honourable members with further details in this regard during the course of the day.

Freight Charges

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What impact are the dramatically-increased truck registration charges that are being proposed elsewhere likely to have on the cost of freight to the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly the short answer is that they will lead to a dramatic increase in prices to all consumers in the Northern Territory, particularly those who are remote from the source of supply. The impact in

Alice Springs will be a little less but in Darwin, for example, I would forecast that an increase in registration fees of some \$12 000 or \$13 000 per vehicle, as proposed to the federal government, and a foreshadowed increase in fuel tax, will add in the order of 2.5¢ per kilogram to the price of every product that the housewife takes off the shelf. Of course, that will come on top of some extreme charges that we raised in the House last year. For example, the average total cost of freight from Brisbane to Darwin is about \$325 per tonne, or around 33¢ per kilogram, of which already \$121 is made up of taxes and charges. Of course, residents of Nhulunbuy will pay additional freight charges on top of that. Of that one-third in taxes and charges, 92% goes to the federal government through import duty, sales tax on vehicles, sales tax on parts and tyres, stamp duty, fuel tax, company taxes, personal taxes, royalties, crude oil excise, registration fees and, of course, the old hobbyhorse of this federal government, sales tax on freight.

A couple of days ago, in front of Hon Warren Snowdon's office in Darwin, the National Consumer Affairs Advisory Council Chairman, Mr Justice Stein, raised, among other matters, that very same sales tax question. The honourable member for the Northern Territory has had long enough to raise the matter of that most iniquitous taxation - tax on tax - on behalf of all Territorians.

The problem for the Northern Territory is that we rely so heavily on road freight. We do not have the options of downtown Victoria or New South Wales of being able to move freight to and from other areas by rail or regular shipping services. We rely entirely on road transport. To suggest that the road transport industry pays less than its fair share towards road maintenance is nothing but a scam. Of those combined taxes that the federal government receives, amounting to \$121 per tonne - and, just weeks after the election, it is flagging another \$25 per tonne - only 6% goes back into the road network.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr FINCH: The member for Nhulunbuy can shake his head about it, but I call on him and on the honourable member for the Northern Territory, in his newly-found influential role as secretary to the Minister for Land Transport, to resist the move from a \$3500 federal registration fee. In the Northern Territory, we deliberately keep registration fees down and, currently, for those same semi-trailers, the fee is about \$900. There is to be a move from \$3500 to \$16 000 a year and an increase in fuel excise which is already 24¢ per litre. We cannot stand any more. I call on honourable members opposite and the new secretary to the Minister for Land Transport to resist such a move and to further review the sales tax on freight as an issue of concern to all Territorians.

Elcho Island Shooting

Mr LEO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Will a coronial inquiry be conducted on Elcho Island into the recent shooting and killing by police of an Elcho Island resident?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a matter for the Coroner, but I assure the honourable member that there will be a full coronial inquiry.

Elcho Island Shooting

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

Many people in the Aboriginal communities are very worried about what has happened on Elcho Island. They are saying that the Tactical Response Group should be better trained to understand how to handle trouble in the communities.

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The fact that there is to be a coronial inquiry into the matters that are being referred to by the member for Arafura really means that comments such as he is ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Arafura is able to ask any question he wishes to and it is up to the responding minister to give him that information. There is no point of order.

Mr TIPILOURA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will repeat my question.

Many people in the Aboriginal communities are very worried about what has happened on Elcho Island. They are saying that the Tactical Response Group should be better trained to understand how to handle trouble in the communities. Will the Chief Minister ensure that the training of the Tactical Response Group is looked into and that the suggestion by the member for Arnhem and the member for Nhulunbuy, that the coronial inquiry be held on the island, be taken up?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I undertake to pass on the views expressed by the member for Arafura to the appropriate people.

Charges Against Police Officers

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to an answer given earlier. Working from the premise that a policeman would be charged only if there were a good probability that the charges would succeed in the first place, can the Chief Minister advise whether charges that have been laid formally against a Northern Territory policeman have been withdrawn subsequently by Crown Law or the police in return for the resignation of the officer so charged? Could the Chief Minister advise how many times such an arrangement could have been entered into and the circumstances of the charges that were involved? I understand it is unlikely that the Chief Minister will have the answer to the latter part of the question at his fingertips, but would he be prepared to provide it later in these sittings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the same applies to the former part of the question. I cannot advise the honourable member on either aspect of his question. However, I will seek the necessary information and provide it during the course of these sittings.

Public Servants - Comments by Opposition Leader

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On television last week, the Leader of the Opposition said that, if he won government, any public servant with a philosophy different from his own would - I think his words were - 'move on'. That greatly concerns me, Mr Speaker. I know what happened in Queensland and Tasmania when there was a change of government. There was a reshuffle in the public service and so many people lost their jobs that you would not believe it. Can the honourable minister, who has responsibility for the public service, comment on that?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I must say that I was very shocked to find that, in his words, the Leader of the Opposition had a hit list of public servants who would be ousted if a Labor government took office in the Northern Territory. I think that many public servants would be shocked to know that such a hit list exists. I was further amazed to hear him to say that anyone who was currently in the public service, and who had a philosophy different from his own, would move on. I make it very clear right now that this government has never resorted, and will never resort, to such tactics. It is very clear that, within the public service, there are many people with different philosophical viewpoints. Within my own department, I have many people who are and profess to be Labor supporters. I have never sought from them, nor would I seek from them, their moving on, as the Leader of the Opposition would do. He made it very clear that people would move on when he gets into government.

That is a shameful admission for a parliamentary leader to make, but it is not unusual for Labor governments to act in that way. We have seen it happen within the federal system, where mates have been put into public service and other jobs. I can assure public servants in the Northern Territory that this government will not resort to such tactics and will certainly endeavour always to protect the right of anyone to profess any philosophical viewpoint that he or she wishes to. It is outrageous. I believe it will be condemned by public servants and Territorians generally and I call on all honourable members to reject it also.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In the last sittings, I asked him whether he would bring on debate regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. That did not happen. Is he prepared to give an undertaking to debate that matter, and maybe to send a resolution to Canberra, during these sittings.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will examine that matter and see if I can do that during the course of these sittings.

Commonwealth Grants Commission Funding Proposals

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, my question relates to today's announcement of funding proposals put forward by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Like the Chief Minister, I recognise the announcement as being the predicted first phase of extensive negotiations between the Commonwealth and the states and territories over funding arrangements for the next financial year. Obviously, on this side of the House, we intend to do everything we can to protect the Northern Territory's interest. I ask the Chief Minister whether he will provide me with a full briefing by senior Treasury officials to ensure that our efforts in this area are effective.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will be pleased to arrange such a briefing. Also, I will be approaching each of our federal representatives with a view to providing them with information through senior Treasury officers. In fact, work is presently under way to collate briefing information in a suitable form. I am pleased to accept the Leader of the Opposition's offer in this regard because it appears that the Northern Territory will be in a precarious financial position next year if one simply extrapolates the information that we have to hand today on the Grants Commission's findings in the context of the federal government's announcements about its attitude towards the states.

The Northern Territory still finds itself in the difficult situation of having been brought into the states' tax-sharing pool and being under the purview of the Grants Commission and its relativities exercises. This leaves us somewhat out in the cold because the Grants Commission's charter relates to what is called a 'standard budget'. Selected items are assessed. These are all recurrent items which are extracted from state budgets and assessed against each other. Each state's revenue-raising capacity is taken into consideration together with other factors. The commission then brings down a finding that the amount of money in the pool should be distributed among the states and the Territory under a particular formula.

What the Grants Commission cannot look at is where we get into trouble. It cannot look at capital expenditure or some other recurrent expenditures such as, in our situation, the funding for the university. Of course, the states do not fund universities, yet we are at least partially funding the University of the Northern Territory. Those sorts of considerations are totally outside the Grants Commission's field of deliberation. That is not making any criticism of the Grants Commission itself. It is simply not permitted to look at that. It is not permitted to feed it into its black box computer that does these very complicated calculations.

To give an example, the Grants Commission looks at the costs of providing teachers in our education system, the costs of bringing them to the Territory, of training them and of sending them to remote areas. It takes into account historical factors like the turnover of teachers in remote areas, which is very high, and it gives us a factor allowance for those heavy expenditures necessary to provide teachers in our education system which clearly is a much more expensive process than that involved in doing it in New South Wales. However, what the Grants Commission cannot look at is the cost of the facilities that are built for those teachers. It cannot look at the schools. The entire area of capital expenditure is outside the purview of the Grants Commission. We argue constantly with the

Commonwealth that treating the Northern Territory like a state as far the Commonwealth states funding arrangements are concerned is inappropriate. We have always argued that the Territory should have a separate financial arrangement with the Commonwealth as we once had.

Darwin Joinery

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer the honourable minister to the recent acquisition by the Territory government, through its shelf company Dalloway Pty Ltd, of Darwin Joinery. Can he confirm that the takeover has exposed Territory taxpayers to an \$8.25m liability consisting of the \$2m invested to take over the company, a \$2.5m TIO loan and a \$3.75m ANZ mortgage?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in order to be precise on the details that the Leader of the Opposition has provided to me this morning, I will answer that question during the course of this morning, if that is acceptable to him.

I take the opportunity to give honourable members an update on the joinery. We are dealing with 2 potential buyers of the joinery at the moment. We can sell up to a controlling interest at any time, and there is a great deal of interest in the sale of that portion of the joinery at present. At that time, we have a moral obligation to sell up to a controlling interest back to the Pastrokos family.

Mr Smith: Until 1992, you will sell it back?

Mr COULTER: Or such other time as it may be convenient for them to do that.

However, there are people who are interested in buying the joinery. That is good because it has saved the joinery, the jobs, the technology and, in particular, the creditors. In fact, yesterday, 80¢ in the dollar was paid to the creditors. They received their first payment. Over \$600 000-worth of credit was involved. This government was concerned that there would be a knock-on effect because already in excess of \$1m has been lost from the Northern Territory economy to companies that have gone into receivership or have simply left the Northern Territory recently.

The government's move in providing assistance to and taking over the Darwin Joinery, through the shelf company Dalloway, has been a success. I am told that last month was a record month in terms of what the company has been able to achieve in sales to the Darwin-based companies Jape Furniture and Japara. 'NT Inc' was hailed as a great success story by the Leader of the Opposition in a full-page newspaper advertisement recently, but the company is in no way Western Australia Incorporated.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Members of the opposition do not want to hear the good news, but I will continue with this success story. Major sales have been achieved in Katherine and Alice Springs. Also, the coffin contract has been a success ...

Mr Smith: Very apt.

Mr COULTER: It is very apt because it is import replacement, and that is exactly what we were trying to effect. Extensive overtime is being worked. Staff are working flat out on weekends at present. Is it any wonder that people are interested in buying into the company? It has been a success story. We were criticised because we took the hard decision. However, within a couple of weeks of restructuring the company, we have achieved record sales. The \$4m-worth of work on State Square is being achieved. Tendering for both the Darwin Airport and the Second Cavalry Unit is well advanced and things are looking good in terms of picking up those contracts. The reasoning behind the government's decision to provide assistance is bearing fruit within weeks of its implementation by retaining that technology, eliminating the need to bring furniture and fittings etc from interstate, and saving the jobs of the 14 apprentices and the 70 employees ...

Mr Smith: What about the criticism that the government has received?

Mr COULTER: Whilst the government was criticised for making that move, and I understand why that happened, this government stands firmly behind the action that it took. Eventually, Northern Territorians will be the winners.

Heritage Legislation

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What is the present situation with regard to legislation on heritage protection?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members will recall that, in November last year, I tabled in this Assembly draft heritage legislation for public discussion. That flowed from some 2 years of consultation arising from a discussion paper circulated by my predecessor in the portfolio, the honourable Attorney-General. As a result of tabling that draft bill, there has been an enormously successful process of consultation. We have received a considerable number of submissions from professional and industry bodies, from individuals and societies with particular interest in heritage issues, from local governments and from bodies representing Aboriginal interests. We have had some 45 submissions so far, comprising about 200 pages of critical comment.

Without doubt, many of the comments were quite critical of the draft bill. That is fine. The draft bill has brought out the clear views of organisations in the community which, for some reason, were reticent to put forward specific views in response to the discussion paper. They are now talking very specifically about what they believe should be included in heritage legislation. We are doing an analysis of those public submissions now and proceeding to draft a revised bill which should be finalised soon. Following that, as the next stage in the process of consultation, I propose to hold a workshop with key organisations and interested individuals to further review the draft bill. Whilst this process may have taken some time and may be continuing to take some time, I believe that the process is very worth while because, at the end of the day, we will have very effective legislation to deal with heritage matters in the Northern Territory, and legislation which quite clearly will have the strong support of the broad Northern Territory community.

Darwin Joinery

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

My question seeks a clarification from the honourable minister. In answer to a previous question, did he say that there were people who were interested in buying the Darwin Joinery - and that would allow the government to retrieve its \$2m at a time when funds are scarce and remove the possibility of another \$5m or \$6m liability - but that the government does not have the flexibility to deal with such people because of an arrangement it has entered into with the previous owner to give him an option some time in 1992? Is that the actual situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we can sell up to a controlling interest in the company at any time.

Mr Ede: That includes the controlling interest?

Mr COULTER: I am answering. It is not a controlling interest. It is up to a controlling interest. Okay?

There is an obligation. We have said to the Pastrokos family that it would have the right of first refusal to buy the company after that ...

Mr Smith: When?

Mr COULTER: At any time.

Mr Smith: Yes, but when is the limit?

Mr COULTER: We believe that, working on the basis of the business plan which has been put together, the company will turn cash-flow positive and be in a very good position by 1992. That is the time when the company is expected to have really turned around and to be going very well.

Mr Smith: If a company wants to buy it tomorrow, you won't sell?

Mr COULTER: No, that is not true. But the first refusal would go to the Pastrokos family. We would go to it and say: 'Do you want to buy it now? We have an offer for it'. If it had the money, the Pastrokos family would have the opportunity to buy into it. If it did not, whatever arrangements that it would want to enter into ...

Mr Smith: Thus, there is no 1992 constraint. You can sell it whenever you can get a buyer?

Mr COULTER: There is a 1992 factor in terms of not having to give a first refusal to the Pastrokos family.

Mr Smith: Come on, answer the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, let us have a look at the Labor Party platform and what it would do. This is what its platform says: 'The Australian Labor Party stands for establishment and development of public enterprises based upon federal, state and other forms of social ownership in appropriate sectors of the economy'. I wonder whether that is the social ownership ...

Mr Smith: I will tell you what. We won't be owning joinery factories.

Mr COULTER: That is good. What will you be owning? That is what people in the community want to know.

Mr Smith: It won't be joinery factories or tourist resorts. We will get rid of them!

Mr COULTER: There is much more in the ALP platform which indicates exactly what it will be owning, Mr Speaker. There is a difference between that side of the House and this side of the House. That will become very clear during the next 11 months.

Mr Smith: Yes, very clear.

Mr COULTER: The fact is that, if we had not have moved in relation to the Darwin Joinery, the cost to the Northern Territory and to subcontractors and suppliers would have been enormous. Those people opposite would have sat there wringing their hands and they would have done absolutely nothing to save that enterprise and that investment. They would have sat there and let it fall and crumble. Today, weeks after we moved in to save this organisation, it has turned the corner and is trading very well. That is the difference between that side of the House and this side of this House and it is the choice that Northern Territorians will make this year. They can have the social ownership platform that members opposite stand for or they can judge us on our merits. When the time comes, we will see who is laughing about Darwin Joinery. We will be very proud of the action that this government took.

Article in 'Northern Territory Construction'

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In the April edition of the Master Builders Association magazine, 'Northern Territory Construction', reference was made to Palmerston College. I understand that some criticism was made in that article. Is the minister aware of this and is he concerned by the comments contained in that magazine?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the comments that have been made and I will be addressing the issue during the course of these sittings. To give members full details would take far too much time during question time. I am reminded repeatedly about the length of answers given to questions.

Can I just say that 2 main arguments were put forward in that article. The first was that Palmerston College had been conceived and executed in haste. I am sure honourable members would realise and acknowledge that that is not the case. In fact, Palmerston College was planned in 1983 when we were looking at the concept of secondary colleges. There is a problem in relation to providing the required number of places in our secondary colleges. Casuarina Secondary College has 1100 students. Darwin High School, a comprehensive high school, has over 1000 students. The government has been planning for a long time to establish a secondary college at Palmerston. The site itself changed at a later date.

The other aspect promoted in this document related to the inclusion of some TAFE elements. It said that it was a threat to the Northern Territory

University's Institute of TAFE. I will address that matter later, but I do not see that as being the case. I will be meeting with the Business Council to discuss a number of issues. I think it was inappropriate to make such comments without contacting my office to find out whether or not the college had been planned for some time. To say that it had been conceived in haste is wrong and needs to be corrected. There has always been a plan for a secondary college in the Palmerston area. It did not eventuate because of the decision to put the university campus at Casuarina. Unfortunately, it has confused that issue. The government needs to plan its institutions. That is done well ahead in order to avoid duplication. I will be addressing the other issues referred to in that article during the course of these sittings.

Water Supply at Brunette Downs

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

The minister would be aware that the community at Brunette Downs has taken its water for consumption over the last 60 or 70 years from the lagoon next to the community. Recently, his department decided that the water was no longer fit for consumption. Could he advise whether the reticulation of the new water supply to the Aboriginal community will be available also to the European community? Could the minister advise the cost of providing the new water supply and reticulation system to the community?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am familiar with some of the the circumstances surrounding that water supply. However, I do not have all the details that the honourable member has asked for. I will supply him with that information during the course of these sittings.

On the basis of chemical analysis, the water was deemed unfit for drinking. The decision by PAWA was taken for health reasons. This is not peculiar to Brunette Downs. There are a number of other water supply areas, particularly in the member for Stuart's electorate, which are in a similar condition. We placed desalination plants in some of those areas but these have not been as successful as we had hoped. Some areas simply do not have sufficient water to service the communities. This is a problem, particularly in times of drought or poor wet seasons. The ground water is not replenished and, in effect, we are mining that resource. Such problems are occurring in communities throughout the Territory. PAWA is endeavouring to supply that water wherever possible. It is not easy. I have spoken in this Assembly on many occasions and at some length about some of those problems. I will supply the requested details to the member for Barkly during the course of these sittings.

TCHIP Program at Elliott

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Last week, the member for Arafura claimed that the minister had done everything in his power to exclude the release of Town Camp Housing and Infrastructure Program funds for town campers at Elliott. Can the minister confirm if indeed this is the case?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, could I say to begin with that the responsibility for Town Camp Housing and Infrastructure Program rests with the Minister for Lands and Housing. I do not have the authority to direct where the Minister for Lands and Housing puts TCHIP funds. However, I certainly support the fact that, in line with government policy, he has directed those funds to the Elliott Community Government Council. I was appalled to hear the words of the shadow spokesman for local government last week. His statements about TCHIP and Elliott indicated to me that he did not know what he was talking about.

TCHIP was established initially by agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory to provide town camp housing and infrastructure in the major urban centres such as Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin etc. The majority of those funds are Territory funds - \$28m compared to \$12m over a period of years. Consideration was never given to the idea that they would be extended to Elliott and Borroloola until, during last year, the Territory government decided that funds would be sought to pick up the obvious need in those 2 communities. The Minister for Lands and Housing took that request to his federal colleagues and finally obtained approval for Commonwealth support only in December last year. Despite this, the member for Arafura, the shadow spokesman on local government, was saying that it had been available for 2 years and that I have been obstructing its distribution. Obviously, that is false.

The member for Arafura went on to refer to the Gurungu Council as being the local governing body for Elliott, which obviously it is not. The Elliott Community Council is the local governing body in Elliott as the Borroloola Community Government Council is the local governing body in Borroloola. He referred to the Borroloola Community Government Council and Gurungu as though they equated. They do not equate. Gurungu is an association of Aboriginal people established, I might say, with the sole intent of getting hold of TCHIP funds and to distribute or manage those funds within the township of Elliott.

Like many community government councils, one of the functions of the Elliott Community Government Council is its ability to provide housing. It is a body established under Territory law, one of those bodies that the shadow spokesman aspires to control under legislation. However, he does not believe that it has the capacity to do the job in Elliott. Obviously, that is false. If I were to tell the honourable member that the Nguju Town Council did not have that capacity, he would be very angry because he knows that it has that capacity. He knows that the controls on community government councils are such that there is a vastly reduced likelihood of a failure such as that which occurred in Elliott a few years ago when an association controlled by Commonwealth officers was entirely unsupervised and consequently went broke.

I am not prepared to fall over and die when it comes to supporting local government in the Northern Territory, as the member opposite obviously is. I will not fall over and say that local government does not have the capacity. Obviously, the Elliott Community Government Council is the appropriate body in this case. The Northern Territory government fought for extra funds for TCHIP in Elliott, as it did for Borroloola. The minister has made available initial funds to start the program in Elliott, as he has already done in Borroloola. Those funds have gone to the appropriate bodies in both communities. That is how things will be done in the future. Funds will be channelled to the appropriate body in the community, the body over

which we have some say and which we can control to some extent through financial accountability measures. We will ensure that those bodies are the bodies that receive funds from the Northern Territory government.

If anyone here believes that Gurungu is a more appropriate recipient of these funds than the Elliott Community Government Council, he is wrong. The Elliott Community Government Council is keen to have the input of Gurungu. It wants Gurungu to tell it what it wants. It wants the Gurungu association within the Aboriginal community to assist it in establishing appropriate housing in that community. If Gurungu is genuine and serious, it will assist the Elliott Community Government Council to do its job. I am appalled at the approach taken by the shadow spokesman on local government. I am sure that local governments around the Territory will condemn him for his words and his lack of support. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that this government will continue to support a very good local government system in the Northern Territory.

Darwin Joinery

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In the minister's answer to my first question on this subject, he said that the government was able to offer up to a controlling interest in Darwin Joinery under the terms of the arrangement which it had. In the same answer, he went on to say that in fact there had been record turnover. In the light of the turnaround which seems to have occurred in the fortunes of Darwin Joinery, is he able to accept an offer for a controlling interest in it, thus releasing \$2m to be put somewhere else, or is he bound until 1992 by an agreement with the previous owner of Darwin Joinery?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in answer to this question, can I first say that we have to have a buyer who is willing to buy the whole joinery. We do not have one at the moment. That is my first point.

Mr Smith: You have not made it available to anyone, have you?

Mr COULTER: The Leader of the Opposition seems to have a renewed interest in the Darwin Joinery and now wants to save it. If he knows of anybody who would like to buy into the Darwin Joinery, I would be only too willing to sit down with him and the potential buyer to save the joinery. It is a shame that he did not have the same interest 6 or 8 weeks ago.

There is a moral obligation to give the previous owners of Darwin Joinery the right of first refusal at any time when somebody may wish to buy the joinery. When we went into the negotiations, we were mindful of the fact that a buyer might turn up and that Mr Pastrokos might be able to buy back the joinery. The business plan provided to us predicted that, in 1992, the business would be able to be resold to the Pastrokos family. That is all that I am saying. If a buyer does turn up tomorrow, we have a moral obligation to ask Mr Pastrokos whether he wishes to buy it back. If he answers affirmatively, but says that he does not have the money, that matter has to be addressed at that time.

Mr Ede: You will lend him the money.

Mr COULTER: You would lend him the money. The Smith Labor government ...

Mr Ede: You are out of date. That was 3 years ago.

Mr COULTER: Tell us what you are up to now.

Mr Ede: We keep learning and developing.

Mr COULTER: You spoke about Western Australian Incorporated. Would you do it through the bank? One of your recent documents says that you would have \$20m for back-up for business and \$5m for venture capital. That is what your current document says.

Mr Smith: That is less than you put into the Sheraton at Yulara.

Mr COULTER: But that is what your current transition-to-government document says. Am I right or wrong?

Mr Smith: No, you are not right.

Mr COULTER: I will ...

Mr Smith: There you go.

Mr COULTER: The figures might be wrong. However, that is what your current document says. I have a copy of it. I am prepared to table it so that you can refresh your memory. We have heard that you would not prop up the Darwin Joinery. You might like to tell the people of the Northern Territory what businesses you would prop up.

Mr Smith: I am not going to prop up any businesses.

Mr COULTER: That is not what it says in the document which apparently you have been circulating. Your document states that you have \$20m that will go towards backing up Northern Territory business and \$5m that will go to a venture capital company. That is what it says.

Mr Smith: You blokes are starting to behave like an opposition already.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, if this is old, if the Labor Party is old and ...

Mr Smith: Why don't you start behaving like a government in the little time that is left to you?

Mr COULTER: We are now to step away from 'a Smith Labor government will draw on the expertise and success of the Western Australian model and establish the system in the Northern Territory' and turn to the document the Leader of the Opposition is circulating presently about the opposition's transition to government. We can read about this new-found visionary and this love of the Leader of the Opposition that seems to be permeating everybody. We understand from this document that \$20m will be spent to prop up Northern Territory business and that \$5m will be put into a venture capital company.

Mr Smith: And we would still be saving about \$15m on what you do currently.

Mr COULTER: We have been told today that you would not have touched Darwin Joinery. What would you have have touched?

Mr Speaker, those are the answers that members of the opposition have to provide. Territorians will judge them by their actions. It is true that this side of the House has been through a rough time lately, but we have taken decisions and we will be judged on those decisions. The opposition has yet to make any announcements at all. As a result of the confusion created this morning about the documents that the Labor Party has circulated, I suggest we wait for members of the opposition to stand up and be judged by their actions.

Legal Costs and Charges

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Is he aware that, in New South Wales, a study has been undertaken into making legal costs more relevant and cheaper so that middle-income Australians, who are not eligible for legal aid, can afford legal services? Further, is he aware of a claim made at the weekend in the Daily Telegraph that it has been calculated that, simply by permitting legal firms to advertise their services and fees, \$297m could be saved on conveyancing alone? Will the Attorney-General examine the possibility of moving away from the archaic principle of lawyers not being allowed to advertise and towards effecting similar changes in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that proposition has been put forward to the Law Society in New South Wales for a second time. It is not a government initiative as such. However, I will be raising those matters with the Northern Territory Law Society to see if they can be addressed by the profession itself. I think that most people in this House would agree that the ability for consumers to be able to make judgments regarding the costs involved in litigation is quite important. I will be taking the matter up with the Law Society and, hopefully, the government will not need to become involved in that matter. We will see what happens.

Department of Industries and Development Expenditure

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer the minister to third-quarter government expenditure figures which indicate that expenditure by the Department of Industries and Development has blown out to \$36m. This figure is already \$7m beyond the department's total budget allocation for the entire year. Will the minister inform the House how much of that \$36m has been sunk into the government's Sheraton/Yulara deals and how much it is now estimated will be poured into the Yulara/Sheraton black holes for the whole of the financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will provide detailed figures to the member for Stuart on those questions that he asks during the course of these sittings, but let us not forget why that blowout has occurred. That is the question that he never asks.

Mr Ede: Because you are involved in it.

Members interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Is it my incompetence? Is that why? No, it is not.

A member: You can blame anybody you like, Barry.

Members interjecting.

Mr COULTER: This year, we have spent \$6m on helping people in the Northern Territory who have lost almost everything they had. I admit that these are people who took commercial risks. The airline strike alone ...

Mr Ede: The Western Australians were blaming the 1987 stock market crash.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: You do not think that the airline strike had an impact on the Northern Territory economy?

Mr Ede: Of course it did.

Mr COULTER: Right.

Mr Ede: But so did the crash of 1987 on Western Australia.

Mr COULTER: And you, with your besser-block or mud-brick heart, would not have helped any of those people, despite the fact that the document that you are circulating at present states that money will be used to prop up business and that \$5m will be put into a venture capital company. I suppose all those people would not have qualified.

The fact is that times are tough and they will become much tougher. It is not only the Darwin Sheraton; the small contractors are affected. \$1m has been lost to this economy through the collapse of businesses in the last 6 weeks.

Mr Ede: What are you going to do about it?

Mr COULTER: You are a great economic genius, aren't you? You talk of the great whizz-bang economic ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that question time is being broadcast. Whilst I have allowed a tremendous amount of latitude on both sides, my patience is starting to wear a little thin. I remind honourable members that they are in parliament.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I am wasting my time trying to explain to the opposition benches how tough it is in the community and how much people are hurting. The Department of Industries and Development has spent a great deal of money to help those people to survive. Things will get much tougher. Under this current Labor government, the whole of Australia is in trouble. There is not one major project in Australia at the moment that creates wealth over \$500m. It has all stopped. The mining has stopped. The North-west Shelf was the last one - \$7000m. It is now over. The North Rankin field is going ahead, but that is a single project. Where is there a project over \$500m anywhere in Australia? We used to have many projects around this great country of ours that relies on mining and agriculture for 70% of its export income. We used to have 3 or 4 major projects in every state, but that has stopped. We are in trouble, and it is time members opposite started waking up to that fact.

Mr Speaker, I will provide ...

Mr Ede: There is \$5000m-worth of tourist investment at the moment.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, we heard about that during the election campaign. Sit down and have a fireside chat with your father-in-law. He has been saying the same thing now for 2 years ...

Mr Ede: You should talk to him about the Sheratons and Yulara. You should hear what he thinks about that.

Mr COULTER: ... and your mob would not listen to him!

Mr Speaker, I will provide details for the honourable member in the very near future.

Harvesting of Lancewood and Gutta-percha

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Can he advise the House on the proposed harvesting of lancewood and gutta-percha in the central areas of the Northern Territory, and the impact that that harvesting will have?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I announced recently the commencement of a new business venture in the Northern Territory. That is a pleasing change from some of the difficulties that we have been experiencing. The Minister for Industries and Development has explained eloquently how much effort we are putting in to try to protect our existing industries despite the deprivations that are being foisted on the Australian economy.

A Darwin company, Central North Trading Pty Ltd, has been granted a forestry licence to harvest lancewood and gutta-percha from pastoral properties in the central districts of the Northern Territory stretching from Hayfield through to Urapunga. The company has also been issued an export licence under the federal Export Control Act. To achieve these licences, the company has had to satisfy Territory and federal authorities that the operation will not be destructive, that the export of natural resources from Australia will be at a price satisfactory to the federal government, and that the company will abide by stringent licensing conditions aimed at protection of the environment and the cultural and heritage values of the area.

Lancewood occurs in dense thickets in a band across the middle latitudes of the Territory and through into south-western Queensland. Under the conditions of the licence, specialist attention is required for the protection of species such as bulwaddy that occur in that area, fire protection, the protection of areas on the interim list for the Register of the National Estate, the location and construction of roads and tracks to avoid potential soil erosion problems and the protection of Aboriginal and heritage sites. As well, the company is required to report on any such sites that are found during the operation.

The operation involves selective logging through which individual trees are removed. There will be no clear felling and, in addition, a minimum cutting size has been set so that mature trees are left. The company has submitted samples for testing in the European marketplace and I am given to

understand that the species is very highly regarded for use as specialist veneers and for wood products such as tool handles, spinning shuttles and so on. This company will begin to establish facilities for its field operations in the next few weeks. I am looking forward to the establishment of a new industry in the Territory and one that is built around the establishment of an ecologically-sustainable, long-term export industry.

Mr Bailey: Why wasn't the PER made public?

Mr HATTON: There he goes again. He cannot help himself.

Mr Ede: How much money have you put into it?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, that is an interesting question from the member for Stuart. We have not put a cent into this.

Mr Ede: Do you promise never to?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, we have not put a cent into this. We have been able to develop an ecologically-sustainable industry for export. We have been able to do it in a way that is responsible and in cooperation with the federal government. It hurts members opposite to recognise that. The member for Stuart is already looking for a way to try to denigrate this. Have you put any money into it? What is the problem? Where are the issues? This is a new industry for the Territory that meets all the environmental and ecological rules and that has the approval of the federal government. It will earn money for Australia and create jobs in the Territory. It is a locally-owned company. Members opposite want to find problems with it. I am proud of this. This is the start of many ventures that will occur in the future as we build this Territory while this government stays in power.

New Parliament House

Mr FLOREANI to TREASURER

In the light of the precarious financial position that the Territory is facing next year, as was reported this morning, will the Treasurer consider stopping work on the new Parliament House which will cost \$60m and be totally funded by borrowing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am surprised at the question from the member for Flynn. Whilst the member for Flynn is one of the newer members of this Legislative Assembly, he has been here for some time now and could have been expected to have picked up some of the principles involved in government financing. The honourable member has been told in this House on a number of occasions that State Square is being funded by a special addition to the Northern Territory's loan program. If we want to receive those funds, we are obliged to spend them on that program. He should understand also the principle that loan funds, not recurrent funds, are expended on projects such as State Square which will be used on behalf of the community for the next 50 years. The principle is that, if the community is to benefit for the next 50 years from the construction of a government facility, the community can be reasonably asked to pay for it over the next 50 years.

The impact of State Square on the Northern Territory government's budget in the next financial year will be virtually nil because we are simply

gathering the loan funds now to pay for the construction of the buildings as they are proceeding. We will not incur the total debt until the buildings are completed. From that point on, of course, we will be paying interest on those funds borrowed. I urge the honourable member to take some interest in the principles of government financing before asking such mundane questions.

Flood Mitigation in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can the minister give us an update on the flood mitigation works for Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, work is progressing on the flood mitigation dam at Alice Springs. I will be in a better position to provide the member with an update towards the end of this month. We will receive a number of reports in the next 2 or 3 weeks. Those reports will give the government the information that it requires on whether to proceed or not and the construction details that have been worked on now for a number of years. Expenditure has occurred on sites within the district. I will be in a better position to advise the honourable member by the end of this month as to the next course of action.

Development Strategy for Gulf Region

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the honourable minister to work undertaken by his department over the past year in developing a land use and development strategy for the Gulf region. When will this document be released for public comment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, considerable work has been involved in drafting a document for land use in the Gulf. A number of issues are involved, including: the land and infrastructure to support the growing tourist industry; the future of the pastoral industry; the development of mining potential; support for the fishing industry, including aquaculture; protection of conservation and heritage areas and areas of scientific significance; and alternative land uses which may have development potential such as lancewood. I expect to receive the draft Gulf Land Use and Development Strategy in the very near future. We are hoping to release it for public comment by the end of the month. The document has been drafted after pretty intensive consultation with people throughout the Gulf region. Following its release, it will be redrafted after the comment period of about 2 months. Then it will be presented to the government as a planning objective under section 66A of the Planning Act.

Assistance to Inventors

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What help is extended by the Northern Territory government, through the Department of Industries and Development, to encourage inventors in the Northern Territory with regard to registering their patents, bearing in mind the value to the Northern Territory of the registration of these patents

through the industries they would generate and the people they would employ? I refer in particular to a situation of which the minister may be aware that involves the intention to register a patent to alter the making of a musical instrument which could lead to a multi-million dollar industry in the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

The Department of Industries and Development provides considerable help and assistance, not only through financial help but also in terms of advice and direction. It even assists in finding potential investors in relation to inventions within the Northern Territory. The Enterprise Awards and workshops also assist. The wheelchair program was designed and developed in the Northern Territory. The Department of Industries and Development provided assistance to that and a range of other inventions.

In regard to Mr Tony Caught's aluminium-framed piano, to which I believe the honourable member is referring, a great deal of assistance has been provided over a period. The big problem is to find markets or an end-user for the product. If the Department of Industries and Development put money into every invention submitted to it, that would be all it would do. It has to choose particular projects that it believes it can assist by means of advice or through finding joint venture partners. Also, it investigates the potential market for particular products. The aluminium-framed piano is believed to have some outstanding abilities that are not present in wooden pianos. The department has provided assistance to Mr Caught. I believe that he will be presented with a cheque for \$7280 for work that he has put into the piano so far. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition wrote to me on this very subject.

Mr Smith: I received a very rude letter in return.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, that is good. I will congratulate my staff on that letter.

Mr Smith: It was not rude to me. It was rude to Mr Caught.

Mr COULTER: Help has been provided to Mr Caught and a cheque will be provided to him for the expenses he has incurred so far in registering his piano. Unfortunately, the end-users and the market do not appear to be available. However, a group of people from Korea have shown interest in the piano. I wish Mr Caught success in those negotiations. He now has a joint-venture partner in Darwin although, as I understand that, the support to Mr Caught from that organisation has been in kind rather than in cash. I understand also that he has been involved with some of the major manufacturers such as Yamaha to try to find an end-user for his product but, to date, has been unsuccessful. To say that the Northern Territory government has not assisted and has not provided financial help ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I did not say that. I asked you what help had been given.

Mr COULTER: Have I provided that information now? We have helped him.

I wish all inventors in the Northern Territory great success in their imaginative enterprises. Of course, one such person is Bernie Ostemeyer from Tristar Engineering. He has come up with a product which I believe will revolutionise the road transportation industry in terms of bulk cargo. He has invented a tipping trailer which has a synthetic body made from

material similar to that used in pipes such as sewerage lines. We are currently working with Mr Ostemeyer on yet another adaptation of that product.

The Department of Industries and Development provides a great deal of assistance to inventors. The process of gaining patent rights and protecting patents worldwide is very expensive. The Chief Minister has reminded me that the wheelchair cost \$250 000 to patent worldwide. The member for Stuart criticises me because of the spending of my department, but the benefits are apparent. However, we have to weigh up each application on its merits. Financial support is provided ...

Mr Ede: The Sheraton at Yulara.

Mr COULTER: There we go again. That is the difference. The ladies and gentlemen who are listening to this can make up their own minds.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Darwin Joinery

Mr COULTER (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition this morning, I advise that I am prepared to table some financial information on Dalloway's position. However, I am not prepared to divulge or discuss the detailed financial position of Darwin Joinery in terms of what amounts are owed to whom and what arrangements are being made in respect of any residual claims.

Mr Smith: I do not need to know that.

Mr COULTER: You asked a question about it. We will see in a moment.

Such matters are properly being addressed by the liquidator. The balance sheet of 16 March indicated that the current liabilities, including trade creditors, subcontractors, taxation etc., amounted to \$1.19m whilst non-current liabilities included \$2.6m to the TIO, \$300 000 to the Department of Industries and Development and a further \$200 000 to the TIO. I will provide the Leader of the Opposition with that information.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Charges against Police Officers
Comments by Commissioner of Police

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, yesterday, I was asked a question by the member for Stuart and a follow-up question by the member for Barkly concerning statements by the Police Commissioner recently to the effect that, in some instances, criminal charges against police were not proceeded with or commenced where resignation had been forthcoming. I would like to respond in some detail on these important matters as there is an extremely important point at issue.

I should indicate that, in response to the 2 questions, I have limited myself only to the period in which the current Commissioner of Police has been in office. During that period, approximately 130 police officers have resigned their office. As best as can be ascertained in the short time which has been available since yesterday to prepare this material, in 4 of the cases resignation, as opposed to dismissal, was associated with alleged police misconduct in which disciplinary or criminal charges were considered or were in progress. The term 'police misconduct' may describe actions ranging from minor discourtesy to serious offences such as alleged

complicity. The instances to which I am about to refer relate to the alleged improper registration of a pistol, an alleged attempt to gain unentitled employment benefits, use of cannabis and alleged theft of approximately \$15-worth of liquor.

I am advised that, as best as could be ascertained in the time frame available, there was 1 case in which criminal proceedings which had been activated were not continued. That case related to the alleged theft of liquor in addition to the matters mentioned. I can advise that, in at least 1 case, the criminal charge of a public officer not disclosing an interest in a departmental contract was proceeded with, notwithstanding a resignation. There is presently a further matter which may involve the extradition and charging of a former police officer in relation to theft-related offences, notwithstanding the officer's resignation. There are also instances in which officers have been dismissed after disciplinary hearings and after being convicted of offences. I do not intend to name in this Assembly the former police to whom these statistics relate although, if the matter continues to concern the Leader of the Opposition after I complete my answer, I can advise him that he will be offered a briefing in relation to these matters.

We are talking about the consideration of resignation versus proceeding with charges. This course of action is endorsed by Crown prosecution authorities and it is a course which I endorse on the basis that the Commissioner of Police is concerned with ridding the police force of rotten apples. It seems to me that, in reality, that is what the honourable members opposite were condemning in their inferences yesterday. They would rather see rotten apples put on trial and, if acquitted, remaining in the force.

Mr Smith: What is wrong with that?

Mr PERRON: You will hear what is wrong with it in a minute.

Mr Speaker, I hope that members opposite realise what they are advocating. Surely they realise the consequences of having rotten apples in the organisation. I would like to refer here - and I ask honourable members to listen carefully - to what Mr Fitzgerald said after a very long and in-depth inquiry. I quote him:

There is an enormous problem created when police officers are acquitted of criminal offences, especially serious offences. Not only does police culture ...

Of course, Mr Fitzgerald is talking about Queensland police culture.

... probably enhance their prospects of an acquittal, but their powers and authorities are restored and their careers, and probably their extracurricular activities, continue unabated, perhaps even aided by sympathy at their ordeal or by increased respect for their achievement in beating the charge.

Whilst I do not believe that we have a police culture of the type which unfortunately existed in Queensland - indeed, we would seem to have the opposite - I quote from Mr Fitzgerald simply to show what can happen. We must encourage a different regime here. I quote Mr Fitzgerald again:

Police and the police force can only be served by a disciplinary regime in which all matters affecting the suitability of any person

to remain a police officer can be reviewed, and in which discipline and efficiency is enforced quite independently of any other criminal or civil considerations.

Fitzgerald is on about getting rid of rotten apples and so is the Northern Territory's Commissioner of Police. He should be congratulated for it, not castigated. If honourable members opposite want to play a game which lets rotten apples stay, then it is they who deserve condemnation.

Further, I think it is very relevant to talk briefly about the exercise of prosecutorial discretion, particularly in the light of the member for Stuart's offensive suggestion that there is one law for the police and one for the rest of the community. In short, he is saying that the Commissioner of Police does deals for his mates. Let me quote from the guidelines issued by the Crown Prosecutor's office. These guidelines are not unique. Indeed, they accord generally with similar guidelines issued throughout Australia. While these are the Crown Prosecutor's guidelines in the exercise of any discretion, the Commissioner of Police also takes into account similar considerations. Before quoting from parts of the document, I will table a copy of the guidelines which is headed 'Prosecution Policy of the Northern Territory of Australia: Guidelines for the Making of Decisions in the Prosecution Process'. In fact, these guidelines may have been tabled in a previous debate in this Assembly. Under the heading 'Prosecutorial Discretion', the guidelines say:

The decision whether to place a person on trial is a very important and at times difficult decision to make. There can be no absolute rules relating to this decision. However, general guidelines which allow for individual cases and views of the Crown Prosecutor are of assistance in achieving consistency and fairness. The discretion of the Crown Prosecutor cannot and should not be impinged upon. The guidelines exist to assist the Crown Prosecutor, not to tie his hands.

There are many matters which are relevant to the decision to place an accused on trial. Obviously, the view of the police, the victim and the instructing solicitor will all have a role to play and are closely considered by the Crown Prosecutor. Informal and formal representation from the accused, through his counsel, to the Crown Prosecutor, as to the laying of the indictment and counts therein, are also closely considered by the Crown Prosecutor. However, all these considerations are minor compared to the Crown Prosecutor's consideration of the evidence.

Before any subjective matters are considered, the Crown should be appropriately satisfied as to the strength of the evidence. The first question is: is there sufficient evidence to establish all the essential elements of the offence to the satisfaction of a properly instructed jury? If the objective answer to this question is no, then the indictment should not be signed. If the answer is yes, the Crown Prosecutor should ask himself/herself: is there a fair chance of conviction (not necessarily a better than even chance)? Again, if the answer is no, then the indictment should not be signed. If the answer is yes, then the indictment should be signed unless one or more of the following factors mitigates against signing the document:

1. the trivial or technical nature of the offence;

2. the youth, age, physical health, mental health or special infirmity of the alleged offender or a witness;
3. the antecedents of the accused;
4. the antiquity of the alleged defence;
5. the degree of criminality in each particular accused, when there are 2 or more;
6. the affect on public order and morale;
7. the obsolescence or obscurity of the law;
8. whether the prosecution is necessary, or will it be counterproductive;
9. the existence of realistic alternatives to prosecution;

I think that point is particularly relevant when considering the case of a police officer who has offered a resignation.

10. the prevalence of the alleged offence and the need for deterrence;
11. whether unduly harsh and oppressive consequences would flow from the conviction;
12. the attitude of the victim to the alleged offence;
13. the likely length and expense of a trial;

And I think that that is important in many cases.

14. whether the alleged offender is willing to cooperate in the investigation or prosecution of others, or the extent to which the alleged offender has done so;
15. the likelihood of a nominal sentence;
16. the availability of summary jurisdiction;
17. the necessity to maintain public confidence in the legal system;
18. whether amendment to the legislation is imminent;
19. whether the Aboriginality of the accused or witnesses affects the prosecution; that is, have the Anunga Rules been breached? Will an Aboriginal witness give evidence, given the Aboriginal culture? Has the requisite intent been formed? That applies in deciding cases like murder/manslaughter.

The Crown Prosecutor takes all those things into account. The matters that he should not be influenced by are:

- A. the race (other than it being a subjective feature favourable to Aboriginal accused), religion, sex, national origin or

political associations, activities or beliefs of the accused or any other person involved, (in the context that these matters should not be the real reason for the prosecution rather than the existence of the appropriate amount of evidence);

- B. his personal feelings concerning the accused, the victim, other involved persons or the nature of the offence;
- C. political implications;
- D. his career prospects;
- E. media pressure.

These are all matters not to be taken into consideration by the Crown Prosecutor.

These factors of public interest, which may be taken into account, are not exhaustive but rather representative of the type of public interest which may properly be considered. It is important to realise that these guidelines apply to every accused; police, public officers, politicians etc are not in any special category.

If no prima facie case exists, or the prospects of conviction are not fair, then an indictment should not be signed. However, if the evidentiary standards have been met, the calling to aid by the accused of any of the above subjective factors would be less rewarding for, say, a public figure, or in a case which has attracted public notoriety, because other factors such as the necessity to maintain public confidence in the legal system will vitiate the particular subjective factors raised by the accused.

Under the heading 'Charge Bargaining' the guidelines read:

There is nothing objectionable about discussion between the defence and the Crown relating to arrangements as to the charge and plea. It is not desirable for the Crown to initiate this bargaining by making an offer to the defence. However, it is a normal and proper matter for the Crown to approach the defence to ascertain the situation so far as trial is concerned. If, during these discussions, or indeed at any time, the defence offers to plead to a particular charge, then it is appropriate to discuss this offer and to make counter offers if necessary. Obviously, any charge which is offered on a plea basis only should be consistent with the guidelines established for the signing of indictments. This means that the offered charge must reflect the criminality, provide an appropriate sentencing basis and be clearly available on and supported by the evidence.

The decision to participate in charge bargaining should be taken carefully and the acceptability of any proposal must take into account:

- (a) the accused's assistance in the prosecution of others;
- (b) whether the likely sentence for the proposed charge will accurately reflect the criminality of the accused;

- (c) the desirability of prompt and certain disposal of the case;
- (d) the accused's antecedents;
- (e) the strength of the prosecution case;
- (f) the availability of witnesses;
- (g) the likelihood of adverse consequences to witnesses;
- (h) the need to avoid delay in the disposal of other pending cases;
- (i) the time and expense involved in a trial and any appeal proceedings;
- (j) the vagaries of trial proceedings;
- (k) the question of concurrent sentences, cumulative sentences and the totality principle;
- (l) the appropriateness of using of the Fifth Schedule to take matters into account;
- (m) where restitution is sought, whether satisfactory arrangements for restitution have been made;
- (n) the attitude of the victim;
- (o) the attitude of the office in charge of the police investigations;
- (p) the court's view, as anticipated, on the propriety of acceptance of such a plea;
- (q) the necessity to maintain public confidence in the legal system;
- (r) the desire to avoid known technical difficulties with particular legislation; that is, where forfeiture of proceeds of crime is available to the Crown under one legislation but not another;
- (s) the Aboriginality of the accused or witnesses.

In the Courts of Summary Jurisdiction, charge bargaining arrangements are subject to obtaining specific instructions from the Officer in Charge to accept the offer. In the Supreme Court, arrangements must be approved by the Crown Law Officer, the Senior Crown Prosecutor or either of the Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutors.

Mr Speaker, nothing of which I am aware suggests the Commissioner of Police or anyone else involved has acted other than in accordance with these guidelines. There is no deal for the police. Indeed, the only suggestion or conclusion which can be drawn is that higher standards of behaviour are expected of police and senior public officials. In short, if there is a deal, it does not work in their favour.

If what is implied in the not-so-veiled criticism of the Commissioner of Police by the questions is that he should not get rid of rotten apples by accepting resignations in appropriate circumstances, then I will tell honourable members what the alternative is, assuming one does not want these rotten apples to stay in the police force. The alternative is a power of summary dismissal by the Commissioner of Police, perhaps with a right of appeal. That is an option which I am prepared to consider. It is not a novel approach. A power of dismissal rests with the Police Board in New South Wales, and I understand that a power of dismissal is proposed for the Commissioner of Police in Queensland under the new police legislation being introduced there. It is a power which the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police has recently called for.

I might understand the implied criticisms of honourable members opposite if they were concerned that the effect of resignation was that a police officer could enjoy the fruits of resignation through collection of retirement benefits. I do not think that is their concern, but I believe it is a concern that some members of the public might have. I would like to refer to what Fitzgerald had to say about that:

The concern that police officers and public officials should not be allowed to take advantage of unavoidable delays in preparing prosecutions by retiring quickly and taking with them benefits derived from public moneys is understandable. The government's understandable desire, however, to prevent any payment of publicly-funded benefits to suspected police officers or public officials must be tempered by concern to avoid the risk of individual injustice and, importantly, the desirability of encouraging corrupt police officers and public officials to retire. Realistically, and despite the cost, the community is far better off with such people out of positions of authority, particularly since not all will be detected and even fewer will be successfully prosecuted.

I draw honourable members' attention to that last paragraph in particular. Far from the horror which members opposite showed regarding the practice, and the tut-tut approach taken by ill-informed media commentators to this topic, it is a practice which is right. It is in the public interest, and it is a practice which is endorsed by anyone who has an ounce of common sense. Indeed, it is time honourable members opposite came clean. I have faith in the Northern Territory Police Force, and I have particular faith in and admiration for the Northern Territory Commissioner of Police. It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to talk in terms of our respected Commissioner of Police, but then he allows his honourable colleagues to imply that the commissioner's character, credibility and honesty are open to be questioned or to be impugned by innuendo. The Leader of the Opposition deserves condemnation. Honourable members opposite know the commissioner is right to rid the police force of unsuitable personnel. They know he is right because, realistically and despite the cost, they know and have always known that the community is far better off with bad police officers out of positions of authority.

Mr Speaker, I would now expect the Leader of the Opposition and the members for Stuart and Barkly, at some convenient opportunity, to accept publicly that this is the appropriate course of action.

Request for Visit to Galiwinku

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister will be aware of suggestions that he and I should be prepared to visit Galiwinku in order to reassure people in that community of our interest in their concerns. I seek an acceptance from him, in principle at this stage pending the issue of any formal invitation from the Galiwinku community, that he would be prepared to do that as I would be prepared to do it.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unaware of suggestions that he and I should visit Galiwinku.

Mr Smith: It was on the 7.30 Report last night.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I do not generally regard the 7.30 Report as an authoritative broadcast and source of messages to the Chief Minister on just about anything at all. However, if requests come to me formally from any source, obviously they will be considered.

Government Tendering and Purchasing Arrangements

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Have there been any recent developments in the matter of government tendering and purchasing arrangements?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question which is most appropriate as there have indeed been recent developments in this area. These have been driven by the government's primary aim in this regard: to obtain value for money and to ensure that such moneys are spent in such a way as to provide maximum benefit to the Territory economy. We have been monitoring closely the direction of procurement activities, particularly since the introduction of new and innovative procedures and guidelines in early 1988. This new system devolved a large element of responsibility for purchasing decisions to the Chief Executive Officers of departments and authorities. The strategy behind this move was to allow managers to manage and to have greater control over the effect of purchasing decisions and outcomes with an emphasis on support for the local economy.

These new initiatives also established a single Supply and Tender Board for review of procurement over \$50 000. A significant feature of the membership of this new board is representation of the private sector by the Industrial Supplies Office. The ISO is playing a vital role in matching the requirements of government purchasers with the capability of local suppliers. The role of the ISO is strongly supported by government and I believe without question that the Territory ISO is the most innovative and successful such agency in Australia. I have also established within the Department of Industries and Development a supply and tender review working party made up of key government purchasing agencies as well as representation from the Confederation of Industry and Commerce, the Master Builders Association and the ISO. This working party has been reviewing key issues flowing from the introduction of these new procedures and guidelines

with a view to further streamlining and refining present procurement arrangements.

In addition, a watching brief is being maintained over developments in the Commonwealth's new and wide-ranging procurement procedures which were introduced late last year following a major review under the financial management incentive plan. These federal procedures also embrace the philosophy of allowing the manager to manage. The working party has looked at various key issues and has made recommendations on such matters as a draft code of tendering, advice to government departments and agencies on legal aspects of the procurement process, review of procedures for approval to approach interstate suppliers, and review of documentation and procedures for period contracts in the works and services and supplies areas.

Presently, some key issues are also under consideration at Cabinet level, which I should be in a position to announce soon. These relate to the government's position on contractors who default on government contracts or who would not otherwise satisfactorily discharge their contractual obligations to government.

The extent of government's obligations to subcontractors and suppliers is similarly topical. Recently, Cabinet reviewed its policy in relation to pre-qualification and pre-selection procedures. Broadly, Cabinet decided to retain the current threshold of \$1m for the pre-qualification of tenderers for capital works, whilst recognising that certain complex projects below that level may also require pre-qualification. As well, Cabinet approved the extension of existing procedures to include certain categories of projects over \$1m, other than capital works, to be subject to pre-qualification procedures, and also approved the pre-selection of tenderers for projects valued at over \$5m. Recently, Cabinet approved the relocation of the Supply and Tender Board Secretariat from its present location within the Department of Transport and Works. Now it will come under the auspices of the Department of Industries and Development. This followed representation from the private sector. I should point out that the Secretary of the Department of Industries and Development is also the Chairman of the Supply and Tender Board, which enhances the administrative reporting requirements of the chairman.

Notwithstanding all these arrangements and the valuable progress which has been made by officers, I consider that also there should be an ongoing consultative process between myself and industry association representatives. The joint purpose of this is to gain a first-hand appreciation of the issues that are most important to industry and, where appropriate, to accelerate the resolution process. Several such combined meetings have been held with representatives of the construction, supply, retail, manufacturing and export industries, and small business. Their priority concerns have been identified clearly, resolution is now well advanced and I expect to make several announcements on these in the near future. Specific matters raised by the group include: ensuring, where possible, that inappropriate persons do not win government contracts in the first place; the extent to which government should and can protect subcontractors and suppliers to prime contractors on government works; possible extensions to pre-qualification arrangements; and maximising benefits to the Territory economy.

Whilst the vast majority of goods, services and works required by government are presently sourced from within the Territory, it is obvious that there is still room for improvement. My commitment is to identify and introduce such improvements to the benefit of our Territory community.

Trust Fund Repayments to Consolidated Fund

Mr EDE to TREASURER

My question is to some degree complex. I gave the minister about half an hour's notice of it but I will understand if he is unable to give me a full answer at this time. The government's third quarter accounts demonstrate an extraordinary transfer of more than \$20m from the trust fund repayments to the Consolidated Fund. In recent years, such repayments have never been more than \$3m in a full year. I ask the Treasurer to explain the financial and accounting decision which has led to this extraordinary transfer and to provide the parliament with some indication of where the \$20m came from.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the notice of this question which the honourable member gave me. If he had given me about another half-hour's notice, I would certainly have been able to respond in detail this morning. Because I was involved in talks with other people, I received his advice only just before coming into the House. I have sought from Treasury an explanation which I will be able to give to the House. If I attempted to explain this complicated matter in my own words, I am sure that I would not get it quite right. I undertake to provide the honourable member with the answer during the course of this day.

National Summit of Education Ministers

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

On radio this morning, there was an item about a national summit of education ministers which is apparently being conducted in Melbourne today. I am surprised to see that the Minister for Education is still in the House. Unless he has a fast jet to get him down to Melbourne in the luncheon adjournment today, he will miss out. I would like the honourable minister to advise the House whether the Territory is to be represented at the summit and on the nature of matters to be discussed there.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, unfortunately I was unable to attend the meeting in Melbourne because it would have required me to miss 2 days of these sittings. Initially, the federal minister, John Dawkins, had made it very clear that only ministers would attend. After I contacted his office, he indicated that the Secretary of the Department of Education could attend on my behalf and would also have voting rights at that meeting. I was very pleased with that decision by Minister Dawkins. I only hope that the other ministers feel the same way because a very important issue is being discussed at that meeting, and I refer to the award restructuring exercise.

Honourable members would be aware of the processes which all education ministers are going through at the moment. At that meeting, the Commonwealth should make very clear its position in respect of its contribution to the award restructuring process. We are talking about how many dollars the Commonwealth will contribute. Members would be aware that most of the states and territories are playing the game and we hope that the Commonwealth will be true to its commitment. When John Dawkins attended the Australian Teachers Federation Conference in Darwin last year, he indicated that the current award restructuring process should be used to redress the

general imbalance of salary levels in different occupations in order to attract and retain quality teachers. He stated also that teachers' salaries must be overhauled and significant increases provided in those areas where disparities were greatest. He made that commitment at the Australian Teachers Federation Conference last year.

I am fearful that the honourable minister is perhaps changing his position somewhat, rather as members of the opposition do on occasions on issues such as the treaty, compact or whatever you like to call it, or the code of conduct they discussed. The opposition tends to move away from its original, stated position. However, John Dawkins is in an awkward position. There is concern about the possibility of a wages break out. All the other unions will be looking very closely at that whole exercise and at what happens at today's meeting. We are proceeding well in the Northern Territory. Honourable members will be aware that the first 3% was granted in November. The second 3% is before the Industrial Relations Commission today and that is an agreed position between the government and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the federation on that exercise. It has put considerable time and effort into it and I take my hat off to the federation's officers. Some of the teacher unions in the states have not really carried out the exercise in the responsible way that the NT Teachers Federation has.

After reading a press release that was issued last night by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, I became concerned. Some other members may have received copies of that press release which referred to the fact that the federation was looking for stop-work meetings to be held on Friday in protest over the incentive package that was put forward by the government some time ago. I would hate to see the 3% increase put at risk because of this particular action. I ask the Northern Territory Teachers Federation and the teachers themselves to rethink their position in relation to that. We are to appear before the Industrial Relations Commission today to argue an agreed position before the commissioner and, at the same time, the Northern Territory Teachers Federation is looking at holding stop-work meetings on Friday. That makes it pretty hard for the commission when the federation says it is addressing an agreed position before the commission whilst it is still fighting outside. To enable us to move ahead with the 3% increase, I hope that the federation and its members will reassess its position in so far as stop-work meetings are concerned.

I am disappointed that they should be seeking to protest over the incentive package on Friday. A great deal of time and effort has been put in by myself and other members to try to ensure that the package we offered was reasonable. The package that we have presented is a good package. It compares very well with what is available in the states. There is 1 state in particular that has some differences, but those differences could be argued. I have indicated that the incentive package will be reviewed. I have given an undertaking that the government will do that, and that process is in place. Any teacher is able to make a submission on his or her views or concerns and those matters will be considered in an appropriate and responsible manner by government.

I give the commitment to the teachers and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation that I will continue to push for the issues affecting teachers as far as their remuneration, isolation allowances and incentive packages are concerned. We have to remember that all ministers are fighting the same battle for their different departments, and balancing contending interests is a very difficult task on occasions. Given that undertaking, I hope that the federation will change its position so that the 3% increase is

not put at risk at this time. I am sorry that I was unable to attend that summit meeting, but I can be contacted at any time by phone by the Secretary of the Department of Education if the need arises.

Member for Karama - Possible Conflict of Interests

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I draw the Chief Minister's attention to statements made by the member for Karama who is also the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. I refer to the member for Karama's intentions with respect to the Karama Tavern. Does the Chief Minister accept the standard whereby a member of his government may have a beneficial interest in the granting of a government liquor licence? Further, I ask what steps he has taken to ensure that there is no possibility of a conflict of interests involved in the process whereby the member for Karama becomes a tavern operator?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as all honourable members know, a system was established several years ago in the Northern Territory that requires members of parliament to register their pecuniary interests and any interest they have in a business, in land, in buildings, in shares etc. Members of the public are able to view that register - and it has been viewed from time to time - to determine that everything is aboveboard and is seen to be aboveboard. It is an accepted practice in Australia - and this has been the case for some time - that politicians can have interests in business.

Mr Bell: What about the liquor licence?

Mr PERRON: Many of them had had interests in business for many years successfully and, I guess, some not so successfully before they entered parliament. Being a politician is a fairly precarious business, as most people would be aware, and quite often people prefer not to shed their existing business interests in case they find themselves looking for alternative employment at some time in the future. Of course, there is nothing at all to prevent a member taking an interest in a business, buying shares or whatever whilst he is in parliament.

In the Territory, we have a system whereby such matters are disclosed. If it is perceived that there may be a conflict of interest in a member's role, that matter is exposed and can be debated in various forums. The member for Karama has made no secret of his intended involvement, with other persons, in a tavern in his electorate. He is an Australian citizen and therefore enjoys several freedoms in this regard. He is not attempting to cover anything up. I do not see a possibility for a conflict of interest to arise. If a licence is granted to the organisation of which the member for Karama is a part, and if honourable members believe that he is acting contrary to the interests of this parliament, I am sure that they will take the opportunity to raise the matter. However, to argue that he should not be permitted to have any interest in this venture is a nonsense. The consequence of that argument would be that all members of parliament should forgo all their business interests upon being elected. As I understand it, all political parties, including the Labor Party, accept that members of parliament should be able to retain outside business interests. There are a few fat cats on both sides of the federal parliament. I am pleased to see that because, quite often, such interests demonstrate that a man has some initiative, has done something successful in life or will do something

successful in life. Perhaps, as a consequence, he will be a better member of parliament.

Member for Karama - Possible Conflict of Interest

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer the Chief Minister to his decision to allow video gaming machines in hotels. Did the Chief Minister ensure that the member for Karama, our prospective taverner, absented himself from discussions and decisions in that regard? Did the member for Karama absent himself from discussions and decisions in that regard on the grounds that there was a potential conflict of interest, and was that decision minuted? If not, why not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not about to advise the member for MacDonnell as to whether or not we minute meetings of the parliamentary wing. As far as I am concerned, it is none of his business.

Mr Smith: Where there is a potential conflict of interest, it is his affair.

Mr Coulter: Oh, rubbish.

Mr Bell: It is in the public's interest. Those people want to know.

Mr SPEAKER: I remind honourable members that question time is being broadcast.

Mr Bell: We are hoping that the people who are listening can get some decent answers.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, decisions taken in relation to matters such as whether or not video gaming machines will be allowed to spread from clubs to hotels were taken by Cabinet. That is the process that has been adopted by the Country Liberal Party since the commencement of our role in government. Clearly, we advise our colleagues of most of the decisions taken by Cabinet. That decision has been made by Cabinet and the move by the government was foreshadowed by the Minister for Racing and Gaming yesterday in this Assembly. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that from my point of view as Chief Minister and leader of this party, the member for Karama has nothing whatsoever to answer in this regard.

Mulholland Investigation

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

In its work, will the Mulholland inquiry encompass any reinvestigations into all those cases alleging police impropriety that have already been examined by the Ombudsman and on which he has made a decision? If so, can the Chief Minister give reasons for then keeping an Ombudsman in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer to the first part of the question answers the second. I have been quite specific in the terms of reference for

Mr Mulholland that he will examine 3 current cases of alleged police misconduct. There is no intention whatsoever to broaden his brief to cover past matters which, to my mind, have been handled adequately by the procedures which have been in place for a long time whereby the Ombudsman is advised of all complaints against the police. In fact, some of them are laid with his office and some are laid with the police. That information is exchanged under a strict procedure which is laid down. The police and the Ombudsman carry those investigations out jointly so that both are totally satisfied that the matter is handled properly. In some cases, those complaints are found to have some substance and action is taken. In other instances, that is not the case. I understand that, in all cases, the complainants are advised of the outcome of those investigations.

I have great faith in the Ombudsman of the Northern Territory. As I said yesterday, the Northern Territory was the first place in Australia to introduce legislation establishing an office of Ombudsman. It is generally recognised among authorities around Australia that our Ombudsman/police procedures for investigation of complaints against police are among the best in Australia. I have total confidence in them. I would certainly not propose to interfere with them in any way.

Size of NTPS

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On radio this morning, the Leader of the Opposition said that he would not increase the size of the public service if he won government. Can the honourable minister advise how this compares with the government's current policy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was rather surprising that the Leader of the Opposition would state on radio that he would not increase the size of the public service. He said: 'We want to give a very clear message to the public of the Northern Territory that we will not be inflating the public sector'. That is surprising given the very clearly stated policy that the Labor Party has that it would increase the size of the public service. I would like to quote directly from Labor Party policy. The platform of the Labor Party states: 'A Labor government will review the current system of contracting and subcontracting with the aim of increasing the government's permanent work force'. I would have to say that there is a distinct difference between what the Leader of the Opposition said on radio this morning and the stated policy of the Labor Party.

One of the proud achievements of this government has been its ability to get government work out into the private sector where it can be done more effectively and more cheaply, and can create more work for the private sector which is the driving force of any state or territory. The government does not drive. The private sector should be driving the economy and we have set the scene for that to happen. However, that is not what this Labor Party would do.

Let us have a look at some of the rest of its policy, which is in direct conflict with what was stated this morning on radio: 'A Labor government will support, by all possible means, union advocacy of a short working week with no reduction in wages and conditions'. It would cut the working week, but not inflate the public service. How in hell would it do the job? Talk about forked tongues!

Mr Coulter: Give them the definition of 'work'.

Mr McCARTHY: That is a beauty too: 'A Labor government will ensure no government employee or employee of a statutory authority will be required to work in excess of 35 hours a week'. That is another indication that the Leader of the Opposition speaks in one language to his loony left and in his party platform and in another to the community in an effort to achieve government by stealth and convince the wider Territory public that the ALP would not increase the public service.

Let us look a little further: 'A Labor government will support union initiatives to discourage the use of modern technology to monitor performance in the workplace'. What great stuff that is! It would even extend this policy to local government. It would direct local government, the third tier of government, which surely should have discretion to operate in its own way: 'A Labor government would ensure that, as far as possible, all labour employed by local government authorities is employed as councils' permanent work force and that the use of contract labour is discouraged'. Some 12 or 18 months ago, members opposite were crying that the subcontractors in the Territory were not getting enough work. What great stuff this is for all those subcontractors and contractors in the northern suburbs who will not get work under a Labor government because that government has said that the public sector will be expanded.

Perhaps I can locate the definition of 'work'. This is magnificent stuff! 'Labor in government will adopt a more liberal definition of the word "work" to support those developing work programs not as important as paid work, those who wish to become self-sufficient without using labour as a means of exchange, and those who pursue cultural activities which may not lead to self-sufficiency ...'. They will liberalise the word 'work' so that people do not have to work and the people of Australia will have to pick up the cost.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr McCARTHY: Do not try to weasel out of it. This is your policy document, not mine. Mr Speaker, to show that the member opposite is not honest ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I withdraw that remark. To show that the Leader of the Opposition speaks with a forked tongue, I would like to refer again to the radio interview this morning. He indicated that the policy of the Labor Party would be put in place. When talking about the amalgamation of Health and the Liquor Commission, he went on to say: 'That is our policy and therefore we will put it into place'. It is their policy to liberalise the word 'work', cut out the subcontractors and increase the public service.

We have a very good and effective public service in the Northern Territory. This government has built that public service into a great body of people which performs without enormous growth. Because of the policies of this government, the public and private sectors are working together to develop this Northern Territory into a place that we can all be proud of.

Mortgage Repayments

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Is the minister aware that the financial sector agreed recently, at a meeting in Darwin, that it would accept mortgage payments on a fortnightly basis rather than the normal monthly basis? Is he also aware that studies have shown that there are tremendously large savings to be made by that simple process of paying half as much fortnightly of your mortgage repayments? The total interest paid over the period of a loan is reduced and the number of years over which the loan has to be paid is also greatly reduced. In other words, the equity in the dwelling for the mortgage holder grows at a much greater rate. This is good news, but it is not generally known in the community. Would the minister check the facts and perhaps issue a pamphlet so that all Territorians will be aware of the advantages of paying fortnightly? This would fit in pretty well because most of us are paid on a fortnightly basis.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the decision by the banks to accept fortnightly payments. It does give an advantage because, over a 12-month period, the equivalent of 13 monthly payments have been made. I have asked my department to look at the possibility of our loans scheme being set up so that it could complement that fortnightly payment but I have not received any final advice on that as yet. In terms of providing advice to the community, I have not contemplated the printing of a pamphlet to provide that information. I will certainly examine whether that could be the most effective way of providing information. Honourable members may wish to advise their constituents in their regular newsletters that the banks have taken such a decision and that there are advantages in using that method to make repayments.

ALP Policy on Election Campaign Funding

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware of an opposition policy commitment which will force taxpayers to pay for election campaigns mounted by political parties, and can the Chief Minister assure taxpayers that his government will not adopt this policy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, page 40 of the Labor Party's current platform contains a specific commitment that a Labor government in the Territory would legislate to provide for the financing of political parties' election campaigns from the Consolidated Fund. This is not a policy which is designed in any way to benefit Territorians. It is designed to benefit the Labor Party. Obviously, Labor receives very little voluntary financial support from the public. To overcome that, this policy proposes to take the lazy way out and to take the funds from the pockets of taxpayers. I can assure Territorians that the Country Liberal Party will not adopt this policy. We will not have a bar of it because we do not believe that the people of the Territory want to see their taxes handed to political parties. If Labor ever forms government in the Territory, which is pretty unlikely, that is exactly what will happen. Money which should be used to pay for government services, teachers and nurses etc will be used to pay for the advertising and public relations high-fliers of all political parties.

In my view, the fact that public funding of election campaigns has been introduced in some places in Australia does not justify it in any way whatsoever. It is a proposal for a cynical and unjustifiable use of public funds. If taxpayers want to support the ALP or any other political party, they will put their hands in their pockets to do so. That is their right and I respect that right. I greatly appreciate the voluntary financial support which the Country Liberal Party receives. However, if Territorians do not want to put their hands into their own pockets to support any political party, that is also their right. If Labor cannot obtain voluntary financial support from the public, it should question the relevance of its own policies - policies like this one - instead of forcing taxpayers to cough up.

Having said that, I must admit that it came as no surprise to find that Labor was committed to the introduction of this type of legislation. As we all know, in many cases, union members are already forced to finance the Labor Party whether they want to or not. I guess Labor's twisted logic brings it to the view that, if union members wear it, why not all taxpayers? I suppose that means that union members will be paying twice in some way. It would not matter if Labor received no voluntary support at all. It would have the unwilling support of the taxpayers and the unwilling support of union members to see it through.

The CLP relies on contributions from people who know that a Labor government in the Territory would be a disaster. If we did not have the right policies for the Northern Territory, we would not receive that support. There is no better incentive to ensure that Country Liberal Party policies reflect community values than the fact that our existence depends on it. That is the way it should be, and I am sure that the vast majority of Territorians would agree with me. If the Leader of the Opposition honestly believed that the people of the Territory would wear this imposition, he would have told us about it long ago instead of waiting for us to raise it in this Assembly. The opposition was hoping that no one would look in those corners of its platform document.

Mr Ede: I ran that in parliament. You said that you were going to look at it.

Mr PERRON: I am tired of waiting for the Leader of the Opposition to unveil his grand plan for the Northern Territory and so I am giving a bit of free publicity to his own platform.

Mr Smith: It has been the subject of a major debate in parliament.

Mr Coulter: We looked at it. We are giving you the answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Ede: Do you want to check Hansard? I will give you the references.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, let the Leader of the Opposition tell the public how he will make the Territory a better place to live by transferring the responsibility for political party fundraising from the parties to the taxpayers. What about those taxpayers who do not want to support any political party? I believe that there are plenty of people who do not want to support political parties, particularly by way of dollars out of their own pockets. Surely they have some rights in that regard. Let him tell the

public why he has this policy and why he will impose this burden on Territory taxpayers if ever Labor gets into government. I am sure that people would like to know.

Gardens Hill Site

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Has the minister received advice from the Planning Authority on the rezoning of the Gardens Hill site? If so, has he made a decision on that rezoning? If he has made such a decision, what is it and is it consistent with the Planning Authority's recommendations? If this important public decision has not yet been made, when will it be made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to be quite honest, I cannot recall receiving any advice. I certainly would have no intention of overturning the Planning Authority's advice in this matter, as I have followed the Planning Authority's recommendations regarding this block ever since I have been involved with it. Further, there is no intention to rezone that particular block. As honourable members who have paid some attention would realise, the application did not require a rezoning of the land. It involved retaining the present zoning as recommended by the Planning Authority.

Waste Recycling

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I note with interest that Darwin's only waste recycling company has closed down in recent days and I wonder what effect this will have on the community, particularly on community groups which are involved in recycling in the Darwin area.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is true that there has been considerable community concern. I must say that I have had quite a number of letters from a wide range of people from Darwin and elsewhere expressing concern about the collapse of Vital Recycling and the consequences of this for a number of recycling schemes which have been operating through schools, government offices, businesses and homes. The family of one of my constituents had been going through a process of separating household rubbish for some 12 months and had dramatically reduced the amount of household garbage put out for collection. Recycling was actually working quite successfully at the consumer level, reducing the amount of waste and providing plenty of material for recycling.

I do not propose to go through the circumstances surrounding the collapse of Vital except to say that real difficulties are emerging nationally in relation to the whole issue of recycling. We have very successfully stimulated the community to become involved in recycling. However, there is much more work to be done in reducing the amount of waste and packaging generated in the first place. The problem is that the recycling industry is still very much in its infancy and the demand for recycled products nowhere near matches the amount of material supplied for recycling. That means the actual cycle is not being completed.

In a number of cases, large amounts of material have been collected in places like the Northern Territory, shipped to recycling plants interstate and stockpiled. In fact, I believe that there is enough raw material in stockpiles at present to keep recycling plants going for 5 years. As a consequence, a considerable amount of paper has been going into landfill sites down south. In other words, the process has actually been self-defeating, consuming additional energy to transport materials only to result in their being used as landfill.

The problem in the Northern Territory is not simple. We have a number of difficulties. We have relatively small volumes of waste, large distances to processing places and high transportation costs. For some time, the community and the government have been addressing the problems through an organisation known as the Total Recycling Advisory Community Committee, which has been working to develop a recycling strategy for the Northern Territory.

I must say that I was very pleased to accept the invitation from the shadow spokesman on the environment, the member for Wanguri, to adopt a bipartisan approach on this issue. It is a very serious community issue and it is very pleasing to contemplate taking it beyond party politics in the search for a practical solution. As part of a bipartisan approach, I will involve the member for Wanguri in all stages of the government's strategy development. That will include participation in decision-making, at least at the administrative level.

I can advise that we are moving quickly to get a solution in place and to support the work of TRACC. We have obtained the services of a gentleman from the Western Australian government Environmental Protection Authority, a Mr York, who has recently completed the development of the recycling strategy for Western Australia and therefore has the latest information on markets, the economics of recycling and the nuts and bolts of what needs to be done to develop recycling programs which are economically and environmentally rational.

Mr Ede: It is a Labor state.

Mr HATTON: Yes, it is a Labor state and that just shows that this government is prepared to cooperate with its sister states no matter who is in power. We have been doing that for 15 years and it is an indication of what a proficient, efficient and professional government we have in the Northern Territory.

To return to the point, Mr York is making his initial visit to Darwin later this month when initial assessments will be made. Work will proceed as fast as possible to develop an appropriate recycling strategy for the Northern Territory. We do need to do that quickly because it is very important that we do not allow disillusionment to take over in the community on the issue of recycling. We need to maintain the incentive for recycling but we also need to find practical solutions to the problems. I advise all members of the community who are involved in recycling that we know the situation is frustrating at the moment, but I ask them not to lose heart. Recycling is important. It is an important long-term goal for the community and we need to get our act together and establish directions as soon as possible so that we can do something which will be practical and genuinely responsible environmentally.

Water Supply in Darwin Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In view of the recent dry wet season and the expected very dry dry season, with bore water levels falling early, can the minister tell me what form of water rationing will be put in place in Darwin? What is the truth of rumours about the Power and Water Authority trying to meter and restrict bore use in the rural area in order to leave plenty of water in the bore fields to supply continuing extravagant use in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, you have to hand it to the member for Koolpinyah in terms of knowing the issues in the rural area which can give her a little publicity. The last time there was mention of metering private bores, a public meeting the likes of which I have never seen in my life was organised by the member for Koolpinyah, and I was invited to be the guest speaker. Fortunately for me, I happened to know about half of the people there and I was able to walk away after giving a firm undertaking that we would not be metering private bores in the rural area. That is still the position.

However, in terms of the aquifer and the poor rainfall, the present situation is serious. I am not sure exactly what the rainfall was for this wet season. I know it was very dry at the start of the season. However, I am not sure what our average rainfall was over the whole wet season as compared with elsewhere. At the moment, the watertable in my bore is 6 ft below the surface which is not bad for this time of the year. I will obtain some information from PAWA about the actual rainfall in the area. I will take the stargazing, 'it's all done with smoke and mirrors' weather forecasting of the member for Koolpinyah into account. I will speak to Monty at the ABC and see if we can obtain some support for her statement. I will obtain information on the current state of the aquifer in the rural area and provide that to her during the course of these sittings.

Toxic Emission Standards

Mr LEO to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Does the government have any standards on the level of toxic emissions, either into the atmosphere or the waterways, with which manufacturers are forced to comply? If so, what are those standards and how does the government monitor compliance with those standards?

ANSWER

The honourable member has raised an issue that is being addressed at a national level. At the moment, monitoring processes are carried out by specific departments. For example, water monitoring is carried out by the Power and Water Authority which has responsibility for monitoring water quality. I understand that there are some general standards for water quality.

The Australia and New Zealand Environment Council meetings have indicated that a great deal of work is being carried out to develop some national standards on air quality and water quality monitoring. There is a significant and valid difference of opinion as to the appropriate methods of monitoring. There is one school of thought, which is promoted by governments such as that of Victoria, that suggests that the standard of

release in water should be fixed at so many parts per million and that that standard should apply across Australia. There is valid scientific evidence indicating that that is illogical because of the different hydrology of different parts of Australia and that the standard should be based on the outputs rather than the inputs. The issue is whether there should be tolerance of any form of pollution in the waterways. For example, the Northern Territory has very high levels of tidal flushing. Does that have a significantly different impact than on enclosed waterways in the southern states where there is very little water movement and pollution and contaminants can accumulate far more dramatically? That is an example of the scientific debate that is taking place on that issue.

We are monitoring the waterways in order to avoid or clean up any pollution problems. I am not the minister responsible, but my advice is - and I have been querying these matters - that the waterways throughout the Northern Territory are the cleanest in Australia.

Mr Leo: We do have standards?

Mr HATTON: We are monitoring and measuring. There are no fixed standards. I have gone to some length to explain that fixed standards do not necessarily provide an appropriate answer. It is the level of material allowed to go in and, in particular, the measurement of the quality of the water. We are working with the rest of Australia and New Zealand at developing appropriate methods of dealing with water monitoring and water quality control.

Similarly, standards are being applied in respect of air quality monitoring. This has not been a significant issue in the Northern Territory because of the absence of heavy and polluting industry. That is not to say that it is not a potential issue. The Department of Mines and Energy has undertaken air monitoring. We are working at a national level on the development of air quality standards and monitoring procedures. We do not have specific legislation in place but, where there are emission standards in respect of particular industries, we address them.

One of the reasons why we do not have major problems in the Northern Territory is that, even before industry was developed here, we were working actively and successfully on programs to avoid pollution in the first place through very effective environmental assessment processes. Industries have been developed under stringent environmental guidelines which have avoided pollution processes, both atmospheric and aquatic. That is why we have a clean environment. We have successfully maintained the biological diversity of the Northern Territory despite the very rapid economic developments that have occurred since self-government. That is something that we should be proud of. That is not to say we should rest on our laurels. We are looking at stages to ensure that we do not pollute our atmosphere or our waterways and that adequate monitoring is undertaken as we move now into our secondary phase. We are working, at a national level, to develop national standards and procedures, and that is the appropriate course of action to adopt.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Water Supply at Brunette Downs

Mr COULTER (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, in response to the member for Barkly, I am advised that water for consumption by all people at Brunette Downs came originally from water tanks. Lagoon water was used for all other purposes. With increased population, the water usage exceeded the

rain water supply and the lagoon then became the primary all-purpose water source for the Aboriginal people. No one questioned the quality of water in the lagoon until August 1989 when the presence of strongyloides, a genus of roundworm, was identified in some of the people in the community. This prompted investigation of the water which was found to be outside accepted water-quality standards. However, it was not the carrier of the worm. The Power and Water Authority advised the then Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the community station people and other associated groups of the situation.

Due to the fact that the Aboriginal people are living on land without tenure, the PAWA has not provided or installed any capital infrastructure. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission has been prepared to fund such infrastructure. The Power and Water Authority has provided technical expertise and assistance, and a solution to the water-quality problem was forwarded to ATSIC in January 1990. This consisted of desalinating water from the existing Department of Education bore. The Department of Education has indicated that it is receptive to the proposal and it would have access to the desalinated water. The Power and Water Authority has indicated that it will maintain the facility.

The estimated cost of installation and associated reticulation, fully funded by ATSIC, is \$100 000. As the facility will be fully funded by ATSIC and, ultimately, will be the property of the Aboriginal people, it is considered that availability of supply to the European community would be at the discretion of the owners.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Darwin Joinery

Mr COULTER (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, yesterday I undertook to provide information to the Leader of the Opposition in relation to Dalloway Pty Ltd. In response to the question asked in the House on Wednesday 2 May, I will provide to the Leader of the Opposition various summary sheets on Dalloway's position as at 16 March 1990. Of course, this date was the day following settlement of the acquisition arrangements. These sheets include a summary of the government acquisition objectives, a breakdown of the government's \$2m purchase price, the board of director arrangements, the product summary, a sales budget projection from 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1991, current contract totals and work in progress, potential future work totals and an estimated balance sheet as at 16 March 1990.

I urge the Leader of the Opposition to listen carefully to my further remarks on this matter, as I have no doubt that I will have to remind him of them again in the future. It is a fact that Dalloway Pty Ltd is owned by the Northern Territory government and was purchased with taxpayers' funds. Whilst our intention in this regard was clearly to benefit the Territory by preserving jobs and protecting trade creditors and subcontractors etc, that is a separate issue. The nonsense uttered by the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that the government has exposed itself to an \$8.25m liability is issued ...

Mr Smith: Answer the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I will not go on because this becomes a little personal about his ability to understand. Can I offer him a briefing by Tony Watson of the Department of Industries and Development? Tony Watson is a highly regarded officer who is on secondment to us from Westpac at the moment. He is involved in refinancing deals of this type. Mr Speaker, I

will not go on at length about that. Members on this side of the House regard it simply as the Leader of the Opposition provoking a minister into making an inappropriately detailed response.

The estimated balance sheet at 16 March 1990, which was provided to him, clearly shows a net surplus in the order of \$2.85m of assets of \$7.174m over liabilities. The \$4.319m non-current liability shown in this to the extent of \$3.129m includes a secured loan by the Territory Insurance Office which does not involve taxpayers' funds. We are clearly discussing the acquisition of a saleable asset, not the exposure of a liability. The Leader of the Opposition does himself no credit by again spreading misinformation and clearly shows no regard for the workers now employed by Dalloway nor for the creditors and subcontractors concerned, all of whom would otherwise now be in a different position.

Having said all that, I must indicate to members opposite that I do not propose further to debate the in-house financial arrangements of either the Darwin Joinery or Dalloway Pty Ltd. Members opposite have never yet evidenced any ability to differentiate between their right to know, their need to know and their desire to know matters which are commercially confidential. Whilst the government has acquired Dalloway, it does not propose to operate a people's joinery. Dalloway has a private enterprise board of directors which has a charter to run the business as a commercial venture ...

Mr Smith: Who are they?

Mr COULTER: That is in the briefing that I am about to give to you. I am not sure how they will react to their names appearing in Hansard. In fact, their names are not included in this. However, the board includes Mr Alex Neale from the Gold Coast, Jim Bell, who is the Darwin manager of Sitzler Bros, a company director from Victoria, who is involved in refinancing and restructuring companies, and Mr John Pastrikos.

Mr Smith: Who is actually managing it at the moment?

Mr COULTER: Jim Bell has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the project.

The government does not intend to operate this as a people's joinery. This business will be run as a commercial venture until such time as government divests itself of its interest. Divulging the day-to-day financial operating data of any company operating in a competitive commercial environment would be suicidal for such a company. This may well suit the political agenda of the Leader of the Opposition but, as with many things he does, it would be of detriment to the Territory. If the Leader of the Opposition is desirous of making any positive contribution to the Territory, a good starting point would be to support Dalloway or, at least, to refrain from turning it into yet another political football.

ANSWER TO QUESTION Trust Fund Repayments to Consolidated Fund

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer a question asked of me by the member for Stuart in regard to trust funds. The 1989-90 budget provides for \$27.04m to be paid from the Northern Territory Housing Commission Trust Account to the Consolidated Fund. This is being effected at the rate of about \$6.08m per quarter. That makes approximately \$20m to the end of March. The transaction is new in 1989-90, reflecting the fact

that the funds for public rental housing built by the Department of Transport and Works for the Housing Commission are now allocated by appropriation direct to the Department of Transport and Works. Previously, the Department of Transport and Works recouped its costs from the trust account. In order to provide moneys in the Consolidated Fund to do this, it is necessary to transfer the money from the trust fund to the Consolidated Fund. This is purely an accounting transaction with no financial significance.

Mr Ede: That is what I could not work out.

Mr PERRON: In the view of the administering department and the Housing Commission, the system of funding public rental housing from appropriation is a better way to go.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Gardens Hill Site

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, in relation to a question asked by the member for Wanguri this morning, I would like to confirm that I have yet to receive advice from the Planning Authority in relation to Lot 5690, Dashwood Crescent.

Trade Development Zone - Contracts of Chinese Workers

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

The minister will recall that, in apologising for his false accusations in relation to the Trade Development Zone, he expressed regret that the real issue of the human rights of workers there, particularly the Chinese workers, had been overlooked. Is he aware that a delegation from the provincial employer of the Chinese workers is presently in Darwin to discuss the workers' employment contracts? Further, can he confirm that the new contracts will entitle the workers to collect their full award wages or will the contracts simply be redrawn to leave the workers with little more than the amount of about \$US120 which they received under the original contracts after all deductions were made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I wonder if I might address the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition in a broader context. I refer particularly to the tripartite negotiating arrangement and the monitoring committee which met in Darwin last Wednesday to continue talks aimed at resolving all of the issues which have arisen. All parties to the tripartite negotiating arrangement were present, although the ACTU and the Department of Industrial Relations were represented at national level by telephone conference. The aim of the meeting was to clear the decks, with a special further meeting likely to be held on 17 May at which the reactivation of the tripartite negotiating arrangement will be considered.

Honourable members will realise that the tripartite negotiating arrangement determines the conditions under which foreign workers take up temporary or guest status at the Trade Development Zone and that the arrangement has been suspended while aspects of working conditions for Chinese guest workers at the Hengyang factory have been examined. The basis of the present discussion is the payment of overtime to Hengyang guest workers and my understanding is that it will be completed to the satisfaction of all parties this week.

Concern remains about the existence of individual contracts between guest workers and employment agencies in China, which is what the Leader of the Opposition has alluded to, and conditions in those contracts which are totally unsatisfactory in an Australian environment. To this end, I met with representatives of the Guandong Manpower Corporation in Darwin last week. I explained to them that the contracts were not acceptable and that they needed to be replaced with documents recognising that the Chinese guest workers in Australia were entitled to the same rights as any other workers in Australia. After discussions, this position was recognised and accepted and I will be able to view the new contracts before they are put in place, unlike the previous contracts.

I have already come to similar arrangements with other participants in the Trade Development Zone, chiefly the SZ Australia group which plans to start operations at the TDZ in October. Honourable members will be aware that this group will become the largest employer in the Northern Territory when its 5-stage development plan is complete. It will be bigger than Nabalco, employing some 850 workers. Whilst most of these workers will be Australian, some will be Chinese.

I am confident that the tripartite negotiating arrangement will be renewed at the meeting on 17 May. I do not doubt that all parties to the

discussions agree in principle that the arrangement should continue and that the TDZ should continue to expand. I have had discussions with national and local representatives of the ACTU, various unions and Commonwealth departments. Those talks have been positive and encouraging. The 3 federal ministers with responsibilities in the area, Ministers Dawkins, Cook and Hand, have indicated their support for the concept of a tripartite negotiating arrangement within the TDZ environment. Hopefully, all matters outstanding from the unfortunate Hengyang affair are close to resolution, and the zone can get back to work.

Protest March by Aboriginal Women

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Last Saturday morning, the Chief Minister and the Minister for Health and Community Services met a large group of Aboriginal women in Alice Springs. These women were protesting against the prevalence of alcohol in the Northern Territory. What was the outcome of the talks the Chief Minister held which, I understand, continued over the weekend?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be pleased to give the House some brief details of the talks that were held. The Minister for Health and Community Services and I met with about 12 male traditional tribal elders on Friday evening when we reached Alice Springs. On Saturday morning, there was a march by a large number of Aboriginal women from the regions around central Australia, and from as far away as the South Australian and Western Australian borders. They met with the minister and I for several hours on the Saturday afternoon. The march stemmed from concern felt by those people that the effects of alcohol on members of their communities were deleterious. Of course, those effects have been highlighted in recent times in Alice Springs.

The women put many matters to the minister and myself, the principal one being that they were not satisfied that organisations, which have been established over past years to speak on behalf of Aborigines, do in fact speak on their behalf. Two organisations mentioned in this regard were the Tangentyere Council and the Central Land Council. Most of the issues raised related to alcohol and alcohol abuse in the communities. They were concerned that tribal custom was being affected very severely by the large number of people who are abdicating their responsibilities to their families and communities by moving away, particularly from dry areas, and going to places like Alice Springs for long periods. They were gravely concerned also that, when Aborigines who have been on drinking binges return to their communities in a drunken state, they cause considerable violence and grave concern to families. The women believe that all take-away liquor outlets should be shut down. They oppose the formation of any Aboriginal licensed clubs in Alice Springs. That view was modified by some of the speakers opposing more than one Aboriginal drinking club in Alice Springs. The government has handed over land for a licensed Aboriginal club in Alice Springs as an experiment to determine whether or not people who run such a club can make inroads into educating Aboriginal drinkers in relation to alcohol.

A suggestion was proposed - and this was well-received by the traditional women - that steps should be taken to make it more difficult for Aboriginal drinkers to gain access to the money that they use to obtain alcohol. Much of the money used for the drinking binges is taxpayers' funds which are paid to Aborigines in the form of various welfare payments. It

is very sad to think that these payments, which are designed to help unemployed or ill persons support their families, are being used largely for this purpose by some people. We must be very careful not to make the mistake of believing that all Aborigines are in this situation. Indeed, it seems the majority of them are either non-drinkers or are able to handle alcohol quite adequately.

A suggestion was made that the cheques for these drinkers should be payable only on their communities and not in places like Alice Springs. Then they would have to return to their communities each week or fortnight when the cheque was due. At present, they can stay in Alice Springs indefinitely by registering with the local welfare office and picking up their cheques there. The families are not receiving very much benefit from those cheques. I propose to write to relevant federal ministers in this regard to propose they undertake an examination of that option.

The women suggested that money that was to be spent or proposed to be spent on establishing Aboriginal drinking clubs in Alice Springs would be better spent on Aboriginal women's centres on each of the communities in order that constructive activities could be fostered and that alcohol education programs could be run in conjunction with those centres. They advocated strongly that there should be no alcohol sales at all on Sundays. They said also that no special liquor licences should be issued for Aboriginal sporting events. There are a number of specifically Aboriginal sporting gatherings in central Australia and I understand that most, if not all, have such licences. That is not unusual in the Northern Territory of course. These women advocate that no such licences be granted for those venues.

I was given a letter signed by 2 male tribal elders. It advocated the abolition of drinking rights for Aborigines on the basis that they believed that Aborigines could not control themselves in relation to liquor. Alcohol has had such an effect on tribal custom and families that they believe that the drinking rights should be withdrawn. I pointed out to those men that what they were seeking was probably quite unconstitutional and impossible for the Northern Territory to introduce. I said that I did not believe that the wider Australian community would see that as a step forward. Nevertheless, I sympathise with the motivation of those people in proposing that extreme step to revert to pre-1967 when the law was changed to provide to Aborigines in the Northern Territory the same rights to consume alcohol as are available to other members of our community.

The Minister for Health and Community Services met separately with the women on Sunday morning and agreed to form a committee to work on health issues, including alcohol abuse problems. Traditional women will nominate a number of persons to that committee and they will deal direct with the minister and the minister's office on those issues. I met separately with the minister and tribal male elders and have undertaken to form what we have loosely called a council of traditional elders. This council will meet once or twice a year, or as required. The council will be comprised of specific senior Aborigines from each of the tribal regions in central Australia and it will meet with ministers only. No lawyers, anthropologists or bureaucrats will be involved in the process. These men specifically wanted to have a forum where they could meet directly with the government at the highest level and express their views. They felt aggrieved that no other forum has provided them this opportunity. They are very concerned that the Central Land Council claims to speak on their behalf and to represent their needs. They rejected the Central Land Council as being insufficiently

representative as a body, in an Aboriginal traditional way, to represent their views.

No one could deny the genuineness of the concerns that were expressed at the demonstration. It was moving to sit for several hours and hear speaker after speaker enunciate his or her perception of the grog problems in central Australia. We were speaking through interpreters at the time. It was not a case of simply seeking those Aboriginals who were articulate in English and listening to their views, although a couple of the traditional Aboriginal women certainly were competent English speakers as well. It brought home to me the fact that past actions by governments, though well meaning, have really established structures which have left the traditional tribal hierarchy out in the cold, as it were, under their systems.

Whilst a couple of honourable members opposite are far more familiar with these matters than I, it seems that the spokespersons for Aboriginal communities are clearly tribal elders, and they have their own system of deciding who should speak on behalf of the community. No community can speak on behalf of any other community, whether it is adjoining or otherwise. They do not follow the democratic system that we follow of electing people to boards and so on. In fact, it appears that that concept cuts right across the tribal system. I believe that the Northern Territory government will move increasingly towards seeking representation and the views of the tribal hierarchy in trying to meet the needs of Aboriginals.

Honourable members will be aware that the sacred sites legislation, which was passed controversially through this Assembly last year with very strong opposition from the land councils, requires a compulsory procedure of consultation with traditional custodians of sacred sites. That is exactly the type of provision that ought to be reflected in other laws of the Northern Territory. Nevertheless, the land councils, perhaps understandably, saw that as a threat to their very existence. They wanted to be the only bodies to speak in relation to sacred sites on behalf of Aboriginal custodians. I think that is unfortunate.

I believe that, in the future, we should go increasingly to the right and powerful people under tribal tradition to talk about their people's needs and aspirations. The views we obtain through that process will be quite different from some of the views that are promulgated by other organisations, albeit well-meaning organisations which I am sure are trying hard to meet the needs of Aboriginals as they see them. However, that is the problem. For too long, we have discussed the subject of the needs of Aboriginals as if they are all one homogenous group with the same aspirations, and that is not the case at all. I appreciated the opportunity to talk to these people over the weekend. The government has taken on board a range of matters which it will examine and discuss further with them.

Government Consultation with Aboriginal People

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I note with interest the comments just made by the Chief Minister in respect of his meeting at the weekend with traditional Aboriginal women, and Aboriginal women from Alice Springs and from many of the communities in my electorate. I should point out that I was invited by the Chief Minister's staff to attend the rally but not, unfortunately, to attend the subsequent meetings. As a member of the Sessional Committee on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community, I have 2 questions. Firstly, how does the Chief Minister expect this new consultative process that he has set up to

relate to the actions of this Assembly? Secondly, I note the Chief Minister's apparent distrust of Aboriginal organisations that are based in Alice Springs, and that was an unfortunate theme of the Chief Minister's meeting. Does the Chief Minister accept that those organisations have an important role to play?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the honourable member's first question, I believe that there is an important role to be played by the Sessional Committee on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community in going to some of these communities, either by way of full session or perhaps subcommittee, and that is that it should go to whatever lengths are necessary to contact members of the appropriate tribal hierarchy to obtain their views. I believe that the attitude of those people should warrant special attention in the committee's report. I am sure the honourable member will know exactly what I am talking about and will be able to facilitate that happening, particularly within his own electorate.

The honourable member commented that I reflected some mistrust of Aboriginal organisations working on behalf of Aboriginals. It is not mistrust. As I said in my earlier response, I believe that these organisations are well meaning and do a great deal of good work, and I speak of organisations such as the Tangentyere Council. Most certainly, I believe that they have a role to play. However, as a result of the weekend's activities, I will regard with more scepticism the firm attitudes put forward by organisations like the Tangentyere Council when they claim to reflect the attitudes and aspirations of 'Aboriginals'. The problems differ from place to place, and the views and possible solutions certainly differ from place to place as well. It is wrong for an organisation, which is based in urban Alice Springs and which, I believe, is comprised mainly of Aborigines who have spent much of their lives in Alice Springs, to claim to be able to speak on behalf of traditional Aborigines living all over central Australia.

Australia New Zealand Transport Authorities Conference

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

At the recent Australia New Zealand Transport Authorities Conference held in Darwin, what agenda items had specific relevance for the Northern Territory, and what implications do they have for future directions in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, ANZTAC, as it is known, is comprised of senior officers of all transport authorities throughout Australia, both state and federal, and a representative from New Zealand. The agenda included items on the licensing system, vehicle registration, commercial passenger vehicle requirements, road safety, and some aviation and shipping topics. It was pleasing to have those officers in the Territory where they could see some of the problems that Territorians face in relation to road safety. These problems are quite dramatically different from those elsewhere in Australia. For that reason, the safety items on the agenda were certainly of most interest to myself.

For myself, the highlight of the conference was the recognition that the Northern Territory has been a leader in many ways in the development of

uniformity in traffic regulations. Much of that has conflicted with the views expounded recently by the federal minister. During the course of the 2 days, we discussed the Prime Minister's 10-point package briefly. The ministers will be considering the 10-point package again in Perth later this month. The conference gave me the opportunity to raise some very specific issues that I think are worthy of addition to the 10-point package. I should indicate to honourable members that I will be forwarding to my interstate ministerial colleagues and to the federal minister an amendment to the 10-point package that I believe is more practical and would lead to identifying specific solutions to each state or region's unique problems.

In addition, I was able to highlight matters which were omitted from or undersold in the original 10-point package. One of these relates to seat belts. The federal minister has castigated us already for our track record this year, and it is not glorious at all. Nevertheless, when the actual problems that are faced in the Territory are analysed, it is obvious that we need to arrive at different solutions from those applied in the south-east corner of Australia. Of the first 23 fatalities this year, not one of the victims was wearing a seat belt where a seat belt was fitted. Obviously, some of the fatalities are motor cyclists or pedestrians but, of all the vehicular accidents, not 1 person killed was wearing a seat belt. Members will be aware that we have flagged an increase in the penalties for seat belt offences. However, that is not good enough in itself. As I did in December, I will be asking my transport minister colleagues to examine technical means of addressing this extremely devastating problem.

In addition, our statistics involve a far greater representation of Aboriginal people. These relate not only to serious accidents and fatalities in the bush - and travelling in the trays of vehicles is high on our agenda - but also the accidents that occur when Aboriginal people come to town. While those accidents do not always involve alcohol, alcohol is involved in a high proportion of pedestrian accidents. However, often Aboriginal people have trouble in handling the road traffic conditions in towns and we need to be addressing those matters seriously through some educational programs. The stability of vehicles on bush roads is another matter which I wish to have included on the agenda. The number of single vehicle roll-overs, particularly on gravel roads, is of great concern to us.

All in all, the meeting addressed a broad range of issues. Those of principal interest to me and, I believe, to Territorians generally, are those of road safety. We will be taking those matters to ATAC later this month in what I believe to be a far more sensible and a far more achievable 15-point road safety package.

Death of Mr Francisco Pires

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES

In this tragic case, given that Mr Pires was known to be depressed at the prospect of police charges against him, and given the knowledge that police in fact did not intend to proceed with those charges, why was Mr Pires not advised much earlier that the charges would not be proceeded with?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have that information before me at present. However, I will undertake to obtain it and pass it on to the Leader of the Opposition during these sittings.

Darwin Water Supply

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

At least one landholder in the Darwin rural area has been publicly critical that decisions have not yet been made in relation to the location of water reservoirs in the region to supply the needs of Darwin and its environs well into the next century. Is the honourable minister in a position to say when such decisions will be made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am indeed aware of the situation to which the member for Ludmilla refers. I understand that the Minister for Lands and Housing will address the matter of the strategy plan for the Darwin rural area in a statement to the House today. One of the highlights of that strategy plan is the provision of water to service a Darwin population which is expected to rise to a million within the next 100 years.

I have a fair degree of sympathy for the plight of rural landholders affected by the siting of future dams and I can understand their frustration. Because the government has undertaken the exercise properly, with full consultation with the community, it is well known that property in certain areas is likely to be affected. As a result, landholders are finding it difficult to sell those properties and, in most cases, are waiting anxiously for decisions to be made. However, we are talking about the expenditure of large sums by government and the establishment of a sound and stable water supply for Darwin and the immediate region for the next 100 years. It is not a matter for an off-the-cuff decision. The government needs to be completely satisfied that all detailed, technical and financial studies have been completed before committing such funds. The exhaustive process is now almost complete. This month, Cabinet will have before it all the material needed to make this important decision. The first event to follow the decision will be discussions with the landholders affected. It could be that up to 34 properties will be involved.

Preliminary talks have already been held with landholders. They will be offered either land swap, other arrangements or acquisition of their land. In all cases, the value of properties will be determined by the Valuer-General. Initially, the government looked at several sites in terms of the potential for major reservoirs. After public discussions and geotechnical investigation, the sites at Batchelor, Acacia Gap and Tumbling Waters were dropped from consideration. The decision now focuses on sites at Marrakai, Warrai and Mount Bennett, and which one should proceed first. I am pleased to report that the waiting period for affected landholders is almost at an end.

Trade Development Zone - Contracts of Chinese Workers

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In the light of the fact that some 200 000 guest workers from China are working throughout the world, and that they all sign contracts with the Chinese government before they are allowed to leave China, what guarantees can the minister give that, when they return to China, the Chinese workers at the Trade Development Zone will not have to pay back the full Australian wages for which the minister has been fighting? If he cannot give any guarantees, would it not be a good idea to obtain our guest workers from places like Taiwan or Hong Kong?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I said in response to the Leader of the Opposition in his first question this morning, I am confident that the people from the Guangdong Manpower Corporation are aware of the facts. This is the first time that they have started doing business with Australia. The Guangdong Manpower Corporation alone would have 200 000 guest workers placed around the world, and I think the figure is probably in excess of 1 million people. We have pointed out to the people of the Guangdong Manpower Corporation that their contracts are unacceptable unless they offer conditions equal to or better than those which apply currently to all Australian citizens. They are well aware of that now. They understand that, and they have gone away to review those contracts in that light.

It is worth saying that, after their investigation of the working and living conditions here, they hailed them as the best that they had seen. They travel to many countries around the world where they have guest workers placed, yet they have hailed ours as some of the best working conditions that they have inspected. I sincerely support their observations in that regard. Very good working conditions are offered at the Trade Development Zone. The Guangdong Manpower Corporation is in no doubt about what is acceptable in Australia regarding working conditions. A contract is a contract and those contracts will be adhered to.

Year 10 Examination Essays and Violence

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The minister will recall that he has been reported as being concerned about violence depicted in essays written by Year 10 students during their examinations. Will the minister confirm reports that he intends to require inspection of school and community library stocks for what he describes as 'anti-social material'? Will he detail the mechanism by which this is to be accomplished and what he intends to do with such anti-social material once it is identified? Finally, can he confirm that, as Minister for Education, when the sexual abuse phone-in was conducted in 1985, he banned posters advertising that very phone-in on the problem of sexual abuse from Northern Territory schools?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I had expected him to put it earlier because I had anticipated that he would continue with the wonderful Shakespearian performance that he commenced last night on the 7.30 Report.

Mr Bell interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell's question was heard in silence. It was a statement and a question. We gave the honourable member a tremendous degree of latitude and I would hope that he will listen now to the minister in silence.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the acting opposition spokesman on education does not have a good record for his acting. I recall the last exercise, when he started to talk about patronage of clubs, and how he shot from the hip on that occasion. He has done that again in this exercise. In fact, the member for MacDonnell has not checked the details at all. Last Saturday's NT News reported the position accurately. I received a report

from the Board of Studies on Year 10 assessment. Concern was expressed in that report and I asked to have the matter investigated. Could I also ...

Mr Bell: By whom?

Mr HARRIS: By the Board of Studies. It is up to the Board of Studies to determine how it will do this. All I have done is ask it to investigate this matter. I am surprised at members of the opposition. They have nothing of substance to raise and so they are digging up issues. I guess this relates back to the Labor Party platform which indicates that the party intends to eliminate all forms of censorship in public or private for any person. That is what members of the opposition should be talking to the people about, and they have a great deal to answer in that regard.

COGSO was also concerned about this issue. In its newsletter, it made the following comment: 'However, there is cause for concern about the widespread level of violence included in answers and of student expectation that the future will be nasty and brutish'. COGSO was concerned, as I am concerned. It is quite obvious that members of the opposition are not concerned about this issue. They would not have it investigated at all. They would have the board look at the issues and advise the minister, and then the minister would do nothing.

This government is concerned about these issues. Crime and violence is of major concern in our community today.

A member interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, a report has been made by the National Committee on Violence, and the member for MacDonnell raised this issue. It is true that it has made constructive suggestions for the prevention and control of violence in Australia. That is fine; I am not denying that at all. It is a good report which contains recommendations that need to be examined, but let us not stop there. If we identify that, at certain year levels, there are concerns in relation to what is being written in answers by the students, those matters should be investigated. I have initiated such an investigation on this occasion.

I mentioned this matter when I opened a seminar and at the AGM of COGSO recently in Katherine. I am sure that most of those people are as concerned as I am about the trend that was indicated in some of those papers. All I have done is ask that the Board of Studies look into this matter and report to me by the end of the year. How it goes about that is entirely up to the Board of Studies. I will not become involved in that exercise, but the matter is of concern to this government. It is about time that members of the opposition realised that, if they are raised, such matters should be pursued vigorously through a body such as the Board of Studies. I have asked the board to investigate this matter and also to examine matters in relation to students below Year 10 or above. I am happy to give the opposition a copy of that. There will be a major report from the Board of Studies. All I have asked is for the matter to be investigated and that is what is happening.

Allegations Relating to Education System on Groote Eylandt

Mr SMITH to Minister for Education

My question relates to another matter which ought to be inquired into. I refer to allegations concerning the education system on Groote Eylandt.

This morning, a petition, calling for a public inquiry, was presented from 203 adults on Groote Eylandt. We know that the honourable minister initially rejected calls for such an independent investigation into events on Groote Eylandt on the basis of internal reports and teacher support. Now that we have this petition from 203 people on Groote Eylandt and the minister has had time to review the files and has been made aware of the widespread rejection of the internal report by teachers throughout the Northern Territory, is he prepared to initiate such an independent inquiry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the issue of Groote Eylandt has been thrashed out very thoroughly. The longer that debate continues on this issue, the more it will undermine the morale of teachers in that community and other communities. I spoke to the Leader of the Opposition outside of the Assembly during the last sittings and I told him that I would be looking into this matter. I indicated that I would be watching what happened very carefully. Many people suggest that teachers should be moved on regularly. That relates to the comment about the so-called 'old boys' network'. The longer someone remains in one community, the more likelihood there is of an old boys' network being established. On the other hand, there is the comment that isolated schools and areas want consistency in respect of teaching staff. They want teachers to remain for more than 2, 3 or 4 years. That wish has been expressed by people in those areas, and that needs to be examined too. I believe that the allegations in respect of Groote Eylandt had no substance whatsoever. That was identified when Col Young went to Groote Eylandt to defend his case. He has to put forward a view in relation to his members and I accept that he has that right. He went there for a public meeting, and very few people attended.

At this stage, I am satisfied with the processes that have been followed. I have indicated very clearly to this Assembly that certain processes are required to be adhered to by the Department of Education and the Teaching Service Commissioner. I am aware that the Leader of the Opposition has written to me in relation to this. On a previous occasion, I made the comment that mistakes had been made on both sides, that those matters had been examined and that the people concerned had been spoken to and had spoken to each other. I believe that the matter has been settled.

Community Service Orders Scheme

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

The Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council, Mark Crossin, alleged on ABC radio over the weekend that participants in the Community Service Orders Scheme would be used to do the work of council employees. Is it intended that community service orders replace work undertaken by council employees?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I heard the reports on ABC radio in relation to Mr Crossin's comments. He expressed concern regarding possible competition from community service orders participants doing the work of council employees. I believe his concern was aroused by a letter that I wrote to the councils in Darwin, Litchfield, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs the week before last urging them to make more use of the Community Service Orders Scheme. I did that because I believe there is potential under the scheme for councils to avail themselves of further assistance over and above - and

this is a point that I have been very careful to emphasise - the work done by council employees or day contractors.

The scheme was introduced in the Northern Territory in 1979 as an alternative to prison sentences. It has been working extremely well. That is best illustrated by the fact that, apart from the successes achieved in the Northern Territory, it has attracted considerable attention from authorities interstate. Participants work on projects especially approved by regional community service orders panels.

I was a little surprised to hear Mr Crossin's comments. As far as I am aware, he had not approached the Department of Correctional Services and, certainly, he had not approached my office for advice or assistance in relation to his comments. In fact, as do members of the community, the unions have representation on the community service orders advisory panels. When any job which community service orders participants might be directed to do comes up for consideration, the union has direct input through those panels. When writing to the councils and in statements that I made on radio, I took particular care to emphasise that in no way should the Community Service Orders Scheme be used to undertake work done currently by council employees or contractors. It is my view that there are many jobs that could be done by community service orders participants. For example, there are simple jobs such as litter clearance and the beautification of towns to the benefit of the councils and the ratepayers. Such work could be done at minimal cost although the councils would have to provide supervisors. The communities would be cleaner and more presentable to residents and visitors. This is important for our tourist industry.

Work done for councils in this way would certainly place emphasis on the community aspect of the Community Service Orders Scheme. It would be work done by the participants for the community. I believe that would lead to a better appreciation in the minds of the general public of the value of the scheme. That is important because, if the scheme is not well-respected by the community, it could be in danger of losing its value. I emphasise to honourable members and indeed to any council employees that it is not intended that community service orders participants undertake work that council employees currently undertake. I urge Mr Crossin to contact my department or my office if he seeks further information. I reaffirm that, in any event, unions have representation on the panels which consider any work to be done.

Sentencing for Rape and Assault Offences

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The minister has said publicly that he has put in place an investigation into all relevant legislation dealing with sentencing prisoners for criminal offences. When will we see a result in the form of suitable punishment to fit gross crimes against women such as rape and assault? Women are beginning to lose faith in government attention to their personal welfare. They believe that it is more than time that perpetrators of major crimes of assault should be made to pay suitably heavier penalties.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this problem is not unique to the Northern Territory. It is evident Australia-wide and even in other areas around the world. I will be making a detailed statement on the matter tomorrow. I certainly hope that

the member for Koolpinyah will contribute in a positive way towards the debate on that statement.

Pastoral Properties - Rents and Ownership

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

I am aware that this question deals with the subject of pastoral leases. I direct it to the Chief Minister because it requires an answer on a matter of government policy as opposed to departmental administration. Is the Chief Minister aware of reports at the weekend regarding the ownership of, and rents being paid for, pastoral properties in the Northern Territory? What explanation can he offer for the fact that the government of Brunei pays less rent than a tenant of a Housing Commission unit for property holdings which cover an area as large as the country of Brunei? Further, what explanation can he offer for the fact that, despite the recommendations of the Martin Report of 1980, we still have no foreign power ownership register in the Northern Territory? What explanation does he have for the fact that there is no public register of who owns what leases over what pastoral lands in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I believe that the question would be more appropriately directed to the Minister for Lands and Housing, who is responsible for the matters raised by the honourable member. However, I point out that the drawing of comparisons between parties such as the government of another country and a Housing Commission tenant is really quite absurd.

Pastoral Properties - Rents and Ownership

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, I readdress my question to the Minister for Lands and Housing.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, to suggest that lessees of properties pay a pittance in rent in comparison with people who are in Housing Commission houses is a gross distortion of fact. I would hope that, after all his time as a member of parliament, the member for Nhulunbuy is aware of the procedures involved in obtaining pastoral leases. The owner of a pastoral lease is required to purchase the pastoral lease at a market price and, in some cases, that price is many millions of dollars. Furthermore, there is a requirement to meet covenants involving expenditure on fencing, bores, buildings, yards, stock and so on. There are requirements to be met under the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign. In respect of the comparison with a Housing Commission tenant, if the tenant was required to pay the full market value of the house and, in addition, to pay rent and meet requirements in relation to fencing and the building itself, the comparison would be valid. Obviously it is not.

Any suggestion that people are receiving some type of special deal is ridiculous in the extreme. Indeed, the fact that people are forced to pay full market value as well as a rental seems to be something that should be looked at in terms of fairness. Mr Speaker, you would be well aware of what occurred before we had self-government in the Territory. In those days, all properties were held under leasehold title and an annual rental charge

applied. I think the rental for my block of land was 10¢ or \$1 a year. The member for Nhulunbuy's suggestion is ludicrous. I wonder whether he really knows what is required of purchasers of pastoral leases or whether he is trying deliberately to mislead people. Either he is trying deliberately to mislead people or he is abysmally ignorant of the circumstances of pastoral properties.

As far as a list of owners is concerned, the information is public. The Land Titles Office has the information. Recently, I answered a written question in relation to who owns what where. In this context, it is worth pointing out that the only group which is not required to pay rent or meet covenants etc is that of Aboriginal parties who, on purchasing a property, apply to have the land converted to Aboriginal land under the Land Rights Act. It then becomes inalienable freehold and totally divorced from the Territory requirements. It cannot be purchased, sold or controlled. That is a matter which needs detailed consideration because I believe all Australians should be treated equally, regardless of the colour of their skin.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Water Supply in Darwin Area

Mr COULTER (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, last week the member for Koolpinyah asked a question concerning water supply in the Darwin area. The matter was raised in the context of the below average rainfall figures for the last wet season. Whilst Darwin received a considerable amount of rainfall during the weekend, until Friday evening the 1989-90 wet season had produced 1116 mm of rain compared with the annual average of 1652 mm. Darwin's water supply is drawn from 2 sources, 90% coming from the Darwin River Dam and 10% from the McMinns bore field. The Darwin River Dam is currently 60% to 65% full and contains enough water for several years supply. There is no plan to increase water pumping from the McMinns bore field. There are no plans for water restrictions in Darwin or elsewhere in the Northern Territory and no evidence to suggest that the level in the McMinns aquifer will be significantly lower this year as a result of Power and Water Authority pumping.

I note that the member for Koolpinyah again raised the subject of metering of bores in the rural area. She has to start acting responsibly sooner or later, but I will say again that there is no intention on the part of the Power and Water Authority to meter bores in the rural area.

Mr COULTER (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in the Chief Minister's absence, I ask that any questions relating to his portfolio areas of responsibility be directed to myself.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara Costs

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

This morning, as I understand it from a newspaper reporter, the Chief Minister said that the government planned to plunge the Territory into deficit budgeting. Some 8 days ago, the minister was asked how much of the expenditure of the Department of Industries and Development, which has already blown out by \$7m, has been sunk into the government's Sheraton and Yulara deals. The minister promised to supply that figure during these sittings. Could he supply it now?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, firstly, may I say that deficit budgeting has always been an option that is open to the government. It is an option which the Treasurer always has in trying to get through yet another fiscal year. In respect of what the Chief Minister and Treasurer said to a reporter this morning, I was not present and therefore I can hardly be expected to comment on that without direct knowledge. I have a transcript of the interview that he gave this morning and there is no doubt that the mission that the Chief Minister is on today is probably the most crucial mission to Canberra ever to be undertaken by a member of a Northern Territory government.

I would like to spend some time on this issue because it is very important. I ask for the Leader of the Opposition's indulgence in answering this question.

Mr Smith: Sure.

Mr COULTER: I will supply him with the information that he and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked for recently.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will read the letter that the Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister. He will meet with the Prime Minister this afternoon at 5 o'clock. He wrote to the Prime Minister on 20 April:

On 27 April last year, I met with Treasurer Keating to attempt to settle on a level of ongoing special assistance for the Northern Territory. You will recall that officers from our respective Treasuries had collaborated earlier on a joint report about the Northern Territory's physical disabilities. That report confirmed that the Territory's physical disabilities were real, largely beyond the Territory government's influence or control, and had been compounded over 5 years by a series of sharp cuts to our general purpose funding. Officers did not feel able to agree, however, that the disabilities were ongoing and thus warranting a permanent supplement to the Territory's funding base.

I have had the Treasury officers' report updated to take account of the Grants Commission relativities update of March 1989. The updated report clearly shows that the Northern Territory's physical disabilities identified therein have, far from diminishing, actually increased over the intervening year. This confirms, yet again, that

the Northern Territory requires special revenue assistance on a continuing basis, assessed on all relevant expenditure needs and revenue capacities, not just those in the Grants Commission standard budget, instead of the ad hoc and partial support given at the Premiers Conference according to the federal government's prevailing macro-economic policy objectives.

I am gravely concerned about the Territory's budget prospects for 1990-91. Present indications are that there could be a gap as high as \$70m between realistic revenue estimates and the maintenance of real expenditure. Far from being a situation of our own making, this prospective revenue deficiency arises primarily because of the continuing fall in real Commonwealth payments implicit in your forward estimates. We only managed to cope with the last cut by using up our modest cash balances, and that is no longer an option. The depressed Territory economy, especially in the aftermath of the pilots' dispute, is a further contributing factor to the budget difficulties.

I must emphasise that this is not the result of seeking to provide standards of service higher than in the states or the ACT. Indeed, the Grants Commission found that, in 1987-88, the Northern Territory was providing below average levels of government services in the standard budget areas which account for the bulk of government services. ABS data since 1987-88 demonstrates that the Territory's standards have continued to fall relative to those in the states. I have little doubt that the next update, due shortly, will confirm that trend. We need increased Commonwealth assistance to close this prospective budget gap responsibly.

The only realistic alternative to additional Commonwealth support is a further reduction in standards of services to Territorians to levels even further below those applying elsewhere in Australia. Looking beyond 1990-91, it is clear that the problem is getting worse, given the progressive move to equal per capita funding in certain areas not assessed by the Grants Commission, most notably general purpose capital funding. To avoid annual political decisions, some mutually acceptable and ongoing arrangements are necessary to ensure the Territory's overall fiscal capacity does not fall even further behind that of the states.

I need to discuss these issues with you in the near future and I would like to suggest that we take advantage of the fact that we are both scheduled to attend EPAC on 11 May.

Mr Speaker, to the Prime Minister's credit, the Chief Minister had absolutely no difficulty in obtaining an appointment with the Prime Minister to discuss this very serious issue.

I have the response to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's question regarding the Sheratons. An increase in funding has been provided to the Sheratons and I will table that for the Leader of the Opposition. An increased amount went to the tourist industry and an additional amount was also required because of the Alice Springs flood.

I turn now to the question which the honourable member asked last week. I had intended to deliver a response after today's question time. During question time last Wednesday, the member for Stuart intimated that, in the third quarter of the 1989-90 financial year, expenditure by the Department

of Industries and Development totalled some \$36m, which is \$7m more than the department's allocation for the whole year. He further asked, with highly subjective qualifications and descriptions, how much of this expenditure related to those contingent assets otherwise known as the Yulara Sheraton and the other Sheraton hotels. I undertook to provide substantive data in response to his question during the course of these sittings and, with the indulgence of honourable members, I will do so now.

As honourable members will clearly recall, the pilots' strike of 1989 had a quite disastrous effect on the number of tourists and others who would otherwise have visited the Territory during that extended period. It will also be recalled that the Northern Territory government undertook remedial initiatives which were innovative, timely and effective, and which were widely applauded by our own community and throughout Australia. These included aircraft charters and stages 1 and 2 of a tourism assistance scheme. Unfortunately, while these responses were necessary they were also expensive. Markedly diminished hotel occupation led to the necessity for significant additional funding in relation to tourism infrastructure support. Indeed, most of the additional expenditure by the Department of Industries and Development went into those areas, particularly the Sheratons.

Those expenditures could not have been anticipated when the department's budget was formulated and they were not able to be absorbed by the department's original appropriation of \$29.169m. As a result of the approved budget review, the department received an additional \$11.2m. This comprised \$2m for stages 1 and 2 of the tourism assistance package and \$9.2m for tourism infrastructure support. In addition, the department received \$2m from the Treasurer's Advance for the purchase of the Darwin Joinery. The net effect of these variations is described in the summary which I have tabled.

At this stage, I will leave it at that and simply conclude by saying that things are pretty tough. I started out in this Assembly last week by showing what the picture of Australia's economy was like. Things do not look to be getting any better. We will get through in the Territory. There is hope. It is not all doom and gloom. The Trade Development Zone is one light at the end of the tunnel. It will cushion our economy from the effects of the economic downturn which has gripped Australia for more than 2 years. The oil industry is another. Both are growth industries that will support us and I am quite confident. We have been in tough times before although I stress that, as I said at the commencement of my answer, the Chief Minister's mission is the most important such mission ever undertaken by a minister of a Northern Territory government. On behalf of all Territorians, I wish the Chief Minister well in his discussions with the Prime Minister at 5 pm this evening.

Expenditure Cuts by Northern Territory Government
Departments

Mr SMITH to ACTING TREASURER

I note in passing that the estimated budget for the full year for Yulara and the 2 Sheratons was \$16.7m. Already this year, we have spent \$23.4m, an increase of over \$7m or more than 40%. Clearly, that is one of the reasons why this government is looking at deficit budgeting in the next 12 months. Will the minister confirm that departmental heads have been told to make significant expenditure cuts in advance of the next budget, and indicate the extent of the cuts demanded?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I understand it, we have been told by the Commonwealth that, if we maintain expenditure at the current level throughout 1989-90, we will receive 3% less than we received last year in real terms - some \$30m. That is simply to do what we did last year without any budget bids, without any new initiatives and without substitution. That is a cut in what we will receive from the Commonwealth in the first round of talks. That is the hard data that I can provide to the Leader of the Opposition. For a start, we will receive \$30m less than last year in real terms.

We do not envisage revenue picking up that much. We do not envisage any boom for the economy unless Coronation Hill goes ahead. There are a number of other initiatives that the federal government could undertake tomorrow to get our economy going. Unless there is finally some steel in the backbone of the federal Cabinet and it gets off the Northern Territory's throat, we do not envisage a very big expansion in our economy for next year. Revenue will probably be about the same as for last year.

That is the reality with which the Treasurer is faced. Already, he has \$30m less with which to do merely what he did last year. Naturally, departmental heads have been asked to look at ways and means of getting through the 1990-91 fiscal year. I am not aware of the minimum amounts by which CEOs have been asked to reduce their budgets. However, a great deal of time is being devoted to how we will get through the 1990-91 fiscal year.

Marrakai Pastoral Lease

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

My question relates to the Marrakai pastoral lease. What stage have negotiations reached with the owners of that lease for the excision of an area for low-level tourism development and camping facilities?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to say that an application has been received to excise an area of approximately 11 km² from the Marrakai pastoral lease to develop a camp ground, a kiosk and a buffalo enclosure. A preliminary environmental report has been assessed and accepted and discussion with the applicants is currently occurring to finalise a number of details. My department will then be in a position to provide me with a briefing and recommendations.

I am very pleased to be able to inform honourable members and the community that public access to the billabong will be maintained. This has been of particular concern to fishermen. The applicant has agreed to excise the access road, the boat ramp area and the car park. These will remain as public assets. I am sure that will put to rest many of the concerns that have been expressed by a number of people. This will certainly provide quite a welcome camping area for both tourists and locals.

Deficit Budgeting in the Territory

Mr TUXWORTH to ACTING TREASURER

Can he advise whether, under the terms of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act, it is possible to have a deficit in the Northern Territory budget without the consent of the federal Treasurer because the

federal government underwrites the liabilities of the Northern Territory? If that is necessary, does the Territory have an undertaking from the Commonwealth that such an approval would be forthcoming?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will answer that question in the words of the Chief Minister. Somebody asked him recently how one becomes involved in deficit budgeting. He said with pride: 'We have never had to worry about it in all the years that we have been in government. We do not know'.

Mr Leo: You just borrow money.

Mr COULTER: There is a response from the member for Nhulunbuy.

True to his style, when Treasury officers put it to him on a number of occasions, the Chief Minister would simply refuse to listen to them or even discuss it. The truth is that, until yesterday, nobody knew how to become involved in deficit budgeting. Discussions took place yesterday at a briefing with officers from the Department of Treasury and that issue was discussed as an option that may be considered. I was not privy to those briefings. Some of the questions which the member for Barkly has asked this morning will be put to the Prime Minister at 5 pm today. Until now, the Territory government has never considered how it could become involved in deficit budgeting. I can only say that that option has never been considered before. It is a very involved and technical process. There are many restrictions placed on our becoming involved in deficit budgeting. All those issues are being considered at the moment as an option. As I said, it very much depends on the outcome of this afternoon's meeting with the Prime Minister and the Treasurer.

Imposts on Transport Industry

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

From an article in yesterday's The Australian, it would seem that the Territory transport industry is set to suffer a major impost in the form of a national registration scheme and increases in fuel levies. Has the minister been made aware of the details of such developments and would this have an impact on the Northern Territory in any major way?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, certainly I read yesterday's article with a great deal of interest, as would anyone who has anything to do with the transport game in any remote area in Australia. Last week, we saw some leaks from an interstate commission report, which is to be tabled next week by the federal Minister for Transport, that registration for trucks is to rise, in the Territory's case from some \$900 per truck to some \$16 000 per truck. I do not have a copy of the report as yet. I assume that, in due course, we will receive a copy of what the federal government intends to do in regard to the recommendations.

The leaks of yesterday indicated a 10¢ per litre increase in fuel tax. That would increase the price of fuel at the bowser in Darwin to about 80¢ per litre. I remember the days when we used to wonder if the price of fuel would ever reach \$1 a gallon. At this stage, it has long gone past \$1 a gallon although it is still \$1 a gallon in the US, and one has to ask where the differences ought to be. When we look at the cost approaching \$1 a

litre, it is getting a little heavy. Of course, that will mean an extra \$3000m roughly in taxes into the federal government's coffers. To try to soften the blow, the federal government says that it will reduce the registration on small vehicles. I believe that registration fees on small vehicles in the Territory are the lowest in Australia at the moment or, if not, they are very close to it and very little reduction is available to Territorians. However, Territorians are heavier users of motor vehicles because we travel long distances etc. The impost of 10¢ a litre will have an astronomical impact on Territorians compared to others, and that is not only for the ordinary motorist.

Mr Leo: But it is not out of a report ...

Mr FINCH: The honourable shadow spokesman on transport ought to take a little more interest in this matter.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr FINCH: He may have had word from the federal minister on the side as to what the attitude will be. We will ask him next week, in view of the fact that he is showing so much interest. We will ask him next week, after the federal government has adopted its position. It is no good crying when it is already done. I call on him this week to contact his colleagues in Canberra and put to them the very special case for all residents of Australia who live outside of city limits, where we do not have access to rail as an alternative for freight. We pay sales tax on our freight ...

Mr Smith: On this side of the House, we are in the lucky position where we now have a minister in the federal government who is protecting our interests.

Mr FINCH: The Leader of the Opposition has now put his 2 federal colleagues right on the spot - which is where they ought to be. That must be to the advantage of Territorians and, if it is not, there are a few questions to be asked. The Territory now has in Canberra the secretary to the Minister for Transport and Communications - the federal member Warren Snowdon. We also have the Minister for Shipping and Aviation Support and he has direct access to the senior Minister for Transport and Communications. As I said last week, I expect that not only will they address the \$16 000 registration, where we do not have alternative transport, but also address this 10¢ per litre increase which will ...

Mr Bailey: What cooperation have you offered, Fred? Have you offered them your support?

Mr FINCH: If the member for Wanguri would like to contain himself for a moment, I will explain to him what this means.

Mr Speaker, that 10¢ a litre increase represents approximately a 5% increase in freight costs for Territorians ...

Mr Bailey: It does not represent anything at the moment.

Mr FINCH: It would represent a 5% increase in freight costs, and freight costs comprise one-third of the cost of most products on the shelf. That will mean a considerable cost increase for every Territorian. All I ask members opposite to do is to put in their word on each of those 3 subjects. It is quite simple. It is no good their sitting there and

going off half-cocked every 3 minutes. What is required of them is that they take their representative responsibilities seriously.

Mr Leo: Nothing is expected of you, Fred.

Mr FINCH: The member for Nhulunbuy, as the shadow spokesman for transport ...

Mr Leo: You couldn't deliver. You are a waste of time, space and fresh air.

Mr FINCH: ... ought to be concerned about this. His electorate has greater freight cost problems than the rest of the Territory. Mr Speaker, we always know when the member for Nhulunbuy is beaten for ideas and that is most of the time.

Mr Leo: Bring it on as a statement.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it is delightful. I guess it will be a sad day when he leaves this House.

Mr Leo: It will be the same day that you leave, Fred. The same day, mate.

Mr Smith: At least the member for Nhulunbuy will leave voluntarily. That is the difference.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, we might have a debate on the circumstances of the member for Nhulunbuy's departure from this House at a later time. In the meantime, if he would like to engage the residue of his mental capacity for a few moments and think seriously on behalf of Territorians about ...

Mr Leo: Why don't you bring it on as a statement, Fred?

Mr FINCH: ... the 10¢ per litre increase, the \$16 000 registration fee per truck and the sales tax on freight, Territorians would be just that little bit better off.

Centre For Aboriginal and Islander Studies

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What assurances can he give to this House and the students attending the Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies that the centre will receive adequate funding for the next financial year, and why was the supplementary assistance grant scheme not distributed equitably to the centre?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a number of matters need to be canvassed in response to the honourable member's question. I will begin by saying that, on the steps of the Assembly this morning, I received a letter from Peg Havnen in relation to funds not being allocated to the Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies at the Northern Territory University. It related to a whole range of moneys, totalling some \$10.5m, which go into Aboriginal education. We spend a great deal of time and effort on making sure that money does go to Aboriginal communities for the development of schools, programs in outstations, community education centres and so on. Peg Havnen's letter

will be referred to my department and I will be responding to it. I have given her that undertaking.

I received a letter last night from the students of the Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies at the Northern Territory University in relation to funding. That letter was also referred to my department. Contact was made with the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Malcolm Nairn, and I understand that he will be meeting with CAIS to discuss the issues which have been raised. We are examining the matter.

It needs to be made very clear that this morning's demonstration directed hostility at the wrong quarter. It is not the Northern Territory government which should be kicked in relation to the funding of higher education; it is the federal government. I hope that the Canberra colleagues of honourable members opposite try to address the injustices which have been imposed on the Northern Territory in relation to the funding of our university. This year, we are contributing some \$6m towards higher education. It is disgraceful that we should have to do that, and honourable members opposite should be trying to bring about a situation in which our university is funded in the same way as other universities are. The Commonwealth government should be footing that bill.

I will continue to fight to ensure that the dollars allocated for Aboriginal education go to the areas where they are supposed to go. I have instituted a review of Aboriginal education and honourable members are aware of that. CAIS will be part of that review. I am talking about the very real issue of higher education. The review does not relate only to education in Aboriginal communities. It looks also at higher education for Aboriginal people. I make it very clear, however, that the bottom line is quality and the credibility of the courses which are developed and the awards which are issued. We cannot have a second-rate system. We must ensure that whatever we do maintains quality and credibility.

The other thing which people sometimes forget and need to be reminded about is that the Northern Territory University is autonomous. There are occasions when I would like to kick it, and one of those concerns the graduation ceremony tonight. However, it is an autonomous institution which looks after its own operation. It sets the rules and distributes the dollars to the various courses which it conducts. Of course, I will be making sure, as I always do, that the university is indeed performing its task. However, I do not have any control in relation to the development of the university and honourable members would be aware of that fact.

I ask honourable members to be aware of one thing. When they are promoting aggression towards the Northern Territory government, they should check their facts. The issue of funding in relation to the Northern Territory University is a matter for the federal government. As far as higher education is concerned, the federal government should be the target of any hostility, and I do battle with it continually. To give an example, Aboriginals are currently being denied funds through the Aboriginal education policy because of the slowness with which the agreement is being put together.

The Northern Territory government has been fighting for that funding. We had reached an agreement in relation to Aboriginal education policy where FEPPi and a whole range of people, including the Department of Employment, Education and Training, have been involved in putting together a proposal. The proposal went before Cabinet and Cabinet agreed to it. The negotiating team wanted further amendments and I agreed that we would again look at the

matter. I wrote to John Dawkins asking him to release the money. Some \$16m is being held up. This government is prepared to proceed immediately.

The hostility should be directed at the federal government. I give an undertaking to the people in the gallery here today that I will speak with CAIS in relation to Aboriginal education and funding. However, I ask them to get their facts straight. I am told that there was a banner this morning reading: 'NT Government Squeezing Us Out of Existence'. Goodness me! It makes one feel like chucking it all in and walking out the door. We are fighting very hard to ensure that all sectors of our community receive appropriate education as required. I will continue to do that, but I will not sacrifice quality in the process.

Kava

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

The matter of excessive kava consumption in northern Arnhem Land communities has been of concern for quite some time now. The minister indicated recently that he intends to do something about that. Exactly what action does he intend to take?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in answering this question, I must make an apology to some members of this Assembly. I had planned to make a ministerial statement in respect of kava during these sittings. I will not be able to do that because the situation is a little too fluid to make any definitive statement. A procedure is taking place at the moment and it would be my intention to proceed with a comprehensive debate on the total issue of kava perhaps during the next sittings.

In the meantime, I would like to give honourable members some background information on kava and what we are doing about it at the moment. I will attempt not to take up too much of the Assembly's time in doing so. Kava is pretty well known in the general community. Its scientific name is *Piper methysticum* which means intoxicating pepper. It is prepared from the crushed root of a pepper plant. It has been used traditionally for centuries throughout the South Pacific region. Since 1981, it has been used within the Northern Territory Aboriginal communities to the point where it is in heavy use in some 6 Aboriginal communities. Research in 1986 by a group called Alexander, Watson and Fleming found that 42% of people aged 15 and over in these communities drank kava, 71% of men and 22% of women drank kava and 70% of kava drinkers consumed kava at least once a week whilst 21% of drinkers consumed kava daily. That indicates a fairly heavy usage of kava within those communities.

There has been considerable debate over the years about whether it is good or bad. The argument was that, when a person drank kava, he or she did not get into fights and kill people as was the consequence of alcohol consumption, and that it did not cause the irreversible brain damage and death that had been occurring as a consequence of petrol sniffing. It was regarded as perhaps a less dangerous substance to be abused in communities. There was argument about whether in fact there was a health risk associated with it. That was substantially put to bed when Professor John Matthews, the head of the Menzies School of Health Research, and his colleagues published in the Medical Journal of Australia in July 1988 the results of findings. I might quote that for the benefit of honourable members:

The findings of this study have considerable public health importance as it appears that, in addition to its causing acute intoxication, sedation and relaxation, a rash and weight loss in long-term users, kava may also cause liver and renal dysfunction, haematological abnormalities and possibly pulmonary hypertension. On balance, it appears that the toxic effect of kava on the liver may be considerably greater than that of alcohol. At present, it is not known whether the long-term use of kava causes liver damage which progresses to cirrhosis of the liver and whether it causes chronic irreversible damage in other organs.

Later research indicates that it probably causes more liver damage than does alcohol. Anybody who has visited the communities where there is high kava usage has no doubt that it has quite serious health effects. There is significant evidence and certainly the view is held by many within those communities that kava consumption has contributed significantly to the deaths of a number of young people.

I have been particularly concerned about this issue since I have become Minister for Health and Community Services, and I initiated a series of inquiries and consultations directly with those communities through the Drug and Alcohol Bureau at the end of last year and early this year. Following lengthy debate and a number of reports, I decided finally that we needed to take some definitive action, at the very minimum to bring in controls and restrictions on the use of kava, if not to move to an outright ban on the product. That is really where the debate lies at the moment: whether we should move immediately to an outright ban on kava or whether we should move initially to impose some restrictions and then work towards the removal and banning of the product from the Northern Territory. It is my firm view that we should move quickly in whatever way we can to remove kava as one of the substances being abused in Aboriginal communities. I will move in that direction. The only issue under debate at the moment is how and how quickly we move to that position.

Following investigation into what powers I have available to me, some 10 days or so ago, I invoked the provisions of section 19(1) of the Consumer Protection Act. That section says that the minister may cause an inquiry to be carried out by the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs - and I have done that - into products that 'may cause death or injury to the body or health of any person, whether directly or indirectly, and, where it is determined that the goods do pose such a danger, the minister may make an order prohibiting or restricting the supply or sale of those goods upon such terms and conditions as the minister thinks fit'.

I have received a report from the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs that has referred me specifically to the findings of the Menzies School of Health Research. It is my view that I can and should impose the provisions of section 19(1) of the Consumer Protection Act to limit the supply of kava whilst I carry out an immediate investigation into the feasibility of a complete ban. That process will be carried out over the next month.

I have had an instrument prepared for signature. For the benefit of honourable members and by way of public advice to those who supply kava, I can advise that this instrument states: 'I Stephen Paul Hatton, the Minister for Health and Community Services, in pursuance of section 19(3) of the Consumer Protection Act, by this order prohibit the supply or sale of goods specified in the schedule except and with ...'

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! At the commencement of his answer to the question, the honourable minister said that he was not in a position to make a statement. For somebody who is not in a position to make a statement, he is reading a heck of a lot of the material before him. I suggest that he is abusing question time and should be instructed to finish as soon as possible.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. I ask the Minister for Health and Community Services to resume his seat because I think that he has answered the member for Jingili's question.

Restructuring of NTPS

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I remind the minister that, on 17 April, the Office of the Public Service Commissioner informed all public servants that the Cullen Egan Dell job restructuring report would be fully implemented by September this year. I remind him that, 2 weeks later, Cabinet changed the date to September next year. Given the morale problem created by the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the report, why was full implementation postponed, what was the cost of implementation, what bearing does that cost have on the decision to postpone, and how many positions have been upgraded as a result of the report and how many downgraded?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to answer all aspects of that question in detail. However, I can inform honourable members that the job evaluation system which the government is moving to put in place is the product of an agreement between the unions and the government before the Industrial Relations Commission to implement a system of broad banding and job evaluation as part of award restructuring. That is an agreement which is endorsed by all parties.

The Public Service Commissioner put before Cabinet a time frame for the implementation of the job evaluation system. The recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner in relation to that was endorsed by Cabinet. The present time frame goes beyond the September deadline originally published by the Public Service Commissioner. The decision to change that was made by the Public Service Commissioner as a result of the concern of many public servants that not enough time was to be provided under his original estimation for full evaluation of individual positions. That is the fact of the matter, which I am sure would be borne out by the Public Service Commissioner, if individuals wish to discuss that with him.

I should refer at this stage to Public Service Union Joint Secretary, Mr Rod Ellis - Ellis in Wonderland - who refused to take part in the job evaluation because, obviously, as candidate for the seat of Casuarina in the forthcoming Territory election, he wanted to be able to snipe from the sidelines rather than to take part, even though his union is a party to the agreement to put the job evaluation system in place. That is an outrageous situation. Numerous members of the Public Service Union have something to gain from job evaluation and the job evaluation system that we are putting in place, but the union secretary refused to participate for his own personal reasons. It is not unusual for this man to do this sort of thing. He has done it on a number of occasions in recent times, when he has put his

position as candidate for Casuarina before his duty as Joint Secretary of the PSU.

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I stand by what I have said. Cabinet has endorsed the time frame suggested by the Public Service Commissioner. Progress is continuing on the job evaluation system. We will have the majority of positions in place in January and they will be finalised by September 1991.

Union Membership and Public Service Appointments

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand that, at a recent promotion appeal hearing, the union nominee asked the appellant whether or not he was a member of the union. Can the minister advise whether union membership is a criterion for selection in the Northern Territory Public Service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a very interesting question. I will respond by reading from the General Orders the criteria which apply to staff appointments, promotions and appeals in the Northern Territory Public Service. Section 34(1) says: 'In the selection of employees for promotion in the public service, consideration shall be given only to the relative efficiency of the employees available for promotion'. Section 34(2) says: 'For the purposes of this section, efficiency means suitability for the discharge of the duties, aptitude for the discharge of those duties, the extent of relevant experience, training, including formal training, capacity for development and relevant personal qualities'. Those are the criteria laid down by the government under General Orders.

I refer again to Ellis in Wonderland. I quote from his memo concerning union membership. It says: 'Recently, a union nominee to an Appeals Board asked the question: "Are you a member of the union?" This has created some debate as to whether or not the question was proper. To my mind it was'. This is Ellis in Wonderland, Mr Speaker.

Let us go down further in this memo and this will bring a real belly laugh, not only from members from this side, but I am sure also from members on the other side. It is almost as good as, or as bad as, what we find in the transition-to-government document and the Labor Party policy platform. This is from Ellis: 'It is fair comment to say that the unionist contributes more to the industry than the non-unionist'. He says that a unionist contributes more to an industry than does a non-unionist. He has the blatant hide to say to the 65% of the public service who are not unionists that they are not performing as well as the unionists do. I am sure that the 65% of public service employees who have now become aware of that will be appalled to think that their representative does not think that they perform as well as do his union members.

Mr Bailey: He is not their representative!

Mr McCARTHY: I thought the Leader of the Opposition went to Queensland to get ideas. He came back with a load of cane toads filled with poison to use on the public service.

'The question, of course' - and this is Ellis in Wonderland again - 'should only be asked in the above context', and the above context was to put everything in perspective. Imagine, Mr Speaker, how the non-unionist will feel when, at appeal, he will have to say: 'No, I am sorry, I am not a member of the union'.

A member: Why should he be sorry?

Mr McCARTHY: Well, no. It is simply another symptom of the blight of Labor Party policy.

In this House last week, I referred to the Leader of the Opposition's hit list. The hit list extends not only to where a person sits in the public service but to union membership. I will read again from Labor Party policy and, at this stage, this refers only to local government: 'Preference to unionists shall be extended by councils to all officers, staff and wage employees'. The Labor Party would offer preference to unionists for employment in local government. If it will do it there, it will put it into government entirely. The 65% of public service employees who are not members of a union would be under threat because they would not be given preference, even on appeal, as has been indicated by Ellis in Wonderland.

To show the sort of poison that this would-be leader has brought back from Queensland, here is a copy of The Weekend Australian ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Members on this side of the House have been very patient over this tirade, but I would remind you, Mr Speaker, that a very specific question was asked concerning promotion appeals. Frankly, the honourable minister has answered it very fully indeed.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government to finish his answer as soon as possible.

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I want to draw to the attention of honourable members this issue of The Weekend Australian. It has the Gosse government hit list in Queensland that this man went across to find out how to copy. Already, he is planning whom he would get rid of in the public service. I know that there are EIs who are saying: 'For God's sake, I have been an understudy to you at E5 for a long time. Where will I be when you go?' That is what they are saying. They are very afraid.

Mr Speaker, I table this information: the PSU memo, The Weekend Australian article and the General Orders.

Kava

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

How does he intend to invoke the instrument to control kava?

Mr Bell: Immature, Rick.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is important that the community knows how I propose to implement the Consumer Protection Act in relation to kava which is a matter of some controversy in the Northern Territory. Even if the member for MacDonnell is not interested, I am sure that the member for Arnhem is.

With reference to section 19(1), I have signed an instrument today which means that, from 15 June, it will be illegal to supply or sell kava except in accordance with any approval that, from time to time, I may give. The effect of that is quite clear. If I do not give somebody a particular approval to sell it either for wholesale or retail, the sale will be illegal. It is my intention that, between now and that date, I will be in communication with each of the communities where kava is being consumed and with the current wholesalers of kava to discuss with them the circumstances under which they may be granted approval to supply kava to communities or where they may not be entitled to supply kava. In addition, I will be limiting the quantities that can be sold and the packaging and labelling regulations will be brought into full force as well as record keeping and liability for inspection to ensure proper controls are imposed.

I can advise that I will provide no approvals to supply kava in any form to any community where kava is not currently available, and no approval will be given to any community except with the express approval of the council of that particular community after extensive consultation. The restrictions and limitations that will be imposed will include any that those communities may wish to impose and may include additional restrictions that I think are important for public health purposes.

Former Methodist Church and Manse

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

In the adjournment last night, I raised the matter of the former Methodist Church and manse. The minister gave a response. He stated that he was aware of the buildings and a possible impending risk to them posed by an auction to be held on 31 May. They are being sold as a prime redevelopment site. Will the minister give a commitment to make a decision prior to the auction as to whether he will be moving to protect the buildings or not so that potential bidders will be aware of his position? I would add, for the honourable minister's information, that the former church has been accepted on the National Estate Register and will be gazetted on 15 May. I state also that a Territory Labor government would like to support the maintenance of the integrity of those buildings.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there is no possibility of a Territory Labor government ever having the opportunity to protect any building and, in particular, those buildings.

I refer the honourable member to the comprehensive answer that I provided last evening. Quite obviously, I will be making a decision in respect of whether any protection or otherwise will apply to those buildings before the auction. As a matter of logic, I would need to make a decision before that date, and I will do so.

Winter Electricity Supply in Alice Springs

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Winter is approaching and that is a time of high electricity use in Alice Springs. The main source of power is the gas turbine which has a large capacity. Can the minister assure the people of Alice Springs that adequate capacity will be available and that, if that unit breaks down, electricity will still be supplied without restriction?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, within the next several weeks, I will be announcing a major upgrading of the power station and a major switchboard and circuit-breaker protection installation. As well, there will be some other developments with respect to capacity, new gas turbines etc. We are aware of the problem. Cabinet has discussed the issue and I will be in a position to make that announcement in the very near future.

Operation Raleigh

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I understand that some 120 young people will come to the Northern Territory this year to participate in Operation Raleigh. I know a request has been made to his department for some assistance. What form will that assistance take for this wonderful project that is to occur this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government is extremely pleased to be supportive of Operation Raleigh again. We supported it in 1987. This year, our assistance involves, among other things, the loan of some 13 vehicles. The vehicles were destined for auction but we will forgo that revenue for the 3 to 4 months that the project is in progress. The vehicles were handed over in the last day or so and some of them have already headed off into the bush on various projects. The projects are spread throughout the Northern Territory and I think there are 17 of them in all. They range from work at Cobourg Peninsula to diving in the harbour and some 4-wheel-drive work. Much of the work will be to the benefit of Territorians by way of effecting improvements to parks, recording of heritage and various other things. In addition to those very direct benefits, the Territorians who are participating will gain a great deal in terms of leadership qualities. After Operation Raleigh, the young people will return to their own countries throughout the world and we trust that, as occurred last time, they will act as ambassadors for the Northern Territory. That is an excellent return for the very small price paid through the loan of some vehicles.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday 14 August 1990 at 10 am or such other time and or date as may be set by Mr Speaker pursuant to sessional order.

Motion agreed to.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Removal of Banyan Tree

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, during debate last week, the member for Wanguri raised the question of the removal of a banyan tree from a location which he described as 'north of the Supreme Court building'. For the benefit of honourable members, I would like to provide the background to the removal of that tree which was certainly not located to the north of the Supreme Court. It was between the old Supreme Court and the Nelson Building. The location of the tree was such that it was within the alignment of the proposed Parliament House. The architects and

surveyors deliberated on the matter quite extensively, and certainly I took a great deal of personal interest in the tree.

The member for Wanguri stated that the tree was part of the flora of the peninsula which predated white settlement. That, of course, is absolute nonsense, although it does not totally remove the concern that one does and should have for that tree. The tree did predate Cyclone Tracy. It was very badly damaged by that cyclone and the very poor state of health that it was in prior to its removal might have led people to believe that it was only about 15 years old. That was the advice of my department which, of course, was based on other external advice. Quite understandably, the very small size of the tree, relatively speaking, and its extremely poor health, was more a result of Cyclone Tracy than anything else.

The view of George Brown of the Darwin City Council was that there was no way that the tree would survive a move and that, secondly, it would never recover its original state of health and develop to the same extent as, for example, the tree next to the Wells Building. After a great deal of agonising, it was decided to remove the tree. It was not a clandestine operation carried out in the depths of the night. Discussions were held with George Brown at the council.

Mr Bailey: You should have asked Greening Australia about its concerns.

Mr FINCH: The member for Wanguri should acknowledge that some 30 other mature trees, which were capable of being transplanted, were so transplanted. The landscaping plan for the development will include banyan trees which will, given proper care and attention, reach the same stage of growth within 10 years as had the tree which was removed. I can allay the fears of the member for Wanguri. At one stage, he sought to blame on Greening Australia his misinformation to the House about the tree predating white settlement. That really was not very fair. His remarks in this House were made a couple of days before Greening Australia was aware of the situation and issued the press release.

Mr Bailey: Rubbish.

Mr FINCH: If he did not mislead Greening Australia, perhaps both have been misled by the same source. But, Mr Speaker, all is well. The landscaping proposals for the area, as with all Department of Transport and Works projects, will meet not only with the approval of Greening Australia but, I am sure, with the approval of the member for Wanguri who, during these sittings, has displayed an abysmal attitude towards the environment. He rode into this House on the coat-tails of the Green Independents and I am sure that they will be most interested in reading his speeches from these Assembly sittings.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

20 February 1990

114. Liquor Licence Applications

Mr EDE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

1. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications for new liquor licences have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
2. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications for renewals of liquor licences have been rejected by the Liquor Commission.
3. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
4. For each year 1985 to 1988, how many applications for -
 - (a) new;
 - (b) renewal; and
 - (c) changes,to licence conditions were opposed by commercial or community interests.
5. Of the opposed proposals, how many were ultimately granted.

115. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

116. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

117. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

118. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.

2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

119. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

120. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

121. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

122. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

123. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

1 May 1990

127. Tourist Commission's Advertising Budget

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What was the Tourist Commission's budget for -
 - (a) television advertising;
 - (b) print advertising;
 - (c) international marketing, and
 - (d) trade shows, during -
 - (i) 1987-88;
 - (ii) 1988-89; and
 - (iii) 1989-90.
2. Which advertising agency(ies) is/are retained or have been retained.
3. On what basis is/are the agency(ies) chosen.

4. Is there a tendering process.
5. If there is no tendering process, why not.
6. What is the nature of the tendering process.
7. Are tender documents public.
8. If there is a tendering process and that tender documents are prepared, is the amount of air time thus prescribed.
9. What amount of air time was prescribed during each of the years listed above.
10. If air time was not prescribed during these years, why not.
11. What was the value of that air time.

128. Registration of Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

With reference to your answer to Written Question No 102, relating to Aboriginal Health Workers employed in certain Aboriginal communities, how many of those health workers were -

- (a) registered under the Health Practitioners and Allied Professionals Registration Act; and
- (b) not registered under that act.

14 August 1990

133. Bovine Tuberculosis in Confirmed Free Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many outbreaks of Bovine Tuberculosis occurred within the Confirmed Free area in the Northern Territory since 1987.
2. In how many of these cases has a total or partial de-stocking been the preferred method of cleaning up the infestation.
3. How many of these cattle were shipped out.
4. How many of these cattle were shot to waste or used as pet meat.
5. What was the cost to the BTEC program for outbreaks within the Confirmed Free area for -
 - (a) compensation; and
 - (b) other associated costs,during the financial years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

135. Conversion of Pastoral Properties to Perpetual Leasehold

Mr EDE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. Upon which properties have recommendations under section 48A(1) of the Crown Lands Act, relating to the Director of Conservation's power to recommend the reservation of areas for public interest, been made.
2. Which of the above properties encompassing or bordering major waterways, estuaries or coastline have been -
 - (a) the subject of recommendations; and
 - (b) not the subject of recommendations.
3. What was the result in terms of section 48(5) of the Crown Lands Act in each of the above cases where a recommendation was made.
4. What is the percentage of lands converted to perpetual leasehold retained as a reservation in the public interest under section 48(5) of the Crown Lands Act.

136. Maintenance Contract for Radiological Equipment at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In your debate in the committee stages of the 1989-90 Appropriation Bill you referred to the purchase of radiological equipment for the Royal Darwin Hospital and a maintenance contract with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd which would give 'total savings in that area of \$120 000 per year or \$600 000 for 5 years, which represents a savings in the order of \$350 000 over that period'.

1. To which heads of expenditure detailed in the budget speech do Toshiba invoices Nos 695089, 695090 and 695091 relate.
2. Is it correct, as these invoices indicate, that the government has paid this service contract in advance.
3. Will the 'comprehensive 5-year service contract' with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd be tabled.
4. How is the saving on parts of \$50 000 calculated.

14 August 1990

129. **Botulism in Cattle in the Katherine Region**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. According to departmental estimates, what proportion of cattle in the Katherine region are inoculated on an annual basis against Type C and Type D Botulism.
2. How many cattle are estimated to be grazing on areas where Botulism spores are endemic.
3. How many cattle in the region are carrying the Botulism organism and are not vaccinated against Type C and Type D Botulism.

ANSWER

1. According to departmental estimates, botulism vaccination is practised on 50-60% of Katherine region properties. Many properties only vaccinate weaners, so cattle on these properties are not inoculated on an annual basis. Other properties, including several of the larger property groups (eg Newcastle Waters) use regular annual vaccinations. An estimated 25-30% of cattle in the region are inoculated on an annual basis. Of these, approximately 75% are vaccinated with Type C, and 25% with both C and D.
2. The botulism organism is probably present on most properties in the Katherine region. The cattle population of the region is around 500 000 head. The incidence of botulism varies due to seasonal conditions, and management factors including vaccination coverage.
3. The botulism organism is a common inhabitant of the alimentary tract of cattle. However, botulism is not caused by organisms in the cattle; it is caused by ingestion of toxin formed by the organism. The main sources of toxin are bones and decomposing carcasses. There is no accurate estimate of the proportion of cattle carrying the organism. This statistic is irrelevant to the incidence of botulism.

The proportion of cattle in the region being vaccinated has increased in recent years, largely due to BTEC: the bringing of more cattle behind wire, with regular musters has increased the visibility of the disease and provided the facility to adopt planned vaccination programs.

130. Unresolved Police Charges

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

As a result of police attendance at a party at the home of Richard Setter at 38 Bayfield Street, Malak, on the night of Sunday 30 April 1989 and the early hours of Monday 1 May 1989, the following charges were laid against the 4 people named below -

- (a) Dean Sullivan (who gave his name as Ian Smith) - undue noise;
- (b) Peter Coughlan - undue noise, assault and resisting arrest;
- (c) Mark Woodhams - undue noise; and
- (d) Clifford Purser - undue noise, resisting arrest and assaulting police.

1. Why were these charges not proceeded with.
2. Will the Minister table the prosecution files in respect of these charges.

ANSWER

Question redirected to Attorney-General as question 134.

131. Power Interruptions in Alice Springs Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. How many power interruptions caused by -
 - (a) failures of generation equipment; and/or
 - (b) failures of distribution equipment,
have affected -
 - (i) all of Alice Springs; or
 - (ii) part of the Alice Springs area,during the period from 1 May 1989 to 30 April 1990.
2. What was the duration of each of these interruptions.
3. How does the frequency and length of the breakdown period compare with those of the previous 2 years.
4. What is proposed to be done about this situation.

ANSWER

1. (a) Generating equipment has caused 16 interruptions.

(b) Distribution equipment has caused 3 interruptions.

Total 19 interruptions due to equipment failures.

Three other interruptions were due to nature.

One interruption due to contractor.

Total = 23.

(i) All of Alice Springs was affected 6 times.

(ii) Part of Alice Springs was affected 17 times.

2. See Annexure 1 on following page.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Annexure 1.

			<u>Feeders Affected</u> T/F = Town Feeder(s) 11/22 = Rural Feeder(s)	<u>Generation/ Distribution</u>
1.	13.05.89	8 minutes	T/F 3	G
2.	14.05.89	8 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4 & 6	G
3.	17.05.89	66 minutes	Total shutdown	G
4.	29.05.89	49 minutes	Total shutdown	G
5.	13.07.89	186 minutes	Section of 1 Feeder only	D
6.	09.08.89	53 minutes	Section of 1 Feeder only	D
7.	12.10.89	11 minutes	T/F 5 11.22 F 1	G
8.	28.10.89	8 minutes	T/F 4 11.22 F 1	G
9.	29.10.89	9 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5 & 6 11/22 F 1	G
10.	30.11.89	26 minutes	Single consumer	D
11.	01.12.89	-	Total shutdown Power supply rotated around Alice. Total duration 7.5 hrs.	G
12.	09.12.89	46 minutes	Total shutdown External fault caused generation equipment to fail.	External
13.	23.12.89	10 minutes	11/22 F 1 External fault caused distribution equipment to fail.	External
14.	05.01.90	24 minutes	Total shutdown Contractor caused shutdown.	External
15.	08.01.90	2 minutes	11/22 F 2	G
16.	10.01.90	12 minutes	T/Fs 6 & 7	G
17.	18.01.90	19 minutes	T/Fs 4 & 5	G
18.	13.02.90	19 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5 & 7 11/22 F 1	G
19.	08.04.90	-	Total shutdown Severe storms in area caused generation equipment to fail. Progressive restoration over 2 hours.	External

			<u>Feeders Affected</u>	<u>Generation/ Distribution</u>
			T/F = Town Feeder(s)	
			11/22 = Rural Feeder(s)	
20.	12.04.90	8 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5, 6 & 7 11/22 F 3	G
21.	13.04.90	9 minutes	T/Fs 4 & 6	G
22.	23.04.90	4 minutes	T/Fs 6, 11/22 F 3	G
23.	28.04.90	16 minutes	T/Fs 1, 4, 5 & 6 1122 F 2 & 3	G

3.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total No. of Interruptions</u>	<u>Total Unserved Energy (kWh)</u>
May 87 - April 88	29	116 000 kWh
May 88 - April 89	33	574 000 kWh
May 89 - April 90	23	162 000 kWh

4. (a) Equipment is on order to improve the reliability and flexibility of Under Frequency Load Shedding (see Note 1) in the power station.
- (b) Equipment is on order to improve the sensitivity of protection (see Note 2) on high voltage feeders serving Alice Springs from the power station.
- (c) Existing power station control and monitoring equipment has been modified to give a more reliable performance.
- (d) The No 9 gas turbine control equipment will be upgraded by the addition of a computer memory backup. Equipment is on order.
- (e) Additional protection (see Note 2) has been added to the 11/22kV transformers supplying the rural feeders.
- (f) An alternative supply system is being installed to give greater flexibility to the Lovegrove High Voltage switching station.
- (g) Specifications are now being prepared for a new 22kV high voltage switchboard at the power station to provide improved reliability in the short term and capacity for expansion in the longer term.

Note 1.

Under Frequency Load Shedding is a system which progressively sheds load by tripping feeders in a situation where there is insufficient capacity to meet instantaneous load demands. The system normally comes into action after the automatic tripping of a generation unit leaves a generation shortfall. The system must decide on appropriate action and give instructions within a few milliseconds to avoid a total station shutdown.

Note 2.

The term 'protection' as used here described automatic monitoring systems which disconnect sections of a system which has developed a fault of some kind or is operating outside its specified operating criteria. Examples would be -

- excessive current flowing
- high temperature
- low fuel pressure
- low level of lubricating oil.

132. Accuracy of Scales used in Territory Abattoirs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. During the period from July 1985 to March 1990, when were checks carried out by departmental officers on the accuracy of the scales used to weigh carcasses of cattle purchased 'over the hooks' at each Territory abattoir.
2. Did any of these checks identify broken seals or inaccuracies.
3. If so, when, where and what action was taken to ensure that the scales were fixed before further cattle were put through.
4. Where the inaccuracies resulted in pastoralists being underpaid, what action was taken to ensure they received compensation.

ANSWER

1. The total of instruments tested and their dates of test is listed below -

<u>Location of Instrument</u>	<u>Date Tested</u>	<u>Condition of Same</u>
Angliss & Co	12.11.86	Verified
10 Mile Abattoirs	10.12.87	Verified
Berrimah NT	23.06.89	Verified
Point Stuart Station	22.04.86	Verified
Point Stuart NT	15.05.87	Rejected for inaccuracies
	10.06.87	Verified
	20.05.88	Rejected for inaccuracies
Mudginberri Station	02.06.86	Verified
Arnhem Highway	11.05.87	Verified
Mudginberri NT	16.05.88	Verified
Meneling Meats Pty Ltd	19.03.87	Verified
Batchelor NT	01.03.89	Verified
	20.03.90	Verified
Northern Meat Exporters	01.05.87	Verified
Victoria Highway	03.05.88	Verified
Katherine NT	21.03.89	Verified
	13.03.90	Verified
Victoria Valley Beef	14.04.86	Verified
Victoria Highway	02.04.87	Verified
Victoria River NT	16.03.88	Verified
	15.05.89	Verified
Kimberg Meats	13.03.86	Verified
16 Kilometre	10.03.87	Verified
Stuart Highway	30.03.89	Verified
Tennant Creek NT		

Marshall's Quality Butchers	24.09.87	Verified
Paterson St	31.03.89	Verified
Tennant Creek NT		
Alice Springs Abattoirs	04.10.85	Verified
Smith St	03.03.87	Verified
Alice Springs NT	11.08.88	Verified
Centralian Beef Abattoirs	22.10.85	Verified
Bond Springs	17.11.86	Verified
via Alice Springs NT	20.03.87	Verified
	13.11.87	Verified
	18.03.89	Verified

2. There is no legislative requirement throughout Australia for such instruments to be sealed. Inaccuracies were found at Point Stuart Station on 15 May 1987 and 20 May 1988.
3. In each instance at Point Stuart Station, the Inspector left with the owner of that scale a notice requiring the owner to have the scale corrected within a 28-day period, in accordance with legislative requirements. Section 17 of the Weights and Measures Act prohibits people from using in trade any measuring instrument which is incorrect or unjust.
4. There is no legislative requirement in the Weights and Measures Act to record such information, and compensation is a matter of civil remedy between parties. There is no record of any such action taking place during the period.

134. Unresolved Police Charges

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

As a result of police attendance at a party at the home of Richard Setter at 38 Bayfield Street, Malak, on the night of Sunday 30 April 1989 and the early hours of Monday 1 May 1989, the following charges were laid against the 4 people named below -

- (a) Dean Sullivan (who gave his name as Ian Smith) - undue noise;
- (b) Peter Coughlan - undue noise, assault and resisting arrest;
- (c) Mark Woodhams - undue noise; and
- (d) Clifford Purser - undue noise, resisting arrest and assaulting police.

1. Why were these charges not proceeded with.
2. Will the Attorney-General table the prosecution files in respect of these charges.

ANSWER

1. On the advice of the Senior Crown Prosecutor, the Commissioner of Police in the exercise of his discretion did not proceed with the charges.

2. No. For 2 reasons -

Firstly: in this particular case there is an issue akin to double jeopardy. The civilians have had their charges withdrawn against them and a police officer has been convicted and dealt with for disciplinary offences arising out of this incident. The tabling of the prosecution file could lead to these people being tried in the Assembly.

Secondly: as a matter of general principle, prosecution files contain statements from persons who provide them to the police in good faith and may not wish them to be tabled in the Assembly, eg on a sexual assault case the tabling of statements could cause severe embarrassment.

Mulholland Brief

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

When will the investigations being oversighted by Mr Mulholland QC be completed, and when will his report be received?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has given indications of interest in this matter lately. Mr Mulholland QC was engaged on 11 April 1990 to oversight certain police investigations. These investigations have been dealt with in this Assembly. I am advised that investigations in relation to all matters are proceeding and I am further advised that it is anticipated that investigations may be completed within the next couple of months. I understand that some of the investigations are, in fact, quite close to being concluded. Mr Speaker, one should bear in mind that the time at which investigations will be concluded will be determined by Mr Mulholland because he is the person who can decide what further action, if any, needs to be taken.

I have no knowledge of the outcome of investigations so far. I am advised that no firm conclusions have been reached in relation to the various matters being investigated, although investigating officers are in the process of preparing final reports. I am advised that a vast number of witnesses have been interviewed already, both in the Territory and interstate, to ensure that any allegations that have been made or any other matters warranting examination have been investigated properly. Notwithstanding the work already done, I am advised that there remain some persons to be interviewed or re-interviewed, although not a large number, and some further investigations, not necessarily involving interviews - for example, financial analysis - must be finalised.

I do not know and have not been advised of the exact timing of any report by Mr Mulholland QC. Neither I nor any minister has sought in any way to interfere with the process, nor is it the intention that interferences should occur in any way. As is well known, Mr Mulholland QC and his assistant were in Darwin between 13 and 15 June 1990 and Mr Mulholland QC was again in Darwin for an Australian Bar Association Conference in July, during which time he again carried out work on this matter. As has been stated, Mr Mulholland QC has the widest of briefs, extending to the reporting of any interference as regards his oversighting role. I am totally satisfied as to the competence and capability of Mr Mulholland QC to fulfil his task. It may seem that some time has elapsed since these matters were raised and referred to Mr Mulholland QC. Whilst that is so, the size of the task and extent of investigations required to ensure this matter is dealt with properly is significant, as is the importance of the task. I do not intend that the investigation or Mr Mulholland's work will be rushed in any way. That would be wrong.

In summary, the status is as follows. Investigations are still being carried out, although it would appear matters are reaching some finality. Following completion of investigations, Mr Mulholland QC and Ms Atkinson, his assistant, will prepare a report. Subject to any views that Mr Mulholland QC might express to the contrary, I anticipate that I will place that report before this Assembly. I want to make it clear that Mr Mulholland's role is to oversight investigations being carried out by police, to ensure that the manner and effectiveness of the investigations is beyond question and to report in relation to their tasks, including to

report on any inadequacies in respect of the manner and effectiveness of the investigations themselves.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

In the answer he has given this morning, the Chief Minister said that Bob Mulholland had 'the widest brief'. He said that he would not interfere with Mr Mulholland. He reiterated undertakings that he gave in this House some months ago when he said that Mr Mulholland 'would have complete authority over the conduct of this inquiry'. He said that 'Mr Mulholland could seek that the police follow up other leads, other avenues, talk to other people or whatever'. These are my questions. Why have people with evidence for this inquiry been refused the right to approach Mr Mulholland directly? Why is it that Mr Mulholland can examine such evidence only after it has been reviewed by the Department of Law? How does Mr Mulholland have 'complete authority', when it is the Department of Law which decides what evidence will or will not be referred to him? Finally, is this the reason why, after 3 months, Mr Mulholland has still not been able to interview an essential witness to this inquiry, and I refer to Sergeant Andy Wrenn?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the honourable member mentioned, at the end of his last question, the person to whom he was referring, because that gives me the opportunity to respond using the same name. I am advised that Mr Wrenn's requests for direct talks with Mr Mulholland QC have been noted. I am further advised that Mr Mulholland QC is aware of Mr Wrenn's request. I am advised that, as might be expected, Mr Mulholland QC has been fully briefed in relation to allegations made by Mr Wrenn and, as part of his brief, has received copies of all statements made by Mr Wrenn as well as other relevant background material. I am advised also that, if Mr Mulholland QC considers it appropriate to have direct discussions with Mr Wrenn, he will no doubt so request. Naturally, that request will be complied with. I understand that Mr Mulholland QC has made no such request to date.

Mr Bell: Why can't people approach Mr Mulholland directly? That is the question.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I am not sure what stops anyone writing to Mr Mulholland directly, but it is entirely up to Mr Mulholland how he goes about the task that he has been given.

Mr Bell: No, it is not. Your government has directed him.

Mr PERRON: In responding to the honourable member's interjection, I have indicated that, if Mr Mulholland considers it appropriate to speak with any person in relation to his investigations, he has a charter which requires him to carry out those investigations properly and thoroughly, and he can carry out that charter in any way he sees fit.

Mr Bell: Any way?

Mr PERRON: Any way.

Kaytej and Warlmanpa Land Claims

Mr POOLE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What consultation, if any, with the Territory government occurred before June, when the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs granted the Kaytej and Warlmanpa land claims, which include areas of the Tennant Creek water control district, and what difficulties does the grant pose in terms of resolving issues associated with the future use of the areas concerned?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, when Hon Robert Tickner was appointed Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, he made great play of the need to return to a bipartisan approach to Aboriginal affairs in this country. On 26 June, the areas of the Kaytej and Warlmanpa land claims still remained to be granted. The land claimed covered areas of the Tennant Creek water control district. They were handed over to Aboriginal claimants, and the only consultation with the Territory government was a letter from Mr Tickner which was faxed to the Chief Minister's office on the evening of 26 June. The letter informed the Chief Minister that Mr Tickner intended to proceed with the grants. Of course, what he meant was that the land had already been granted on that day and that it was too late for the Territory government to do or say anything about it. If that is an example of Mr Tickner's idea of a bipartisan approach to Aboriginal affairs, I would hate to see him acting unilaterally. However, he may have been working on the basis that Territorians are already pretty well aware of the Commonwealth's concept of bipartisanship which basically comes down to: 'We will tell you what to do and you can like it or lump it'.

The provision of adequate water supplies is vital to the future development of Tennant Creek. It is expected that the areas of the water control district covered by the Kaytej and Warlmanpa claims will be needed to service the town in about 10 to 15 years time. In the meantime, it is necessary to protect the water catchment from pollution and to monitor the bore fields regularly. Unfortunately, under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, once land has been granted to a land trust, there is no legal obligation on the traditional owners to enter into any agreements at all for the use of that land or its resources. I am aware that the Aboriginal claimants and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs all say there will be no difficulty in achieving this agreement. However, this certainly has not proved to be the case to date. The Territory government has been negotiating with the Central Land Council since 1986 to reach agreement, and without success. The only compulsion on the claimants to negotiate was the hope that the Commonwealth would not grant the land until a completed agreement was in place. Now that the land has been granted, even this compulsion to negotiate has disappeared.

In the Ti Tree land claim, the Aboriginal Land Commissioner made it clear that such a situation was totally unsatisfactory in view of the responsibility of governments to put in place services for their constituents. He said:

A government that has all of the responsibilities of a state, so far as meeting the diverse needs of the entire community is concerned, yet lacks the power of compulsory acquisition which the states enjoy, is at the mercy of those with whom it must negotiate. Counsel for the applicants made the submission that

Aboriginal people could be expected to behave reasonably and responsibly in such negotiations. There is, however, no reason to believe that they are any more reasonable or responsible than the rest of the community might be expected to be had they had advantage in a negotiating situation.

That is from the Aboriginal Land Commissioner. The government has a responsibility to meet the needs of the community, yet lacks the power of compulsory acquisition that the states enjoy. It was for those reasons that the Territory government sought to reach an agreement with the Central Land Council after the areas of the claims outside the water control district were granted in 1986. In July 1988, the government sent a draft agreement to the Central Land Council, which agreed to take the matter back to the traditional owners to get instructions. A copy of the draft agreement was forwarded to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that the Commonwealth was aware of the negotiations and that the Commonwealth did not proceed to grant any land until an agreement was in place. The Central Land Council did not respond to the draft agreement and, in October 1989, following inquiries made by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the government again approached the CLC to enter into negotiations. A copy of this correspondence was also sent to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Following that correspondence, the negotiations became part of the Tennant Creek town boundary negotiations, and those negotiations included talks on both the present water supply and the future Kaytej production area. Meetings were held with the Central Land Council in January, March and May this year, and officers from ATSIC attended all of those meetings. A further meeting was scheduled for July but it was cancelled by the Central Land Council, presumably because the land had already been granted.

It can certainly be seen that the Territory government was committed to negotiating an agreement over the water control district, and those negotiations have now been jeopardised by the unilateral action of the Commonwealth minister. This approach is of even greater concern when consideration is given to the Territory government's efforts to ensure that the Commonwealth was fully across the processes of negotiation. I have written to Mr Tickner to express my extreme concern at his pre-emptive action on this and his failure to consult the Territory government about it. I have advised Mr Tickner that, in 'Seven Years On', Mr Justice Toohey recognised this problem, and he recommended that the Territory be empowered to acquire easements or other interests, short of an estate in fee simple, in Aboriginal land for a public purpose. Justice Toohey discussed the particular problems of water supply and stressed the need for the Territory to have the power to obtain water and the ability to transport it to nearby towns.

The Commonwealth has done nothing to resolve this issue. I have urged Mr Tickner to reconsider and to make appropriate amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. In the meantime, the Territory government will continue its efforts to negotiate a suitable resolution to the problem of guaranteeing the future water supply to Tennant Creek. Equality and equal opportunity is a catch-cry of members opposite. Here we have a situation where legislation provides for unequal or different treatment to different people on the basis of race. We cannot help but have division in our community while the Aboriginal Land Rights Act remains as it is.

Self-government Celebration Costs

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

I draw the attention of the Chief Minister to public disgust over the waste of taxpayers' money for a media campaign to commemorate 12 years of self-government. Did the government state that the cost of the self-government celebrations was \$200 000, is it a fact that the quoted cost did not include the cost of air time on commercial television or the cost of rulers, stickers and other throwaways, and was the all-up cost closer to \$500 000? If so, why did he seek to conceal the true cost from the public of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member ought first to obtain the answer to his question before making the unfounded allegation with which he concluded. I am looking at the notes that I have received in regard to this matter. I am not surprised that the honourable member has raised the question. Of course, the ALP opposed self-government itself at the time and therefore it is not surprising that it should oppose Territorians celebrating self-government as well.

Mr Smith: I hope you keep playing your advertisements in the picture theatres. They are getting a really interesting response.

Mr Bailey: We pay for ours with our funds, not with public funds.

Mr Coulter: If you are running short, let us know. We will help you out.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Chief Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, again this year, the anniversary was marked by advertised flag-raising ceremonies, the issue of bumper stickers throughout the Territory through insertion in newspapers, the issue of anniversary rulers to Territory schoolchildren, the production and telecast on NTDS and Imparja Television of a commercial and the letterbox distribution to households of a brochure. Both the commercial and the brochure depicted the achievements of Territorians since the grant of self-government in 1978.

I point out to honourable members the achievements of Territorians were depicted, not simply those of government because it was not the government alone that brought the Territory from the doldrums in 1978 to what we see today through the phenomenal advances that have been achieved, both socially and materially over that period. Nevertheless, honourable members opposite seem to cast aside any suggestion that Territorians themselves - those people who have worked damn hard for what has been achieved in the Territory - have any right to celebrate what has been achieved over the 12 years.

The target budget for these exercises, the flag-raising ceremonies, the distribution of bumper stickers, the rulers for schoolchildren, the television commercial and the brochure was \$200 000.

Mr Smith: What about advertising?

Mr Ede: The commercial cost more than that.

Mr PERRON: The commercial did not cost in excess of that. I may have to come back to the honourable member on the cost of the broadcast time for the commercial.

Mr Smith: That was on top of the \$200 000.

Mr Ede: What was the total cost?

Mr PERRON: I do not have it in the figures before me at present, but I am sure that members of my staff, who will be listening to this broadcast, will have the information to me very shortly.

Crude Oil Refinery for Darwin

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Given the deteriorating political crisis in the Middle East and the subsequent rise in crude oil prices throughout the world and given that the Timor Sea area is currently producing some 100 000 barrels of crude oil per day, is there now any greater prospect of the establishment of a crude oil refinery in Darwin with a view to the Northern Territory becoming totally self-sufficient in its fuel requirements?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. I will state at the outset that I am being cautious with my answer. There is excess capacity in refineries throughout Australia. Some rationalisation has taken place to try to absorb the excess capacity that exists within oil refineries within Australia. The question is indeed timely. It is ironic that the price of oil has risen in Australia even though Australia supplies up to 85% of its own domestic requirements. The answer to that is pretty simple. It is because Australian oil is linked to Singapore prices. Some time ago, Australian crude was linked to Singapore prices and, of course, Singapore has to import virtually all its requirements. It is a matter of further irony that the Territory oil industry is growing rapidly and yet all that we produce, which is an impressive figure of 100 000 barrels a day and about one-third of the production of Bass Strait, is exported, some going to Singapore itself. That is the mess that oil pricing in Australia is in today.

I hope that, next Tuesday, the honourable Treasurer will announce the results of the petroleum tax review which I called for at the special ministers meeting in Canberra. Indeed, I am chairman of that meeting for this year. I hope that we will get some sensible reform of the oil industry in Australia today and that BHP, for example, which is paying up to 80% in taxes on some wells that it operates in Bass Strait, obtains some relief so that we can find some new reserves. One can only hope that the honourable Treasurer will bring down that decision next Tuesday evening before we all sink under the stupidity of the situation in which Australia now finds itself in relation to oil prices. Fancy our being linked to the Singapore price, when Singapore imports all its oil! At a time when Australia is 85% self-sufficient in oil production, our prices have to rise because the Singapore price rises. It is ludicrous! It is typical of the financial disgrace and mess that Australia finds itself in at present.

Some of the oil that we produce in the Northern Territory goes to Singapore to be refined so that its price is increased before it comes back

to Darwin. That is what happens, and the member for Nhulunbuy should be well aware of that. Does he support that sort of lunacy?

Mr Leo: Where are we supposed to send it at the moment?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the first oil from the Jabiru oilfield went to Hawaii, and then it came back here. In the meantime, Australia is importing oil at an ever-increasing rate because the oil companies operating in Bass Strait are being taxed out of existence. They are paying 80% in tax.

It would be highly desirable to refine Territory oil in the Territory. However, if that is to happen, somebody needs to build a refinery here. Honourable members will not need to be told that such a project requires very big dollars. The government has made such inquiries in the national and international marketplaces previously without being overwhelmed by willing participants. Therefore, I am happy to report that the climate may have changed for the better. Officers of the Department of Mines and Energy attended conferences in Singapore in May and June on the outlook for refineries and downstream petroleum processing. They confirm a rapid growth in demand for refined petroleum products in the Asia Pacific region and the need for new regional refineries. The need has risen quite dramatically because of recent events in the Middle East. That does not mean that prospective refinery operators are rushing us with proposals. This is a highly competitive field. While Darwin has advantages in terms of proximity to oil production, a politically stable environment, availability of land and reasonable proximity to Asian markets, we have too the disadvantage of not being a major international shipping centre and not being located on a busy regional shipping route.

Certainly, interest has re-awakened. As a consequence, I have commissioned a consultancy to establish the parameters under which an oil refinery could be established in Darwin. I am being deliberately cautious about prospects but, at the same time, I have to advise honourable members that 2 groups are currently actively considering Darwin among other locations within the western Pacific region.

The current situation raises for discussion the question of a synthetic fuel plant, a possibility which I spoke about some 2 years ago. Australia has huge reserves of natural gas - trillions of cubic metres. With oil at \$25 a barrel, the synthetic fuel business becomes a whole new ball game. Although I am talking about the process of converting gas to gasoline, I hasten to point out that I am not talking about the technology used in the New Zealand plant. There have been many technological developments in projects converting gas to gasoline throughout the world since the New Zealand plant was built.

The time is now ripe for meaningful taxation reform. Federal governments of both political persuasions have taken \$30 000m from the oil industry, including Bass Strait. Where is that money today? It has gone. Today, oilfields in Australia are being taxed at 80%. They are fast drying up. Bass Strait is on its way out. We have to find new reserves or we will be up for \$4000m-worth of import replacement. That is almost the equivalent of a national wool cheque - not that they are any good these days anyway because you cannot sell wool or, if you can, nobody will pay you adequately.

There will be a disastrous effect on our balance of payments if we do not find some oil pretty soon. The amounts of oil we are talking about are nothing compared to those produced in the Middle East. Kuwait alone produces 1000 million barrels a year. That is equivalent to the total

production from Bass Strait in almost 20 years. We have to get out and start looking for more oil. We have to get the federal government off the neck of the oil companies. BHP is off to Quebec and Vietnam, that great communist country which offers tax-free incentives for the first 5 years. When will this federal government learn? It has to get off the necks of the oil companies so that they can get into exploration, otherwise we will be even further down the tube than we are today.

Dog Control by Local Government

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I have sighted letters written by the honourable minister dealing with the repeal of the Dog Act, with the object of putting the onus of dog control on local governments. It is unclear whether local governments will be able to choose whether or not to undertake dog control. When the Dog Act is repealed, will local governments be required to include the current provisions of the Dog Act in their by-laws or will it be possible for them to refrain from doing so for local reasons?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, clearly the member for Koolpinyah has sighted a letter that I have written to all councils in the Northern Territory indicating the intention of the Northern Territory government to repeal the Dog Act.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I have sighted 2 letters.

Mr McCARTHY: I am little surprised to learn that some councils are continuing to promote the line that my letter indicates that regulations by councils will be mandatory. In that letter, it is made very clear ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It was not.

Mr McCARTHY: If it is read in context, it is very clear that regulation is the prerogative of councils. The government has done exactly what the Northern Territory Local Government Association and most councils have asked it to do for years - that is, to get out of the control of dogs in their areas. Councils have a responsibility for the control of dogs, and the Rationalisation of Functions Working Party, which has been in place now for about 2 years, has made it quite clear that there are areas of responsibility that clearly should rest with councils, and there are other areas of responsibility that equally clearly should rest with government. The working party believes that the control of dogs should be with councils, and I have made that clear in writing to all councils.

I have followed that letter with a clarification to the President of the Litchfield Shire Council because he sought that clarification from me. In a phone discussion with the President of the Litchfield Shire Council on Saturday, I pointed out that the letter is quite clear if it is read in context. If the first page is read as well as the second, it is made very clear.

We were progressing down a path of remodelling the Dog Act in the Northern Territory, but it became very obvious that that would stand further in the way of the ability of local governments to control dogs. The government has no intention of handling dog control itself and therefore there is no reason for us to legislate. Clearly, it is something that

councils do and are responsible for. Therefore, regulation that is in place should be theirs. However, I make it clear again to the member for Koolpinyah that I will not be imposing, via legislation, any mandatory provisions on councils to take up that responsibility. It is their responsibility. If they wish to undertake that responsibility, they may do so and, if they wish to ignore it, they may do so. It will be entirely up to their constituents.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
Bruce Jefferey MLA

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of Mr Bruce Jefferey MLA, the member for Port Macquarie in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. On behalf of honourable members, I extend to Mr Jefferey a warm welcome, and hope his stay in the Northern Territory will be a pleasant and informative one.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hengyang Workers

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I remind the minister of the promise he has made in the last couple of weeks that Hengyang workers would not suffer through the government's determination to close down and evict Hengyang from the Trade Development Zone. No doubt he is aware that a number of Chinese guest workers have been left destitute by the closure of the company. I understand that the company has even withdrawn their rental bonds, making their continued stay at their present location highly unlikely. What arrangements have been made to protect the Hengyang workers, particularly the affected Chinese workers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the outset, a large number of people are working on this problem as we speak. It would serve no purpose to draw the Hengyang affair out in this Chamber, merely for the sake of drawing it out, whilst there are people across Australia at the moment trying to resolve this issue. I will be brief, but I am happy to sit down with the Leader of the Opposition, if he so wishes, and inform him of all the people who are working on this issue and how we are trying to get it back together. Honourable members will be aware of the efforts that I have made in recent months to ensure that all parties are firing in the same direction on this issue, and that is for the ultimate success of the Northern Territory's Trade Development Zone.

Representatives of the ACTU have been in Darwin recently and representatives of the Clothing and Allied Trades Union are in Darwin at the moment. Officers of the Department of Education, Employment and Training and the Department of Immigration are involved. There are people in Hong Kong working on a resolution. Other people returned from Hong Kong at 5 o'clock this morning and they are also working on the problem. We are committed to getting the Trade Development Zone up and going again, and we are committed to getting the Hengyang workers back to work under a new identity. We have had some offers from people and we are discussing those with the liquidator who has been appointed to try to resolve that as soon as possible.

My statement about looking after the Hengyang workers and getting them back to work was made on the grounds that we can find a new operator and

that we can accelerate that operator through the system to enter the zone, preferably on a walk-in walk-out basis on vacant possession. That is the ultimate aim that we are trying to achieve at the moment. The Hengyang Darwin workers have been given 4-year visas. They do not have to return to China. If they so wish, they can remain in Australia for 4 years. I understand that that applies to some 25 workers.

The Hengyang Holding Chinese workers are in a different situation. They do not have the same advantage as the Hengyang Darwin workers because they arrived a little later than the Hengyang Darwin workers. People are being very lenient, and are very sensitive to their plight at the moment and there are 4 or 5 weeks in which to reassess their case. I have had discussions with the liquidator regarding their accommodation. I am very sensitive to the fact that they have very little to do at present. We are trying to organise English-in-the-workplace courses to provide them with some activities during the day. The Commonwealth Employment Service is working on the matter as well.

The real answer is for everybody to return to work under a new banner, and that is our ultimate aim. Things are happening very quickly and I am confident that we will have an answer in the very near future. Whether that answer is the answer we want is largely out of my hands. It is up to the Commonwealth departments and other people involved to provide us with that answer. I would like to pay full tribute to all those Commonwealth officers who have been working on this matter and, in particular, to all the union representatives from the Miscellaneous Workers Union, the Clothing and Allied Trades Union, the ACTU and the Northern Territory Trades and Labor Council. Many people here might look suspiciously on my congratulating those people. I can see the Chief Minister questioning my attitude there. However, there has been a remarkable turnaround from the last time we were in this Assembly and, in particular, from the sittings before that. I believe we have come a long way ...

Mr Smith: Yes, you have turned around remarkably.

Mr COULTER: It has been on both sides. In times of crisis, we realise that we are all Territorians. We all realise the opportunities that the Trade Development Zone presents to us. We all know the Trade Development Zone is bigger than Hengyang, and we will get on with the job. I am extremely impressed by the commitment of those whom I have mentioned and I indicate my gratitude to all those organisations for their support.

General Aviation Costs in the Territory

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I believe that we have a crisis on our hands in another industry in Darwin at the moment. I refer to a question that I asked in May 1989 of the Minister for Transport and Works. I indicated that a great deal of concern had been expressed by general aviation operators in the Territory about the cost recovery system put in place following the creation of the CAA in the Federal Airports Corporation. Given the importance of general aviation to the Territory, particularly in isolated communities, I asked the minister what was being done to address concern about general aviation costs as a result of the new cost recovery system. Nothing has changed. There is a crisis in that industry at the moment.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I realise that you give members of this House an extreme amount of latitude when asking questions, but I have heard a speech so far and absolutely no question at all.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the member for Ludmilla to direct his question as concisely and as quickly as possible.

Mr FIRMIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The opposition must be very sensitive about this. Were those fears justified at the time and are they justified now, a year and a half later?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his request for an update on the fears of the general aviation industry. Certainly, the member for Nhulunbuy, whose constituency would be vitally interested in this matter, would be concerned about the outcome. The member for Ludmilla, and those people who were talking to him 18 months ago, could not have possibly known the full potential consequences, adverse as they now appear to be, of the introduction of the FAC and the constraints and demands that the federal government has placed on it for the operation of Darwin Airport.

Darwin Airport is a major airport without a secondary airport to back it up. In the states, it is usual for light aircraft to have access to a minor airfield. However, of course, the Territory is stuck with the one major airport, and we all expressed concerns at the time about a number of matters. One matter raised by the member for Ludmilla at that time was that the fuel levy placed on the light aircraft industry was put in place initially to cover landing fees. With the introduction of the FAC, its landing fees were a double up. We received no satisfactory answer about that double-dipping from our federal members at that time, and now we are faced with the reality of the move of the general aviation operation from the southern side of the airstrip to the north.

As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, Darwin is a defence strip and the Department of Defence requires that the general aviation industry move to the north side of the airstrip. That has not happened anywhere else in Australia, except possibly at Townsville where the FAC has taken over an airport. People who have built hangars, offices and facilities, and built their businesses on those facilities, are now faced with the same dilemma that Darwin general aviation people are looking at. At the time when the member for Ludmilla raised his question, they were given 3 years notice to vacate the southern side. That deadline is fast approaching now.

Some of the fears raised with me in recent weeks by at least 3 different operators are unfounded, but those that are of concern are that, in addition to that double application of landing charges, they are now faced with extremely high costs to build brand new facilities on the north side and will be required to abandon those that they have been living in for quite some years - decades in many cases. Those will be bulldozed into the dirt. They are faced with increased rental charges, some threefold, on the land that they will occupy on the north side. However, far more critical to them is the lack of determination yet on the precise term of the leases that they are to be given. Some have been told that they will be for periods as low as 10 years, up to 25 years. The crunch is that the common denominator in all of the leases is that, at the end of the lease period, the buildings they build on the north side are to revert to the ownership of the FAC.

Mr Leo: Fred, do you know how boring you are?

Mr FINCH: The member for Nhulunbuy might not give 2 rats about that, but those of his constituents who are to suffer the cost imposition of this will care. It means that, if those people are lucky enough to gain extensions to the leases on their own buildings, they will be paying rental on the improved value of buildings put there at their own cost, and that is quite contrary to what the federal member, Warren Snowdon, said in April 1989. He said then that there would be no cost imposition to Territorians. He said that there was to be no additional cost, and that the big difference between the FAC proposal and that of the Territory government was that we were to charge some terminal fee of \$8 a head for every passenger.

Wait until he sees the increase in ticket prices for those using the new terminal on the north side, with sevenfold to tenfold increases for lease rentals for the major airlines. Wait until he hears what costs those aircraft companies servicing Aboriginal communities in the remote areas of the Northern Territory have to meet by way of extra ticket charges. Those costs will have to be passed on. In 1987, in response to a direct question about small aircraft operators, Senator Collins said on the 7.30 Report that he did not think that there would be any cost imposition to them. He said that they were all in private enterprise and they had to make profits, and they would make profits regardless of the price that was put on their operating costs by the FAC, at the direction of the federal government.

It was the federal government that said they had to get a return on a mickey-mouse \$30m evaluation of the existing assets that had been long paid for by the taxpayer. What did Senator Collins say in response to my suggestion at that time that the Territory government had allocated, in its proposal on the new terminal, \$5m to be put into small operators in the GA industry, to transfer to the north side? We realised that they were in for big costs and that Territorians would not be able to bear it. Senator Collins pooh-poohed the idea. Let us see what he said at the recent opening of the FAC building, when confronted by senior representatives of industry who said seriously to him: 'This is a fine terminal, Senator Collins, but what about the costs that will be imposed on the general aviation industry in the move to the north side?' For the benefit of honourable members opposite, his answer was: 'There will be some casualties'. And then he walked off. What a shameful response!

There are some options here for Senator Collins, who is the Minister for Aviation Support. He can extend, for a substantial period, the leases for those operators that exist already on the southern side, and allow them the freedom to get the value out of the buildings they currently own. Secondly, at the very least, he can provide some government subsidy for those who opt to move at an earlier time to the north side or if people are forced to move to the north side. Thirdly, he might provide access to Territory-held land adjacent to the current airport by way of a taxiway so that the Territory government can see that these small operators are looked after in the interests of all Territorians. A fourth option is totally undesirable, and that is to look for a new secondary airstrip. That would be a great cost to the taxpayer although we cannot cast it out of our considerations. Those are the options open to Senator Collins, and I will look forward to his response to those operators who, at the moment, and despite a great deal of sympathy from the FAC people here, are being faced with catastrophic increases in prices and who are saying: 'Yes, in line with Senator Collins' suggestion, we will have to go out of business'.

Mulholland Brief

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

In his first answer, he said that Mr Mulholland 'was engaged to oversight further police investigations'. Later in his answer he said that, in fact, that was the case. Could the Chief Minister clarify whether Mr Mulholland is leading and supervising an independent investigation into the allegations made by Sergeant Wrenn and others on the 7.30 Report or is he overseeing a further investigation by the police? If so, who is leading and supervising the police investigation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member's question was a little hard to follow. Certainly, we have spoken at some length about and made very clear in this House exactly what Mr Mulholland's role is, and I did not think that there was any confusion. His role has not changed since he was commissioned to oversight these investigations, but it is a broad oversighting. He is not constrained in how he goes about his oversighting of these investigations. In the end, he will report to me - and I have undertaken to table a copy of his report in this parliament - on any aspect of the investigations or matters relating to the investigations that he has any concerns about whatsoever. If he believes, for whatever reason, that the investigations were not adequate and complete and he recommends another course of action - and suggestions were made that he might recommend that these matters were so complex and were not being dealt with properly that a commission of some sort should be established - he is free to do so. I have given an undertaking to the House that the government will implement whatever Mr Mulholland recommends.

Banning of Alcohol for Tribal Aborigines

Mr TIPILOURA to CHIEF MINISTER

If the Chief Minister wants to find a way to ban tribal Aborigines from drinking alcohol, why does he want a law that would ban me from drinking but not Mr Michael Mansell?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that the member for Arafura agrees with me on which of the 2 gentlemen mentioned is an Aboriginal. The media and some commentators took some of my words out of context, not some of the words ...

Mr Bell: If you would put your mind into gear before you open your mouth, you would not say the sort of things you did.

Mr PERRON: That was very original, Neil.

In my communication to the Prime Minister, I was referring to a situation wherein traditional Aboriginal men, in particular, but women as well, had appealed to me to try to find some way in which communities could remove access to alcohol from members of their communities who had clearly and constantly demonstrated an inability to cope with it. Some members of the media have represented this as my advocating that the right to drink alcohol be withdrawn. I have not advocated that and I do not advocate it. This matter is serious. The problem of Aboriginal alcoholism in particular

has created a dilemma for us. Alcoholism period is a problem for us. However, the seeming inability of quite large numbers of Aborigines to cope with alcohol is something that I am sure all members of this House take seriously. However, whilst we all take it seriously, the divergence of views as to the answers is very significant. If we all talk about them a little more together, we may achieve more common ground than we have to date.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Self-government Celebration Costs

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, further to a question asked of me this morning, I can indicate that the \$200 000 for the self-government celebrations included broadcasting time.

Royal Darwin Hospital Incinerator

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to a recent newsletter circulated by the member for Wanguri in which the member informed residents that he had been responsible for changing the specifications of the incinerator at the Royal Darwin Hospital to meet environmental guidelines, following a meeting with the Department of Transport and Works. I ask the minister whether, in fact, the member for Wanguri did accomplish that?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, frequently one becomes exasperated by the exaggerated claims made by members opposite but, on this occasion, the member for Wanguri has taken the cake. Not only did he make an absolute fool of himself with some of the questions he raised with the Department of Transport and Works and the New South Wales State Pollution Control Authority but, despite some lengthy technical briefings from the department, he still has it wrong. In spite of that, in the newsletter which he circulates in his electorate - and I am not surprised that he does not put his picture and the name of the party he represents on the newsletter - he incorrectly takes the credit for developments at the hospital.

The member for Wanguri claimed that the department's specifications and operating guidelines for the Royal Darwin Hospital would have allowed the new incinerator to release cytotoxins into the atmosphere. That is totally untrue, and he was advised of that in a briefing. In fact, under certain operating conditions, the technical specifications and design of the incinerator would allow those things to be taken into account. More pertinently, the member for Wanguri was briefed on the fact that the basic purpose of the replacement incinerator was to provide a cost-efficient facility which would consume less fuel, that being in the interests of the budget of the Department of Health and Community Services. He has sought to push those matters aside.

He claims that he called for withdrawal of the tender documents, and I suppose the fact that he put that call in a press release newsletter somewhere may justify that claim. Of course, there was no need for that to occur. The specifications met both the New South Wales state pollution control guidelines and the anticipated amendments to those, which are assumed to comprise the forthcoming national scheme. He had been given that information and sought to discard it. He went on to say: 'Following discussions with engineers from the Department of Transport and Works' - and they must despair at having to brief some of these people - 'I have obtained agreement to amend the operating guidelines to overcome the potential problems as originally identified by me'. What absolute nonsense! No wonder his leader is ashamed of him.

During the last sittings, we heard the most abysmal delivery from a shadow spokesman on the environment that could ever have been made anywhere in the world. It was shameful. The people who voted for him, and those who supported the ALP indirectly through the Green Independents, must have reeled in their seats when they heard about that delivery. Not only do we have an incompetent shadow spokesman for the environment, but one who falsely claims credit for matters that he has no reason to claim credit for. Those departmental officers will still be available to him and others in a vain attempt to educate them in matters that really they ought to be across.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Chief Minister is aware of a further serious allegation from a police officer reported on the 7.30 Report last night about 'payments of up to \$30 000'. It was reported that, like the officer mentioned yesterday, this police officer would provide his evidence only directly to Mr Mulholland. Does the Chief Minister intend to maintain his refusal to allow witnesses to approach Mr Mulholland directly? If so, what are we to do about these people who, for whatever reason, are reluctant to be interviewed first by police or by officers of the Department of Law? Are we to assume that their evidence does not exist or that it will simply go away?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of allegations made - I believe by the reporter of the 7.30 Report - last night that a police officer had made allegations about another police officer who was supposedly involved in a \$30 000 corruption racket. I think that chain is worth noting because the member asked me whether I was aware of allegations by a police officer in this regard. In that case, I was not. However, I read a transcript of what was said on the 7.30 Report.

The honourable member asks whether I will continue my refusal to allow witnesses direct access to Mr Mulholland. The honourable member has not really taken much notice of what was said during the Assembly sittings when I announced that, on Northern Territory Police Force initiatives, I had agreed to and facilitated the engagement of Mr Mulholland QC of Queensland to oversight the police investigations in the Northern Territory into 3 particular cases involving drugs, allegations of police corruption and a prostitute. Honourable members opposite do not seem to have grasped that Mr Mulholland QC, a man of eminent standing in this country, the senior criminal counsel in Queensland, is not a man whom you tell how to go about his job.

Mr Bell: That is precisely what you are doing.

Mr PERRON: He is not a man to be told whom he should see and whom he should not see and who will be facilitated to see him. Under his charter, he is able to see any person and he is able to report at the end of the investigations. As I have foreshadowed, those investigations are not far from conclusion. Mr Mulholland is able to report to me, and I have undertaken to table in this Assembly his report on any matter which is of concern to him in respect of the Northern Territory, its government, its officers, its politicians or whomever. He is able also to report with recommendations advising, if he sees fit, that particular matters or sections of matters should be referred to anything from a Royal Commission of as high a standing as the Northern Territory government has the authority to implement down to whatever other levels of investigation or inquiry he sees as being appropriate.

Honourable members seem to be suggesting that we should rewrite Mr Mulholland's charter in some way. In doing so, they are putting the view that he is a man who should be told what to do. He has before him the transcripts of a large number of interviews and re-interviews by senior detectives. Three teams of senior detectives in the Northern Territory Police Force are handling these matters, and they are being oversights by Mr Mulholland QC and his very able assistant. He has before him the

detailed and unedited transcripts of allegations. If he wants any further interviews to be conducted and if he wants personally to obtain any information from any witness, he is able to take appropriate action. It has been said that, if any person wants to get information to Mr Mulholland, but does not want to see the senior police detectives who are working on this matter, they could perhaps see the Commissioner of Police or the Secretary of the Department of Law with a view to their passing on this information to Mr Mulholland.

I would like the member for MacDonnell, the shadow attorney-general, to stand by the statement he made at the end of his interview with the 7.30 Report last night. In relation to whether a particular sergeant was told to go on paid leave, he said: 'I am not aware of any of the details in respect of any of the officers. The approach that has been taken by the opposition has been to allow the inquiry to proceed and to wait for its recommendations'. I suggest he do exactly that.

Mr Bell: Provided it is unconstrained.

Mr PERRON: Oh, you want to qualify that now. You do not want to wait for the inquiry to conclude?

Mr Coulter: Mr Mulholland is not the sort of person whom you constrain.

Mr Bell: If you cannot ring him up and talk to him or his officers, he is constrained.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, at the beginning of this exercise, honourable members opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition ...

Mr Bell: What are you hiding, Marshall?

Mr PERRON: It was said that even such an esteemed person as the Premier of Queensland, who is a bit of a guru to the Leader of the Opposition, supports Mr Mulholland as a man of the highest integrity and a man who might be said to be brilliant in matters of criminality. Honourable members opposite are purporting that this man will be snowed by the Northern Territory police. It is preposterous. This man is eminent in his field in relation to criminal allegations and getting to the bottom of such matters. It is not for us to say to him that we have a list of people that we have determined that he shall interview personally because they have requested it, despite the fact that he has access to all the transcripts of all the investigations and interviews with these very people. He can interview them if he wants to ...

Mr Bell: He does not know about them.

Mr PERRON: ... at any time. He is unconstrained.

Mr Bell: He does not know about them.

Mr PERRON: Oh, come off it!

Mr Speaker, I think that is enough said on this matter at this time. Honourable members opposite should be a little more patient and let the investigations conclude. When Mr Mulholland reports shortly, if there are any questions, I am sure they will be raised, and I encourage members of the opposition to raise them but, for goodness sake, display some confidence in the man you say you support, and in our Commissioner of Police, the

Secretary of the Department of Law and the Ombudsman, all of whom have had no allegations made against them to suggest that they are involved in some great conspiratorial cover-up over this matter. That is what the member for MacDonnell is trying to imply in some sneaky way. Give them a chance to do their work unfettered and to report to the courts, where charges are laid, and let the court processes take their course and see what Mr Mulholland has to say. The honourable member can then make the biggest furore in the world if he believes that Mr Mulholland has been inadequate in addressing the task that has been given to him.

Mulholland Brief

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES

My question follows on from that answer. I start by making it clear that no one is casting aspersions on the character or the ability of Mr Mulholland, the Northern Territory police or anybody else. However, we have a circumstance where it is alleged that, in the community, people - police officers, I understand - have information that they think is relevant to the inquiries that Mr Mulholland is undertaking. For good or bad reasons, they are not prepared to provide that information to the local law enforcement officers. The question then is what we are to do in that situation? How can Mr Mulholland conduct the fullest possible inquiry, when there may well be information ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable Leader of the Opposition ask his question?

Mr SMITH: I have. I asked how Mr Mulholland can conduct the fullest inquiry when there may well be information in the community that has not gone through the official channels but that would help him in his deliberations.

Mr Coulter: Do you think he is a fool?

Mr SMITH: No, we do not think he is a fool, but he cannot know about information that is not available to him because there is no channel for that information to get to him. All we are asking is that a channel be provided for that information to get to him, and the reasonable and logical way to effect that is to allow people in that situation specific access to him. Will the minister provide it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has now joined his colleague. I thought he was staying out of this exercise because he was somewhat embarrassed at the line being taken. He says that he is not implying that Mr Mulholland is incapable of doing his job. He then says the I will tell Mr Mulholland how he should suss out all this relevant information.

To digress for a moment, I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition might ask himself why these persons who claim to have information of wrongdoing in the Northern Territory are not prepared to go to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Smith: I don't know.

Mr Bailey: It does not matter.

Mr PERRON: Oh, it does not matter! It is irrelevant!

Mr Bailey: Yes. If they want to get information to Mr Mulholland, it is irrelevant.

Mr PERRON: It is rather like saying that you want to go and see the Commonwealth Attorney-General on this matter because you are not prepared to discuss it with the Northern Territory Attorney-General or the Chief Minister or that perhaps you might go to England to see the Queen about the matter because you do not trust anyone in between. It is absurd.

Mr Smith: You have set up an inquiry into a matter and now you will not allow people access to that inquiry.

Mr Bailey: You are beginning to sound like Joh Bjelke-Petersen: 'Trust us, trust us!'

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I repeat my point. The Northern Territory Police Force has probably the best reputation of any police force in Australia. Sadly, from time to time, allegations are made and demonstrated to have some validity. Sometimes, a police officer acts improperly. There have been a number of cases in which such people have been dealt with, properly, severely and promptly and, where necessary, that will continue to happen. Sadly, when dealing with fairly large numbers of people, the occasional rotten apple is found among them. We must be diligent in maintaining systems which will weed these people out and trample on them.

I can assure honourable members, people in the public gallery and the listening public that the Commissioner of Police of the Northern Territory is a man of the highest standing, an absolutely dedicated man, a professional police officer to the core, who is determined to ensure that the Northern Territory Police Force remains the best and cleanest police force in Australia. Those honourable members opposite who know the Commissioner of Police personally probably do not disagree with some of those statements. Why then are they prepared to put up with this nonsense that, because a citizen or a police officer claims personally not to trust the Commissioner of Police and refuses to talk to him about allegations of wrongdoing by other police officers, it is legitimate to go over the head of the Commissioner of Police, the implication being that perhaps the Police Commissioner is not an honourable fellow. It is a nonsense.

Mr Smith: You have established an inquiry into a number of matters.

Mr PERRON: We have also the Secretary of the Department of Law, a man who does not have such a high public profile as does the Commissioner of Police - nor should he - but a man in whom, personally, I would place enormous faith. He is a man of integrity, who takes his job seriously and will continue to do so. He also is able to be approached by persons who do not want to go to the Commissioner of Police for discussions. Indeed, occasionally, people do have talks with Mr Conran, the Secretary of the Department of Law. If necessary, he will facilitate the transmission of material, unedited in any way, to Mr Mulholland, including requests to be interviewed by Mr Mulholland. Mr Mulholland has before him a request by a Sergeant Wrenn to be interviewed. There is no cover-up about this. However, we will not instruct Mr Mulholland to see such people. It is up to himself. For goodness sake, have some faith in the man in whom you claim to have some faith. He is not a fool. He is a brilliant criminal lawyer and

the most senior criminal counsel in Queensland. Have some faith that he will not be snowed by all this waffle from police and that he will see that there is more to this matter than has been investigated.

We are saying that, hopefully, there will be an end to this soon. The investigations are nearly concluded. If charges are appropriate, they will be laid. The matter will become very public, as it should if charges are laid. If there are persons investigated about whom allegations have been made and charges are not laid, I am sure there will be some explanation. We are placing our faith in Mr Mulholland to have that double security over and above our current police and legal system. He has been given an unfettered charter to tell us whether this investigation has been carried out impeccably. If we care to wait a little longer, we will have that information. I suggest honourable members be a little patient and get out of his hair while he gets on with the job.

Payment of Part-Time Instructors

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In the past, there have been regular complaints from the Department of Education's part-time instructors about delays in the processing of their pay cheques. Recently, the minister indicated that efforts were being made to address this problem. Can he indicate whether an improved system has been developed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am sure honourable members will have received complaints from time to time about late payment to part-time instructors, and I gave an undertaking to address that matter. Treasury has approved the establishment of regional cheque accounts, and the necessary mechanisms and procedures are now in place to pay part-time instructors and contract staff at the completion of each fortnight. Members would be aware that this has been a problem in the past. I hope that this new process will enable people to be paid at the time that they complete the work. We do not anticipate any problems with the new arrangements. However, the situation will be monitored by the department. If any members continue to receive complaints about part-time instructors not receiving their salaries on time, I ask them to contact my office or the department.

Cost of State Square

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The minister has told the public repeatedly that the State Square is a fixed price project and that the price is \$100m. The Auditor-General's report, which was released publicly yesterday, indicated that the project would cost 'well in excess of \$100m'. Is the price of State Square fixed and, if so, what is that fixed price?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at this very moment, to all intents and purposes, the State Square project is on target and on budget. We gave notice in 1988 that, with the exclusion of fees and landscaping costs, the project costs were \$100m approximately. I think it was \$99.8m in 1988 dollars. The first stage, the Supreme Court, is near completion now and is almost on target. It is a very small margin over the original budget for construction costs.

In 1988, we announced that the bare building costs were \$87m. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition might recall that fact, if he would cast his mind back. We gave to the press a very comprehensive breakdown of all of the component costs of the total project. Of course, there will be some escalation of costs resulting from a natural rise in the cost of construction and, taking that into account, the Supreme Court building is almost identically on budget. The second part of the project, the Parliament House, is currently out for tender for all of the subcontract packages. As I have said repeatedly in this House to the Leader of the Opposition and to others, when those tenders close and we add up all of the subcontracting prices, we will know whether or not the original budget figure for Parliament House is on target.

I am not sure where the figures used in the Auditor-General's report have come from. I have not seen them myself. It may have been a descriptive suggestion that they would be well over \$100m. In a month or so, when the prices have been collated and evaluated and recommendations have come through, we may find, as we did with stage 1, that on some components we will accept a small cost penalty to ensure that locals get the work. Honourable members may recall that, with about 4 components of the first building, we accepted a few hundred thousand dollars local penalty to ensure that all of the works went locally. Local businesses are extremely pleased. They say that they believe 95% of the project has gone to locals and, of course, that is rewarding to the government which took the decision in the first place.

With regard to the final price, we will have to wait until those tenders come in and then we will evaluate them. Some variations have been made to the original design brief, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows, so there may be some change in the price, but only time will tell. At that stage, as I have always said, we will announce the total budget figure for the total project.

Mr Smith: It is likely to be bigger than you thought?

Mr FINCH: At the moment, we do not know. We have no cause to say that it will be higher at all, other than for the escalation factor and those components that were announced at the time as being outside the \$100m.

There is no cause for concern at the moment. In fact, I am extremely pleased with the way the project is going, and particularly by the way it returns jobs. Some 600 jobs are involved in stage 1, on and off site. We spoke about this yesterday in the House. A clear statement has been made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Territory Nationals that they would stop the project forthwith. I would like every one of those 600 workers, whatever they are doing, to know that the Leader of the Opposition, the ALP and the Nationals would stop that project tomorrow if they had half a chance. Fortunately for those workers, and for the hundreds who will work on Parliament House, they will not get that chance.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

An erstwhile friend of the Leader of the Opposition and a former Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority is currently a would-be politician. I refer to Mr Bob Ellis who has said in public statements that the proposed flood mitigation dam at Alice Springs cannot proceed because a certificate issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection

Authority to protect a number of trees near the proposed dam wall will prevent construction. Has the minister investigated this claim and, if so, what action will be taken?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I instructed the Department of Law to examine the statement that was made by Mr Ellis, and my subsequent advice is that a certificate has been correctly issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority for the construction of a flood mitigation dam. Of course, the Northern Territory government will comply with every aspect of that certificate. However, in the event that the construction proposal, as outlined in the draft environmental impact statement, is amended, and I expect that it will be amended in the final EIS, then the Territory government may have to seek an amendment to the certificate. That is standard practice, and we agree with that.

To date, there has been no breach of the certificate whatsoever. Contrary to the claims made by Mr Ellis, nothing illegal has been done and nothing illegal is intended. Some honourable members opposite may well have some vested interest in not seeing the Alice Springs flood mitigation dam come to fruition, but they cannot argue with any degree of confidence that Aboriginal people have not been consulted about the dam proposal. The Chief Minister and I have taken great pains to discuss the project personally with affected Aboriginal people over the last 18 months. We have set out to inform them at every step along the consultative path. I firmly believe we have done as much as we can in this area to date.

Mr Ellis, honourable members opposite and others who are politically opposed to construction of the dam can be assured that the project will not start until the final environmental impact statement has been prepared and released and, in the process, any variation in accordance with section 23 of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act will be properly addressed.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware of the report commissioned by the Central Land Council on the flood mitigation dam in Alice Springs by engineers Webb, McKeowan and Associates? Further, is he aware that, at page 7 of the report, under section 35, 'Warning Time', they claim that 'the whole presentation of warning time is misleading and that the calculations, such as they are, clearly show no measurable improvement in warning time compared with the existing situation'? Would the minister care to comment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure if the honourable member is quoting from the complete report. We received the report after we requested it yesterday. In fact, it was released on 2 August, albeit selectively. Neither the Conservation Commission nor the Power and Water Authority was paid the courtesy of being given a copy of the complete Webb Report. We received the complete Webb Report yesterday, and officers of the Conservation Commission and the Power and Water Authority are examining it. I would not like to comment ...

Mr Collins: It is pretty straightforward.

Mr COULTER: As I said, it was distributed selectively. We were not given a copy. Even though 8 August was the closing date for all submissions in this regard, we were not given a copy until yesterday. I do not want to comment on the Webb Report other than to say that we may agree with much of what is in the report.

Mr Collins: I doubt it.

Mr COULTER: Let us wait and see. The Central Land Council, which commissioned the report and distributed some parts of it, has now given us the complete report. I will wait until our engineers have had the opportunity to examine the complete report before I make any comment on those aspects.

Live Beef Exports

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Recently, the Philippines government issued an executive order to increase tariffs on feeder steer imports. What effect will that increase in tariffs have on the live beef trade from Australia?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question and his interest in the well-being of the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. Some 15% of cattle turned off in 1989 in the Northern Territory was sold for live export, and the Philippines comprised a large part of that. In the order of 28 000 cattle were exported live from Australia in the fiscal year 1989-90. Some 90% of those animals were sourced from the Northern Territory. The national value of live export is something in the order of \$10m a year, and 90% of that comes from the Northern Territory. Thus, it is a significant component of the turn-off of our pastoral industry. It has a considerable flow-on to the Northern Territory economy and to the buoyancy of our pastoral industry. The interest displayed by the member for Karama is in contrast to that displayed by the honourable members opposite, particularly the shadow spokesman for primary industry who, in the past, has spoken out quite strongly against the live export of cattle from the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: That is a load of absolute codswallop.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, I refer the member for Stuart to his comments on Wednesday 15 February 1989, and I quote from the Parliamentary Record: 'I have often spoken about the outrageous number of cattle which we export on the hoof from the Northern Territory'.

Mr Ede: Exactly. It would be far preferable to have our own department process them locally.

Mr REED: It gives the lie to what the honourable member and opposition members were saying yesterday in relation to jobs, jobs, jobs. The honourable member has opposed continuously the live export of cattle and has taken no interest in the possible loss of these markets. The member for Stuart has fought consistently against anything the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory has done to better itself and to further the economy and development of the Northern Territory. It gives the lie to the argument put forward by members of the opposition yesterday about jobs, jobs, jobs. They really do not care. This means jobs, jobs, jobs and that is what this

government is here to protect. The honourable member should be absolutely ashamed of himself. I have proven very clearly that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is insincere in what he says in this House and in what he says to the industry. I have proven him to be a liar.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr REED: I withdraw the remark, Mr Speaker.

By parliamentary decree, the Philippines government has moved to increase the tariff on feeder steer imports from 10% to 30%. This is an impost that the Northern Territory cattle industry will not be able to withstand. I have had discussions with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and, yesterday, I wrote to the Minister for Trade Negotiations, Neil Blewett, who was in the Philippines the week before last when these announcements were made. I must say that they were made somewhat to the surprise of some of the Philippines people present and certainly to the surprise of the honourable minister. I have written to him explaining the impact that this will have on the Northern Territory pastoral industry. The AMLC is pursuing the matter also.

During 1989, the Philippines government twice increased the permitted level of feeder cattle importation into the Philippines, first to 38 000 head per year and, secondly, to 58 000 cattle per year. Of course, that caused the Northern Territory industry, both the producers and exporters of live cattle, to increase their potential to service those markets. These recently announced increases, which will come into effect at the end of this month, will impact seriously on their ability to service those markets and, indeed, on their long-term potential to be able to meet demand. Therefore, it is a matter of considerable concern.

The consequences of the announced change will mystifyingly classify the cattle as 'finished goods' from the point of view of the tariff to be applied in the Philippines. That classification will suffer a 30% tariff, and that is the position that we face. I am pursuing the matter and I hope that the opposition's primary industry spokesman, the member for Stuart, will take a greater interest in this issue and will support the primary industry which he has failed to support previously.

State Square

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I remind the honourable minister again of the statement contained in the Auditor-General's annual report that the State Square project is likely to cost 'well in excess of \$100m'. No doubt those words were chosen carefully by the Auditor-General. I remind the honourable minister of his statement in 1988 that the cost of the State Square was fixed and would not be more than \$100m in 1988 figures. If the Auditor-General can tell us that the cost of State Square will be 'well in excess of \$100m' - and obviously, in reaching that conclusion, he has used information available in the minister's own department - why is the minister himself not able to provide us with a more accurate figure on the likely cost of State Square than he has given us so far?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously, the Auditor-General is a much more astute and observant man than is the Leader of the Opposition. Certainly, he has chosen his words very carefully. He has used nothing more than a descriptive term ...

Mr Collins interjecting.

Mr FINCH: ... at the most, to forecast ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Sadadeen not to interject in that manner. I remind him that this question time is being broadcast and, in order to allow constituents in his own electorate to hear the answer, I would ask him to be silent.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, it is quite obvious that, if the Auditor-General was privy to a specific figure, he has carefully chosen not to use it because of its lack of precision. If he had a predictable figure of, say, \$150m or \$151m, he would have said that the cost of the project is expected to be ...

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr FINCH: If the Leader of the Opposition would like to close his mouth and to open his mind for just another moment, he will hear my response. I have told him that, when tenders close in a few months time, we will know the precise figure. And, yes, it may vary from the original budget.

Mr Smith: It is a new definition of a fixed price contract.

Mr FINCH: He still cannot comprehend. He is an ex-educator and it is probably a blessing that he is no longer influencing our schoolchildren.

Mr Ede: He uses an elastic band.

Mr Smith: That is right.

Mr FINCH: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would like to open his mind as well, he too might learn something.

I explained that progress to date has shown a very small variation, less than \$2m, to the original budget.

Mr Smith: Up or down?

Mr FINCH: Up. I explained that this was a direct result of government taking a number of decisions to ensure that work went to local businesses. The air-conditioning ducting is an example. Tiling could have been done more cheaply by tilers from Victoria, and we could have had the painting done a little more cheaply by using painters from New South Wales. Carpentry could have been done more cheaply from South Australia. However, this government took a deliberate decision to ensure that 90% of the work would be carried out locally by local tradesman and local labourers supplied with material from local shops and manufactured in local establishments. We could have obtained the reinforcement steel a little more cheaply from South Australia and the structural steel a little more cheaply from Western Australia. We could have done exactly what is being done at the new Darwin

Airport Terminal. As the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government said yesterday, a visit to that site reveals more Western Australian and New South Wales cars than Territory cars. The construction of the Supreme Court, now in progress, is about keeping jobs and keeping people in the Territory. It is about feeding them, about sending children to school ...

Mr Smith: That is good.

Mr FINCH: Now we have the first acknowledgement that it is good. This is the man who said in the streets that, together with his coalition colleague, the member for Barkly, he would close the job down forthwith and put those ...

Mr Tuxworth: Hear, hear!

Mr FINCH: I take up that interjection. I do not need to be the honourable member's campaign manager because people will know, when he runs for that seat in Darwin, that if he had the opportunity - which he will not have - he is the man who would put those people into the dole queue.

To return to my answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question, I can say that it is true that the price has increased as a result of escalation.

Mr Smith: What is the price? You are the responsible minister. What is it?

Mr FINCH: Our costs have not escalated enormously, unlike the costs of any project ever completed by a Labor government anywhere in Australia, whether it be the Parliament House in Canberra, or the project on the waterfront in Sydney in the Wran days. Their costs escalated threefold - indeed, in the case of Parliament House in Canberra, from \$200m to \$1200m. Our project is being very well managed. It is on target and on budget. It is delivering jobs ...

Mr Tuxworth: What has it cost?

Mr FINCH: I have told you what it has cost. Surely the member for Barkly does not have a problem opening his ears. The original announcement in 1988 ...

Mr Tuxworth: I only want to know what it has cost.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, he has been told 3000 times, and I will tell him again. The original budget of \$100m in 1988 dollars, excluding landscaping and fees, is still on target.

Mr Ede: What will the landscaping cost?

Mr Tuxworth: What will it cost with escalation?

Mr FINCH: I can do a calculation for him later if he likes.

Mr Tuxworth: No. You cannot do that until all the tender prices come in.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, he now understands that we cannot know the full cost until the tender prices close. It takes a little time for the penny to

drop with some people. I will repeat for him that the actual price for stage 1 is a little over original budget, including escalation. These figures are reasonably well predicted.

The reason that we used figures of this sort - and we did it deliberately in 1988 - was so that people in the industry would know what our current commitment was. On this project, we are not in a burning hurry. If we have to stretch it out so that locals are assured of getting the right product and having the right involvement, so be it. We will accept the escalations and the natural rises in the costs of products and labour. When we have finished the job, we will know the total figure, including the escalation to the last day.

The total price for stage 2 ...

Mr Tuxworth: It is the total sum of the tenders that have come in.

Mr FINCH: Now he has it. The price of stage 2 will be known in a little less than 2 months time. He will know then exactly what the basic construction price will be. Unless there is a major variation from prices as they come in, it will be on budget notwithstanding those variations that I have explained.

Hepatitis B Study

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I draw his attention to a recent study by the Menzies School of Health Research. I understand that some preliminary results of that study have now been made available to the Department of Health and Community Services. It has identified a very high level of infection with hepatitis B among Territory primary schoolchildren. Has his department had time to determine the response that it intends to make?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the results of the study to which the honourable member is referring are still being evaluated. The study included a survey of some 1115 Territory primary schoolchildren. One of the preliminary findings was that 29% of the children in this group had been exposed to hepatitis B virus at some time during their lives. It is well known that there is a high level of hepatitis B in the Territory community and vaccination programs are administered by the Department of Health and Community Services to address that problem. Nevertheless, in recognition of these findings, the government has decided to expand its programs and to provide hepatitis B vaccine for all newborn babies in the Territory. Currently, vaccine is provided by the government for high-risk groups only.

It is too early for the impact of our current hepatitis B program to show up in such a survey and so there is no reason to suppose that these existing programs are inadequate. However, I realise that the survey's findings could cause some concern to parents of newborn babies, and the government wants to offer them the fullest support. This new initiative will cost the Territory about \$30 000 a year on top of what we spend already on hepatitis B control. Under existing programs, a large number of Territorians are vaccinated every year. These include all newborn babies in high-risk communities, policemen and prison officers who are likely to encounter blood in the course of their duties with wounded or violent people, and the families of known carriers. That is not a mutually

exclusive group, but it gives an indication of the sort of people who are covered.

The government began routine hepatitis B vaccination of all Aboriginal children at birth in 1988. In 1989, the government submitted a proposal to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to vaccinate all Aboriginal children from birth to 12 years of age. That would have been undertaken at a cost of \$1.3m. However, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs rejected that proposal. Later in 1989, DAA offered \$500 000 for a vaccination education program to be developed in consultation with Aboriginal medical services. The low level of funding was for children up to 5 years of age and covered 1575 children in the Alice Springs and Barkly regions. The remaining 2517 children were intended to be covered under later funding. In June this year, the Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Commission offered \$450 000 to the Territory, only \$50 000 of which was for the Department of Health and Community Services' programs in conjunction with Aboriginal medical services. The remainder was to go direct to the Anyinginyi Congress and the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. A request has been made to ATSIC to provide adequate funding for the vaccination program in the 1990-91 financial year.

This has been a matter of some frustration for me in relation to this program. It is an example of some of the issues of concern arising as a result of the ideological positions being adopted by ATSIC in respect of independent health services. In respect of this hepatitis B program, our departmental assessments were that, for \$276 496, the Department of Health and Community Services could vaccinate 3500 children and, for \$376 601, the Aboriginal medical services could vaccinate 600 children. On that pro rata basis, with the allocation of \$450 000, we could have vaccinated every Aboriginal child in that age range throughout the Northern Territory through the Department of Health and Community Services - that is 4100 children. Because ATSIC insisted that \$400 000 of the \$450 000 had to go to the independent health services, only about 1500 children will be vaccinated.

I think that is a gross waste of money simply to promote an ideological position taken by the ATSIC organisation. It is a matter of some real concern. I have taken the matter up with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. As usual, it is very difficult to get a response on this type of request. It is very similar to what occurred, unfortunately, with the marginalisation of Aboriginal health at the National Health Ministers' Conference, with the formation of those new Aboriginal health organisations through ATSIC rather than through the health organisations of the federal government. I am very concerned about many of those problems.

I would like to make the point that, although hepatitis B is considered to be a mild disease, it can cause permanent liver damage. It is endemic in Aboriginal communities and usually it is acquired in early childhood, with most individuals then developing an immunity. Earlier studies in Australia and overseas have shown that the risk of hepatitis B infection is greatest for children of Asian and southern European origin, and for Aboriginal children. The Menzies School of Health Research study confirms this. Medical research has shown that there is a small risk of hepatitis B transmission between children at kindergarten and an even smaller risk between children at primary school. The study could provide no evidence to suggest that transmission has occurred at school.

Other studies have shown that some children become infected with hepatitis B at or around the time of birth, and others become infected in the home or community environment within the first few years of life.

Hepatitis B is highly infectious and is transmitted by exchange of body fluids during sexual intercourse, through contact with infected blood and even through contact with open sores. The risk of transmission is increased in situations involving overcrowded living conditions, contaminated water supplies, poor housing and sanitation, and high levels of skin infection. Generally, the risk of infection is low for older children and adults but immunisation is available. People needing advice as to the advisability of immunisation should contact their doctor or their local Community Health Centre.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr BAILEY (Wanguri)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the Minister for Transport and Works made a number of comments relating to me personally, and I feel I need to correct the record. The first demonstrated the total ignorance of the minister. He held up a page from a 4-page newsletter and said: 'Doesn't the honourable member bother putting his name or any other information that identifies where it comes from'. That action shows the sheer idiocy of the honourable member in not ...

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order. I ask the honourable member for Wanguri to withdraw the words 'sheer idiocy'.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw the words.

Mr SPEAKER: Unreservedly.

Mr BAILEY: Unreservedly, I withdraw the words 'sheer idiocy'.

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member was given leave to provide a personal explanation. He is making a speech regarding the content of his newsletter and various other matters.

Members interjecting

Mr SPEAKER: There was a point of order in relation to some of the terminology the honourable member used but, at this stage, I do not believe that the statement that he is making is contrary to standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the honourable minister the lack of information given to indicate where that part of the newsletter came from. It is part of a 4-page newsletter that carries quite clearly the name 'John Bailey's Wanguri Electorate Newsletter' on the front of it. If the person who passed the copy to him had given him the entire newsletter, perhaps he would have had that information.

Secondly, the honourable minister stated that the reference in the newsletter to the fact that I had received assurances, following my initiation of inquiries, that the specifications for operating procedures would be changed, is incorrect. Information was brought to my attention regarding deficiencies in the tender procedures for the new hospital incinerator. I made inquiries with the New South Wales State Pollution Control Commission regarding that and received from that body information that was basically a document called 'Notes on Biomedical Waste Incineration'. They sent copies to the Conservation Commission too, which was the first time any Northern Territory department had had copies ...

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing order 57, in relation to personal explanations, says that 'having obtained leave from the Chair, a member may explain matters of a personal nature'. The honourable member is debating the contents of a document and advice he has received.

Mr SPEAKER: The standing order that the honourable Attorney-General is referring to, standing order 57, allows that there be no debate in regard to the personal statement that an honourable member is making.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I thank you.

This information was received in the Northern Territory by both my office and that of the Minister for Conservation. They pursued that information. I agreed that, from information that I had received initially, the original questions that I raised with the State Pollution Control Commission did not appear to be the major problem. However, the information based in that document did allude to there being 'problems with the operating procedure as specified in the tender document'.

I asked then for a meeting with a Mr Allan White of the Department of Transport and Works ...

Mr Hatton: A ministerial officer, I believe.

Mr BAILEY: A ministerial officer, Mr Allan White, with 2 engineers from the Department of Transport and Works. I had a long discussion with them and an agreement reached was that the problem related to the ability for the incinerator to be operated at 2 different burn temperatures. The tender document suggested that the higher temperature should be used for cytotoxic waste and the lower temperature for other biomedical waste. It was pointed out quite clearly in this document that the higher temperature was needed for all biomedical waste, and I received an assurance from Allan White that the directions for the operation of the incinerator would be that it would operate at the higher temperature for all materials that were considered in any way dangerous through producing dioxins and furans and that, if the operating procedure could not be guaranteed, then the switching device that adjusted it between one temperature and the other would be taken out of service. He stated quite categorically also that the original reason for installing the incinerator was as a cost-saving measure, a fact which has never been disputed. However, he added that, if there were any risk of producing dioxins and furans, increased cost would have to be incurred as a result of running the incinerator at the higher temperature.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Ophthalmology Services at RDH and Fogg Dam

Mr HATTON (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, during the adjournment debate last evening, the member for Koolpinyah raised some questions in respect of ophthalmology services at Royal Darwin Hospital. As well, she raised some issues associated with Fogg Dam. In respect of the Fogg Dam issues, I am obtaining more comprehensive information before providing an answer.

However, in respect of ophthalmology services, I can respond that, at the Royal Darwin Hospital, we have 1 full-time plus 1 sessional ophthalmologist. The full-time ophthalmologist is an overseas-qualified person whose qualifications are fully recognised in Australia. Currently, he is on leave and a locum British ophthalmologist is working in the hospital at this time. In addition, a 'rotating' Registrar from Sydney Eye

Hospital comes to Royal Darwin Hospital. Waiting times for eye surgery are virtually non-existent. We have 12 Aboriginal patients, some of whom have not even decided to have surgery at this stage. They are still considering their position. There is virtually no waiting time for surgery.

As for eye clinics, at one time there was a 2-month delay in appointments because we were not sure the locum was coming. However, most people were told to ring about now because they could have earlier appointments if the locum had arrived. In the south, it is common for people to wait much longer for their appointments. I am advised that there are waits of about 18 months for access to ophthalmology services. Here, access is available almost straight away. The recent 2-month delay was to satisfy the ophthalmologist coming in.

With our full-time specialist, plus Dr Mahmood in the private sector, and with part-time sessions plus another private ophthalmologist in the town, demand is such that it would be unlikely to support any more specialists in this field. Some 12 months ago, the waiting list for surgery was 6 months. Now it is non-existent. This is because our full-time specialist has been going out to remote areas, determining problems and working hard to reduce the waiting lists. I have no way of finding out what the waiting times are on the private lists, but I believe that the information I have given satisfactorily answers the honourable member's question.

Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In this House in February of 1989, the minister said that he was confident that he would be able to confirm a major development by Henry and Walker on Myilly Point 'before the end of the year'. That was before the end of 1989. It is now 5 years since the government entered into an arrangement with Henry and Walker over that land, and not a sod has been turned. How long is the minister prepared to support his deal, when the favoured developer has patently failed to provide a single job on the most valuable development site in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would be aware that a proposal was put to the government before the end of last year. We referred the developer to the Darwin City Council because of areas of council land that impinged on the proposal. As I said last year, the matter cannot go on for ever. However, we must bear in mind that the use of the site is constrained by the university which will be there for at least another 6 years. I can definitely assure honourable members that a proposal was put and that there will be some further work done regarding the time frames involved. Obviously, the situation must be freed up to ensure that a valuable area can be developed, but developed in a way that is beneficial to all of us.

Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Am I to assume from his answer that the government is looking at an extension of the exclusivity period for Henry and Walker over this land until the Northern Territory University vacates the remainder of the area? If that is not the case, what time scale is the government looking at?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's assumption, the answer is no. In relation to the second part of the question, I refer him to the answer I made last year

Mosquito Control

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What progress has been made towards implementing the recommendations of the Mosquito Task Force report prepared by his department and the Darwin City Council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Karama has more than a passing interest in this subject, as has the member for Leanyer. Since the day they were elected, both have been promoting the cause of mosquito control in the northern suburbs of Darwin. In his maiden speech in this House, the member for Karama referred to the concerns that the people in his electorate had about the continuing mosquito problems emanating from the Leanyer Swamp area.

The government has been doing extensive work in that area since that time. I am pleased to update honourable members on the latest developments that are occurring to address this very serious problem for the people in the northern suburbs who live in the vector range of mosquitoes at Leanyer. The transmission of diseases by mosquitoes is a major problem in the Territory. Other than the ever-present threat of malaria, transmission of the Ross River virus occurs in the Northern Territory on an annual basis. My Department of Health and Community Services has a comprehensive surveillance and control program. This program is operating so well that dengue fever is not present in the Northern Territory in spite of a current outbreak in Queensland.

To further understand mosquito disease control, my department has undertaken studies on the basic biology of the *Anopheles faranti* complex which is the primary vector of malaria in the south-west Pacific. In conjunction with the Menzies School of Health Research, the department has developed and perfected a DNA probe which is now ready for use. This has been accomplished after 2 years of research at a cost of \$30 000 per annum. In preliminary investigations, this probe has been successful in identifying the various members of the species complex for adults, larvae and even dried museum specimens. This will be useful in ecological and habitat studies required for malaria vector control. Further collaboration with the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has developed additional techniques of identification of these mosquitoes as well as lists of all viruses carried by the mosquitoes.

My department conducts a helicopter control program against salt-marsh mosquitoes, principally in the Darwin and Alice Springs regions, with an annual budget of \$50 000. This is further supported by a combined mosquito engineering program, involving the Darwin City Council, to eliminate breeding areas by engineering drainage. This involves an annual budget of \$180 000. I am pleased to report that a major maintenance program in drains around Darwin has been largely completed and that the drains are mosquito-free.

A Northern Territory disease control program has been instigated at a cost of \$35 000 per annum to assist with direct mosquito control in the population centres of Jabiru, Darwin and Alice Springs. Recently, Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the report which suggested the need for a better resourced mosquito control program and the establishment of a Mosquito Control Advisory Committee. The committee will be of particular value in reviewing program performance, disseminating information to the community, interpreting information from the community, and assisting in the decision-making process in respect of contingency options. It will advise me through the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health and Community Services.

The committee will be modelled on others which have been effective elsewhere in Australia. It will include the following members: a representative of the Medical Entomology Branch and another from the Communicable Diseases Branch; a medical practitioner; a member of the Legislative Assembly; an alderman of the Darwin City Council; and a representative of the Environment Unit of the Conservation Commission. I can advise honourable members that the Legislative Assembly representative will be the member for Karama who clearly has a direct interest in the matter from an electorate viewpoint, an interest which has been apparent since he was elected in 1983. In addition, there will be 2 community representatives and a nominee from the Department of Defence.

The committee will meet twice yearly or as required, and we will be kept informed on the current status and performance of elements of the mosquito control program. Sufficient members of the committee were appointed to allow an inaugural meeting on 8 August at which agreement was reached on the general areas of interest. My department agreed to provide secretariat functions, and I expect the remaining vacancies on the committee to be filled soon.

One important element highlighted in the report of the task force was the responsibility of the Department of Defence as the owner of a large section of the land containing mosquito breeding sites close to Darwin's northern suburbs. Recently, I have written to the Minister for Defence, Mr Robert Ray, seeking his financial support for remedial works on defence land. These works, which largely comprise restoring land pitted by bomb craters, are essential if our mosquito control program is to be effective. The estimated cost of such rectification works is \$200 000. I have not yet had a response from the federal minister, but I will keep honourable members informed about developments. In respect of the financing of this rectification work, the committee has proposed that the 3 levels of government - Commonwealth, Territory and local - contribute on a pro-rata basis, according to the proportion of land area which they control within the vector area. I think that is an eminently reasonable approach. The Northern Territory government has accepted the proposal for the commitment of funds on that basis, as has the Darwin City Council. The only level of government which has made no commitment at all in that area is the Commonwealth. I assure honourable members that I will keep pressing the Commonwealth to meet its environmental obligations to the people of the northern suburbs.

Myilly Point Development

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Mr Speaker, I refer the minister to an answer that he gave in this Assembly on 21 February 1989: 'The development rights for Myilly Point are in the hands of Henry and Walker. As I said, there is no time constraint on the developer. Of course, the government would not allow those rights to extend indefinitely'. This morning, he said that the government was considering time constraints on Henry and Walker. When will the government take a decision to stop this farce whereby a developer can hold up development of a prime piece of real estate in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a pity we have to keep on giving answers to the Leader of the Opposition because he does not listen to what he is told. He likes to ignore anything which informs him of the facts. I am glad he referred back to that answer because it stated that the exclusivity would not exist forever.

Mr Smith: It has been a long time.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, there he goes again. He is not interested. The community knows that that is one of his big problems. One of these days he may wake up to that, and then we might be in a bit of trouble.

Quite plainly, the government's attitude now is that no exclusivity exists. The government would certainly entertain any proposal from any other developer that would do justice to the site. The answer that I gave

in February referred to that course of action. However, the Leader of the Opposition does not want to understand what is going on. He would rather try to make a fuss and grab a headline. I cannot help him if he does not want to understand, but he certainly wastes the time of the House and community by going over these matters continuously.

Racing Industry

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

Can the minister advise the House on the progress of the racing industry in the Northern Territory, particularly after what must be considered the most successful Darwin Cup ever held?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the results of the Darwin Cup Carnival are the best on record - a record field, a record number of visitors and participants, and an excellent carnival overall.

Mr Vale: And a winner for Alice Springs.

Mr FINCH: And, of course, as the member for Braitling has prompted, a win to Lord Chamberlain, a horse owned and trained in Alice Springs by John Turner.

It was an exciting finale to a month of racing, and I need to commend Ted Bailey, the Board of the Darwin Turf Club, and its Secretary, Paul Cattermole, for an excellent job done again. The club has done a tremendous amount to improve the facilities over the years, and much of that work has been supported by funds that it has received from the TAB. I need to remind honourable members that the TAB is flourishing. It has the greatest growth rate in Australia and has come from something like an \$18m turnover in 1985 to some \$45m to date. Those profits are put to very good use in supporting the racing industry throughout the Northern Territory, thus returning to the punters a large proportion of their investment dollars in the form of improved racing facilities and amenities.

The Bennett Report, which was adopted 3 years ago, recommended levels of funding which have now been exceeded due to those improvements in the TAB turnover, and that trend will continue. We are looking at better broadcasting facilities and, as I advised members last year, we have been waiting for the federal Minister for Transport and Communications to approve a limited broadcast licence for that purpose. That will be a radio network that will operate off the Imparja satellite providing a comprehensive racing broadcast system to people not only in remote areas of the Northern Territory, but right throughout the Northern Territory and interstate.

When the former federal minister was in Darwin, just before the federal election, he did give an undertaking that, if they were returned to power, that approval would be forthcoming. It has been a little slow. Some further reviews have been conducted in Canberra but we hope that, before long, that approval will be forthcoming and will enable the provision of a better facility for those punters who would like not only to take advantage of the telephone system to the TAB to place bets but who wish to hear the race called whilst at their homes, while they are doing their gardening, sitting on the verandah or driving their cars. When we get that licence, and we trust that the federal minister will not hold that up much longer, that facility will be put into place immediately. A good return will help

to increase TAB turnover and, once again, that will help to promote racing. The carnival was excellent and a great time was enjoyed by all. Many compliments were received from interstate visitors, trainers, jockeys and tourists who are interested in the racing game. I finish by offering my congratulations to one and all of those involved in the Darwin Cup Carnival.

Kava

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

What procedures has he put in place in relation to the restriction of kava sales to remote communities? What success or otherwise has been achieved through the consultation process which his department is undertaking in relation to the sale of kava generally?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thought I had answered a question along those lines on Tuesday, but I am happy to answer the question because kava is a really important matter, particularly in the electorate of the member for Arnhem. Briefly, without reiterating all the matters that were dealt with in a previous answer that I gave earlier this week, I will state that kava control was introduced on 12 June, if I remember correctly, under section 90 of the Consumer Protection Act. Kava was declared a prescribed substance. The declaration stated that, from that date, it was illegal to supply or sell kava except with the approval of myself, as the Minister for Health and Community Services, and then only under such conditions as I as the minister would approve. After I announced that in the May sittings, I commenced a wide-ranging consultative process throughout the communities in Arnhem Land where kava was in use. I might say that there was no chance of any approval ever being issued to a community which was not already using kava.

Secondly, I continue to support the principle that communities must accept responsibility for their own behaviour and, to that extent, that they should be confronted with the facts of the situation and expected to make some responsible decisions themselves. That is a genuine process of self-determination which I strongly support. In that process, however, as I have said to the communities, I have public health responsibilities as the Minister for Health and Community Services. That being the case, even if communities said that they wanted kava, I would impose such restrictions as were necessary to avoid any harmful consequences of kava sale.

Those were the points I made to the communities and I have been encouraging them to move voluntarily to seek the banning of kava. Two communities - Galiwinku and Maningrida - agreed to the placing of a ban on kava and that has been implemented. Kava can no longer be legally supplied to those communities. Warruwi and Ramingining decided that they would like some kava supplies, and we have granted licences to allow it to be sold by the respective community councils, with no individual sellers of kava and with a maximum availability of 50 g per person per day. That level was set on the basis of advice from the Menzies School of Health Research, which says that the consumption of 100 g of kava per person per day is injurious to health. We set the limit at 50 g on the basis of keeping it below the level that the Menzies School of Health and Research advised would be harmful. There has been considerable negotiation about that because the communities have been trying to increase that limit. However, I can advise that kava consumption in Ramingining has decreased from in the order of 10 bags - a 75% reduction in consumption.

In Milingimbi, 2 diametrically-opposed views are held within the community resulting in quite a difficult situation. With the Drug and Alcohol Bureau, I am seeking to assist a resolution. There is a very strong pro-kava lobby and a very strong anti-kava lobby. Through the Drug and Alcohol Bureau, we have offered to conduct a plebiscite of the community with a secret ballot arrangement to alleviate some of the pressures being imposed on people there.

We have not heard anything from Gapuwiyak. Certainly, no legal supplies are allowed into Gapuwiyak.

Mr Leo: What about petrol sniffing?

Mr HATTON: The member for Nhulunbuy asks about petrol sniffing in those areas. In some communities, petrol sniffing has re-emerged. It is a cyclical problem. The department and the Substance Abuse Advisory Committee, which comprises senior Aboriginal people throughout Arnhem Land, are addressing the problem. The department is actively involved in providing counselling and substance abuse support programs within the communities.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health and Community Services will restrict his answer to the original question that was asked by the member for Arnhem in regard to kava, not pick up interjections from the member for Nhulunbuy in relation to petrol sniffing.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I advise that kava is a concern. In the end, communities are making decisions for themselves and they must live with the consequences of the decisions that they take. It is important that the process of self-determination is backed up by public education programs to discourage substance abuse and to provide alternative solutions to their problems.

Child-Care Centres - Screening of Staff

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I refer him to commitments made during the Wanguri by-election. What progress has been made towards implementation of a screening system for child-care centre relief staff which was promised last year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during the Wanguri by-election last year, a couple of incidents involving child-care centre relief staff gained considerable publicity. As a consequence, the Chief Minister undertook that the Children's Services Branch would develop a program to assist child-care centres in the screening of people who take up duties within the centres, in particular relief staff. In doing that, it has always been emphasised that the fundamental responsibility for screening and selection of staff must rest with the employer. We will not accept the ultimate responsibility for deciding the appropriateness of a particular staff member. The employers are expected to exercise their duty of care in the selection of their staff. They can do that through the normal process of interviewing and checking on past employment to determine whether there are any reasons why it may be inappropriate for certain persons to work within a child-care centre. We will not place that responsibility on the department. We will supply support to the child-care centres in the process of their own decision-making.

The incidents that occurred in 1989 highlighted the difficulties faced by child-care centres in checking the bona fides of casual staff in particular. The government suggested that the services of the Northern Territory Police Force could be used for this purpose but was also mindful of the individual's right to privacy. Following consultation with child-care providers and licensees, the government agreed to provide a voluntary screening service. From this month and as of this week, people wishing to work as relief staff in child-care centres in the Northern Territory may apply to be placed on a list, following which their bona fides and police records will be checked prior to their registration for consideration for employment by child-care centres. As I said, this system should not be viewed as a professional registration scheme for children's services staff. Placement on the list is not a prerequisite for employment in child-care centres. However, the service has been established to assist licensees of child-care centres with the time-consuming process of preliminary screening of casual staff. Licensees will remain responsible for the interviewing, selection and appointment of all permanent and relief staff.

The cost of establishing and operating the scheme will be borne by the government for a trial period of 12 months, when the scheme will be reviewed. The service will be managed by the Northern Territory Children's Services Bureau, located at Shop 14, Casuarina Plaza. A 008 toll-free telephone number will be available for callers from outside the Darwin area. No system of screening can provide a guarantee as to the conduct or performance of child-care staff. This is the licensee's responsibility. This scheme is intended to provide support to child-care service providers in carrying out the valuable and demanding role of offering good quality care for young children.

Powerline to Cosmo Howley Mine

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is it a fact that the Power and Water Authority has spent \$4.2m building a powerline to the wrong mine? Is it a fact that the line was built in the full knowledge that there was no contract with the Cosmo Howley mine to use the power? Is it also a fact that, prior to the line being built, a separate wing of the minister's administration had approved AGL signing up Cosmo Howley to use gas turbine generators for its electricity needs and that AGL had a binding contract with Cosmo Howley for a period of 10 years? Is it a fact that, as a result of this, the \$4.2m powerline has never been used? In light of the minister's efforts in the area of power saving, which he spoke about yesterday, does he not regard this performance as abysmal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should spend a little more time in the northern part of the Northern Territory. That story is so old that Dave Nason of Channel 8 did an interview on the subject 2 weeks ago, alleging that I had approved a powerline which was not connected to anything and was simply rusting away. What is more, the story is not true.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr COULTER: Do you want to hear the answer or not? Just sit down and relax, and you will learn something.

It has been my intention to develop the Northern Territory electricity grid since I became the minister responsible for the Power and Water Authority. There is ample evidence of progress in that area, including the 132 kV line to Katherine. There are also a number of proposals to develop the grid in the member for Stuart's electorate. I will give him copy of a booklet entitled 'The Northern Territory Energy Strategy' which outlines our plans for the power grid and how we wish to go about providing electricity to Northern Territory consumers. It is my intention, wherever possible, to replace all fuel oil generation of electricity in order to ensure that electricity costs in the Northern Territory do not increase. We have not had an electricity price increase since October 1986, when the Chief Minister of the day was none other than Ian Tuxworth. The proposed powerline to Jabiru is another good example of the strategy.

Mr Ede: No, no, no.

Mr COULTER: I will get back to your question.

Mr Ede: You will get back to it, will you? You are still trying to think of an answer.

Mr COULTER: I want merely to explain my approach. We talk about microeconomic reform. That is the placement of infrastructure throughout the Northern Territory in order to allow mines to open.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! My colleague asked a specific question about the powerline to Cosmo Howley. So far, that question has not been answered at all. It was fair enough for you to admonish the unfortunate Minister for Health and Community Services for drifting away from the subject.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Are you reflecting on a decision of the Chair?

Mr LEO: No, Mr Speaker. I am just asking for a sense of balance. If you are going to get up the Minister for Health, get up the Minister for Mines and Energy as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In terms of consistency, the Minister for Health and Community Services was responding to questions from you which were not being directed through the Chair, which conduct I found to be out of order. I find that, in his response, the Minister for Mines and Energy is answering the member for Stuart's question in regard to power, electricity grids, and the philosophy and the policy of the government of the day. There is no point of order.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, of course, we could run power out to Jabiru, and that was part of the proposal for the 132 kV line to Katherine. However, we were not allowed to run powerlines through a national park. That was what Senator Richardson told us, which was illegal by the way. He had no right to stop that. This occurred after we had received sacred sites avoidance for the line site, and it was knocked back.

At present, we are operating privately most of the power grid system, including the power generation at Cosmo Howley by AGL. The EDI proposal, which is the line that the honourable member is talking about from Pine Creek to Cosmo Howley, could be considered to be another generator. The 3 generators which have been installed at Cosmo Howley by AGL are running flat out. There is no reserve there, and the powerline across to Cosmo Howley was put there to provide continuity of service so that, at the flick

of a switch, we would be able to provide it with electricity from EDI. It would be very simple to do.

We have just signed up to come off that same line. It is acting as another turbine in order to provide continuity. That is what electricity backup and continuity is all about ...

Mr Smith: It has not been connected.

Mr COULTER: If you will give me time, I will have an electricity grid right across the Northern Territory that you can go up to with a set of jumper leads and start up whatever industry you like. That is what will happen.

Mr Ede: It has never been used.

Mr COULTER: Another line is to come off that powerline that has never been used, going to the Western Mining Corporation's Goodall Mine. The tenders have been put out on that, and I expect it to be completed by October this year. That line will be energised. It will pass very close to Woolwonga and that will be linked as well.

Mr Smith: When?

Mr COULTER: To Woolwonga?

Mr Smith: Yes.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the Woolwonga project is held up for a number of reasons, but mostly because of the road crossing at Cosmo Howley. The Department of Transport and Works is assessing the safety aspects involved with the number of trucks that would be crossing the road ...

Mr Smith: Put in an overpass.

Mr COULTER: I ask the Leader of the Opposition what he would do. Would he allow the trucks to cross without any safety features?

Mr Smith: I would get them to beep horns: boop, boop, boop!

Mr COULTER: Horns? And they go boop, boop, boop - now there is a technical answer from the Leader of the Opposition! I did not think that he had that road engineering design-and-construction attitude, but that is the answer that Territorians or people in a Greyhound bus can expect. As they come up over the top of the Hayes Creek hill, I hope that the Leader of the Opposition's early warning signals will be working - the boop, boop, boop. I can imagine the passengers popping their heads out of the windows of the bus as 150-t trucks run across in front of them. We plot the buses coming down that hill, and they travel very fast indeed. I do not think the road safety aspect and controls suggested by the Leader of the Opposition will be acceptable.

However, that is why the Woolwonga project is held up at present. It would add another \$1m to the cost of building that road. Let me go down the road a little further to Mt Todd. A huge electricity supply is required there, and powerlines to carry it.

Mr Speaker, I will circulate the Northern Territory government's energy strategy which outlines the grid system that we will put in place. In some

areas, electricity towers will be required. I suppose I will need to dress them up with green branches and nests for the birds so that I can appease the environmental group which is opposed to transmission lines of any sort going anywhere. However, I will do that, Mr Speaker, and we will have a grid. We will reduce electricity costs in the Northern Territory or at least maintain them at today's level by providing that grid right across the Territory. We simply cannot afford to generate electricity using oil or fuel at today's prices.

Mr Ede: They have gas.

Mr COULTER: That is right. And they will have gas at ...

Mr Ede: Which you agreed to them having. Then you put a thing in here which has sat for 12 months. Isn't that incompetent?

Mr COULTER: They have gas and they have 3 turbines travelling flat-strap all day. Let us take it back to something you may know something about. If a turbine happened to throw a fan belt or some damage occurred, there would be no backup. Cosmo Howley was the first mine to go on to gas ...

Mr Smith: Show us where your contract is.

Mr COULTER: I will show you, and I will take you to the opening. Mr Speaker, I make this promise to the Leader of the Opposition. I will take him out for the energising of that line in 12 weeks time ...

Mr Smith: But it will not be at Cosmo Howley, will it?

Mr COULTER: ... and I will allow him to throw the switch to energise that line.

Mr Smith: Thank you.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I would love to have him out there, and that is a promise that I make to him - provided the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is hanging off the wires at the other end!

Woolwonga Project

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I think we can read into his previous answer that it is true that a \$4.2m transmission line was put in place to Cosmo Howley. It has never been used and will not be used for that purpose. Is it true that a major stumbling block in the negotiations concerning Woolwonga is the government's insistence that a dedicated road be put in for the cartage of material from Woolwonga through to the existing plant at Cosmo Howley, and that the cost of this dedicated road plus an underpass, overpass or whatever is required at the Stuart Highway intersection, has been costed at \$6.5m? Is it equally true that the anticipated heavy-load traffic on that road is about 1 truck per hour?

ANSWER

Mr COULTER: No, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: It is 1 every 2 hours then, is it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Disadvantaged Schools and Country Areas Programs

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Some time ago, the minister approached his federal counterpart and federal members about inequities in the federal government's Disadvantaged Schools and Country Areas Programs in respect of Territory children. Has the federal government responded to the minister's approaches?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that this has been of ongoing concern to the Northern Territory government for 7 years. We feel that we are being disadvantaged through the inequities of the formula systems that are applied to these programs. The problem is that the funding formulas used for the Disadvantaged Schools and Country Areas Programs at present do not correctly identify the target groups. This results in the Northern Territory receiving far less of these program funds than it should. The Commonwealth government has procrastinated for a number of years on this matter. It is quite clear that the reason for that is that it is looking after the interests of the southern states. It is not interested in our concerns about the provision of the correct funding formulas for disadvantaged kids in the Northern Territory.

The current formula is supposed to allocate resources on the number of persons living 100 km and 150 km from a 10 000 population centre. Persons 100 km plus are being counted once and those over 150 km are counted twice for funding purposes. There are 37 000 persons in the Northern Territory living more than 150 km from 10 000 population centres. Victoria, which has merely 3684 such persons - using 1986 census data - attracts almost 4 times as much funding as the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory receives 3.7% of the national funding while Victoria receives almost 15%.

The Commonwealth is well aware of this situation because of the repeated and ongoing representations of the Northern Territory. However, it has done nothing to redress the situation. The anomalies in the national funding formula are the cause of Northern Territory children having only limited access to the programs that target specifically their special needs. For us to give the disadvantaged students the opportunity to have access to the Country Areas Program and the Disadvantaged Schools Programs, we have to rotate the schools. That is not acceptable to the Northern Territory government and I do not think it is acceptable to any member of this Assembly. Many members represent constituents whose children are disadvantaged as a result of living in areas further than 150 km away from 10 000 population centres.

A number of members have contacted me regarding this. The member for Stuart has written to me on this problem. I think that he was unaware of the Commonwealth aspects of this matter and I am sure that he will take that up. I offered a briefing to Senator Bob Collins and Warren Snowdon some time ago. I know that Senator Collins has taken up the issue and is fighting with us to ensure that Territorians are given a better deal. I do not know about Warren Snowdon. Unfortunately, when we try to obtain dollars to help Territorians, the opposition seems to fight us on so many occasions. I refer in particular to the Northern Territory University.

I urge members to look at the situation realistically and to contact the federal government. I reiterate that the Northern Territory has 2.5 times more isolated persons than has Victoria, yet Victoria receives nearly 4 times the funding that the Northern Territory receives. That is a disgrace and it has to be addressed. I have had no response from the federal government. I hope that members pursue the matter with vigour, and I can assure them that the Northern Territory government will do so. Our formula needs to be based on the needs of people in the Northern Territory. We need to ensure that all disadvantaged students have access to the Disadvantaged Schools Program and the Country Areas Program.

Berrimah Research Farm Frontage

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I assume the minister has the interests of his department at heart and that he knows the importance of agricultural research to the people on the land. Has he retrieved the Stuart Highway frontage of the Berrimah Research Farm which was alienated for the now failed international grammar school project? For some time, this land has had a large weed burden and the remains of excavation. It is a disgrace and does nothing for the morale of the employees of the Berrimah Research Farm. It is not appreciated by professional staff as this valuable agricultural land should be put to proper agricultural research use again.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries is not responsible for the area of land referred to.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I know that. You have to get it back.

Mr REED: I understand that that land is tied up with legal processes following the consequences of the international grammar school project.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to comments made by the Chief Minister last night on the 7.30 Report, in which he confirmed what the opposition has come to suspect during the last few days. He said: 'There is no independent inquiry. There is no inquiry at all'. I indicate to the Chief Minister that I have circulated a motion in respect of a resolution of this problem and I advise that I will be seeking to move the suspension of standing orders to allow debate on that motion. However, my question is as follows. Will the Chief Minister now place on the record in this Assembly, firstly, that Mr Mulholland is not conducting an independent inquiry into the police investigation of corruption allegations and, secondly, that Mr Mulholland is not even conducting an inquiry and cannot and will not accept independent evidence from people who approach him?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have the full transcript of last night's interview but it is certainly available to the honourable members opposite. I am surprised that the honourable member has to ask the question to get the information. On Tuesday 1 May this year, I made a statement to this Assembly specifically outlining Mr Mulholland's role in oversighting police

investigations into 3 specific cases of some sensitivity in the Northern Territory. There is no ambiguity in anyone's mind, other than the mind of the member for MacDonnell, as to what Mr Mulholland's role is. His role has not been changed in the months since he was engaged by the Northern Territory government to act in this very important role. His role has not changed at all. In relation to the other matters raised by the honourable member, I suggest that they might be dealt with through processes which the Leader of the Opposition is proposing to utilise in this House.

Telecommunications

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

This question is addressed to the minister in his capacity as minister responsible for telecommunications in the Northern Territory. Has he examined the various scenarios now being considered by the federal government to change Australia's telecommunications system? If so, what advantages or disadvantages would accrue to the Territory as a result of such change?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. Indeed, I have sought a preliminary study of this complex issue as it relates to the Northern Territory. In summary, it seems that the Territory ought to be deeply concerned about the progress of the raging debate, particularly as it affects the fate of Telecom's community service obligations, known as CSOs. The federal government has put the cost of CSOs at \$230m per year. This amount equals the value of services which Telecom provides to customers not deemed to be profitable. In essence, Telecom uses its profitable services to cross-subsidise its non-profitable services. According to Telecom, the Territory is cross-subsidised substantially by profitable services in the eastern states. This means that we will have to be vigilant to ensure that, in any deregulation process, Territory residents are not affected adversely by the increased charges.

Deregulation does not necessarily mean that Territory residents will be lumbered with higher charges because, without doubt, CSOs are a federal government responsibility. It could be, for example, that the federal government would place a levy or a special tax on Telecom and other telecommunication carriers to fund the CSOs. Such a levy would then be returned to the carrier providing the most cost-effective delivery of the CSO. If we can get an assurance from the federal government that CSOs will be met, deregulation should not adversely affect Territory residents. In fact, it should provide substantial benefits, because more efficient systems should provide cheaper STD and IDD rates with reductions of as much as 30%. That is the theory, although the reality is really in the lap of the gods. The whole issue is in the Canberra melting pot at present, where it is the subject of bitter factional infighting in the Labor Party.

The Beazley option would combine Telecom and OTC into a 'megacom', with the sale of Aussat to an alternative carrier. The Keating option would link Aussat and OTC for a bigger sale. Then there is the left-wing option, which is to do nothing except conduct a vendetta against anybody who would do something. The Northern Territory government will maintain a watching brief on this issue, however it develops. The commitment of the Department of Industry and Development in this area is well known. In fact, we have taken Telecom to court for alleged overcharging in some of the remote areas of the Northern Territory. We are not going to stand by and see the Northern

Territory victimised in the bitter brawling which is taking place in the Labor Party at the moment.

Mr Ede: We will fix it.

Mr COULTER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says: 'We will fix it'.

Mr Ede: You are not game even to talk to your own people.

Mr COULTER: This is the man who decided that the factional business was so tough that he ought to get out of it. He resigned as the only member of the centre right in the Northern Territory. That is how much he will fix it.

Mr Speaker, our task will be to make sure that Territorians, who have every right to expect efficiency in their telecommunications service on a par with other Australians, are not disadvantaged in any deregulation process, should it emerge.

Section 44(1) of the Australian Constitution

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

A few weeks ago, a member of the federal parliament suggested to me that the matter of section 44(1) of the Australian Constitution and its possible breach was referred to meetings of the Attorneys-General for resolution. This section of the Constitution relates to factors that may disqualify people from becoming members of the federal parliament. Has the matter been discussed at meetings of the Attorneys-General? If so, what was the resolution and under what power was the resolution made?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter was referred to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General by the member for Sadadeen, who had collected some information, some petitions and other bits and pieces. I cannot recall the matter being part of the formal agenda of the standing committee or any discussions or resolutions occurring. I am certainly quite happy to research the records to see if the matter has ever been raised, possibly in my absence, and to provide that information to the honourable member. My recollection of the matter is that the member for Sadadeen provided some information to all Attorneys-General.

Toxic Waste Dump

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Is he aware that firefighters will refuse to attend an outbreak of fire at the Hidden Valley toxic waste dump? Does the minister accept that he does not know what chemicals are contained in the toxic cocktail now located at that dump? What contingency plans does he have to handle an outbreak of fire at the dump? Why is it that the minister has no inventory of such dumps and is thus constantly forced to react to such situations as they arise?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I realise that the honourable member has been in the House for only 12 months, but really he ought to study the administrative arrangements orders because the toxic waste disposal site is managed under the Dangerous Goods Act which is under the administrative responsibility of the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government through the Work Health Authority.

Mr Bell: The Minister for Health and Community Services and Minister for Conservation is not interested. Terrific!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, you wonder why you bother even trying to give information to the members opposite. They are not interested. They want to play politics day and night. Every time you try to give some guidance to them on something as fundamental as which minister has responsibility, you get the nonsense that comes from the member for MacDonnell.

These detailed questions should be directed to the minister who has the administrative responsibility for the management of the site. However, I will advise the honourable member that the Conservation Commission, through our Environment Protection Unit, which was established in May 1990 and which is working very effectively, has been aware of some concerns in respect of that site. Honourable members will be aware of the matter that was debated on the 7.30 Report last night. I might say that it was quite a balanced and well-presented report.

There are concerns in respect of the disposal of a number of chemical waste materials in the Northern Territory. In fact, it is a major concern in Australia. Some burning of the waste at that site did occur. That was stopped last year. The area was hard-standed, and waste was stored there. Last year, a storage facility was constructed there. Since last year, the new waste has been packaged appropriately and stored inside that warehouse and storage area. The waste that was in the hard-stand area is being identified progressively for appropriate packaging and storage.

The matter of any damage to the environment occurring as a result of what is currently being stored has been investigated. I am advised that there is no indication of any leaching into the environment. However, the Environment Protection Unit, in conjunction with the Work Health Authority, is carrying out site investigations to ensure that the site is properly cleaned.

Mr Bailey: Flammable liquids are stored next to highly toxic liquids.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, in asking the question, the honourable member commented that we did not know what was there. If he knows what is there and the authority does not, that is curious. He is saying now that he knows precisely not only what is there but where it is. He cannot have it both ways.

Mr Ede: Come on, we know.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Environment Protection Unit is checking the site. Where there had been some open pits burning, that was stopped in 1988 or 1989. I have asked for that site to be investigated to ensure there is no leaching into the environment resulting from previous practices. I have asked for those investigations to be carried out. They are being dealt with expeditiously through the Work Health Authority working to the Environment Protection Unit.

People become frightened when terms such as 'toxic waste' or 'noxious waste' are used. Fundamentally, we are talking sump oils, which we recycle at Mataranka for use in lime kilns, pool chemicals, which we are trying to get out of people's backyard sheds, and some industrial chemicals from factories. Most of the material there has been accommodated in a supermarket or a warehouse at some stage. We are relocating it away from the community to a disposal site. We are packaging it appropriately. As is occurring elsewhere in Australia, we are working towards long-term disposal. The Australian and New Zealand Environment Council has been working on this program. We need a high-temperature incineration process for the safe and environmentally-appropriate disposal of these chemicals and other wastes. Everybody knows what needs to be done, and every time a government suggests an appropriate location for it, the NIMBY syndrome is put forward - not in my back yard. The member for Barkly is very familiar with that debate. He played both sides of the coin. He promoted a site in his electorate and, when he changed party, he changed his mind.

Mr Tuxworth: Palmerston was the better site. I had to defer to that.

Mr HATTON: It is a shame that you did not tell your Cabinet colleagues at the time.

Mr Finch: That is why he sent me all around Australia to promote Tennant Creek.

Mr HATTON: Australia needs to resolve the problem of long-term disposal. In the meantime, we need to collect that waste and store it. That process is taking place. If he wishes to know the details, I ask the honourable member to refer his questions to the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government.

Toxic Waste Dump

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer the questions to the Minister for Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this indicates how well the various government departments work together on these matters. The Minister for Health and Community Services has had the benefit of a full briefing on this subject. However, there are a couple of facts that need to be stated. First, the dangerous goods reserve has been established for the last 4 or 5 years. It has been collecting dangerous or possibly dangerous substances from people's backyards and garden sheds. These are being stored there for want of the ability to destroy them. The site is fenced and it is illegal to enter it. It is patrolled by a daily security patrol. It is visited constantly by the Work Health Authority and by people who use the explosives area there.

I am not sure where the 7.30 Report obtained the supposedly amateur video that I saw on television last night. If that was an amateur video, I will go jump. I am not asking the 7.30 Report where it got the video because I know that it will not tell me. The fact is that the person or persons drove through the fence in a vehicle in order to tape that footage, and broke the law in doing so. I know that the media tends to put itself

above the law, but it is quite illegal to enter such a place. The matter is in the hands of the police and will be investigated thoroughly.

I will visit the site today. I know that much work has been done. It is a pity that the people who went out there to take the video disturbed those substances, because they can be dangerous. There is no doubt at all that they were disturbed and that also is illegal. When I visit the site, I am quite happy for a member of the media to accompany me. I will visit the site under the authority vested in me as minister and accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer of the Work Health Authority. If members of the media would like to come out, they may meet with me at midday today.

Mr Bailey: I will go with you.

Mr McCARTHY: You did not get an invitation but ...

Mr Bailey: Here we go. It is all secret, is it?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, if the member for Wanguri chooses to come, probably I could bear his presence for a short time.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Royal Darwin Hospital Incinerator

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, yesterday I was asked a question concerning the incinerator at the Royal Darwin Hospital. Subsequently, the member for Wanguri, who asked the question, made a personal explanation. As usual, the member for Wanguri had it wrong right from the start. If he cares to read Hansard, he will see that I did not make any allegations about his name not appearing on the newsletter. I was talking about the name of his party and about his photograph.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Could you advise me which section of our standing orders allows a minister to answer a question twice? He did not even indicate that he had answered inadequately in the first place. He is responding to a personal explanation made by my colleague. He is debating a personal explanation. He is not answering a question or giving new information. He was not even asked the question a second time.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Nhulunbuy makes a valid point. I thought that yesterday's debate had covered everything which needed to be known in response to the question. However, the member for Wanguri ranged quite widely in his remarks yesterday and I think that the Minister for Transport and Works is now endeavouring to clarify his own position. Is that so?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I am providing supplementary information.

Mr SPEAKER: Then do it by way of a personal explanation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr FINCH (by leave): The supplementary information is that, as stated yesterday, the basic intention is to provide a low-cost, low-fuel consumption incinerator to replace the existing facility. As a bonus, the design of the proposed incinerator would allow it to be used for elimination of cytotoxic waste. The Work Health Authority has advised that the quantities of such waste in Darwin are relatively small in comparison with those processed by southern facilities. The authority states: 'It is

difficult to determine the levels of hazardous substances likely to be released accordingly'. By way of explanation, the point is that the incinerator could be used to eliminate such waste through a process involving 1-second gas retention time at a temperature of 1100°C, starved-air primary combustion and secondary combustion conditions. That is a very short time requirement. The member for Wanguri missed the point totally when he suggested that the operating conditions of the incinerator ought to be set at that high level continuously.

Mr Bailey: I did not say that.

Mr FINCH: In fact, that would lead to a more deleterious effect on the atmosphere by burning far more fuel than would be required for normal purposes.

By way of further personal explanation, Mr Speaker, the member for Wanguri stated that he had received briefings from my ministerial officer, Allan White.

Mr Bailey: No. I said Alan White from the Department of Transport and Works. You said 'ministerial officer'.

Mr FINCH: I did not say a thing, Mr Speaker. In fact, I know which Alan White briefed the honourable member. For the record, it was Alan White the engineer, not Allan White the ministerial officer. He got that wrong.

Mr Bailey: Your colleague got it wrong.

Mr FINCH: The member for Wanguri's comments about having the standards changed were also untrue. There are no standards. As he said himself, we used notes on biomedical waste incineration from New South Wales because our expert consultants had decided that we would adopt the New South Wales guidelines. Once again, despite receiving an opportunity to explain his position, the member for Wanguri still got it wrong.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Fogg Dam

Mr HATTON (Conservation): Mr Speaker, I would like to provide an answer to a question asked by the member for Koolpinyah who, during Tuesday's adjournment debate, asked what I intended to do about the state of Fogg Dam, which she criticised. In particular, she referred to the overgrowth of weeds, an apparent lack of birdlife and the poor condition of the road access. The government is aware that there are management problems at Fogg Dam and, to this end, the Conservation Commission engaged special consultants some time ago to examine relevant management issues including hydrology, weed control, access, recreational use and aesthetics. The final draft master plan has just been submitted to the commission and is under consideration.

Vegetation growth in the dam has become a problem, partly as a result of the low water level resulting from the poor wet season and partly as a result of gradual silting up over a period of years. The consultant has recommended a possible solution to the control of weeds. The cost of that solution is estimated at between \$350 000 and \$425 000, comprising \$75 000 for the hydrological study and \$350 000 for sluice-gate water level control, partial drainage and creation of several small islands to cover the major weed areas as an alternative to drainage and removal of silt. Plant growth has possibly caused a minor shift in bird species from diving species such

as pygmy geese, to inhabitants of reeds such as rails and crakes. It should be borne in mind that there are significant seasonal changes in bird assemblages. Nevertheless, the dam remains an important breeding and refuge site for a wide range of bird species, most of which can be observed on any visit.

A contractor has already been programmed to grade the access road from the Middle Point village end, and to repair the culverts across the dam wall. It is anticipated that this work will be completed this month. Fogg Dam has been an important tourist destination for many years as evidenced by current visitor numbers, which are approximately 25 000 people per year.

Skycom

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

What action, legal or otherwise, has the Trade Development Zone Authority taken to recover moneys owed to it by a former Trade Development Zone tenant, Skycom, and how much money is owed to the authority by Skycom?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that, in fact, Skycom never actually started up in the Trade Development Zone although a factory was built for it within the zone. I would rather not say anything further on the Skycom issue as the last correspondence that I have seen in recent times suggests that legal action will be taken in this regard.

Mr Smith: By whom?

Mr COULTER: By Skycom itself.

Mr Smith: Against whom?

Mr COULTER: Against the Northern Territory government. Therefore, I would not care to comment. However, I will be happy to provide a briefing to the Leader of the Opposition on this matter if he so desires.

UNESCO Conference

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

I believe that, recently, the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs hosted an international UNESCO Conference. Could the Chief Minister advise the House of the Northern Territory government's involvement in the conference and of any outcomes of that conference?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the UNESCO Regional Seminar on Technology for Community Development in Australia, South-east Asia and the Pacific was held in Alice Springs between 9 and 11 July this year. The conference was sponsored jointly by the Northern Territory government, the University of Melbourne and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau which, as honourable members will be aware, is the organisation which fosters much of Australia's aid to developing countries around the world. It is an authority of some significance and influence.

I am advised by the Director of the Centre for Appropriate Technology, Dr Bruce Walker, and the conference organiser, Clive Scollay, that the conference was an outstanding success. In fact, Dr Kurrupu, the UNESCO program specialist from Jakarta, stated that the seminar exceeded all of UNESCO's expectations. In his concluding remarks, Dr Kurrupu claimed that, in terms of the number of delegates attending and the high level of organisation and content of the seminar, Alice Springs was highly desirable as a UNESCO seminar venue.

Mr Bell: Did you read the paper I gave, Marshall?

Mr PERRON: Many delegates among the 150 who attended also had a very positive response to the seminar. Our colleague, the Minister for

Education, opened the seminar and I understand that the member for MacDonnell presented a paper to the seminar.

Honourable members may be aware that the Centre for Appropriate Technology is an annexe organisation under the Alice Springs College of TAFE. Under the guidance of Dr Bruce Walker and his staff, CAT has grown up primarily to serve the needs of outback communities, particularly Aboriginal communities and, in doing so, it has created a whole new philosophy of what technology in the development context should be all about. I am sure that many honourable members have had the opportunity to visit the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs and that they will have been as impressed as I have with the design work that has been undertaken there and the production work involved in its various items for use in the community.

Honourable members should be aware also that the Northern Territory government sponsored 4 of the international delegates to Darwin after the conference. Before their leaving Australia, we thought it appropriate to give them the opportunity to visit relevant facilities here. They inspected the Northern Territory University, the Menzies School of Health Research and the Royal Darwin Hospital, and they took a great deal of interest in the new wheelchair project which has been designed in the Territory and will be produced here.

In conclusion, it is clear from the response to the seminar that interest in the development of appropriate technology in the Territory is very high. Indeed, the seminar has shown that CAT is among the national and international leaders in an emerging area of considerable value, not only to the Northern Territory but to those many developing countries around the world that have populations far in excess of ours but which have similar problems, particularly in regard to the health and hygiene of indigenous people, water supplies and the like. I commend Dr Bruce Walker for his initiative in having this conference held in Alice Springs. On behalf of the Northern Territory government, I was pleased to approve the degree of sponsorship that we put towards the project.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to Mr Frank Alcorta's announcement in Saturday's edition of the NT News that anybody could approach Mr Robert Mulholland. In fact, Mr Alcorta gave Mr Mulholland's telephone number and his postal address. Will the Chief Minister confirm that, as he announced in this House and elsewhere last week, people are not able to approach Mr Mulholland direct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not think that the honourable member would find recorded anywhere words from me that people cannot make their own personal approaches to Mr Mulholland. Certainly, I do not encourage it. Obviously, any person can write to any other person whose address they can find. Indeed, they can ring any other person who might answer a telephone in this country. Therefore, there is nothing to stop anybody attempting to communicate with Mr Mulholland directly. I am not encouraging it, Mr Speaker. I have said in this House on a number of occasions, as honourable members well know, that anybody with genuine concerns about possible malpractice in the Northern Territory has adequate and perfectly reasonable avenues through which to pursue their complaints. Those avenues

have been enunciated in this House and I am happy to enunciate them again and again if honourable members wish me to do so.

At this stage, it is appropriate to mention the role of the Ombudsman, who is an independent statutory officer of this parliament. Except in relation to his budgetary requirements, he does not report to the government or to the Chief Minister. He reports to this House. He has a specific role in matters concerning the investigation of complaints against the police. His role is that of an independent investigator. His powers are very wide-ranging and honourable members might like to refresh their memories concerning those powers when they deal with constituents who are a little concerned about placing their trust in the Commissioner of Police, the Secretary of the Department of Law, or the Solicitor-General. I might say here that it is interesting that such people seem to be more willing to place their trust in reporters than in the senior officers of the government.

However, the Ombudsman is independent of those senior officers of the government. He has substantial investigative powers, and he reports to this parliament. If persons are still of the mind that they believe that they cannot trust senior government officers, they have the opportunity to write directly to Mr Mulholland because this is a free country. We do not control Australia Post and we cannot intercept mail. Whilst I do not condone that avenue in these circumstances, obviously it is one that is available to people.

Local Film Production for Government

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Criticism has emerged recently from Territory film production houses about government work disappearing over the Territory's borders. Can the minister give some indication of the amount of work generated by the departments and authorities under his stewardship that is done by local production houses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be happy to provide to honourable members the general figures that I have available. In the 1989-90 financial year, the Department of Mines and Energy spent a total of \$370 242 on public relations and promotional material ranging from pamphlets, brochures, booklets and maps through to film and video production and placement of advertising in the Territory, interstate and overseas. Of that, \$280 752 or 75.8% of the total was spent locally with Territory companies. In relation to the \$89 490 spent interstate or overseas, the great bulk was for the placement of advertisements in publications like The Australian, The Financial Review, and on special Northern Territory features in the Hong Kong Standard during last year's NT Expo. The remainder was for purchase of existing, specialised material such as maps and mineral databases. There was not a single case of an interstate firm being selected for a job that could have been done in the Territory.

The Power and Water Authority spent a total of \$433 814 during the 1989-90 financial year on similar exercises. All of that money was spent with local firms. The 1989-90 budget for promotions by the Department of Industries and Development totalled \$746 840. This included assistance to industry generally for promotional activities interstate and overseas. For example, the department picked up some of the costs, a figure of \$65 000, associated with a prime time, 1-hour special on the Northern Territory shown

on Japanese television. Even so, 90% of the department's budget on these and related activities was spent with Territory firms. Of the total budget of \$746 840, only \$74 336 was spent interstate or overseas. Apart from the television special, other spending was on interstate and overseas advertising or on work associated with interstate trade exhibitions.

It should be clear, Mr Speaker, that any suggestion that promotional and public relations work is not overwhelmingly done in the Territory is very wide of the mark. The facts and figures indicate that Territory companies have been supported very strongly. To summarise, local expenditure was 76% by Department of Mines and Energy, 100% by the Power and Water Authority and 90% by the Department of Industries and Development. That meant that \$1.5m to \$2m of work went to local Territory companies.

Northern Territory Rural College

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The NT News reported last Saturday that the Katherine Rural College is facing closure. As the college was once the flagship of the Department of Education, can the minister advise the following: is the report in the newspaper correct, what has caused the fall in student numbers at the college, and what steps is he taking to ensure that the college continues its role as a support base for the cattle and horticultural industries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that the Katherine Rural College, now the Northern Territory Rural College, is a project which this government developed. We have been behind it and the Commonwealth government has also given a great deal of support to it in the past. The letter referred to by the NT News and by the honourable member was sent to the college in February of this year. To bring members up to date, I will give some details concerning the situation at the Northern Territory Rural College at that time. I was concerned that there appeared to be a decline in student numbers at that institution.

In September 1989, a forum was held at the college to examine current and future rural education and training needs in the Northern Territory. I opened the forum which was attended by representatives of industry and by training providers. I believe that some members of this Assembly were present also. From the forum, the college council requested the minister to approve a change in the name of the college in order to emphasise its Territory-wide responsibilities, and to commence discussions with the Northern Territory University with a view to establishing formal course links at the associate diploma level. Subsequently, development of 2 associate diploma courses has commenced. Ideally, the Associate Diploma in Applied Science will begin in 1991, subject to arrangements with the NTU in relation to staffing. This course is likely to attract some 20 full-time students. The Associate Diploma in Horse Husbandry, offered in association with Roseworthy Agricultural College, is scheduled to begin in March 1991. A number of informal agreements have been reached with staff scheduled to commence in 1991, and this course is likely to attract some 12 full-time students.

Evidence from interstate suggests that there is a need to upgrade certificate-level programs to associate diplomas in order to attract students. The college has embarked on this policy which will be implemented in 1991 and beyond. We believe that the situation in respect of

certificate-level courses has been a major factor in the low attendances at the college. It is a very good college with wonderful facilities that are comparable to those in other agricultural institutions throughout Australia. Unfortunately, there is no associate diploma on offer. I should mention here that we accepted the DEET proposal to become the principal off-the-job trainer for the Rural Australia Traineeship Scheme in the Northern Territory.

A number of matters were not addressed in the newspaper article and I think it is important that, for the information of members, I cover those here. The 13-week certificate in stock and station skills has received system-wide accreditation and is 50% sponsored by the pastoral industry, commercial enterprise and participants. The pre-vocational trade course is a 40-week program jointly funded by DEET and DOLAS. In 1989, all graduating students - and there were 10 of them - gained employment by way of apprenticeship. In terms of overseas training courses, the college has conducted two 13-week courses for Indonesian animal husbandry graduates. The last course finished on 3 August and had 7 participants, all senior employees of the Directorate-General of Livestock Services in Jakarta. Aboriginal special courses have also been offered. Honourable members would be aware of ongoing skills instruction for 8 Conservation Commission trainee rangers, mechanical trades courses at Daguragu for 10 CDEP employees, and mechanical trades courses held at the Northern Territory Rural College campus for 8 of the Kalano Community Association employees. A whole range of courses have been offered and have been producing results.

Discussions have been held with DEET in relation to the conduct in 1991 of 2 bridging courses for the Rural Australian Traineeship Scheme. The estimated target for 1991 is 10 full-time students per course. In adult education, the college has continued to offer animal husbandry and trades skills training programs in modular format. This program has been supported by 2 Commonwealth innovative rural education and training programs. In 1989, the cost for a full-time TAFE student - and this relates to a minimum of 540 hours - was approximately \$11 500. At present, 1 staff position is unfilled and we are awaiting decisions on new courses to be offered in 1991.

Every effort is being made by the Northern Territory Rural College to ensure that the courses that are offered are of benefit not only to people in the Northern Territory but also to people throughout Australia. The situation is the same with the university and our TAFE colleges. We are developing a network here that will be able to be utilised by people in other parts of Australia and it is important that the programs be fostered. We will continue to promote the Northern Territory Rural College. My concern was that an award needed to be offered which was of value and which people could use in future life, and that was the reason for the development of the associate diplomas.

Since that time, we have produced a series of brochures which will be distributed throughout the Northern Territory and in other parts of Australia. An example is: 'It takes more than just grooming to make a career with horses'. That relates to horse husbandry. Another example is: 'When it comes to managing cattle, it doesn't pay to be a duffer'. The brochures give the appropriate details.

Mr Ede: This sounds like really serious stuff.

Mr HARRIS: There is room in the Northern Territory for trained jackaroos and jillaroos. The contents are written in Indonesian as well, for our overseas students.

Members interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: It is not a laughing matter, Mr Speaker.

Mr Ede: It is!

Mr HARRIS: It is about time that the member for Stuart tried to get his colleagues to support us in the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: Listen sport, if you can't organise your own department, get out and let someone get in who can!

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is one of those people who say: 'It is not going to work. Let's chuck it all in. To hell with what has been put into the place'. In the Northern Territory, the Country Liberal Party government is interested in ensuring that our students have the best possible opportunities. We have Taminmin High School which is developing. The Northern Territory Rural College at Katherine will continue to be developed to look after the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory, and we will continue to develop courses that will have substance. I believe that, as a result of the actions that have been taken by the rural college, it will be able to attract students, and not only from the Territory but from the states of Australia.

Darwin Aero Club

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he confirm that the Darwin Aero Club is considering selling its fleet of aircraft in an effort to raise the finance that a move to the new north-side general aviation area would require?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, sadly, that is true. Recently, the aero club circulated a questionnaire to all financial members seeking their views on such a proposal and, of course, such a proposal is necessary, in their view, to gain ...

Mr Bell: I have not got mine yet.

Mr FINCH: I did emphasise that this had gone to financial members.

Mr Bell: When did you get this?

Mr FINCH: A week ago, Mr Speaker. Of course, I answered my questionnaire saying, in somewhat angry terms, that it was regrettable that aero club members should be faced with such an impost.

Last week, I mentioned in the Assembly that the club was facing an increase of some 300% in rental fees. Unfortunately, that is not true. It is some 560% increase in the area rate and, of course, not only does the club have now to rent the space for the club facilities and hangar/workshop, but also it has to pay rent for the apron space in front. Of course, that news was quite catastrophic in itself.

Mr Bell: What effect will that have on hire fees, Fred?

Mr FINCH: In response to the member for MacDonnell's interjection, the questionnaire asked how much more members would be prepared to pay in rental rates. The real crunch will come when the club is faced with the 10-year lease which will require that the newly-developed \$300 000 facility be relinquished to the FAC at no cost return. From the end of that lease period, rent will be charged based on the improved value of the new club house, paid for with the accumulated assets collected over 20 years in the form of some 8 aircraft - and I believe that another is on the way - owned by the members of the aero club. They will have to be sold so that the club can make the compulsory move to the north side.

The other night, in the adjournment debate, the member for Stuart went to great pains to suggest that I had misled this House in regard to these matters and in regard to comments made by Senator Collins to the Vice-President of the aero club at the recent opening of the FAC facility in response to a question, not about deregulation but about moving the general aviation people to the north side. In response to a question - and the Vice-President of the Darwin Aero Club is quite happy to confirm this publicly or otherwise - Senator Collins said: 'There will be some casualties'. He then walked off, to the amazement not only of the Vice-President but of the President of the Darwin Aero Club. That is a fact that is not to be treated lightly.

Of course, the member for Stuart suggested also that I made some inaccurate statements about the \$5m that was to be put into the small aircraft operators' transfer. It was, in fact, \$5m and, in a letter to Senator Gareth Evans on 26 February 1988, copies of which went to his colleagues, and another letter of 6 April 1988 to the new minister, Peter Morris, copies of which went to Senator Collins and Warren Snowdon, we said quite clearly that the Territory government proposed to subsidise to some 50% a move of general aviation to the north side. It will cost them \$8.2m to move to the north side and we were proposing a 50% subsidy.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr FINCH: I am quite prepared to table this for the benefit of the honourable member so that he can see for himself. I am happy to table the letter to Gareth Evans and a letter from the Department of Transport and Works to the Deputy Secretary, Transport. This was when we were looking to the federal government to transfer funds to us, and the latter letter indicated that \$4.1m was considered to be an appropriate general aviation relocation subsidy.

Mr Ede: You table yours and I will table mine.

Mr FINCH: Mine are tabled.

In actual dollars, we were looking for some \$27m. Those documents will verify that that was to be negotiated. Some 2 years later, the aero club is being forced to sell off the assets that it has built up over 20 years. It is shameful. The response from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition here and that of Senator Collins are also shameful.

Back to Dhupuma Celebrations

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of Back to Dhupuma celebrations which are to be held on the Gove Peninsula this weekend to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the

closure of that institution? Will the minister be attending those celebrations and will he assure those present that his government has finally heard and will act on the request of Aboriginal people to re-establish a post-primary educational boarding facility in east Arnhem Land, or will he ignore those celebrations and the educational needs of the Aboriginal people in that area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the celebrations, as the honourable member chooses to call them, that are taking place at present. It is not my intention to attend those activities. The whole issue of secondary education is being addressed in my review which will be out in September.

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

As minister responsible for the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, I remind him that last week was the anniversary of the new sacred sites legislation. Can he provide some details of the authority's performance during that period?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Territory government's new Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act came into force on 16 August 1989. I am sure all honourable members would recall the controversy that this legislation generated. In conjunction with various stage-managed demonstrations, a range of outrageous claims were made that the intention of the legislation was to let this government destroy sacred sites. In fact, the legislation was the strongest and the most far-sighted sacred sites legislation in Australia. That fact was lost in the rush to abuse the government made by various groups with their own political agendas.

Mr Bell: The rush by various groups! What about the rush by your crowd?

Mr MANZIE: The member for MacDonnell was one of the main instigators of pushing totally incorrect information - lies actually, Mr Speaker.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Lands and Housing referred to the purveying of lies. I would suggest that, in relation to myself and other Territorians about whom he made the allegation, it is unparliamentary and he should be asked to withdraw it unreservedly.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. I ask the Minister for Lands and Housing to withdraw that comment regarding lies.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the comment and the word 'lies'.

The member for MacDonnell was responsible for promoting information throughout the community which had no basis in truth, which had no basis in fact and ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker. I would put to you that, if the Minister for Lands and Housing wishes to suggest that I or anybody else in this Assembly has misled this Assembly by consciously and wittingly telling untruths, he must do so by way of a substantive motion. He must be

asked to withdraw that. He may believe that, if he uses some different form of words, he can suggest that. The fact is that what he has said was, once again, unparliamentary. I would have thought that the first law officer of the Northern Territory would do a slightly better job in answering a question in this Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Any observer could see members opposite were totally incorrect in their information and in the scenarios they painted. It is disappointing that they are not men enough to admit that they were wrong and that the government was very effective. However, we expect that from the people opposite because, obviously, the facts never come into any assessment they make of a situation.

The new act has been operating now for just over a year and I am sure that all members would have to agree that, during that period, the much-feared Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has been able to operate quietly, without fuss and without conflict. Until 16 August 1990, exactly 1 year from the commencement of the act, the authority had received 151 applications for certificates to allow the applicants to use or work on areas of land which contain sacred sites. Of those applications, 19 were withdrawn by the applicants and, of the 132 applications remaining, 22 are still being negotiated. Certificates were issued in 108 cases and 2 were refused.

It is disappointing that the member for MacDonnell is not listening to the answer because, as I pointed out earlier, he was one of the people who had his facts totally incorrect. Obviously, he does not wish to avail himself of any information which might help to correct some of the apparent misconceptions in some of the statements he makes.

Mr Bell: Simple smear with no substance, Daryl. It does you no credit at all.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, we are used to this sort of attitude from the member for MacDonnell.

That means that about 82% of applications have been resolved and certificates have been issued, 17% are still being negotiated and 1.5% have been refused. I understand most applications are resolved in a matter of weeks. Some take a little longer, and the more complex ones can take some months of negotiation. However, that is not surprising, given the sensitivity of these matters. It is very clear that the authority is operating exceptionally well, especially when one considers the controversy such issues have generated in the past. I am aware that, in pursuance of their own political anti-government agenda, some groups are eager to label any sacred sites question which crops up these days as proof that the Territory government's new sacred sites legislation is not working. That is not true. Despite all the opposition to it, the new legislation and the new authority are operating extremely well.

I do not suggest that there will never be any sacred sites disputes in the Territory. Obviously, it is a subject that is sensitive and which involves complex issues. There will be occasions when there are some problems. However, it is very clear that the Territory government has put in place an excellent framework through which sacred sites matters can be addressed and, in most cases, settled very quickly and quietly. I believe the authority's achievements over the past 12 months should be simply the

start of a far more sensible and a far more reasonable approach by all parties to sacred sites matters in the Territory.

I ask members to cast their minds back 12 months. The media coverage of this matter gave an impression which was totally incorrect. I remember that a particular current affairs program broadcast live from a corroboree where the bone was pointed at me among claims that the government was out to destroy sacred sites and take land away from Aboriginals. As a matter of fact, I gave a 20-minute interview of which a 20-second segment was shown and that segment was contrary to the whole gist of the program. I wonder if media commentators would like to look at what has occurred in the last 12 months and possibly do a program indicating what the legislation has achieved, and how successful it has been, pointing out that those earlier claims were totally incorrect.

Assistant Teachers in Remote Aboriginal Schools

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What action has he taken to stop the practice of using assistant teachers as janitors and cleaners in remote area Aboriginal schools?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member did raise with me a concern that he had in relation to a janitor's position at Warruwi, and I have given him an indication that I will look into the matter. My understanding is that there is some conflict relating to teachers and matters concerning the Warruwi community, and we have put in place a program which will resolve the issues, hopefully, reasonably quickly. I am quite happy to keep in contact with the member for Arafura in relation to these processes which, hopefully, will help to resolve the unfortunate circumstances which have arisen at Warruwi.

Excisions on Pastoral Leases

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Will he confirm that, over a month ago, he signed more than a dozen approvals for the granting of excisions for Aboriginal people on pastoral leases? Would he confirm that none of these excisions has been gazetted? Would he advise the House as to why this delay has occurred? Will he inform the House as to whether or not he has conducted an investigation and, if not, why not? Could he advise the House of the purpose of the delay, and will he give the House a guarantee that the gazettal notices will appear in the very near future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm the number of excisions involved, but certainly I have signed a number of them over to Aboriginal communities. I have done so for a number of years, and the government's record in this area is second to none. However, there has been an ongoing problem. Attempts to negotiate with the land councils have been very one-sided. We have tried to approach negotiations with as much good faith and goodwill as possible. However, the approach of the land councils has been constantly obstructionist, even contrary to the wishes of the actual communities involved in relation to such matters as Territory title. The views of communities are overturned regularly by the land councils.

Another relevant factor is the undertaking which the land councils gave in relation to excisions that they would withdraw claims over stock routes. Unfortunately, although the Territory government and the pastoralists have proceeded in good faith, the land councils have not withdrawn the claims that were in place. Under these circumstances, it is extremely difficult to deal in a fair manner and to negotiate in good faith. That does not mean that the government has changed its attitude. We will not do so, because we are concerned about the Aboriginal people who are affected directly, the people who have the problems. The land councils are playing political games but, to suggest as the member for Stuart seems to be doing, that I am attempting to slow down the granting of excisions ...

Mr Ede: I have heard people in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs saying nasty things about you.

Mr MANZIE: The member for Stuart wants to answer the question himself now. I do not know why he bothers asking if he does not want to listen to the answer.

Mr Speaker, I am unaware of the details of when gazettal of those lands will occur. The fact that I have signed them means that they are in the system and being dealt with in the normal way. The government is making no attempt whatsoever to hold them up, but I reiterate that the land councils must honour their agreement. If they do not, there will be problems. The government cannot be expected to enter agreements in good faith and then to carry out its side of such agreements when the other side totally ignores its own commitments and continues on its merry way. If the member for Stuart and members opposite want to champion people who do not stand by agreements they make, that is fine.

Mr Ede: We are championing the people for whom you signed the excisions. Now you won't gazette them. I am talking about the people on the ground - my constituents.

Mr MANZIE: However, the community should be fully aware that they are doing so to the detriment of all people in the Territory.

Esplanade Foreshore - Alleged Damage to Historical Sites

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I preface my question by saying that, as one who spent a considerable number of the days of his boyhood scrambling around the cliffs on the Esplanade foreshore, it was a matter of some surprise and wonder to me when a Mr Ellis alleged that roadworks being undertaken on the Esplanade had destroyed a set of historic steps and a wartime bunker. What measures were taken by the minister's department to ensure that damage to historic sites there was contained to a minimum?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Transport and Works has a very comprehensive process for assessing its projects in terms of environmental and heritage implications and this project was no exception. The member for Karama referred to Mr Ellis, the so-called and self-proclaimed Green Independent convenor who has once again cried wolf in his over-enthusiastic attempts to bag the government. The steps he referred to as 'historic' and, in his words, 'probably the oldest structure in Darwin', were built by the Conservation Commission 7 years ago as part of a

CEP program which involved the provision of access to the foreshore. The steps were not exactly heritage material. As I stated in a press release a couple of weeks ago, we took the precaution of contacting local government in order to assure ourselves that the steps would not be missed and would not be needed.

As far as the wartime bunker is concerned, military historian Peter Dermoudy is aware of a report of a gun emplacement in an oral history account given by an old-timer. As a comprehensive search is being carried out for the bunker, not just by Mr Dermoudy but by departmental officers, I suspect that the bunker is a bit of a dug-out, located somewhere around the cliff face, that some old-timers wandering around town looking for something to amuse themselves with dug out during the war. I doubt that it is a major installation. It is not recorded anywhere and, according to all the evidence we can find, certainly it is not in the vicinity of the Esplanade construction site. Once again, Mr Ellis has cried wolf and it is time that the people of the Territory and the media woke up to his nonsense.

Taminmin Rural Farm School

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

With the continuous financial help being directed at the Northern Territory Rural College at Katherine, despite its less than ideal running of its educational and financial affairs, can the minister assure me that this situation will not disadvantage the Taminmin Rural Farm School at Humpty Doo in any funding or staffing for agricultural studies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have given details on the Northern Territory Rural College. I believe that efforts are being made and that they will be successful. There will be no impact on Taminmin High School, and I think the honourable member will be pleasantly surprised in relation to activities at Taminmin.

Mangrove Management Plan

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

The Mangrove Management Plan, which has been referred to on a number of occasions in this Assembly, still does not appear to be a public document. When will this document be available for the public to scrutinise instead of it just being referred to by ministers in this Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Mangrove Management Plan has been a long-standing issue. It is part of the overall Coastal Management Plan and, in particular, the Darwin Harbour planning process that is taking place. The matter is under discussion at the moment, directly between myself and the Minister for Lands and Housing, on its interrelationship with planning laws in the Northern Territory. When these matters have been resolved, the plan will be available for public release. We are seeking to get it into the public arena as soon as possible.

Access to New Darwin Airport Terminal

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

There seems to be considerable confusion about the route of the access road from McMillans Road to the new Darwin Airport terminal. As I understand it, there are 2 options: Henry Wrigley Drive or a new road off Rothdale Road. Has a decision been taken and, if not, when will a decision be taken on this vital matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no decision has been taken other than the standing arrangement which is access via Henry Wrigley Drive. The interim access that has been available for some time into the airport is quite adequately provided for at Henry Wrigley Drive. Although, in the longer term, there may be some traffic implications, particularly at Rapid Creek Road and to and from McMillans Road as the traffic builds up, they are but part of the deliberative considerations.

The other option was to come through to match Rothdale Road. There are a number of downsides to that, including the impact on traffic moving to and from the sporting area. That is the major planning consideration that we have at the moment. We are in the process of looking at future traffic arrangements to and from the Marrara complex to assess whether it would be possible to match the traffic leaving the airport. The other consideration is the impact on the adjoining suburb.

Whilst there is still some work to be done, there is no panic about it in terms of time. The airport is due for completion late next year and even then, with some minor upgrading, the current Henry Wrigley Drive will be adequate for those purposes for some time. I anticipate that, by early next year and certainly by the middle of the year at the latest, we will have reached a decision on the overall planning, not just for the airport but also to take in the sporting facilities at Marrara.

Panorama Guth

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

In recent days, it has been announced in Alice Springs that the owner of Panorama Guth, Mr Hank Guth, is planning to move to Melbourne and that he is afraid that the building may be bought and developed for a different purpose because it is in the CBD and is on a very valuable site. Has the minister been approached by Mr Guth, and will the government take on board very seriously this important art gallery, with its 360° painting, which is a real asset to Alice Springs, to ensure that it is preserved?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we have had correspondence from Mr Guth in relation to the potential sale of this property in Alice Springs. That correspondence was directed to the Museums and Art Galleries Board and suggested that consideration be given to the government purchasing the facility as a permanent display area for the museum. Whilst we do understand the significance, particularly the tourist significance, of the Panorama Guth in central Australia, it would be inappropriate for the total facility to be purchased by the Museums and Art Galleries Board, quite apart from the very serious financial constraints that are inevitably on government at present.

However, we are quite concerned about some parts of the collection there which do have archaeological and historical heritage significance for the Northern Territory, and we have advised that, if any attempt is made to relocate that outside of the Northern Territory, we will be utilising our powers under the necessary legislation. Certainly, we would be interested in protecting and retaining that collection for the Northern Territory but, as to the building and its facilities, it is more appropriate that it be operated by a tourism-type organisation. We have put it to Mr Guth that we would not be interested in purchasing the building, although we have a particular interest in the archaeological and historical collections that he has there.

Repeal of Dog Act

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Over the weekend, I spoke with many people in Palmerston and read an article in the newspaper in which the Palmerston Town Council complained about the proposed date for the repeal of the Dog Act. Is there any way that the minister can bring that date forward to allow the town council to provide relief to the residents of Palmerston?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was a little dismayed to see the concern expressed by the Mayor of Palmerston with regard to the timing of the repeal of the Dog Act. After all, the repeal of the Dog Act was an action taken largely to fit in with the desire of local governments to take control of dogs in their own areas. The setting of 1 July 1991 for the repeal was to allow local governments enough time to put by-laws in place should they choose to do so. I pointed out to honourable members last week that it will not be mandatory for local governments to pick up any provision under the Dog Act if they and their constituents thought that to be unnecessary.

In fact, it will not be a simple matter to put in place by-laws which will pick up all of the requirements of local government overnight. However, I am quite happy to bring forward the date of repeal if local governments decide that an earlier date would be better for them. I have had approaches made to me also by a number of community governments asking for more time. They do not think the 1 July date gives them enough time to put by-laws in place. In fact, we can prepare a set of model by-laws which should be able to be picked up by most councils, perhaps with some modifications. However, we need a little time because the Parliamentary Counsel's office is very busy and this is not necessarily of the highest priority. Of course, the Palmerston Town Council can put by-laws in place under the present act. I understand that, in the past, it has not taken the same level of action as the Darwin City Council has taken in relation to controlling dogs. If local governments can get together and decide on an appropriate date, we will make every effort to fit in with their requirements.

Competition for Land by Mining and Pastoral Industries

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, for some years, tension has increased in the mining and pastoral industries over competing interests for land and access to that land. Has the minister addressed this issue and, if so, what has he done to

alleviate the tension and misunderstanding that has been created between these 2 industries?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I note the honourable member has described correctly what used to be the situation between pastoralists and the mining industry. I have taken great pains in recent times to attend meetings of pastoralists and the Cattle Council to try to resolve the issues that have arisen from time to time. It is true that, in years past, considerable friction developed between the mining and the pastoral industries, mainly over rights of access to pastoral lands and the rights under legislation of both parties. Both sides had extremists who raised the level of tension. On the one hand, the occasional pastoralist acted like a medieval feudal lord with the absolute right to put any trespasser to death. On the other hand, the occasional miner/explorer charged his truck onto pastoral land without notice, left all the gates open, dug a few holes and left all the mess behind him.

I called the industry bodies together to address the concerns being expressed on both sides, and the members for Katherine and Victoria River will recall the discussions that took place in a series of meetings. As a result, better lines of communication were established between the 2 industries. The mining industry produced a code of behaviour for its members entering pastoral land. It initiated a system of notice for mineral explorers that could not fail to be brought to the attention of the pastoralist so that the pastoralist had every possible chance to raise legitimate objections to access rights. Many landholders were unaware that the Mining Act gave mining companies the right to explore for mineral deposits on their land, subject of course to certain conditions. Landholders are required to give access to mineral explorers if a company has been granted an exploration lease. However, the explorer is required to work within strict guidelines, and is required to protect the property of the landholder.

It really boiled down to both sides being aware of their rights. Once the 2 parties came together for discussions, most of the tension faded. Recently, I attended a meeting of the Katherine Branch of the Cattlemen's Association and I can report that the 2 industries are now working together much more cooperatively. In its efforts to continue the consultation process, the Department of Mines and Energy has just produced an attractive and informative calendar. I will circulate the 1990-91 calendar for the benefit of honourable members. This calendar sets out what those rights are. I have often argued that a bill of rights should be written on rice paper so that, if you were jailed, you could eat it and so at least it would be of some use to you. The calendar carries an 8-page booklet containing plain language hints and guidelines for landholders if a mining company is granted an exploration lease. It is to be circulated throughout the pastoral industry and I commend it to all honourable members.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, in response to the request from the Minister for Transport and Works, I seek leave to table an extract from the Northern Territory government's airport proposal entitled, 'Darwin Airport Redevelopment of Civil Facilities'. This clearly states the government's indicative cost of general aviation land site and air site as \$10m and the vague expectation that, for the redevelopment, the Commonwealth would be expected to put in somewhere between \$20m and \$40m.

Leave granted.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Excisions on Pastoral Leases

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I would like to provide some further information in relation to a question asked by the member for Stuart relating to excisions. I inform him that notices of acquisition for living areas on 13 pastoral leases have been prepared for gazettal and the issue of titles to those areas will follow. That process is going through the normal channels. I point out that there is legal doubt as to the effect of amendments to the Land Rights Act. The Aboriginal Land Commissioner is of the view that formal withdrawal of the claims over the stock routes etc is necessary to overcome the provisions of section 67A which prohibit dealings with lands subject to claim. That is the particular area that I was talking about where there has been a lack of cooperation in the spirit of the negotiations and the agreement.

Cost to Community of Territory Budget

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Yesterday, the Treasurer again raided the petrol pump to pay for this government's management decisions. On our calculations, the average Territory motorist now loses about \$90 a year to this practice. Obviously, that figure is significantly higher for the productive rural sector in the Northern Territory which has been hit even harder than the 1¢ per litre.

A member: What about the federal excise?

Mr SMITH: If you want to justify yourselves in terms of the federal excise, go for it.

Mr McCarthy: What is it in the Labor states?

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, in Queensland ...

Members interjecting.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! This is question time and the Leader of the Opposition should be asking a question, not making a speech.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has had some difficulty this morning in putting his question because of interjections from the government side of the House.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In Queensland, which has a similar geographical shape to that of the Northern Territory, motorists pay no state-imposed excise duty on petrol. Has the minister calculated the inflation factor that is built into this and other taxing decisions made in his budget? In other words, what will it cost the community, not only directly - because that figure is available in the budget - but indirectly through flow-on effects in terms of increased prices for goods and services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition well knows that the Northern Territory is one of the lowest taxed areas in Australia. It is still one of the lowest taxed areas in Australia despite the increases that I announced yesterday in the Northern Territory government's budget. No doubt honourable members are aware that, in regard to the specific issue of state petrol taxes, as they are called, which are actually petroleum licence fees, in state terms, the Northern Territory was late in imposing this impost at all. At present, Queensland is the only state in Australia which has never had a state petrol tax, but every other state in Australia has had one for many years. From recollection, it was only about 3 years ago that the Northern Territory introduced such tax at all. We introduced it at the lowest rate in Australia and, even after the impost introduced yesterday, the rate is about mid-range. The highest tax is in Tasmania which has 7¢ per litre state duty on petrol, and that is prior to its bringing down its 1990-91 budget. Of course, we are talking about a state that has just borrowed \$50m to pay redundancies for the public service. We can well expect that Tasmania may be having a hard look at its 7¢ a litre impost on petrol.

Mr Smith: What is the inflationary impact of your decision on the Northern Territory?

Mr PERRON: The Leader of the Opposition knows that not only do we have the lowest impost of state-type taxes on our citizens but we have one of the lowest CPI rates of increase as well, which we are pleased to note.

Mr Smith: What is the inflationary impact of this?

Mr PERRON: To answer the honourable member's question specifically, I have not had calculations done to see what the impact will be on the local CPI. In order to overcome the deficiency left with funding in the Northern Territory by allocations from the federal government, which are down 2% in real terms - and the Northern Territory is the only place in Australia to receive any cut in real terms - we found it necessary to raise a number of state-type taxes and charges in a minimal way. I am sure that Territorians well understand the situation that the Territory finds itself in. I have found the reaction to the budget to be one of complete understanding.

Kenbi Land Claim

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to a report in the Sunday Territorian of 12 August in which the Northern Land Council claimed that it wanted to settle the Kenbi Land Claim. What is the government's attitude towards settling the claim and what is the present status of negotiations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Territory government does view the Kenbi or Cox Peninsula Land Claim very seriously. Unlike many land claims, this is not over land in some remote part of the Territory. The Cox Peninsula is just across the harbour, and it is the most logical site for the future expansion of Darwin. If we are to avoid the urban disasters which distance has brought about in the southern capitals, it is vital that this area be available for Darwin's inevitable expansion. I note that, in the Sunday Territorian of 12 August, the Chairman of the Northern Land Council, Mr Yunupingu, stated that the Northern Land Council was willing to negotiate a settlement of the claim with the Territory government. In the article, he went on to accuse the government of not wanting to settle the claim because it had gone cold on the idea. I would like to put the record straight in relation to that allegation.

During the past 15 months, serious attempts have been made to settle the claim. The Territory government has been taking the initiative in those talks. This initiative was taken because the Territory government regards settlement of the claim as a high priority. It is not something that we have gone cold on. The government accepts that the settlement must be on reasonable terms which can accommodate legitimate Aboriginal interests and the future needs of Territorians generally. An offer was made by the Territory government to the Northern Land Council in June last year. That was rejected and a counter offer was put forward by the claimants in October 1989. The Territory government regards the area sought by the claimants and their offer as being incompatible with the obligation to provide for the future growth of Darwin. Accordingly, we have had to reject that. However, we made a further counter offer to the NLC which was rejected by it. Since then, the NLC has continually put the original but unacceptable offer. No one in his right mind could say that that was

negotiation. It is just a simple intransigent restating of a position which the government, on behalf of the community, cannot accept. The attitude that is blocking the efforts to settle the claim has been further complicated by the fact that the Northern Land Council may no longer represent all the claimants.

It seems that the best hope that the government can have to make any progress on settlement negotiations will come when the Aboriginal Land Commissioner hands down his findings in relation to traditional ownership. That is expected to occur before the end of this year. His findings could clarify whether there are any traditional owners as per the requirements of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and, if so, for which areas of land on the Cox Peninsula. The increased certainty that results from defining those areas and from the identification of various traditional owners, if any, should allow settlement negotiations to recommence early in the new year. I hope that those negotiations can be completed quickly and successfully for all parties. In any event, I would like to assure honourable members that settling the Kenbi Land Claim remains a very high priority for this government and we will continue to monitor the situation very closely on behalf of all Territorians.

Public Service Numbers

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, during the term of this government, public service numbers have increased from 15 112 in 1987-99 to 16 002 in 1990-91. The major increase has been in the last 12 months with over 460 additional public servants being placed on the payroll. In light of the position taken by the government at the time of the last election, when it said that there would be a virtual freeze on public service numbers, what new services are being provided by the public servants recruited during the last 3 years, numbering almost 1000?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have before me specific details of what authorities and departments the additional staff are working in. Off the cuff, I imagine that a substantial number are employed at the Northern Territory University which has gone through a period of substantial growth since its establishment by this government a few short years ago. Each year, it becomes more and more successful as it adds new courses and enrolls more and more local and overseas students. In addition, I am sure that the figures would show that there has been growth in the number of staff providing services in health and education, in many cases to Aborigines.

If the honourable member would care to place the question on notice, I would be quite happy to answer in some detail. Quite clearly, public servants are contributing to the economy and to the range of services provided to Territorians. Whilst they are all slotted into specific departments and authorities, I do not happen to have the detail of that information before me at present.

Australian Safari

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TOURISM

Can he advise the House of details concerning the Australian Safari which, I understand, is now heading towards Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I speak, competitors in the Australian Safari, formerly known as the Wynn's Safari, will be starting to cross the Northern Territory border. Over 165 vehicles left Sydney last Saturday morning including motor bikes, 4-wheel-drives and sedans. This event is now the premiere car rally in Australia and is rated internationally as No 2 in the world, immediately behind the Paris-to-Dacca Race. In addition to the 165 vehicles - and I am not exactly sure how many have crossed the border into the Territory - the contingent includes about 800 people comprising drivers, crews, officials and over 100 representatives from international media agencies who are travelling with the rally.

After discussions, the rally organisers, Automotion Australia, agreed to re-route the safari so that it would take in each of the major Territory towns. Tonight, it will be overnighing at Ayers Rock. It will overnight in Alice Springs on Thursday, in Tennant Creek on Friday and, on Saturday 25 August, it will overnight just outside Katherine. There will be a very spectacular finish to the rally in Darwin on Sunday.

The international rating body has indicated that, by 1992, the Australian Safari will displace the Paris-to-Dacca Race and it will be not only the No 1 event in Australia, but No 1 in the world. I am delighted that the organisers agreed to re-route the rally so that the Territory towns will gain an economic benefit from having 800 people stop over for 1 night as well as the entertainment benefit. In addition to this good news, I advise the House that, next Tuesday, together with Automotion Australia, we will be making an announcement about another major international car rally which is to be held in the Northern Territory next year.

Northern Territory Debt Servicing

Mr LEO to the TREASURER

I note that the Treasurer expects that debt servicing this year will blow out by some 12% to \$173m. Since the budget contains no measures to retire debt, he should be able to tell this House how much we will owe next year. What will the debt bill be at the end of this budget?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the honourable member should need to ask this question unless he has been out of the Assembly during these sittings. On the first sitting day, I tabled a comprehensive paper examining exactly how much debt there is in the Northern Territory, its justification, the servicing arrangements, and comparisons with all states in Australia in regard to our debt servicing capacity and our accumulation of debt over a period. I note his cute use of the term 'blow out' in his question because, quite clearly, the Northern Territory government is legitimately and purposefully accumulating more debt each year in providing the infrastructure and services that are required of this government by its citizens. As the honourable member will know, if he has yet learnt how to read a budget paper, an \$80m new Australian Loan Council borrowing program has been attributed to us this financial year. With that capacity to borrow, we will assume the responsibility to service it. I do not know of a government in Australia that has been through a year in office and has not borrowed more money. Quite clearly, we will be increasing our debt servicing payments over a period as a percentage of our income. If I recall rightly, our percentage is one of the lowest, if not the lowest, in

Australia. The paper that I tabled indicated that the Northern Territory had a considerable capacity yet to accumulate more debt - probably a capacity beyond that which we will be able to accumulate debt because of the Loan Council global borrowing limits. The honourable member could obtain the answers to the questions he asked if he cared to study the budget papers properly. There is no blow out in the Northern Territory government's debt servicing arrangement. There is simply an increase which is expected every year.

Ludmilla Supermarket Liquor Licence Application

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

Is he aware of concerns raised by the residents of Ludmilla over the Ludmilla Supermarket at Lot 4940 Bagot Road, Ludmilla? Will he introduce legislation to provide relief to those residents from constant repeat applications?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware not only of the current concerns of Ludmilla residents, but also of those previously expressed and relayed through the member for Ludmilla. He has represented the interests of his constituents in a constructive manner. I must say that the intrusion by the member for Millner, from the adjoining electorate, on that issue in the Ludmilla electorate has not been at all constructive, according to information I have received. In that, I include his most inappropriate advice to constituents of Ludmilla that they have to pay a \$20 fee to lodge an appeal with the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission.

I am aware that the member for Millner did not speak to the amendments made to the Liquor Act in November last year. He did not take any interest and therefore it is probable that he does not realise that there is no fee to be paid. He has the residents of Bagot running round collecting 50¢ pieces to raise \$20 to lodge an appeal with respect to which they need pay nothing. Of course, that is typical of the lack of intellect and knowledge of the member for Millner.

Mr Ede: Does this mean that I will get my 10¢ back?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, as honourable members are aware, that is exactly what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is worth - his contribution of 10¢.

Let me say that the application that is before the commission at this time is legitimate under the act. The opportunity exists for people to reapply and naturally, from time to time, there are circumstances that warrant reapplication. Where the commission sees that such a reapplication is frivolous and does not provide any new, substantive argument, it can simply reject that application. However, as it is written - and, as I indicated, the Leader of the Opposition did not contribute to its amendment last year - the act provides that, if an objection is brought against a reapplication, then the commission must hold another hearing. That is a point that needs to be addressed and the member for Ludmilla has raised this issue quite correctly. I am not sure what the practical solution is, but we will examine the situation seriously. In the meantime, those residents of Ludmilla who have an objection have simply to indicate, as they did previously, that they want the argument from their first hearing carried forward as their substantive argument.

Mr Smith: Why should they have to do it time after time?

Mr FINCH: They do not have to pay 1¢ to do it.

Mr Smith: Why should they have to do it at all?

Mr FINCH: They do not have to collect any new petitions. They have simply to say to the commission that they want their original arguments carried forward. The commission will hear those arguments and determine whether the applicant has some new basis for his application. It will make an independent decision. This where the ALP and the CLP differ dramatically and people ought to know it. The liquor commission, which has been appointed from members of the community who have experience and integrity, will take on board the opinions of the community in reaching its decision, a decision which will be based on community interest alone. The Leader of the Opposition is well aware that we amended the act to remove the commercial argument in any liquor application. As a consequence, the decision focuses on community interest alone.

The big difference between the ALP and CLP is that I will not be the arbiter of whether somebody should have a licence or not have a licence or should have a licence taken away. That is the job of the liquor commission. The policy of the Labor Party, and statements in the media by the Leader of the Opposition, indicate that he would decide on each individual application. That would be most inappropriate. Constituents in the Northern Territory need to know that. He might leave it to some bureaucrat.

With the current system, the community has direct access to an independent commission which has guidelines laid down in accordance with the act. That is all that is required. We will not politicise the liquor commission as the Leader of the Opposition would do. I commend the member for Ludmilla for his constructive approach. We will take his suggestions on board for consideration.

Increases in Ministerial Staff

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister has said that the public service must survive this year with no increase in numbers and severe restraints on funding. Why, as is shown in the budget papers, has approval been given for the luxury of a substantial 20% increase in ministerial personal staff, from 61 to 74?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am glad the honourable member has brought this to my attention because the matter he is talking about includes staff to the opposition as well.

Mr Ede: It has not increased.

Mr Smith: I do not have 13 staff.

Mr PERRON: It may well be that my attention needs to be closely drawn to this matter in order to scrutinise it. Without any prior notice of this question ...

Mr Ede: What! You do not even know what your ministers are up to?

Mr PERRON: ... and being mindful of the fact that there are 6 papers in the budget documents and some thousands of figures, I do not have at my fingertips the exact area to which the honourable member is referring. Unlike members of the opposition, members on this side of the House are getting on with running the Northern Territory and we have much more on our desks than yesterday's papers.

AIDS Cases in the Northern Territory

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Yesterday, I gave the minister an indication that I would ask this question. Will he provide the figures on AIDS cases in the Territory, preferably for the northern and southern regions and categorised according to the various stages of the disease so that we can be aware of what progress is being made to curb the spread of the disease?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have the exact numbers in front of me, but I will seek to obtain the information and answer the question before the end of question time.

Conservation Commission - Limited Tenure Employment

Mr BELL to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer the minister to the lack of employment in Aboriginal communities in central Australia which has been the subject of debate in this Assembly on many occasions. I refer the minister also to the number of Aboriginal people working as rangers in the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory, many of them on limited tenure employment. Why has the minister slashed limited tenure employment in the Conservation Commission, and can he confirm that 60 such positions have been removed from the commission's establishment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is inaccurate to say that the establishment has been slashed. For the benefit of the honourable member, establishment or MSL sets out the approved level of staffing which any department or authority is allowed to have. That number is a maximum staffing level, and it does not necessarily mean that staffing will be maintained at that level at all times. Limited tenure positions are maintained in respect of a number of parks and within the commission generally. Usually, they are provided because the commission increases park staffing during peak visitor periods, particularly during the Top End dry season and the centralian winter, when most tourists visit our parks. Limited tenure positions are used to lift staff numbers to cope with additional visitor numbers in the areas and, during quieter periods, staffing numbers are reduced. That is a prudent management strategy.

Nobody is making any secret of the fact that this is a tight budget year. Obviously, the Conservation Commission is managing its staffing establishment appropriately. I do not know the specific numbers of staff in particular areas, but I can obtain the details for the honourable leader. I can say that there will be some restrictions on the availability of staff in particular areas during the course of this year as the commission seeks to manage a very tight budget in an appropriate manner.

Effect of Tax Changes on Timor Sea Oilfields

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Following last night's federal budget, wherein the Treasurer indicated that he will be changing tax arrangements for the oil industry, what effect will those changes have on the Timor Sea oilfields?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to answer the honourable member's question. We have advocated these changes to the tax regime for nearly 12 months and I pay particular tribute to the Treasurer, who was highly regarded as a spokesperson for the resource industry in his former capacity as shadow minister for resources.

Mr Perron: More highly than as Treasurer.

Mr COULTER: Much more highly than he is as Treasurer. However, he is concerned for the industry.

As current Chairman of the Council of Resource Ministers, which will be meeting in Darwin next Monday, I have been tireless in putting the case for meaningful taxation review for the oil industry. I have put that case at every possible forum, including the special ministers' meeting which I called in Canberra to discuss the taxation proposal for natural gas, which was then mooted by the previous Minister for Resources, Senator Cook.

On 26 July, the Chief Minister wrote to the Prime Minister saying that it would be appropriate to allow post-mining rehabilitation as a taxation concession. I am pleased to say that the federal government will now allow this provision to apply to the dismantling of drilling platforms and so on. I congratulate the Prime Minister for taking notice of the Chief Minister and allowing that to happen.

Mr Smith: I am sure that it happened just like that.

Mr COULTER: It is more likely to have happened that way than because of the efforts of the federal member for the Northern Territory, Mr Snowden. He would have us believe that he personally negotiated the Timor Gap agreement, although he could not produce a single document or speech in which he said anything about it. He would have trouble negotiating the gap in his mouth, let alone the Timor Gap.

I am pleased to say the federal government has realised at last that it has been holding back oil exploration and development in Australia, and in the Timor Sea area in particular. At last, it has heard the call for action in this regard. As true Territorians, all honourable members should have a deep and compelling interest in the Timor Sea oil development. It provides substantial employment and beneficial support for Territory business. Such honourable members will know that I have been calling for changes to the federal tax regime for years. The most recent public occasion was at the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association National Annual Conference which was held in Darwin 2 months ago.

Basically, in last night's federal budget, the Commonwealth did the job that was required. It has amended the structure of the resource rent tax to allow deduction of exploration costs Australia-wide. This means that development costs, for example at the BHP Jabiru well in the Timor Sea, can

be offset by exploration costs incurred elsewhere by the company. Previously, the system limited such offsets inside what was generally known as a ring fence. In other words, they applied to a particular lease or project area. The changes announced last night will result in the reintroduction of a genuine incentive for oil exploration in Australia, particularly in Australia's most exciting exploration area, the Timor Sea. This is an item of solid good news for the Territory

Other taxation changes are welcome but are unlikely to have the same immediate beneficial effect in the Territory. They include taxation deductions for oil platform removal and for mine-site rehabilitation. Already, the Territory includes mine rehabilitation costs as a legitimate deduction against assessments for Territory mining royalty payments. Recently, the Chief Minister called on the Commonwealth to allow such deductions against income tax assessments. This has now been done. An alteration to the resource rent tax will make secondary drilling of minor oil deposits more viable economically. Honourable members may not be aware that BHP has been paying some 80% tax on its production from some wells in the Bass Strait. That has made those projects totally uneconomical, and BHP has walked away from any further exploration or development of those wells because of the impost placed on it by the federal government.

As I said, this is directed mainly to the Bass Strait field. I said earlier that I had been calling for such changes for a long time, along with the oil industry, but I do not want to claim that this has resulted from my efforts alone. I congratulate the federal Treasurer, the new Minister for Resources, Mr Griffiths, and that lone battler in the Commonwealth parliament, John Kerin, because he too has been fighting for this for a long time. I will be saying more in direct terms at the meeting of Australian Ministers for Mining and Energy which I will be chairing in Darwin next week.

The current Middle East crisis has shown clearly that Australia needs to move swiftly to full self-sufficiency in the production of oil. We are about 85% along the track today, but we need to go to 100% as quickly as possible. The changes in the tax regime announced last night will most definitely help to achieve that.

Mr Speaker, before I sit down, I will say this. We have to go a step further now. We need to realise the potential of the trillions of cubic metres of gas that are locked up in this country. Personally, I am moving away from nuclear energy because I realise that, whilst the Labor government is in power, the federal government cannot come to grips with nuclear energy or the mining of uranium in Australia. I think Labor will continue in power federally for the next 2 or 3 years. However, we need to move quickly into gas. I believe that, in the near future, in Taiwan, Korea and Japan, which are the big markets for uranium, there will be a more readily-accepted approach to gas than there is to uranium.

I am not saying that markets for uranium do not exist nor that there is no need to dig it up, nor yet that Pancontinental and Koongarra should not be allowed to go ahead immediately. I am saying that the intransigence of the federal government will not allow it to happen. I would like it to look immediately at the synthetic fuel propositions that we put to the federal Treasurer almost 2 years ago which would allow us to bring the Bonaparte Gulf gas on-shore and tap into those markets. Korea and Taiwan will import 2.5 million tonnes and there is expected expansion into Japan. I do not believe that the Indonesian fields can produce past the sixth platform that they are proposing. The market is open, but we need incentives to get into the gas business. We cannot sit back and allow it to be locked up.

I recall a story that was told to me recently by Sir Bruce Watson. This resembles our history with gas. The story involved an area in the Baring Straits that cost \$100m to drill. The geologist went back to his boss and said: 'We have some bad news and some good news'. This occurred at a time when mineral prices were very low. When asked what the bad news was, he said that they had spent \$100m on the well and got nothing. When asked what the good news was, he replied: 'We did not get copper either'. Gas has been wrongly regarded in this country as a problem. It has a market and those people need a meaningful taxation review of the gas resource in this country. We need that now, not in 12 months time. There are projects around Australia that could go ahead today. I will be fighting for that at next week's conference in Darwin. Last night was the first step in a very long march to recover this country from the doldrums into which it has fallen. I hope that I have the support of all state ministers and the federal minister in this regard.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In respect of the proposed flood mitigation dam in Alice Springs, when will the final environmental impact study be made available to the public, and how much money is likely to be spent on the dam during this financial year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we are considering the replies to the draft EIS very seriously. Last week, we obtained a copy of the Webb Report prepared by consultants engaged by the Central Land Council. We are examining that document at the moment. If it had been forwarded to us when the council received it, instead of its embarking on a media campaign, that would have enabled us to assess the document much earlier. I am not sure of the actual cash allocation in this year's budget. In his budget speech, the Chief Minister highlighted his commitment to commence construction of the dam immediately after any matters arising from the EIS have been dealt with in a proper manner. I have no doubt about his commitment to the construction of that dam this financial year. A very large cash allocation will enable that project to start. As soon as the EIS has been completed, I have no doubt that the construction of the flood mitigation dam will commence immediately.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara

Mr BAILEY to TREASURER

On the Treasurer's own estimates, the taxpayer must pay \$24.4m to prop up Yulara and the Sheratons this year. That is \$500 000 a week. Last year, the budget estimate was \$17m. We know it blew out then because of the pilots' dispute. What is the cause this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of course, as they are entitled to do, members opposite make as much play as they can of the government's contribution to the financial structures that support the Yulara Resort and the 5-star hotels that were built in Alice Springs and Darwin. They continually purport that this is a drain on the public purse that should not be there and, on a regular basis, the Leader of the Opposition makes great play of how he will wave his wand and remove the Northern Territory from these contractual

arrangements. He has not indicated whether he will do that by way of legislation, or what effect walking away from contractual arrangements might have on the Northern Territory government's credibility.

The government is proud of the 5-star accommodation that exists in the Territory and of the Yulara resort. These projects were built at an original cost in excess of \$200m, much of which flowed into the Northern Territory economy. They employ about 1750 Australians who pay Commonwealth and Northern Territory taxes of over \$20m a year. The payroll bill that is flowing is in the order of \$30m per year. Perhaps the honourable member opposite should obtain a briefing on these matters. Unfortunately, I do not think he has had the good fortune to be nominated to the Public Accounts Committee which receives, on behalf of this Assembly, briefings from time to time on the very complex financial structures behind these financial arrangements.

The payments to which the honourable member referred support complex financial structures to the extent that the returns from those projects are not able to meet the financial costs of the projects. The arrangements have termination dates which may vary with each of the projects. At that time, they will be sold or, in the case of Yulara, will be inherited by the Northern Territory people. That will be a very handsome asset. It will be even more valuable at the time that it is handed to the Northern Territory people and taken out of the hands of what one might call the mortgagees.

The figures that he referred to and the increase in those figures reflect the difference between the financial structures at present and the returns that are expected from the resort and from the hotels. If he cannot understand that, it is probably because he does not understand the financial structures. He might seek a briefing on the subject if he is really interested in finding out the information rather than trying to score a political point.

Mr Bailey: The purpose of question time is to obtain information.

Mr PERRON: Perhaps he could raise the matter with 1 or 2 of his colleagues who have been on the Public Accounts Committee. If they choose their words carefully and do not breach PAC guidelines, they may be able to convince him of the worth of the financial structures that brought these handsome assets to the Northern Territory. They are not liabilities; they are assets.

Local Court Rules

Mr TUXWORTH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I wrote to him recently about the introduction of Local Court Rules. When are the Local Court Rules likely to be commenced in the Northern Territory, particularly for the advantage of the smaller centres?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, contrary to the member for Barkly's suggestion that it would advantage people, the proposal would have placed a higher cost on the smaller business operators and on ordinary Territorians. In fact, a revision of the rules is under way to ensure that we obtain a far fairer system of costs for ordinary Territorians. When that process is completed, the matter can proceed. Contrary to his assertion, what was proposed would have been more expensive for people, and we did not wish that to occur.

Hong Kong Recruitment Campaign by DOLAS

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Last year, the Department of Labour and Administrative Services conducted a recruitment campaign in Hong Kong. What was the success or otherwise of this campaign?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have some information on the Hong Kong recruitment campaign. As honourable members would be aware, we sought in Hong Kong professionals whom we found difficult to recruit in Australia. There have been 2 offers of employment made by the Northern Territory Treasury. Both of these offers have been accepted and are currently undergoing immigration processing. Mines and Energy has made 1 offer of employment, and that has been accepted. Transport and Works has made 12 offers of employment, mainly for engineers and architects, and 8 of those have been accepted. In relation to Health and Community Services, 1 offer of employment has been accepted and 1 further offer of employment has been made to a medical practitioner but it has not been accepted as yet. Approximately 30 nursing candidates have been short-listed and they are being assessed.

It had been hoped to recruit about 50 professionals in the first intake of people from Hong Kong. The reason for that was that there was economy in numbers because these people are provided with an intensive induction program. Some people have come already, under their own steam, and have been provided with first-hand knowledge of what to expect in the Northern Territory. They have returned to Hong Kong and formed an association of people who are likely to come to the Northern Territory to live and work. That self-help organisation provides information and support in respect of what is a major move for them.

I think the work done by the Department of Labour and Administrative Services over the last 12 months or so, in getting these people organised and bringing them to a position where they feel comfortable about coming to the Northern Territory to work, has met with a great deal of success. Obviously, there is a need for these people. The fact that we have been able to persuade the Commonwealth government to enter into a tripartite agreement to allow these professionals into the Territory indicates that the shortage of such people is being experienced Australia-wide. I am looking forward to the chance to meet with some of these people. I have no doubt at all that they will bring a great number of benefits to the Northern Territory through their expertise. Equally, I have no doubt that the Territory will be attractive to them. In many ways, it is not unlike the area they are coming from although, of course, it is much smaller and without some of the comforts that they may have been used to in Hong Kong. However, some things are cheaper. They are coming to much cheaper housing and a much less costly standard of living in many ways, yet still a very high standard of living. Those who have been here to date have indicated that it is very attractive to them.

Sheraton Hotels and Yulara

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to his answer to the previous question relating to the Sheratons and Yulara. Some 3 or 4 years ago, I was briefed on the

operations of the Sheratons and the Yulara Resort. Something that has remained in my memory is that the Territory government's commitment to those projects was expected to decrease over time and to conclude in 1996 or thereabouts, with a complete clearance of the operations in one way or another. Last year, the budget commitment was \$17m and that blew out as a result of the pilots' dispute. However, this year, \$24m has been budgeted without any good reason being offered. What has happened to the projections that said that our contributions to the Sheraton Hotels and Yulara would decrease over time, and why has so much been allocated in this budget to cover our contributions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it should be obvious to the Leader of the Opposition that the projections for income by way of occupancy and dollars returned through those organisations is insufficient to service the debt.

Mr Smith: So our projections were wrong?

Mr PERRON: I guess there is probably an ongoing ramification as a result of the pilots' dispute. The Leader of the Opposition seems to think ...

Mr Smith: So it is the pilots' dispute, is it?

Mr PERRON: I am saying that there is probably an ongoing effect from the pilots' dispute ...

Mr Smith: Is there or is there not?

Mr PERRON: I will let you know, all right!

Mr Smith: You do not know now?

Mr PERRON: It is an assumption.

Mr Smith: You spend \$24m and you do not have a clue why you are doing it, or what the justification for it is?

Mr PERRON: Come on! The member for Disneyland can do much better than that, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: Well, this is Disneyland stuff.

Mr PERRON: I am speaking without being briefed on the subject. I am happy to be briefed on the subject and to inform the Leader of the Opposition of further details in this regard, but I suspect that there is an ongoing effect on occupancy and cash flows through the 5-star hotels and the Yulara resort as a result of the pilots' dispute.

If the Leader of the Opposition thinks that everything returned to normal the day the pilots' dispute ended, I am afraid he has much to learn. However, the Deputy Chief Minister is full of information and has just indicated to me that it will probably take until 1992 before the situation is expected to return to 1987 levels.

Mr Smith: Where?

Mr PERRON: In the Territory's tourism industry.

I am prepared to obtain detailed information for the Leader of the Opposition on this matter and to provide an answer to him on the next sitting day.

Mr Smith: That is not what the minister told the House last week. He said they had been covered already. 1992 - that is very interesting.

Mr Coulter: For the Sheratons, in terms of ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Northern States Cooperative Tourism Market

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TOURISM

Is he aware of a recent statement by the Leader of the Opposition that, if he were in government, he would set up a joint or cooperative tourist market with the northern states? Would it be possible to implement such a proposal?

Mr Smith: I do not recall saying that.

Mr FIRMIN: You have been saying so many things lately that you cannot remember what you have said.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I read what the Leader of the Opposition said in one of his policy releases, and it was to the effect that he would set up a joint marketing or promotion arrangement with a northern Australian state. I read that with some interest, and the kindest thing I could say about the Leader of the Opposition is that all he has done is to reinvent the wheel. His statements are almost as ill-informed as are those of his parliamentary colleague from Nhulunbuy who said that the tourism industry was fragile.

For some years, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission has had in place joint promotion with Queensland. In fact, in New York, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and the Queensland authority co-share office space. In addition, they have been working with the Western Australian government. In fact, several months ago, I had a meeting in my office with officers from the Pilbara Shire and tourist officials from that area. We discussed additional joint promotion of northern Australia. We go a little further than the Leader of the Opposition. At my request, the Chairman of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, Bob Doyle, met several months ago with his counterpart in South Australia to discuss joint promotion of central Australia and the northern part of South Australia.

The kindest comment that I can make about the Leader of the Opposition is that he is illiterate, ill-informed or ill-read. Not content with crisscrossing the continent in a desperate search for initiatives and ideas, and adopting and then dumping the policies of the Dowdings, the Burkes, the Gosses and the Cains, he then returns to the Territory and adopts what we have had in place for years. The Leader of the Opposition is so slow that he could best be likened to a witchetty grub with super glue on its boots.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
AIDS Cases in the Northern Territory

Mr HATTON (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen asked me to provide some figures in respect of the number of notified AIDS cases in the Northern Territory. I am pleased that I took the precaution of double-checking the figures prior to answering because the most recent briefings I received before these sittings contained different information from that which I have received today. I believe that the figures which I have now received are accurate. They indicate that there have been 6 AIDS cases in the Northern Territory - 5 in the Darwin region and 1 in the Alice Springs and Barkly region.

Honourable members should be well pleased at the work that is being carried out by our staff in relation to communicable diseases, particularly the AIDS unit. In terms of combating AIDS, and particularly in terms of the excellent work being done in Aboriginal areas, that unit is probably the best in the country. Its success is measured by the fact that there is a very high awareness and understanding of HIV infection throughout the Northern Territory, particularly in the bush areas. It is measured equally by the fact that, despite the fact that 25% of our population is Aboriginal and very young, and lives in communities which are very susceptible to sexually-transmitted diseases, there has not been 1 case of HIV infection in the Territory's Aboriginal population. This is despite the fact that cases have been identified among the Aboriginal populations in our 3 bordering states. Our monitoring programs are at least as efficient as those in the states. That record speaks volumes for the work of the communicable diseases and AIDS teams, for the Aboriginal communities and their health workers, and for everybody in the field who works on education and awareness programs and on practices which will avoid the spread of AIDS. As I said, there are 6 recorded cases of HIV infection in the Northern Territory. I understand that the indications are that, in all of those cases, the infection was contracted interstate.

Teaching Staff Cuts

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

While the minister was on leave, the acting minister was the member for Katherine. By vigorous interpretation of formula, the acting minister was able to cut 44 teacher positions and relocate only 24. On his return, the minister realised that there had been no consultation before the cuts, and that many were simply not justifiable. As this is very important, I urge honourable members to show tolerance when the minister replies to this question which is as follows. Which of the following school cuts has he been able to reverse: Darwin High School lost 1 Band 2; Dripstone lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 3; Driver High School lost 1 Band 3; Nightcliff High School lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 3; Taminmin High School lost 2 Band 2s and 1 Band 3; and Sadadeen Primary lost 1 Band 4 ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's question is very long. It may have been better and more appropriate had he placed it on the Question Paper. I would not expect the Minister for Education to answer the question unless he has been forewarned of its content.

Mr EDE: I have given forewarning.

Mr SPEAKER: That is fine. Continue.

Mr EDE: Alice Springs High School lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 3; Anzac Hill High lost 2 Band 2s; Sadadeen Secondary College lost 1 Band 3; Darwin Central, Jingili lost 1 Band 4; Ludmilla lost 1 Band 2; Millner lost 1 Band 4; Tiwi lost 1 Band 2; Wulagi lost 1 Band 3; Gray lost a Band 3; Jabiru lost 1 Band 3 and 1 Band 2; Amoonguna lost 1 Band 2; Ti Tree lost 1 Band 3; Yuendumu lost 1 Band 2 and 1 Band 4; Katherine South lost 1 Band 4; Mataranka lost 1 Band 4; Katherine High lost 1 Band 3; Numbulwar lost 1 Band 2; Ramingining lost 1 Band 3, Yirrkala lost 1 Band 2; Nhulunbuy lost 1 Band 2; Oenpelli lost 1 Band 3; and Elliott lost 1 Band 3. Would the minister advise which of these quite incredible cuts, made without any consultation, has he been able to reverse?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, again we hear the opposition spokesman on education putting forward a view that we are cutting staff irresponsibly from schools. What a load of nonsense! The reality is that staffing is based on formula, and the member representing the education portfolio on the opposition benches knows full well that that is the situation. In the situation that he refers to, the matter has been examined in some instances. Yuendumu is one which I examined specifically. The reason why there was a problem there was that Yuendumu does have that Community Education Centre up and running and there was a need for us to look at that.

Let me come back to staffing generally. The forewarning given to me by the member for Stuart was handed to me 2 minutes before you walked into the Chamber, Mr Speaker. Clearly, it is not possible for me to provide that type of detail at such short notice. I will endeavour to obtain the information that he has requested and to provide him with the answers during the course of these sittings.

The so-called sacking of staff is a load of nonsense. I can recall that, some time ago, the member for Stuart issued a press release indicating that 36 positions would be lost throughout the Northern Territory, and that

the government would sack staff and do all sorts of things. The reality is that 36 promotion positions will be reduced from some schools, whilst 24 promotions will be increased in others. These fluctuations are due to variations in student enrolment numbers in these schools. There is nothing unusual about these enrolments or staffing entitlement fluctuations. Such pluses and minuses occur every year. It has not happened on this occasion only. On this occasion, as in past years, where the minuses have exceeded the pluses, we will be able to relocate any displaced staff in vacant positions as they arise. Through a provision in the Northern Territory Teaching Service known as the Excess Officers Provision, any teacher displaced receives priority for placement in vacant positions as they arise.

It should be noted that Territory schools are provided with teaching positions on the basis of student numbers, according to a detailed formula. The members opposite know that. It has been something that has been occurring for years. We knew that things would be tight this year and we knew that we wanted to maintain the very good formula which governs student-teacher ratios in our schools. We wanted to maintain the best possible facilities in this country and we needed to ensure that the formula was adhered to. There is no secret about that. In fact, in 'Teaching in Tomorrow's Territory', we talked about above-formula positions. This matter has not suddenly happened. It has been public information and the member for Stuart knows it, but he keeps promoting the idea that this government is interested only in chopping teaching staff and kicking people out. In order to maintain the best staffing formula in Australia and the best facilities, whilst keeping our budget flowing, we have to be responsible on this issue.

To return to the above-formula positions, we have made it very clear that the policy in relation to formula will be adhered to strictly. We have adopted a process which will ensure that that can occur with a minimum amount of disruption. In respect of above-formula positions, 'Teaching in Tomorrow's Territory' says:

Strict application of formula staffing has always been supported by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, but problems related to enrolment fluctuations which could result in transfer or voluntary demotion have meant that many above-formula positions have remained in schools for a further 12 months to enable staff to apply for transfers or promotion should they wish in the following annual promotion round.

It is proposed that, for 1991, above-formula staff other than agreed special needs staff will not remain at a school beyond the end of the year in which the position is reclassified. This will be achieved by earlier identification of formula entitlements and streamlined placement procedures.

That information has been available for some time and the member for Stuart knows it. Indeed, all teachers know it. We are aiming to ensure that we are able to maintain the formula in our schools to ensure that they are able to cover the core subjects or the approved curriculum as set by the Northern Territory Board of Studies. That is what this is all about. In some situations, there is the possibility ...

Mr Ede: What about consultation? The demographers were supposed to go around. They did not visit the schools at all.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, when we talk about consultation, we are looking at the entire staffing of the school. We consult the teachers and, where

there are problems in relation to their positions, these are identified and those people are counselled. The councils are involved. Where there is genuine concern by a council that the school cannot carry out its responsibilities in relation to core subjects or curriculum in the next year, those matters are further investigated.

In the case of Taminmin High School, I attended a public meeting there and listened to a lot of the nonsense that was being put forward by some. They were promoting the idea that we would sack 36 people. That needed to be discussed in more detail. I spoke to some students at Taminmin High School and I indicated that, where there is concern, that matter will be looked at responsibly.

In relation to above-formula staff or the proposed adjustments to staffing this year, we will establish a group that can look at the issue and ensure that the Northern Territory Board of Studies' approved curriculum can be covered. There are some 7 schools that have contacted my office or the department at this time that do have problems in relation to next year's staffing. As I said, a process is in place to examine those schools and to ensure that they are not being disadvantaged. It is acknowledged that some of the principals will have a greater workload placed on their shoulders because of the Master Teachers Program and the need for them to be involved in panels. There will be an increased load also as a result of the devolution of powers and the development of school improvement plans at the various schools. We will be looking at that matter.

I will endeavour to provide the honourable member with the information that he desires. However, may I indicate very clearly to the teachers and to the public that the opposition is continually employing scare tactics and suggesting that we are sacking people left, right and centre. That is not the case. The schools are looked after. In the Northern Territory, we will maintain the best formula and we will maintain our facilities. However, a little responsibility has to be taken to put all that in place. We must ensure that schools are not overstaffed and that teachers work the appropriate time. In relation to the process of award restructuring, the Northern Territory Teachers Federation has tried to be responsible in its approach. I thank it for the way in which it has gone about its work. There has to be give and take. We want to maintain the best system in Australia and, in order to do that, we have to keep to formula. I have indicated that I will listen to the concerns of any school that has a problem to ensure that those concerns are looked at in a responsible and proper manner.

Instrument of Reconciliation with Aboriginals

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

I noticed an item in Tuesday night's federal budget papers which allocated \$4.5m towards the development of an instrument of reconciliation - that is, a treaty - between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians. Is the Chief Minister aware of this item and would he care to comment on it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware that there is an allocation of \$4.5m in the federal budget supposedly to convince us all of the federal government's or the Prime Minister's point of view. It is disturbing that the taxpayer

should have to foot the bill to convince people that Australia really needs a treaty with Aboriginals.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, it has been called many things. Initially, it was referred to as the Barunga statement wherein the bid was first made to the Prime Minister. Following that, it has assumed a variety of names. The definition of all the various names is probably the same. Call it what you like, I do not believe that there is any community support for the premise that Australia was stolen from Aboriginal people. I do not think that today's Australian citizens believe that they should shoulder some terrible guilt about how this nation was originally settled. It is a shame that such a large sum of money has been allocated obviously for a publicity campaign aimed at non-Aboriginal Australians, if I understand correctly the flavour of the press release from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Tickner, which was issued yesterday.

We know that Northern Territory ALP policy spells out clearly its attitude on the subject. Thus, I suppose it is wrong to say that there is no support for it in the community. I quote from the Northern Territory ALP's policy document:

The Northern Territory Labor Party recognises the need for the Australian government to provide appropriate compensation for Aboriginal people who have had their land stolen and who have been alienated from their culture and heritage. The NT ALP, acknowledging the absence of any treaty or agreement with Aboriginal people over compensation for dispossession, supports the call for federal legislation to address this question of compensation.

The federal government has revised its intention of entering into a treaty with Aboriginal Australians to something like the year 2000. If it intends to allocate amounts in the order of \$4.5m every couple of years to convince us all that it is a good idea, it will cost the Australian taxpayer a lot of bread. I think that the present allocation is for a 2-year campaign. No doubt, at the end of that period, an assessment will be made of whether it was successful or not. If we all remain unconvinced that it is necessary to have a document filed away in a bank somewhere in order that non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians can comfortably work together as Australians, I suppose it will revamp the campaign and intensify it. It has until the year 2000 - that is, of course, if anyone believes that the Labor Party will be in office in Canberra until then. Perhaps there is some saving grace for us there.

Taminmin High School - Redundancy of Positions

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

A couple of months ago, a meeting was held at Taminmin High School. At that meeting, the minister promised that a committee would be formed to assess the situation in relation to the redundancy of certain positions. Has the committee been formed? If so, who is on the committee and what assessments has it made to date?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I indicated in answer to the question asked by the member for Stuart, in cases in which schools indicate that they have concerns, we will look into those concerns. I will outline the process because I think that it is important. We want to ensure that required curriculum areas are covered. We are not talking about personalities. It is not a matter of schools saying that they need a particular position because they believe that, without it, the school would be unable to function. Each principal and assistant principal will prepare a general outline of management for 1991. That will be discussed with the regional superintendent to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the government. By the end of week 9, the principal, assistant principal and senior faculty staff will have completed that management plan for 1991, showing the staff allocation and teaching loads. The plan will then be scrutinised by an advisory panel, which is the panel to which the honourable member refers. This panel will comprise a secondary principal, an assistant secondary principal ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Of the school concerned?

Mr HARRIS: No. They will come from other areas. The other member of the panel will be a senior officer of the Department of Education. The panel will look at the management plan to determine whether it is possible to cover the curriculum with the staffing allocation put forward. It is a fair process. I have given a commitment on behalf of this government that, if the Northern Territory Board of Studies core curriculum is not able to be taught satisfactorily with allocated staffing levels, I will ensure that the necessary staff will be put in place. I have made that commitment very clear and I repeat it now. We have to ensure that the process of looking at the courses and subjects is carried out responsibly, and that the emotion is taken out of it. As we have seen from this morning's comments by the member for Stuart and others, it is very easy to create the impression that we intend simply to scrub people. That is not the case. The government has a responsibility to ensure that it covers the areas, and it will meet that responsibility, but that will be done in a proper manner.

As I indicated earlier this morning, the process has been put in place. A letter will be sent to the Taminmin High School outlining the process that is to be followed. The process will consider the issues realistically and not emotionally. I hope that, by using a panel comprised of people from outside the school concerned, that panel will be able to say that those programs can be covered with the staff that have been provided.

Barkly Highway at Tennant Creek

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What progress has been made on the proposed deviation of the Barkly Highway into Tennant Creek?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in March this year, I received correspondence from Maggie Hickey, the convenor of the working party in Tennant Creek, seeking that we put a stop to ...

Mr Ede: The next member.

Mr FINCH: It is true that Maggie Hickey is the Labor Party candidate for the electorate of Barkly. Of course, for her, this issue has really become a bit of a ...

Mr Ede: Cause celebre.

Mr FINCH: Yes, one of those.

Mr Bell: French not too flash, Fred?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the Department of Transport and Works and the Northern Territory government were prepared, not necessarily to stop the highway project, which is what she was seeking, but at least to defer to the end of the current construction program the actual intersection at Threeways which was to be located adjacent to the Shell service station. Since that time, in a spirit of cooperation, the department has put together all of the technical surveys to assist that working party to make an economic evaluation of whether the project would be viable and justifiable or not. After many months of origin-and-destination surveys, submissions from all sorts of companies and organisations in Tennant Creek, and surveys of freight companies etc, a technical appraisal was forwarded to the working party some 2 months ago.

Given the urgency of this matter, I am concerned that the final report, which now needs to have the social impact and political aspects built into it, is still not to hand. The federal budget has now been brought down, and I emphasise that because, naturally, any funding of a deviation of the Barkly Highway would be a federal government responsibility and would need to be funded specifically by it. Lots of noise has been drummed up by the Labor candidate for Barkly, allegedly on the basis of her good contact with Senator Collins, Warren Snowdon, Minister Kerin and Minister Brown etc, accompanied by a proliferation of phone calls and winks and nods indicating that it will get the green light.

However, following a visit to Tennant Creek a short time ago, when officers of the federal department indicated quite clearly that the economic feasibility of the proposal was in extreme doubt and that they could not undertake to recommend any support at that stage, I am wondering whether the Labor Cabinet has gone cold on the issue. I have sought that the mayor should pursue this matter. I have said all along that, if the \$8m-worth of work involved in such a project stacks up viably, and the federal government is prepared to support it, then naturally enough it will receive our wholehearted endorsement. Very simply, of course, Tennant Creek is in an economic slump. If this project proved to be viable, it would be of some assistance to people there.

There has been considerable politicking on the matter, with many winks and nods and hints about what Senator Collins and Warren Snowdon will and will not do for them, and I can only assume that some bad news has been passed to them and that they are holding off. The Department of Transport and Works needs to proceed and, of course, Shell needs to know what the outcome will be. The company has an investment there of some \$3m. The project is demonstrated to lie \$9m on the negative side following a cost-benefit appraisal. That does not include the \$3m or \$4m that would be required to compensate Shell, and that would appear to be a fair figure. Shell and also the Department of Transport and Works need to make business decisions, and it is time that we saw some action from the working party led by, as the member for Stuart advises, the Labor candidate for Barkly.

Police Investigation of Alleged Police Corruption

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to the extraordinary comments made by the Chief Minister this morning in respect of the police investigation into police corruption. I point out to the Chief Minister that I regard myself as fair game in terms of an upcoming debate. However, I do not regard people outside this Assembly as fair game. Will the Chief Minister apologise to Geoffrey Barbaro, following the libellous comments the Chief Minister made about him on the ABC program to which I referred? Secondly, in respect of the investigations themselves, what guarantee is there that information given to police by people such as Mr Barbaro's client will be passed on to Mr Mulholland?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in response to the first part of the first question, I do not recall saying anything that was libellous against a solicitor in town on the radio this morning. However, if I did, I am sure that I will be communicated with by that individual. Certainly, I would not think him to be a man who would need to seek advice on such a matter. I will re-examine what I said to see if I said anything that was offensive or damaging to him. If I did say any such thing, at least it was not said under privilege in this House, as has occurred in certain instances in the past.

The honourable member's second question is a little absurd. He is implying is that Mr Mulholland QC, the acknowledged senior criminal lawyer in Queensland and a man of considerable standing in the view of the Leader of the Opposition and the Queensland Premier etc, is a man who needs to be told how to do his job. He has been given a broad brief by the Northern Territory government which includes the ability for him to advise the Northern Territory police investigating teams that certain actions should be taken - and he would take a pretty dim view if they were not - in respect of the 3 matters included in his brief.

For the honourable member to ask what guarantees there are that any information provided by any person to police will be forwarded to Mr Mulholland underrates Mr Mulholland's standing. It certainly underrates the police investigators, the Commissioner of Police etc. What the honourable member is implying really is that nobody can be certain that anything that is provided to the police will ever be passed on to anybody else.

Mr Bell: Exactly.

Mr PERRON: In my view, that is an absurd statement having regard to the procedure which the honourable member knows has been established in the details of the brief given to Mr Mulholland. If he does have any concern in this regard, he might urge the Leader of the Opposition to take the opportunity, which is still open to him and has been open to him for 2 or 3 months, to receive a personal briefing from the Commissioner of Police and, if necessary, the Secretary of the Department of Law. The Leader of the Opposition could be briefed in considerable detail as to where the investigations are and what procedures are being followed to ensure that all information that comes into this system is passed on appropriately.

The Leader of the Opposition has refused persistently to allow himself to be informed of these matters on the basis that he is not prepared to know

anything that the rest of the public does not know. That is a shame. I think he is avoiding his responsibilities as a supposedly senior person in this community. People ought to be able to place some trust not only in him but also in his opinion. If he were prepared to accept a confidential briefing, at least then, even if he were not prepared to go public, he could assure his colleagues of his satisfaction or otherwise with the procedures that have been established. He is afraid that he might be convinced and he might have to say that he is satisfied with what is happening. He will not take that chance. He would rather dodge his responsibility and not know what is happening because that would remove his opportunity to score political points. He ought to be ashamed of himself.

Road Transport and Road Safety

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Members will be aware of the Commonwealth government's determination to divert to rail much of the freight currently carried by road transport. One of the underlying principles of that action is that road transport contributes inordinately to the carnage on our roads. Is that a valid principle in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, the much-maligned truckie has an excellent record as a result of self-regulation and in close consultation with the law-makers of the Northern Territory. That is particularly apparent when consideration is taken of the many miles that are travelled and the huge tonnages that are freighted by road trains, sometimes on roads such as the Victoria Highway which are far from conducive to road safety. However, we do not know whether the great east coast drama, in which the truckies are portrayed as an evil scourge, is in fact a furphy.

A report called for by the federal government, undertaken by the Monash University Accident Research Centre, and published last Tuesday, would seem to put the lie to all of the suggestions made about road transporters. Even on the east coast, on the Pacific and Hume Highways, the statistics taken over a period of 18 months speak for themselves. On average only 8.5% of fatalities involve - and I emphasise 'involve' - trucks. Of that percentage, only 32% are caused by the truck. That means that, even on that horror stretch, only 2% or 3% of fatalities are the responsibility of truckies.

In the Northern Territory, we are much better off. As I explained, through sensible legislation and a cooperative industry, truckies here are involved in only 7.6% of fatal accidents and are responsible for only 1.6% of the total fatalities. Those figures are based on average numbers over the last 7 years. Therefore, it is clear that one of the fundamental premises, on which is based the argument for the ridiculous national registration fee which is supposed to be introduced, and which will cripple the trucking industry and Territorians, is false. The other premise on which it is based is just as false. It involves deliberately moving freight business from road to rail by penalising truckies.

There is to be a 4-year deferment of the full impact of the fees, but what the Commonwealth did not say was that there is a 6¢ a litre diesel impost. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition carried on about a 1¢ per litre impost in the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth impost is 6¢ a litre on diesel for truckies and 9.4¢ on petrol to motorists. This is all

based on a false premise. It is no wonder that, in the Northern Territory and in Western Australia, people develop the attitude that the east coast portrays centralised decision-making and socialism at its worst. Decisions emanate from Canberra, all favouring the east coast of Australia. However, life exists beyond the railhead.

Wheelie Bins

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Department of Health surveys done previously showed heavy maggot infestations when bins were collected only once per week. Was the minister aware of this situation, or advised of concerns held by health surveyors and the Department of Health and Community Services prior to the introduction of a once-weekly service by the Darwin City Council? As the current situation would appear to be a health risk, does the minister accept responsibility for events as a result of his lack of action?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I love the cute epithet at the end of that comment, but I have become used to that type of inane outburst from the member for Wanguri during the last 12 months. Nonetheless, I will respond for the benefit of the constituency, which is particularly concerned about the problems associated with the infamous wheelie bin and the more infamous weekly garbage collection service. I am pleased to see that representatives of the Darwin City Council are present in the public gallery and so are able to listen to the comments which are likely to be made about this matter.

At the time of discussions about the introduction of wheelie bins, I requested and received reports on the potential health effects of the introduction of weekly collections using wheelie bins. Among health surveyors, there was considerable debate as to whether the issues involved were, strictly speaking, health matters, or whether they related merely to odour and discomfort. The reports indicated that, unless appropriate action was taken, there was a possibility of maggot infestation and an increase in the fly population. The reports indicated also that appropriate courses of action could be adopted to avoid that possibility. The health surveyors' reports were made available to the Darwin City Council and, whilst the precise details escape my memory, the general advice from the department was that the introduction of wheelie bins and weekly collections would not, per se, constitute a health hazard. I had correspondence from the community on the subject and I responded to the community in the light of the department's advice.

Whilst I do not denigrate that advice, I must say that I have never been a supporter of weekly collections of garbage in the Northern Territory. There is no doubt about the unique odour which is a consequence of once-weekly garbage collection. The effective requirement to triple wrap and freeze or refrigerate garbage until the collection day is an outrageous imposition on the community. The Minister for Transport and Works addressed this matter quite comprehensively in the adjournment debate last night. He indicated that the council is charging residents \$105 a year per household in garbage collection rates. In fact, the contract rate for the collection service is in the order of \$50 a year per household, which gives the council \$55 per year per household for overheads.

I might note that, when the bins were introduced, the ratepayers did not obtain any of the increased productivity benefits in terms of reduced

garbage collection rates. That occurred not only because of the bins but also because only 1 person is required on the truck. Not only has the service been halved, but also fewer workers are engaged on the work. I understand that the rules require that the driver shall not leave the truck. If, at night, smart Alec kids decide to reverse the bins or push them a couple of feet away from the kerb, the householders miss out on that collection.

Mr Bailey: Or if someone parks nearby.

Mr HATTON: Or if somebody parks nearby. It would then become a fortnightly collection.

I believe that, out of its overhead component of \$55 or thereabouts, the council ought to be able to meet the \$21 additional cost for a second collection per week. As Minister for Conservation, I would be happy to discuss with the council how we could integrate kerbside collection of recyclable materials with the garbage collection service. That would provide some efficiency measures for the council in its land-filling and dumping costs and, at the same time, assist in the process of collection of recyclable materials. I do not accept responsibility for the flies that are creating a black tinge to the light across the northern suburbs of Darwin. That fairly and squarely rests on the shoulders of the Darwin City Council, and I believe it has the financial capacity to do something about it.

Government Printing Office - Use of Recycled Paper

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand the Government Printing Office has produced several publications printed on recycled paper in recent months. How many government publications are now printed on recycled paper and what other moves are under way to ensure that as much wastepaper as possible is being recycled?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as honourable members would be aware, the recently tabled budget papers were printed on recycled paper. That follows the policy adopted by various government departments recently to ensure that, where possible, recycled paper is utilised. It has been said that recycled paper is more expensive than other papers and therefore it is necessary to weigh up the difference in cost and decide whether the cheaper option should be taken and other types of paper used. I am told that the paper used for the budget papers was marginally cheaper than the paper that we would otherwise have used. Thus, things are changing in that regard.

About 15 or 16 regular publications are printed on recycled paper. These include the Government Directory, the Equal Opportunity Survey results, the Environment 1990 folders, Guide to NT Parks, the brochure 'Introducing the Mines Environment Directorate' - and it is pleasing to see the Department of Mines and Energy utilising this facility - the Conservation Commission letterhead, public service circulars, business cards, award restructuring booklets, the Conservation Commission's corporate folders, Land Care letterheads, the Annual Report of the Conservation Commission, envelopes, the Feral Animal Conference leaflets, and the ozone protection leaflets. Those are some of the current publications that have and are utilising the recycled paper.

The other part of the question related to the recycling of paper out of the Northern Territory. As honourable members may be aware, the Government Printer had been utilising the services of Vital Recycling prior to its closing down. Following the demise of that company, we were left in a bit of a quandary as to what to do with wastepaper. Initially, we reached an agreement with APM in Queensland to send the wastepaper in sacks. That continued for a short time. Since that time, we have started to compact the paper and ship it to Queensland. In fact, about 50 t of paper from the Northern Territory government is passed through the Government Printing Office and shipped to Queensland for recycling. I understand the Minister for Conservation will have a little more to say about that later today.

The other day, I took the opportunity to visit the Government Printing Office when the budget papers were being produced and I talked with a number of the people there. I am pleased to say that the Government Printing Office has turned the corner and has become a very lean, mean machine. It is operating extremely well. During the evening, whilst the budget papers were being printed, I returned to thank the people at the Government Printing Office for their efforts. I took a couple of cartons of beer around and had a drink with them.

I would like to commend the last 2 Government Printers. Since I have had responsibility for the Government Printing Office, Mr John Cossons and Mr Graeme Carswell have been the Government Printers. Both have done an excellent job in changing the Government Printing Office from an organisation which carried a bit of fat to one that is now functioning extremely well. It is able to respond extremely quickly to the needs of government. In fact, it has been able to put a very substantial portion of its work out to the private sector.

The Government Printing Office is now under review again. When we started the process of trimming it down a couple of years ago, I promised that we would review it again with a view to determining the direction it would take in the future. I sincerely commend the efforts of the Government Printing Office and the efforts its officers are putting into using recycled paper and reducing the costs of its utilisation. I commend also the fact that we are continuing to recycle paper through the Government Printing Office.

By-laws in Relation to Dog Act

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In answer to a question asked earlier in these sittings, the minister said that local government councils and community government councils can make their own by-laws in relation to the Dog Act. Legal advice given to the Darwin and Palmerston councils indicates that this is not so. What is the true position?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker I am not aware of the legal advice that the councils have received. Quite clearly, councils do have the capacity to make by-laws under the current Dog Act and they have the capacity to fulfil their obligations for the control of dogs in the Northern Territory under the auspices of that act. I have promised to repeal that act to allow councils the freedom to create their own by-laws without any restriction which may be imposed by that act so that they can pick up the problems that they have in policing dogs outside of those areas designated as public places.

The Darwin City Council has been controlling dogs in Darwin for some considerable time. Other councils have not gone as far as the Darwin City Council has in utilising the current act, but there will be no restrictions on councils once that act is repealed. If community government councils and municipal councils would get together and make a decision on where they want to go with this, I would quite happy to look at the repeal of the current Dog Act as soon as possible. It does not have to be effective from 1 July 1991. That date was selected only to allow people enough time to have their by-laws in place if they chose to create by-laws. Of course, being a former councillor and president of a community government council, the honourable member will be aware that the Northern Territory Community Government Association has sought a longer period of time before the repeal of the act comes into effect whereas, generally, municipal councils would prefer a shorter time lapse. I would like the 2 arms of local government to get together and decide what they really want.

Palmerston Bus Service

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Why was the Palmerston Bus Service granted to Buslink without the contract being put out to public tender, what is the period of the contract and what is the anticipated overall cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there were good logical reasons for not putting the contract out to public tender. Within a few days of the last major disputation within the Darwin Bus Service, the residents of Palmerston suggested rather strongly that they would like an integrated service for Palmerston.

Mr Coulter: They petitioned this parliament in fact.

Mr FINCH: Yes. They petitioned this parliament, through their local member. They stated quite specifically that they wanted Buslink. Naturally enough, the basis for their request was that Buslink already operated the local service. They wanted an integrated service so that, whenever possible, they could be picked up in the suburbs of Palmerston and be driven along the trunk route to Casuarina or the centre of Darwin without having to change buses. The Darwin Bus Service examined that option in terms of economic viability and practicality. At the same time, we were reviewing the need for expansion of other routes within the northern suburbs. As a total package, the most economic course of action was deemed to be the extension of the terms of the existing contract to give Buslink the major routes.

The existing 10-year contract, which has 7 or 8 years to run, was based on competitive tenders. The allocation of the additional integrated routes to Buslink was based exactly on those competitively-won tenders. It was not a big deal. The other option was to terminate the existing contracts for the suburban routes, which would have resulted in a cost penalty and some unfairness to Buslink, the private company which held those contracts. Of course, the routes being offered were within the jurisdiction of the Darwin Bus Service and therefore there was no conflict with any other contractor.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: There was.

Mr FINCH: In response to the interjection from the member for Koolpinyah, the Darwin Bus Service is currently looking at further integration of services in the rural area, where there is a mix and where it would make sense to arrange some localised integration, if it can possibly be negotiated.

In my view, there was no disadvantage to other contractors. The decision was made on the basis of competitively-won contracts. To have done otherwise would have been totally unfair to the incumbent contractor and it would have cost the government dollars. As for the cost of the contract to government, I do not have the figures before me. As I have said, it was based on the previous rates. It applies for the balance of the current contract for Palmerston. There were some marginal long-term savings to government. We were due to examine the purchase of some new buses and we were saved the necessity of meeting the capital costs of replacement buses. All in all, it was a good deal on behalf of the taxpayer.

Honda Central Australian Masters Games

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for TOURISM

Would the minister provide the House with an update on the third Honda Central Australian Masters Games which are due to commence in early October this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, reports from the Office of Youth, Sport and Recreation in central Australia indicate that this year's Honda Central Australian Masters Games will be even bigger and better than they were in 1988, when about 2000 competitors took part in the games and generated an estimated \$1.4m into the economy. It is estimated that, this year, 2500 competitors will take part. The value to the central Australian and Northern Territory economy will be around \$2m. That figure is based on estimated enrolment figures. The nomination figures are up by about 25%. Currently, 1500 people have nominated formally. In the corresponding period in 1988, 1075 people had nominated. On a sadder note - and honourable members may have heard about this - the oldest entrant in the games, a gentleman born in 1897, a 93 year-old walker from Melbourne, was knocked down by a car in Melbourne 2 or 3 weeks ago, and died.

I would like to pay tribute to Honda, which is once again the major sponsor for the Masters Games. Honda has indicated that it will sponsor the Masters Games again in 1992. The Northern Territory is delighted to have the continuing support of Honda Australia. I would like to pay tribute to the company, and particularly to one of its directors, Mr David Morwood, who has been a strong supporter of the games. Some honourable members might be aware of the fact that Mr Morwood's daughter, Amanda, works for the Office of Youth, Sport and Recreation. The Attorney-General might be further interested in the fact that David Morwood is an uncle of Shane Morwood, the well-known Collingwood footballer. In conclusion, let me say that the continuing support of Honda and other sponsors, together with the Office of Youth, Sport and Recreation, will enable the Honda Central Australian Masters Games to continue as the premier masters games in Australia.

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PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

20 February 1990

114. Liquor Licence Applications

Mr EDE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

1. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for new liquor licences have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
2. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for renewals of liquor licences have been rejected by the Liquor Commission.
3. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
 - (a) approved; and
 - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
4. For each year 1985 to 1988 how many applications for -
 - (a) new;
 - (b) renewal; and
 - (c) changes,to licence conditions were opposed by commercial or community interests.
5. Of the opposed proposals, how many were ultimately granted.

1 May 1990

127. Tourist Commission's Advertising Budget

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What was the Tourist Commission's budget for -
 - (a) television advertising;
 - (b) print advertising;
 - (c) international marketing; and
 - (d) trade shows, during -
 - (i) 1987-88;
 - (ii) 1988-89; and
 - (iii) 1989-90.
2. Which advertising agency(ies) is/are retained or have been retained.
3. On what basis is/are the agency(ies) chosen.
4. Is there a tendering process.
5. If there is no tendering process, why not.
6. What is the nature of the tendering process.
7. Are tender documents public.
8. If there is a tendering process and that tender documents are prepared, is the amount of air time thus prescribed.
9. What amount of air time was prescribed during each of the years listed above.
10. If air time was not prescribed during these years, why not.
11. What was the value of that air time.

14 August 1990

135. Conversion of Pastoral Properties to Perpetual Leasehold

Mr EDE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. Upon which properties have recommendations under section 48A(1) of the Crown Lands Act, relating to the Director of Conservation's power to recommend the reservation of areas for public interest, been made.
2. Which of the above properties encompassing or bordering major waterways, estuaries or coastline have been -
 - (a) the subject of recommendations; and

5. How many sick days were taken by police officers during 1990 for the months of -
 - (a) June;
 - (b) July; and
 - (c) August.
6. What cost effect did this sick leave have on overtime.

139. Breakdown Attributable to Bovine Tuberculosis
Marqua Station

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

With reference to the minister's answer to Question on Notice No 133 in which he stated that the only breakdown attributable to Bovine Tuberculosis in Impending Free areas was at Marqua Station -

1. Will the minister agree that a breakdown occurred on Tarlton Downs Station in the same year.
2. Will the minister acknowledge that his answer to Question 133 was wrong and record his apology in Hansard.
3. Will the minister advise whether there are any other errors of fact in the answer.

20 February 1990

115. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	14
2. Total cost 1988-89	934 569
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	16
4. Total cost 1989-90	711 006

NORTHERN TERRITORY TREASURY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	4
2. Total cost 1988-89	49 231
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	13
4. Total cost 1989-90	194 583

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL
(Authorised Auditor's Fees)

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	-
2. Total cost 1988-89	1 161 984
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	-
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 138 000

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	-
2. Total cost 1988-89	-
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	1
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 000

DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	10 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	1
4. Total cost 1989-90	9 763

POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	2
2. Total cost 1988-89	56 500
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	2
4. Total cost 1989-90	7 680

116. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	31
2. Total cost 1988-89	505 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	34
4. Total cost 1989-90	676 331

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - NIL

117. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	5
2. Total cost 1988-89	47 152
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	6
4. Total cost 1989-90	60 728

118. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

TOURIST COMMISSION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	8
2. Total cost 1988-89	243 025
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	11
4. Total cost 1989-90	286 000

OFFICE OF YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	3 711
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	1
4. Total cost 1989-90	45 426

119. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	321
2. Total cost 1988-89	9 658 395
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	330
4. Total cost 1989-90	9 310 680

DARWIN PORT AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	8
2. Total cost 1988-89	20 808
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	9
4. Total cost 1989-90	98 350

RACING, GAMING AND LIQUOR COMMISSION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	32 672
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	-
4. Total cost 1989-90	-

120. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	9
2. Total cost 1988-89	223 539
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	8
4. Total cost 1989-90	159 667

WORK HEALTH AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	3
2. Total cost 1988-89	42 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	5
4. Total cost 1989-90	8 550

OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	4
2. Total cost 1988-89	67 286
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	3
4. Total cost 1989-90	128 755

121. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.

3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	9
2. Total cost 1988-89	160 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	12
4. Total cost 1989-90	190 000

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	31
2. Total cost 1988-89	1 284 814
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	29
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 088 094

122. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	12 383
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	-
4. Total cost 1989-90	-

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND HOUSING

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	47
2. Total cost 1988-89	461 694
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	34
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 130 733

ABORIGINAL AREAS PROTECTION AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	6
2. Total cost 1988-89	15 926
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	32
4. Total cost 1989-90	129 359

123. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	53
2. Total cost 1988-89	421 104
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	31
4. Total cost 1989-90	429 945

POWER AND WATER AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	122
2. Total cost 1988-89	4 235 718
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	95
4. Total cost 1989-90	2 861 836

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	16
2. Total cost 1988-89	239 430
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	14
4. Total cost 1989-90	681 475

TRADE DEVELOPMENT ZONE AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	6
2. Total cost 1988-89	122 318
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	5
4 Total cost 1989-90	138 487

1 May 1990

128. Registration of Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

With reference to your answer to Written Question No 102, relating to Aboriginal Health Workers employed in certain Aboriginal communities, how many of those health workers were -

- (a) registered under the Health Practitioners and Allied Professionals Registration Act; and
- (b) not registered under that act.

ANSWER

The Health Practitioners and Allied Professionals Registration Act was passed in September 1985 and the Registration Board established in 1986, therefore no Aboriginal Health Workers were registered in 1981 or 1985.

In 1 year an Aboriginal Health Worker position may be filled by more than 1 person, for example, due to maternity leave, transfer or resignation.

The following registration details are of Aboriginal Health Workers employed by the Department of Health and Community Services in December 1989:

Registered Aboriginal Health Workers	86
Conditionally Registered Aboriginal Health Workers	4
TOTAL	<u>90</u>
Trainee Aboriginal Health Workers (not registered)	97

Communities who receive a Grant-in-Aid from the department manage their own health service, including staffing. Aboriginal Health Workers employed through Grants-in-Aid are not reflected in the above figures.

14 August 1990

133. Bovine Tuberculosis in Confirmed Free Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many outbreaks of Bovine Tuberculosis occurred within the Confirmed Free area in the Northern Territory since 1987.
2. In how many of these cases has a total or partial de-stocking been the preferred method of cleaning up the infestation.
3. How many of these cattle were shipped out.
4. How many of these cattle were shot to waste or used as pet meat.
5. What was the cost to the BTEC program for outbreaks within the Confirmed Free area for -
 - (a) compensation; and
 - (b) other associated costs,during the financial years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

ANSWER

The honourable member for Stuart is again demonstrating his ignorance of the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign. The term 'Confirmed Free Area' has no directly applicable meaning in the sense in which he has used it.

I presume the honourable member is seeking details relating to breakdowns in the Impending Free Areas and have framed my reply accordingly.

Question 1

- 1987 - there was no Impending Free Area in the NT.
- 1988 - Tuberculosis was confirmed on Henbury Station, tailtag area TKAS0135.
- 1989 - Tuberculosis was confirmed on Marqua Station, tailtag areas TKAS0127 and TCAS0050.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question 2

<u>Tailtag Area</u>	<u>Type of De-stocking</u>
Henbury West TKAS0135	partial
Marqua - East and West TCAS0050	total (in progress)
Marqua - Breakfast Creek TKAS0127	total (in progress)

Question 3

Henbury West TKAS0135

864 cattle trucked with compensation
185 cattle trucked without compensation

TOTAL = 1049 head

Marqua East and West, Breakfast Creek TCAS0050, TKAS0127

(to date)
3680 cattle trucked with compensation
557 cattle trucked without compensation

TOTAL = 4237 head

Question 4

Henbury West TKAS0135

79 unmusterable cattle
27 untruckable cattle

TOTAL = 106 head - all these cattle (origin - Meteorite, Running Water, Block, Gap, Cotton Bush) were destroyed with compensation paid to the station. A number of unmusterable cattle (origin - Cave Hole, Bowra and Shepherds) were also destroyed but with no compensation paid to the station.

Marqua - East and West, Breakfast Creek TCAS0050, TKAS0127 -

To date no cattle have been 'shot to waste' or 'used as pet meat'.

Question 5

Assessable gross costs to BTEC for these breakdowns are -

Financial Year	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	TOTAL
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Compensation Payable	117 270	46 663	1 228 179	1 392 112
Other Costs (Type A)	390	19 565	21 201	41 156
TOTAL:	117 660	66 228	1 249 380	1 433 268
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136. Maintenance Contract for Radiological
Equipment at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In your debate in the committee stages of the 1989-90 Appropriation Bill you referred to the purchase of radiological equipment for the Royal Darwin Hospital and a maintenance contract with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd which would give 'total savings in that area of \$120 000 per year or \$600 000 for 5 years, which represents a savings in the order of \$350 000 over that period'.

1. To which heads of expenditure detailed in the budget speech do Toshiba invoices Nos 695089, 695090 and 695091 relate.
2. Is it correct, as these invoices indicate, that the government has paid this service contract in advance.
3. Will the 'comprehensive 5-year service contract' with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd be tabled.
4. How is the saving on parts of \$50 000 calculated.

ANSWER

1. Hospital Activity, Royal Darwin Hospital Program Capital Items Category of Cost.
2. Yes. The government has paid this services contract in advance.
3. No. Terms and conditions of contracts with private enterprise are not generally tabled in parliament. Protection of privacy is considered a high priority. Royal Darwin Hospital has numerous commercial agreements for the supply of goods and services.
4. The radiology equipment agreement allowed a one off \$100 000 saving with an annual saving of approximately \$50 000 per annum based on the cost of spare parts stored and utilised to maintain the previous equipment.

Work Health Authority

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The minister and other members of the Assembly would be aware that certain concerns have been raised in the community in relation to benefits available under the Work Health Act. What action does he intend to take, or has he taken in relation to those concerns?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I preface my answer to this question by saying that I am fully aware of the trauma suffered by families of injured people and, of course, by the injured persons themselves when, unfortunately, they are injured through work or from whatever cause. There is enormous trauma to families and the individuals concerned. I have been a little concerned over the last few weeks about much of the information that has been circulated, particularly by the member for MacDonnell, concerning the position with the Work Health Authority in the Northern Territory. The member opposite has termed it 'a disaster'. If the member opposite wants to look at disasters in work health, he should go to Victoria or South Australia. As we all know, Victoria is in debt to the tune of billions of dollars in relation to work health, and South Australia is currently \$60m in debt as a result of extremely poor management of its system.

Much has been made of the level of benefits in the Northern Territory compared to the level of benefits in other parts of Australia. Mr Speaker, you can compare apples with oranges if you like but, if you compare apples with apples, our system stands up quite well in comparison to others around this country. Let us look at some of the benefits payable. I will refer to weekly benefits because those are the benefits on which people must survive during an injury period. I am not referring to a lump sum benefit that one might receive in one of the states, perhaps after many years of court action, but benefits on which people must survive. In the Northern Territory, the person's normal weekly earnings prior to the accident are maintained for 26 weeks. Following that period, there is 70% of normal weekly earnings to a maximum of \$540. That does not stop after 6 months or after any time period pulled out of a hat. That figure is maintained until retirement. That figure is in addition to all medical and rehabilitation expenses incurred by that person.

Last year, Western Australia was the state favoured by the opposition. Let us look at Western Australia. An injured person receives the industrial award rate of pay only, regardless of what he was earning. If he has been earning \$1000 a week and the industrial award is \$400, that is what he receives. That is limited to a total figure of \$83 000 maximum. Once that amount has been reached, that person goes on unemployment or sickness benefits and becomes a burden on the Commonwealth social security system.

The new-found love of the opposition is Queensland. Since the last Queensland election, it has become the most favoured state of the opposition. Let me talk about the Queensland situation. In Queensland, an injured worker is paid at award rates for 26 weeks, whereas we pay normal weekly earnings for 26 weeks. The maximum amount payable is \$55 000, although I will say that it is about to be increased by \$10 000 or \$12 000. Once that amount is reached, the worker is picked up by social security. That is how the Queensland system operates, and the situation in respect of weekly benefits in other states is similar.

Members of the opposition, particularly the member for MacDonnell, have been raving on without really looking at the situation elsewhere in the country. He has been looking at areas such as death benefits and permanent impairment. Death benefits in the Northern Territory are not the nation's highest nor are they the lowest. Permanent impairment benefits are not the lowest either. In fact, the Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction which takes a whole-of-body stance in this area. In most states, if a person contracts a disease or internal illness at work, work health benefits do not apply. In the Northern Territory, such benefits do apply. In many of the states, if a person receives a lump sum benefit, any benefits received through normal weekly compensation or medical and other benefits are deducted from that amount. Our work health system compares extremely favourably right across the board. Although our benefits may not be as high as those in other states, when one looks at the way their systems operate, it becomes quite clear that the operation of our Work Health Act is far from being a disaster.

When we look at death benefits, as I said, they are not by any means ...

Mr Bell: Which one is lower, Terry? Tell us which one you think is lower.

Mr McCARTHY: They are not by any means the lowest in the country. The death benefits in Queensland total \$77 000 compared to our \$80 000, and that is reduced by any amount paid in maims or weekly benefits, whilst we make no deductions. They make many deductions. In the ACT, it is \$79 000. In South Australia, it is \$80 000 - again less than in the Northern Territory. We do not deduct any other payments that we have made.

Even though, from the facts that I have been able to outline here this morning, it is clear that we are not by any means the worst in this nation, I have no doubt that people are suffering, but people are suffering in the states too. However, they are not suffering because our system is worse than those in the states but because any cut in a person's salary is difficult to accommodate. I know that as well as anybody else does. I have been in that situation, and I recognise that it is a very traumatic time for families when it occurs.

As a consequence, I have met with the Injured Persons' Association and I have agreed to have the Ministerial Advisory Council of Work Health review all benefits payable under the Work Health Act in order to ensure that we maintain our responsible position in the matter of work health in the Northern Territory.

Work Health Authority

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I have a number of questions following from the minister's previous answer. He made a great deal of the question of weekly benefits in Western Australia and Queensland. Is he aware that, in both those states, a common law action is retained for a pain and suffering component that, in the Northern Territory, has been removed in its entirety unlike any state in the Commonwealth? In respect of a Northern Territory employee and a Commonwealth employee, does the minister accept that injured workers in the Northern Territory should receive lower benefits than their Commonwealth counterparts?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, do we have to be so different from every state? I have outlined for the honourable member opposite where we are above the states in this matter. Does he think for a minute that there are no Commonwealth employees in those states? There are Commonwealth employees in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales who are receiving different benefits from the benefits provided by those states. Why should we be different? We have a responsible attitude to work health. A review into work health in the Territory has been under way for some time. The member opposite, who now climbs up on his high horse and says that he has been aware of this problem for 12 months or more, did not make a submission to that review. He did not come near us. Neither did other members of the opposition or the unions come forward with any action with regard to that review. They did not come with a submission and ask if we were aware of the problem that people were facing. They did not come forward, yet they say they were aware of it.

I do not know how they can hide behind this. They kowtow to the Commonwealth to such an extent. It is quite obvious. Over the last few days, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have been kowtowing to the Commonwealth at the expense of their relationship with the unions. I am not prepared to sit here and accept the high moral stance adopted by the member for MacDonnell when he did not make any effort to bring these concerns forward previously so that they could be addressed. I have responded quickly and I have responded in the correct way in order to ensure that people in the community do not suffer.

Commonwealth Guarantee on Borrowings

Mr SETTER to TREASURER

I understand that the federal Treasurer has written to the Chief Minister and Treasurer advising that he will withdraw the Commonwealth guarantee which underwrites the Territory's borrowings. What will be the effect of this action?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm that I have received advice from the federal Treasurer that he intends to withdraw the Commonwealth guarantee from 1 July 1991. This is a serious matter which has cost implications for the Northern Territory. At the time of self-government, the Commonwealth undertook to stand behind the Territory when it entered the finance marketplace to raise loans for capital development throughout the Territory as part of its budgetary process. We were then, and we are still, a relatively small borrower and the Commonwealth guarantee provides comfort to lenders and enables us to secure loan funds at attractive rates. The federal Treasurer claims that, having been in the marketplace for 12 years, we should be moved to a more state-like footing, notwithstanding that we do not have the powers of a state. We do not have control over important mineral reserves and royalties, our hands are tied in relation to land administration and history shows that we are subject to the whims of federal decision-making to a far greater extent than are any of the states.

In taking this step, the federal Treasurer gave us a pat on the back by saying: 'In the absence of the guarantee, the Commonwealth considers that, provided the Northern Territory continues to manage its finances prudently, the Territory should continue to be able to borrow on favourable terms and

conditions'. It seems that, in that regard at least, the federal Treasurer disagrees with the Leader of the Opposition in this parliament. We are all aware that the Leader of the Opposition peddles quite a different line about how the Northern Territory government manages the taxpayers' funds of which it has stewardship. I will be very interested to hear what the Leader of the Opposition's attitude is towards the federal Treasurer's foreshadowed action in this regard.

We have been very successful at securing attractive interest rates. Currently, we raise funds at a rate just a little lower than 2 of the Australian states. At present, the average interest rate that we pay on our total debt is about 12.1%. Without the Commonwealth guarantee, there is no doubt that new borrowings will be at higher rates. We estimate a cost penalty of up to \$500 000 in the first year. That figure will compound in each subsequent year as we borrow at the higher rate. Over a period, this decision will cost the Territory many millions of dollars. Why should we be placed in this position when it costs the Commonwealth absolutely nothing to provide the guarantee? It does not cost it a cent. We accept that, eventually, the Territory government should have to stand on its own feet in the capital markets. However, we should do so when we have state-like powers over the administration of the Northern Territory. That is when we should do it, not now.

I have written back to the Treasurer - and I will table the 2 letters in a moment - appealing to him to review his decision. His decision does not benefit the Commonwealth in any way and, in a moment, I will demonstrate that it is likely to cost it some money. The Northern Territory's self-government exists really at the pleasure of the federal government. We are here as a result of a federal act which can be repealed at any time. Under that act, the Commonwealth has some very significant powers which do not exist in relation to the states. It has the power to withhold assent to legislation passed in this Chamber. In some respects, legislation can be overturned within 6 months of its being put in place in the Northern Territory. In the last 5 years, we have received precisely twice the cuts in Commonwealth funding that the states have received. We are subject to the whims of the federal government to a far greater extent than any state is. No doubt, in part, that is because we do not have the power where it counts. We do not have the numbers, particularly in the Senate. The Northern Territory is far from being a state.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The question from the member for Jingili to the Treasurer related to the termination of Commonwealth guarantees in respect of the Territory's capacity to raise loans. The Treasurer is now indulging himself in broad-ranging comments on Commonwealth/Territory relations which I do not think are appropriate in question time. They should be the subject of a statement.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have been listening to the Treasurer with interest and I find that he is answering the question he was asked.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the question asked me to comment on the ramifications of this action and that is what I am addressing.

In late June, at the last Loans Council meeting, the Commonwealth advised the Territory and the states that, for its own presentational purposes in its budget documents, it wanted the states to redeem the Loans Council's advances, that is, money raised by the Commonwealth by way of loans and forwarded to the states as distinct from the Loans Council

borrowing limits where the states raise funds themselves in the market. The Commonwealth has asked the states to borrow funds and to pay back the advances to the Commonwealth. To encourage that, the Commonwealth says that it will facilitate it at nil cost to the states.

Commonwealth advances to the Northern Territory now amount to \$785m and, for the information of honourable members, our global limit borrowings are \$552m. The Commonwealth is asking us to go into the marketplace to borrow another \$785m over a period and to pay that back to the Commonwealth so that it can remove all of these outstanding loans from its books. The Commonwealth has said that it will ensure that we are not disadvantaged in that regard. The withdrawal of the Commonwealth guarantee means that, as we enter the marketplace to borrow the \$785m, we will have to pay a higher rate of interest than would apply if the guarantee were still in place. In ensuring that this situation will have a nil net effect on the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth will be writing larger cheques for us than would otherwise be the case.

I hope that this is only an oversight on the part of the federal Treasurer, and that he might overturn his decision when he realises the implications. I would hate to think that his Treasury officers have weighed the matter up and have made the decision. Certainly, if the federal Treasurer knows that the decision will increase the costs to the Commonwealth government, but nevertheless remains prepared to withdraw the Commonwealth guarantee to the Northern Territory, one would have to be very suspicious about his motives.

Mr Speaker, I table the federal Treasurer's letter and my response.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In spite of the minister's protestations, he has more or less conceded that benefits to Territory workers are among the lowest, if not the lowest, in this country. My question relates to his awareness of the overall costs of premiums and benefits paid out and profits to insuring companies, one of which is the Territory Insurance Office. Is the minister aware of his own government's figures, tabled in this Assembly, which indicate that insurers are making a \$10m profit on a \$27m turnover on work health, an amount equivalent to a 40% profit on turnover in worker's compensation insurance?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as usual, the member for MacDonnell is playing around with figures that he does not really understand. I refute his assertion that I have conceded that the Northern Territory is behind the states in terms of compensation benefits. Certainly, I did not concede that. In fact, to the contrary, I made it clear that the Northern Territory's benefits in a whole range of areas - particularly those very important benefits which enable people to survive and to pay for their weekly groceries - are better than those in the majority of the states. The same applies in other areas, when one takes into account the deductions which states levy on their long-term impairment benefits and death benefits. They deduct amounts which have been paid out already in weekly benefits. We do not. When we pay a lump sum benefit, all our weekly benefits are maintained. Rehabilitation benefits and medical expenses continue to be paid. Whilst some of our lump sum benefits appear to be low in comparison with those in the states, when one

takes their deductions into account, it is clear that we are not necessarily behind the 8-ball.

We chose deliberately to have a work health system which did not rely on a single insurer. We are a responsible government when it comes to money matters. We could foresee the problems which work health systems in Victoria and South Australia now face with their single insurers and their belief that governments were the fount of all knowledge and could run a system better than the private companies in the insurance world. We went deliberately down a road of having private insurers involved in this system.

It is not my place or the government's place to tell an insurance company whether it can make a profit of this size or that size. That is monitored by the Insurance Council of Australia. If the insurance companies are making money out of work health, I am sure that the council will advise its members and they will take action as a result. I will not go to private insurers and tell them what rate they will charge and what profit they will obtain. That is how the private sector has some freedom under a conservative government. I know that that is anathema to the members opposite, who believe that they should put their sticky fingers into everything and direct private enterprise how to run its show. I believe that that is a matter for insurance companies and the employers who buy that insurance. If an employer believes that an insurance company is charging too high a premium, let him say that he is not prepared to pay it. How can the government tell an insurance company what its premiums should be?

I can give figures that will show clearly that, under the Work Health Act in the Northern Territory, workers' compensation premiums have reduced dramatically. Across the board, they are now around 4%. Some of those were previously as high as 40%. That is the clear result of the good management of this government in respect of work health. Let the would-be Leader of the Opposition over there indicate to the public that the opposition would put its sticky fingers into insurance companies, that it would run a Victorian-type work care system which has seen billions of dollars go down the drain or that it would run a South Australian style work health system which has seen \$60m go down the drain. Let him tell the public exactly what sort of people members of the opposition are.

Counterfeit Aboriginal Art Works and Artifacts

Mr FLOREANI to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the Chief Minister aware that the Northern Territory is being swamped with counterfeit Aboriginal art works and artifacts which are being produced overseas under the pretext of their being genuine Aboriginal art work and artifacts? Would the Chief Minister, in cooperation with Aboriginal artists and organisations, consider enacting copyright legislation to protect Northern Territory artists, Northern Territory businesses and potential purchasers from cheap foreign imitations as this infant industry is estimated to be worth \$10m per annum in the Northern Territory?

Mr Speaker, with your permission I have some samples of genuine Aboriginal art work and the copied art, and some photographs of people producing this art work in Bali.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Flynn may make the artifacts available to members during the course of these proceedings.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the proposition put by the member for Flynn is an interesting one. I will not respond in detail other than to say that there are copyright laws that exist in Australia. If I recall rightly, they are federal laws. I do not recall any Northern Territory copyright laws. I know that those laws have been used by Aboriginal artists to seek redress from those people who have snaffled designs. It has been quite a topical issue in the media recently. We will have a look at this, but I think it is probable that the protections are there. It is up to artists, who believe that their designs are being copied in breach of copyright, to take appropriate action to try to obtain redress. In regard to any items that are being imported, as distinct from those produced in Australia, there may be some additional protections that can be brought to bear in that the commodity has to come through customs which, naturally, does not apply to material produced in a factory somewhere in Australia.

All I can do is take on board the honourable member's points and we will have a look at the matter. I can assure him and other honourable members that the Northern Territory government does indeed support Aboriginal enterprise. It is a very significant industry in the Territory and elsewhere and, hopefully, it will be very much a growing industry which will employ many more Aboriginal people than it does at the present time and give them the opportunity to earn their own income, be their own bosses and establish their own enterprises.

Fuel Costs

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What action is the government taking to alleviate the burden on people in remote areas of the Northern Territory, including businesses and those who need fuel to carry out their daily lives, as a result of the sudden increase in fuel prices in the past few weeks?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question from the member for Araluen is indeed timely. I was told this morning that the price of oil has now risen to \$US40 a barrel. That is a rise of some \$US6 over Friday's spot price ...

Mr Tuxworth: That was at 8 o'clock.

Mr COULTER: That is right. We need an hourly update on this.

For the information of honourable members, I was in Singapore last week at a petroleum conference and the Singapore spot price has increased some 60% since 2 August, the date of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. At US\$40 a barrel, we can be in for a great deal of trouble if something is not done. Of course, roughly calculated, every dollar increase in the price of a barrel of oil represents 1¢ a litre. The federal government people are probably rubbing their hands together over the windfall that the federal government has received as a result of this. It exceeds some \$2m a day at the moment. That is not bad money for doing nothing. It should see the federal government gain an extra \$500m. I forget the formula that determines the amount of this per-dollar increase that goes straight to the federal government.

The situation is reaching a crisis point in Australia. Luckily, we have moved away from the Singapore spot price, because we simply could not afford to pay \$US40 a barrel in Australia. A formula has been agreed to now that reduces our price below the Singapore spot price. An international price applies now rather than the Singapore rate to which we were linked previously. However, it means big problems for Australia and, of course, bigger problems for people living in remote areas of Australia. The Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister and Premiers throughout Australia expressing his concerns and I will start by putting those concerns into perspective and talk about fuel pricing and what has happened in the past few weeks.

As a result of the Middle East crisis and the rising cost of crude oil, the price of petrol has increased by about 14¢ a litre throughout Australia. A rule of thumb is that the price of petrol per litre increases at the rate of 1¢ for every \$US1 increase per barrel. In addition, since the federal government indexes both its crude oil excise on Bass Strait oil and its excise on refined products, its fuel tax has added a little under 4¢ to the price of a litre of petrol. Currently, about 25¢ of the price of each litre of petrol is paid to the federal government. Finally, there is the Northern Territory government tax, which was raised by 1¢ in the current budget. This means that 5¢ of the price of a litre of petrol sold in the Northern Territory goes into our coffers. Our tax on petrol is not indexed. Thus, if petrol were to rise to \$42 per barrel, the Territory government would still receive only 5¢ per litre, while the federal government's indexed collection would be more than 30¢ per litre.

No Territory motorist, business or any fuel-using concern welcomes the situation, but the underlying cost of fuel is out of our hands. It is in the hands of people like President Hussein and President Bush. Obviously, in this situation, it is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that no one suffers disproportionately through the fuel cost burden, particularly the people who are least able to afford it. In this case, the people least able to carry the burden are those suffering the greatest weight - that is, those people in remote areas in the Territory and elsewhere in Australia.

Under the former Liberal government, there was a scheme in place which went some way towards alleviating the burden: the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme. In fact, it is still in place, but no one would know it because the federal ALP has emasculated the scheme, rendering it almost totally impotent to compensate those who live in remote areas. Previously, the scheme subsidised the freight component on fuel. Today, it costs more than 10¢ a litre to transport fuel to some remote areas of the Territory. The Territory government believes it is right and proper to ask the federal government to help those who can least afford to pay the extra cost of fuel, who have no alternative energy supplies and no public transport, and who are now effectively subsidising those who pay less for fuel in heavily populated parts of the eastern seaboard. It is a serious situation that is already affecting the tourist trade because holiday motorists on a budget simply turn around and head for home after filling up at the bowser. Remote area businesses are cutting their profit margins to the bone in order to survive.

I look to members opposite to use whatever influence they may have with their colleagues in the federal parliament to make the federal government realise its responsibility to people in remote areas of the Territory and to have the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme returned to the level it was at before the Labor government emasculated it. It is known that the

indexed excises that the federal government collects from crude oil and at the petrol bowser are reaping windfall revenues for it. It seems only fair that it should put at least some of that extra and unexpected revenue back into helping those people who are powerless to find alternatives as the cost of fuel goes through the roof. A return to the former freight subsidy levels would save those in remote areas up to 10¢ in the litre, at least bringing prices into line with those paid at city service stations. That would help save lost tourist trade and, very possibly, lost business and jobs. Such a decision from the federal government would be not only fair, but would also make economic sense. We cannot wait for 1 or 2 months. We need urgent action on this, and we need it today. People in the Northern Territory and all over Australia are hurting very badly.

Mr Bell: What about Work Health victims?

Mr COULTER: If we cannot create wealth, we cannot all have bigger slices of the cake. We have to build bigger and better cakes. Is that the type of response that I am to get on this issue? Let us look at this question for a moment.

Mr Bell: You argue for urgency. Argue consistently, Barry.

Mr COULTER: Will you support this or not? Do you believe in this? Do you believe in helping people?

Mr Bell: Yes.

Mr COULTER: Good. Now let members of the opposition put their words into action. Let us see if we can have a united approach to this as a parliament in the Northern Territory and get some action from the federal government. It could be done by a simple stroke of a pen, just as the federal Treasurer intends to remove the Commonwealth's guarantee. It could be done that simply. We are not asking for new legislation. We are asking simply that it reinstate a scheme that was in place before. It could be done by close of business today if the federal government wanted to do it. That is the degree of urgency that is required because, at this price, we will simply drive people out of business and drive the tourists out of the Northern Territory.

Mr Bell: Bring on a motion. Let us debate it.

Mr COULTER: That is a good idea. We will propose a motion in this House. I can put it to my colleagues today. Let us see if we can get some action on this. The seriousness of this situation must be realised. It is ridiculous that Australia is 85% self-sufficient in fuel and yet we are linked to some international oil price. In addition, the federal government receives \$2m a day in windfall profit whilst businesses close in remote areas of Australia. The international spot price could reach US\$40 a barrel as panic buying is now setting in. We must have action immediately. The federal government had its little party picnic yesterday and it may now be able to get back to the serious business of running this country.

I was on a flight coming back from Zurich the other day and there was an Australian pilot on the plane. We were coming into Singapore. He said to me: 'I am getting off here. Where are you going - back to the Titanic?' I said: 'Unfortunately, yes'. The country really is sinking, and this will be the issue which sends it to the bottom. The federal Treasurer is the captain of the Titanic. The ship has hit the iceberg and

he is trying to convince everybody that it has just stopped for crushed ice. We have to do something and we have to do it now.

Pinelands Industrial Estate

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand that the councils of Palmerston, Litchfield and Darwin have agreed together and recommended to the Office of Local Government that the Pinelands Industrial Estate be included in the Palmerston rate area to enable the Palmerston Town Council to widen its financial base. Has this recommendation been made and, if so, will the minister proceed along the lines recommended as soon as possible?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I confirm that the councils have made a combined recommendation along the lines described by the member for Ludmilla. The matter is under consideration. However, I cannot confirm at present that the government proposes to go down that line. There are some difficulties associated with it. I would hope that, in the not too distant future, I will be able to confirm the government's intentions one way or the other.

Costs of Court Action Against Telecom

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer the minister to a recent judgment of Justice Burchett dismissing a claim by certain communities against Telecom for provision of certain telecommunication facilities in the Northern Territory. Given that the Northern Territory government actively encouraged those communities in the court action, will it pay their costs to Telecom which, I am reliably informed, may amount to nearly \$0.5m? Further, did the Northern Territory government fund the applicants' costs or will it do so, and how much will that cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the member for Arnhem's question on notice. Without having been briefed at this stage, I understand that the judge did not dismiss the claim but stated that it should be referred to the tribunal which was set up to hear such cases. I understand that that has been done.

Let me give the honourable member an update on the result of taking the judge's advice and the reference that we have ...

Mr Bell: Which you should have been aware of originally.

Mr COULTER: We were aware of it. The tribunal told us to go to the judge.

Mr Bell: After you had commenced the action.

Mr COULTER: No way in the world. The tribunal did not want to have anything to do with it. The good judge, who was not satisfied that everything had been done in accordance with the law, advised us to go back to the tribunal. That was what happened.

Let me outline what we were trying to do in this case. We believed that the people in Aboriginal communities were being mistreated by Telecom. It will be interesting today to find out what will happen in respect of community service obligations and just how much a telephone will cost. The head of the Telecommunications Unit, Mr Ian MacLean, tells us that it could cost between \$40 000 and \$60 000 to have a phone connected. There will be a lot of phones in remote communities at that price! Let us not forget what the government was trying to do, Mr Speaker. I am happy to provide an update on the briefing, but let us not be too negative about it. There are some positive aspects. We have taken the advice of the judge and referred the matter to the tribunal.

Funding of Town Camps

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Can the minister justify what appears to be a dramatic cutback in funding provided to town camps through the Office of Local Government this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, funding of town camp organisations has been a matter of concern to many people. Over the last few years, I have been attempting to normalise local government functions in town camp areas. As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, initially, the Office of Local Government was part of the Department of Community Development. That department had a much wider role in the support of various organisations than has the Office of Local Government, whose primary role is to provide funding and support for local government organisations. Whilst some town camp organisations are carrying out what could be described as local government functions, others are not. It is very difficult for the government to determine clearly how local government funds are being spent by town camp organisations. Through consultation with the various municipal councils and town camp organisations, I have been trying to get to the bottom of the current situation and to bring about a greater involvement of municipal local governments in town camp areas and to ensure that they take their share of the responsibility.

Honourable members will be aware that local government receives Commonwealth funding on a per capita basis. The Grants Commission distributes those funds, basically on a needs basis, and municipal councils receive funding which would partially accommodate the needs of town camp organisations within their municipal boundaries. For some considerable time, the Northern Territory government has been topping up those funds. Initially, the Commonwealth-funded town camp organisations, such as Tangentyere, Kalano, Bagot and a range of others, were separate from those supplied through the Local Government Grants Commission. When the Commonwealth withdrew that funding, it forced the Northern Territory to pick up that additional burden which, in some cases, was quite substantial. Tangentyere is an organisation for which I have a great deal of respect. In Alice Springs, Tangentyere fulfils a number of very important functions for Aboriginal people in its area, not just local government functions, but functions of management of those communities in all sorts of ways. It is involved in the provision of housing and training, and it does so effectively. I am very much in support of that.

However, the Office of Local Government has a primary responsibility to support local government and, given that the Commonwealth, as is its wont,

reduced funding in real terms to the Northern Territory once again this year, the government was forced to reduce funding across the board, particularly in the areas of government operation. In fact, the Office of Local Government received less funding in real terms this year than it did last year and, as a consequence, I had to find ways to reduce the outgoings from our office. One of the outcomes of that has been reduced funding to town camps which, as I pointed out, are not the primary responsibility of the Office of Local Government. We have never been able to get a clear indication of what funding those organisations are receiving from other agencies because they do not tell us. Consequently, I have had to make that decision and, as hard as it is, I stand by it. I do not like it. I do not like reducing funding to anybody, but that is a decision that has been taken responsibly. I believe that those organisations will continue to fulfil their roles effectively, but I would say that they should be contributing more from within.

If we look at the Bagot community in Darwin, we could say that the Bagot community is very much a part of urban Darwin. As a consequence, the people living there should be paying such charges as rates and power and water charges. We should not be picking up those costs by means of local government funds, yet that is what we have been doing. The same applies to Tangentyere and Kalano, and it cannot continue. All people have to contribute for what they use, and there is no reason at all to believe that the people of Bagot or the people of Kalano or the Tangentyere town camps should be any different from the rest of the Territory's citizens. The decision is a responsible one, and I stand by it.

Police Cars

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the Chief Minister's interest in cars and the speedway, and assuming he is au fait with the details of his portfolio relating to the police and the cars that Traffic Branch officers drive, how can he equate the \$50 000 spent on the Northern Territory police car, when it competed recently at the speedway with a US police car, with the condition of the cars driven daily by our police officers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker I am about to demonstrate that I am not perhaps as au fait on these matters as the honourable member perhaps believed. I would be extremely surprised to hear that \$50 000 had been spent on a standard police car to enable it to compete, as a public relations exercise, against a car brought from overseas. In fact, I understand that the police car that was used is an ordinary police car. Unfortunately, I could not make it on the night, but I presume that it may have had its tyres changed and its mufflers removed, and probably it did not have a carburettor. I guess it was fuel injected and there is not a great deal that can be done to that. For \$50 000, a very handsome engine can be obtained and a very handsome differential, along with tyres that are a couple of feet wide and lots of other goodies as well. The police car used, which I gather is now back on the road doing ordinary patrols, certainly is not equipped with that type of equipment. I think the honourable member's information is wrong and ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Who won the race?

Mr PERRON: Unfortunately, the race was rather unequal. The Americans are very good at building giant and very powerful engines, particularly for

patrol cars used in places like California. Most of the major companies that compete for police contracts in the United States issue special models with police pursuit engines that are able to beat the competition. There was not much chance that the Northern Territory's police car could match that vehicle in particular. However, we put on a good show and the public relations aspect is important.

Honourable members may not be aware of the fact, but the Victorian police - and I do not say a great deal that is nice about Victoria these days - have had a car carrying police colours and police lights permanently competing at the drags in Victoria as a public relations exercise to improve the relationship between police and young drivers. It is regarded as an outstanding success. All the young fellows, who get a bit toey with the foot on Saturday nights, are able to go to the drag strip and compete physically against a police car with their own car. The police in Victoria regard it as a very successful public relations exercise, and I look forward to the day when we can have a more permanent fixture in Darwin in that regard. However, I acknowledge that it should be at minimal or no cost to the taxpayer, and that is very possible.

Costs of Court Action against Telecom

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer him to the question asked by the member for Arnhem and to the judgment in the cases involved. I draw his attention to the applicants in those cases. They include the Warruwi community, Gapuwiyak community, Numbulwar Numbirindi Council, Bulman Community Council, Kaltukatjara Community Council and Walunguru Council. There are about a dozen of these applicants in this case and I remind the minister that the court awarded costs thought to be in the vicinity of \$9.5m against those individuals and communities. At the encouragement of the minister, those communities and individuals are liable for \$0.5m. Firstly, can the minister confirm that he directed officers of his government to approach these individuals and communities and, secondly, can he guarantee those individuals and communities that he and the government will meet the cost of this idiot \$0.5m action?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I had intended to provide an answer on this after question time. I have some additional details, but I am still awaiting further information. I seek the indulgence of the House to give the full explanation about the way in which the case started, who our advisers were, and under what section etc. If that could be granted, I would appreciate it. It is important because some people were paying full commercial rates for the telephone service, and there are many people in remote areas of the Northern Territory that still do not have a telephone.

I well remember the maiden speech of the member for Stuart, who spoke about telephones in his electorate. I have heard the member for Braitling, who was the former member for that electorate, speak about the number of telephones in the area. Unfortunately, over a period of some 20 years, the situation has not changed much. Maybe we could get some of the turbo-charged carrier pigeons that Mr Richardson spoke about yesterday. There are still people who do not have a telephone. In these days of wonderful communications discoveries and innovations that we are so proud of and that we are marketing worldwide, there are people in our community who cannot pick up a phone.

On 23 March 1989, the department engaged ...

Mr Bailey: Who is responsible for power and water?

Mr COULTER: Do you want to hear the answer or not, china?

On 23 March 1989, the department engaged Amos, Aked and Swift Pty Ltd to develop a strategy for the Territory government to use in persuading Telecom to provide interim satellite telecommunication to 13 remote Aboriginal Territory communities until the communities are served by the Digital Radio Concentrator System. The AAS Report concluded that the Territory government could take legal action against Telecom for breaching section 11 of the Telecommunications Act 1975 and section 27 of the Telecommunications Corporation Act 1989. Telecom has indicated that it will provide these services through DRCS technology but, because of the time delay in providing the service, Telecom can be adjudged as failing to implement its plan. Instead, Telecom has offered specific communities ...

Mr Bell: What did the court say?

Mr COULTER: I will get to that. I will leave nothing out.

Telecom has offered specific communities telecommunication services via its commercial ITERRA satellite services. ITERRA services can be provided within 4 weeks of an order being placed. ITERRA services are charged for at the full commercial rate which is applicable perhaps to a remote goldmine but certainly not to an Aboriginal community.

Mr Vale: Or a pastoral property?

Mr COULTER: Or a pastoral property.

In fact, Telecom is acknowledging that the DRCS is inadequate to service the Territory's remote area Aboriginal communities and has offered ITERRA services instead, but at a greatly increased cost.

On 3 July 1989, on behalf of the Ngukurr community, which was served by the ITERRA service, the Solicitor for the Northern Territory served court proceedings on Telecom for the recovery of overcharged moneys. Also on 3 July 1989, the Department of Industries and Development, on behalf of 12 remote Aboriginal communities, wrote to Telecom requesting that the communities be served by interim satellite telephone facilities at the applicable remote area rate. Regrettably, on 17 July 1989, Telecom wrote back to the department advising that it would not serve the communities via satellite unless they paid the full commercial price. Authorised by the 12 remote area Aboriginal communities - the communities which the member for MacDonnell named - the department took legal action on 1 August 1989 under section 27 of the act ...

Mr Bailey: Encouraged by you.

Mr COULTER: ... on the communities' behalf to have interim satellite telephone services provided.

That is right, and I will keep fighting for them until they receive it. It is not over yet, and I have not given in yet.

Mr Bailey: You did not appeal though.

Mr COULTER: Did they get you in here simply to annoy me?

The Ngukurr case was heard in the Federal Court from 15 May to 22 May 1990. On Friday 24 August 1990, Justice Burchett of the Federal Court brought down his decision in the Telecom court case. Unfortunately, the judgment went against the Aboriginal communities and the judge declined to order Telecom to provide an interim satellite telephone service. While the judgment is lengthy, the main reason the judge has given for dismissing the action is that the power to order Telecom to provide telephone services under its community service obligation is conferred on the Australian Telecommunications Authority. That is AUSTEL, and I referred to it as the tribunal before. As such, effectively, the judge has abrogated his role in this case and is handing it over to AUSTEL for decision. I understand that some people have indicated that the Territory government ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I would ask the Minister for Industries and Development to withdraw the word 'abrogated' in respect of the actions of a Federal Court judge. I believe that it is contrary to standing orders to reflect on the actions of a Federal Court judge in those terms, except by way of a substantive motion.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order under standing order 62. I ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the word 'abrogated'.

However, he did hand the matter over to AUSTEL for decision. I understand that some people - and it was said here this morning - have indicated that the Territory government may have been better served by going straight to AUSTEL over this matter instead of to the Federal Court. Unfortunately, this is ill-informed scuttlebutt which bears no actual relevance to the course of action taken by the Territory government. AUSTEL was not even established at the time that action was taken over the Ngukurr case. Whilst it had been established formally when the second action was taken, it had no concrete structure at all.

Mr Bell: That is nonsense.

Mr COULTER: All advice from our consultants, the Department of Law and its lawyers from Allen Allen Hemsley indicated - and I appreciate the honourable member has his 2 subjects of law now but there are other people who have been studying law for a while - that legal action under section 27 of the new Telecommunications Act should proceed. On behalf of the Aboriginal communities concerned, the department has written to AUSTEL requesting that it direct Telecom to provide public pay phones to the communities forthwith. It is not over yet. We have excellent legal advice on this. We are concerned that Aboriginal communities and remote parts of the Territory should have that basic telephone service. We will continue to fight for them.

Mr Bailey: Before or after they get power and water?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, unfortunately, when God made this place, he left out a bit of water here and there. I cannot simply truck it in or pipe it in to these people wherever they decide to live. That is a problem, and we have had that debate in this Assembly on many occasions. However, as a result of innovations of which this country can be proud as a world leader in telecommunications, they could have a phone service tomorrow if Telecom

would realise its obligations under the Telecommunications Act 1989 and provide that service. That is all we are asking for.

If we cannot get that service under the present Telecommunications Act, with a 5-vote margin yesterday, what chance will community service obligations have under the new scheme? The federal parliamentary secretary to Minister Beazley could not convince his own Labor Party colleagues that it was a good thing. What chance do we have for community service obligations under the new Telecom regime? I am very concerned. If the 2 occupants of the vacant chairs opposite had cast their votes the other way yesterday, it would have given a margin of 3 votes.

Members: 1 vote.

Mr COULTER: That is right - 1 vote.

Mr Speaker, they are on their way back from Damascus after having sold the Northern Territory remote communities down the drain.

Powers Brewing Company Proposal

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

On the Clare Martin show this morning, I listened to the minister's description of his highly confidential and tremendously sensitive negotiations with Powers Brewing Company and his attempts to hose down speculation on that issue. Can the minister confirm that perhaps the first public announcement on that issue was made on either Monday 10 September or Tuesday 11 September in the bar of the Vic Hotel where, in the presence of an ABC journalist, the minister shouted at the top of his voice words to this effect: 'I am getting a brewery for Palmerston'? Whilst the minister considers his answer, could I advise him that I have a statutory declaration from a member of the public to that effect.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a number of journalists have been aware of this project for some time. I respect those journalists and their integrity in holding back the story for as long as they have. Similarly, I respect the Palmerston Town Council, which has been briefed in relation to the project. Some 4 journalists have been aware of the matter, and I reiterate my respect for their integrity. However, I cannot respect a political candidate who, for the sake of a media grab and some press coverage, is prepared to sink such a project.

Mr Smith: You might have sunk it in the Vic Hotel.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, if I did say it in the Vic Hotel, I cannot recall. I respect that ABC journalist. I suspect that it was the same journalist who rang my office yesterday. I know that that journalist ...

Mr Ede: How many others were there?

Mr COULTER: At least 4 journalists are aware of this project. I respect the integrity of those journalists, but I cannot respect a political candidate who issues a press release during negotiations at the risk of jeopardising the project. He has jeopardised the project. Let us be perfectly clear about who released the information in the public arena. It was the ALP candidate for Palmerston. When he rang Powers Brewing Company yesterday, he was told that he was not to release the information under any circumstances.

Mr Smith: Were you told by Powers Brewing Company not to release the information under any circumstances, particularly in the Vic Hotel?

Mr COULTER: He was told not to ...

Mr Smith: Were you told that?

Mr COULTER: ... release it under any circumstances.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would advise honourable members on both sides of the House that question time is being broadcast this morning. I hope that members will maintain some decorum.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the ALP candidate for Palmerston was asked not to release any information. What did he do? He contacted the federal Minister for Small Business and Customs. He arranged a forum and he rang

certain journalists and television media representatives to ensure that he would receive coverage. Fortunately, many of them did not turn up and did not cover his announcement.

Mr Smith: At least it was not made in the Vic Hotel.

Mr COULTER: It just demonstrates the security of the Vic Hotel - things at the Vic Hotel that do not get into the press. It was not until Mr Draffin stood up in his small business forum and spoke about the matter that it became public. It was none other than Mr Draffin ...

Mr Smith: Where did you think he got it from?

Mr COULTER: Where did he get it?

Mr Smith: From your office, in the end.

Mr COULTER: Mr Draffin obtained it from my office, did he? That is not correct, Mr Speaker. We have not spoken to Mr Draffin. The Leader of the Opposition is wrong in saying that. He is wrong.

The fact is that this project is now in jeopardy as a result of the irresponsibility of the ALP candidate for Palmerston in making it public. Thank goodness some of the journalists did not turn up there and it was only the ABC which ran this story. Some of those journalists knew that it was not to be mentioned. This project is now at risk. Many journalists were aware of this project, not through my source but through many sources. I pay tribute to those journalists who were aware of this project. I pay tribute also to the Palmerston Town Council, which had an in-camera session but did not leak this project. However, I am disgusted by the candidate for Palmerston who was told by the corporation that he would put the project in jeopardy if he made a public announcement.

Mr Smith: Were you told that before you said it in the Vic Hotel?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the announcement by me in the Vic Hotel was known to possibly 4 journalists, but I respect their honour and the privilege under which they held that information. They have held that information now for some 3 weeks. Full marks go to the media and those journalists for their integrity in holding that story. I congratulate them for it.

I congratulate the Palmerston Town Council too for holding confidential its in-camera session. It has been involved in these negotiations so far. I hope that I can get this project back for the sake of the Territory. I have worked on this project now for over 12 months. If I had wanted to make an announcement on it, I could have made it at any time, but I chose not to. I operated under the confidence and the security that I had with those journalists that were aware of the project, and I thank them very much for their integrity. However, I cannot and will not forgive the ALP candidate for making such a public statement as he did. All that he has done is jeopardise this project. Let us be under no misapprehension about who has blown this project. It was the ALP candidate for Palmerston.

Fuel Cost Increases

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT AND WORKS

Yesterday, there was some discussion about the horrendous effects that recent fuel price increases are having on the Northern Territory economy and we heard the Minister for Industries and Development put forward his point of view on that issue. It might be appropriate if the Minister for Transport and Works could advise the House of his perspective on how the recent fuel costs will affect freight charges on goods coming into the Northern Territory.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member for Jingili has not asked the Minister for Transport and Works a question. He has simply made a statement and expressed an opinion.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Minister for Transport and Works.

Mr Leo: What was the question?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand the question completely and it is a little disappointing that members of the opposition do not. Of course, the member for MacDonnell is concerned that I might spend 10 minutes on telling this House and the people of the Northern Territory about the horrific impact that fuel prices and road freight charges that are hanging over our heads, might have on them. If he, his leader or his deputy leader - who at least went to the trouble of getting some appraisal of road registration costs under the ISC Report - had spent 10 or 15 minutes to deliver their message to the federal government, a message that I can tell them was delivered effectively by the South Australian and the Western Australian Labor ministers, then perhaps Territorians would not have so much to fear.

Not only are we looking at horrific increases in our freight costs, but we are dependent almost totally on road freight. As honourable members know only too well, 90% of our incoming freight is delivered by road. Substantial portions of our outgoing freight to the states, our primary produce, cattle and horticulture goods, are transported by road. Those products are very sensitive to the small variations that can occur from time to time in road freight costs, not to mention how sensitive they are to the horrific costs that they are facing now. Based on petrol price increases to date, the industry is talking already of 10% increases about to hit people on their freight. That 10% is bad enough alone but, when sales tax of 20% on average is added to it, they are talking about an increase of 12% at the shop's front door.

Not only are we talking about a petrol price hike that, in my view, is almost totally unnecessary, but we are linked to this artificial international parity. We should be talking about releasing ourselves from that for domestically-consumed fuels. There is no reason why we should not. In the meantime, the Chief Minister has suggested that the federal government ought to reintroduce fuel equalisation schemes, and there is no reason why it should not. It is making millions of dollars additional profit every day of the year, and that will escalate dramatically.

We did not really have a debate. We had a pooh-poohing of the concerns I had about the Inter-States Commission's Report, a report based totally on

the federal Department of Transport and Communication's recommendations to it, that the federal government should hike up road train registration fees by some \$70 000 per annum. It has generously considered now that \$42 000 per annum is good enough for Territorians to suffer. Thank goodness, that was not good enough for the Western Australian minister. We were able to convince most delegates at the Hobart conference recently that it was a problem and that the basic principles were wrong. Why should one sector of the road-user industry carry the total costs for construction of our road systems, particularly with a flow of dollars across the borders to the eastern coast?

These are serious matters, and an additional \$40 000 per year for registration of road trains is unacceptable. In itself, that will lead to a significant increase in freight costs of probably another 10% or so. The 9.4¢ in fuel tax will be additional. Certainly, the federal government will take from the states the right to raise their own fuel tax and, in most cases, those states have used their fuel tax to improve their road systems. Added to the now 24¢ federal tax that is imposed on Territorians at the bowser, when all these costs are totalled, they will lead to an increase of 20% or more in freight costs to the Territory, and that is not acceptable at all.

During the last sittings, all I asked for was a little support from the members on the opposition benches. But no, in their centralist government approach, hand in hand with their colleagues of the same political persuasion, they will simply go along with what these people interstate say, and they will go willingly.

Mr Ede: Come off it!

Mr FINCH: At least your colleagues interstate have the guts to stand up for themselves and their constituents.

Mr Ede: You must have had your ears stapled and your eyes glued shut.

Mr FINCH: It is their new-found friendship with Canberra. They are kowtowing again.

The impact of the petrol price situation is bad enough. Petrol price increases will be 10% at least within the next month, according to industry spokesmen, not to mention increases in transport costs, and this other shadow still hangs over our heads. Thank goodness, the basic principles were rejected by ATAC at its last meeting, but the federal minister wants to bring it on again next April. That leaves a few months during which these people opposite can put in a bit of a dig ...

Mr Ede: We will be in government by then.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, Disneyland is what their policy is about, and Disneyland epitomises their belief about their future prospects in government. I find it abysmal, mickey-mouse politics that they should sit there and do nothing about these shadows hanging over the heads of their constituents and all Territorians.

BTEC

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and FISHERIES

I refer to the minister's frequent comments that his government enjoys the support of the pastoral industry for its BTEC program. Can the honourable minister advise this House if the Northern Territory government has ever sought to deny pastoralists the right to freedom of speech on the BTEC issue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition is again taking control of BTEC from the opposition's point of view. The last time he tried it, he got his fingers burnt and ditched it suddenly by giving it to the member for Stuart. He is now going to have another go at it.

As the Leader of the Opposition correctly states, the industry is very supportive of the BTEC program. I have indicated a number of times, most recently last week, that this year industry will put \$19m into the BTEC program. If industry had a shadow of doubt in relation to the BTEC program and the way it is conducted in the Northern Territory, its members would withdraw those funds immediately, and I am not talking only about the industry in the Northern Territory. I am talking about the industry nationally, and I am talking about the national scrutiny to which the industry put our BTEC program, and the Cattlemen's Union of Australia making recommendations to the Queensland government that it adopt the processes that are now applied in the Northern Territory in relation to the way we run our BTEC program.

If the BTEC program was such a nasty ogre, when the Queensland Labor government came to power, it would have ditched it, but it has not done so. What has happened instead is that the industry nationally has recommended to the Queensland government that it have a look at how we conduct our program in the Northern Territory and adopt some of the procedures that we use. Of course, the reason for that is that we have been open to total scrutiny from every source and, on every occasion when anyone has any doubt in relation to our BTEC program, I extend invitations to the industry, whether they be the national body or the local body, or to the federal government to examine our program. Our books are open, and that is what has happened. As a result of that scrutiny, we are now being recommended as an example ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I asked a very specific question and I will repeat it in case the honourable member has forgotten it. Can the minister advise this House whether the Northern Territory government has ever sought to deny pastoralists the right of freedom of speech on the BTEC issue?

Mr SPEAKER: I will rule on that point of order. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition's question is straightforward, and I would ask the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries to answer it as concisely as he can.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition is so sensitive in relation to this issue. From the point of view of the industry, neither my department, my office, nor myself has ever sought to hinder anyone from putting forward their comments or views in relation to the BTEC program in the Northern Territory or how it is

conducted. To the contrary, I have put in place a process whereby the opportunity for producers to complain, to support or in any way to comment on the BTEC program has been maximised. The process that I have in place is one whereby every avenue is provided for producers to put their views, whether they be positive or negative. In accordance with the responses that we give them, we change the program to suit the needs of the producers. Producers are very well represented on my BTEC Committee and I can assure the honourable member that there is never any hindrance put in the way of anyone wishing to make any comment in relation to the program in the Northern Territory.

Membership of Darwin Tourist Promotion Association

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TOURISM

I would like the honourable minister to explain why small Top End tourist operators who set up a completely honest, financially-positive business at their own expense, without any government help, grant or loan, are forced to pay a membership fee to the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association before the Government Tourist Bureau will exhibit their promotional pamphlets and dodgers on its premises? Can the minister tell me if the membership subscription to the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association is still \$356 a year or has it been adjusted for small operators?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question was brought to my attention some time ago by the member for Koolpinyah. Following the meeting that I had with her, the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association met with a number of those small operators down the track and in her electorate. There is nothing to prevent any tourist organisation forming in the Territory and promoting any area. Following discussions with government, the tourist industry, the bureaus and the commission, a code of ethics was adopted by the Tourist Commission and the bureaus. The means to maintaining those standards is by having some control over who has authority to display brochures on our tourist bureau racks across Australia and across the Territory. As a result of complaints from the industry or from anywhere in Australia, the tourist associations themselves can move to expel their members. They then advise the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and any brochures that are on display belonging to that organisation are then removed.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: What about the honest people?

Mr VALE: There is nothing to stop the honest person approaching the tourist bureaus or the tourist association. If the member for Koolpinyah has an individual operator with whom she has some trouble, I am more than happy to meet with her myself or to have the tourist association or the commission meet with her.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I refer the minister to his answer to the previous question and his advice that no impediment has ever been put in the way of any pastoralist who wished to comment on any aspect of BTEC. Has the Northern Territory government ever proposed to any pastoralist in the Northern Territory that he or she sign a legal document which sought to remove that person's right of freedom of speech on the BTEC issue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I reiterate that the processes that have been put in place provide every avenue for aggrieved people, whether they be in the industry or not, to put forward their points of view. People have done this in a variety of ways. They have done it publicly. They have done it through the Ombudsman, through the courts and by means of their legal representatives meeting with representatives of the government. Those negotiations may result in agreements between the legal parties. I am not up to date with what particular agreements might be put in place between a producer and the department through their legal representatives. I would have thought it a matter for the producers if they enter into the type of agreements to which the honourable member alludes.

Mr Ede: Have you ever tried to do it?

Mr Perron: Are you talking about commercial confidentiality?

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, these arrangements are put in place between the department and the producer. If the producer wishes to enter into such an agreement, so be it. The fact is that, in relation to this program, if people feel aggrieved by the way it is being conducted, they have avenues that they can pursue publicly, through legal channels, through the Ombudsman, by means of other processes through the BTEC Committee or through their industry sources. The confidentiality of any agreements between the department and particular producers is a matter for the producers. Offhand, I do not have any knowledge in relation to those agreements. In any case, I am not prepared to divulge the contents of any agreements that have been put in place with individual pastoralists.

Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Last Thursday night on the 7.30 Report, it was claimed that the Alice Springs flood mitigation proposal was nothing more than an election gimmick to divide black and white people. Could the minister give us an update on the status of that project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not think that it can be put any more simply than the Chief Minister put it in Alice Springs last weekend - the Alice Springs people will have a dam in 1991. I know how committed he is to that, and that will happen.

Mr Lanhupuy interjecting.

Mr COULTER: The member for Arnhem might not live in Alice Springs but some people there are listening. The Northern Territory is rather larger than the electorate of Arnhem and people in Alice Springs are interested in this matter even if the honourable member is not. We talk about arrogance in this parliament. His would be unparalleled by anybody's. This is a very serious problem. It relates to deaths of Aboriginal and European people in the Alice Springs region. I would like the opportunity to explain the situation in full.

Work is continuing on the environmental impact statement and we believe that it will be ready for evaluation by the Conservation Commission towards

the end of this month. We hope that the commission's assessment of that full EIS will be available either later this month or in early to mid-November of this year. I state again that the Webb Report simply will not stack up. Now that we have the complete Webb Report, I will leave it to the scientists and engineers to deal with.

Mr Collins: He is supposed to be an engineer himself.

Mr COULTER: That is right. I will let his peers judge his report.

I conclude, Mr Speaker, with the words of the Chief Minister: Alice Springs will have a flood mitigation dam in 1991.

Allegations by Former Council Clerk at Yuendumu

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Recently, Chris Raynal, a former council clerk at Yuendumu, published a book containing severe criticism of Northern Territory government employees. He claimed that Northern Territory government officers systematically deny Aboriginal people their right to self-determination and self-management. Is there any substance to these allegations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been involved in Aboriginal affairs in the Territory for about 27 years. I know that, from time to time, people move in on Aboriginal communities and take advantage of what they find there. Initially, such people may not intend to rip off Aboriginal communities but often they have an eye for any opportunities which might arise. Their performance is often quite amazing. Unfortunately, such people tend to turn up on a regular basis. They move from one place to another, and it is probably a very good idea to warn Aboriginal communities around the Territory about such people. I have seen so many of them. They rip off one place and move on to the next. It is surprising that nobody checks their backgrounds.

The book referred to by the member for Araluen is called 'Yuendumu: Betrayal of Black Rights'. It is designed to justify the damage which the author caused while working in Yuendumu as the council clerk. In his book, Mr Raynal portrays himself as a man of vision and goodwill determined to uplift Aborigines from a pitiful existence and to show them a new way of life. By way of contrast, he depicts every other white person working at Yuendumu - nurses, teachers, police and Office of Local Government field staff - as part of a racist conspiracy to oppress the community's Aboriginal residents.

As Mr Raynal's story unfolds, the plotters are aided by a part-Aboriginal essential services officer who establishes his own family empire. Some drunken Aboriginal residents become puppets of the conspiracy. After a series of clashes with various members of the community, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the Yuendumu Council forces the author to leave the community. It is a great plot. Probably it could be made into a movie. According to Mr Raynal's account, the council president privately made it clear to him that the council does not really want to do what it is doing. Mr Raynal claims too that a white conspiracy forces the council to withhold his final pay cheque against the wishes of council members.

I hesitate to condemn the book outright. To do so might give it some credibility. People might race out to buy it, not only for its turgid literary style, but because I have somehow given it some undeserved prominence. Although the book pretends to be an expose of government and white oppression of Aborigines, the author declares that his experience on Aboriginal communities is limited to his brief 14-month stay at Yuendumu during part of 1988 and 1989. An overbearing element in Mr Raynal's account is a vigorous righteousness, which apparently motivated his actions and decisions at Yuendumu. It is quite likely that this part of his character alienated him, albeit unwittingly, from most residents of Yuendumu. Like many visitors to the Territory, he believes that he has the ability to absorb an extensive knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and lifestyle in a very short time.

Mr Raynal admits that, even before his arrival at the community, his knowledge of the needs of the unfortunate Aborigines of Yuendumu was greater than their own. This unshakeable belief in the correctness of his views prompts him to share them with the reader more than generously. Mr Raynal has polished his own image as an idealist committed to the welfare of Yuendumu's Aboriginal residents on almost every page of his book. In doing so, it is perhaps understandable that he omitted significant facts which might have impeded that perception.

Mr Raynal was employed at Yuendumu both personally and corporately. He enjoyed an annual remuneration of more than \$80 000, in addition to a subsidised house, 4-wheel-drive vehicle and utilities. His spouse also received an income after he employed her on the council. His salary package made him the highest paid community council clerk in the Northern Territory. However, as clerk, he failed to record precisely the terms of his employment. Among other calamities for which he fails to take credit, he caused more than \$150 000-worth of damage to the community's power station an hour after deciding that he knew how to run it. Despite his credentials as a highly-qualified accountant, he left behind him a very high level of inadequately documented council debt. Although he left the council in poor financial circumstances, he managed to return himself and his family to Tasmania, at the council's expense - and I hope he stays there.

In the course of the book, Mr Raynal refers to a saying which asserts that people who work on remote Aboriginal communities belong to one of 4 'M' categories: missionary, mercenary, misfit or madman. He goes on to suggest lightheartedly that his own character is drawn from all 4. I would not credit him with missionary status, but I have no doubt at all that he fits very well into the other 3 categories.

Mr Raynal's book might attain some status as a minor classic, at least in Territory legal circles. The incredible list of unsubstantiated allegations he makes against people in the so-called conspiracy he concocted might cause the book to become the subject of a record number of libel suits. The author singled out the then Regional Director of the Office of Local Government for particular criticism. Having known this person for many years, it is my view that she has impeccable credentials for employment in relation to Aboriginal affairs. She acquitted herself in the public service with the utmost integrity.

I understand that the Minister for Education has examined the author's claims about teachers at Yuendumu. Like mine, his investigations refute the author's unsubstantiated assertions. I have no hesitation in naming this man as one of the people who come into the Territory from time to time, rip off Aboriginal communities, cause untold damage, and then claim in the wider

community that they have been hard done by. I have seen so many. I could name one after another over my 27 years of experience in this field. It is shameful that, at times, they are given some credibility. Unfortunately for Mr Raynal, I believe that he has shot himself well and truly in the foot. It is likely that he will find himself the subject of legal action, and I trust that those people who have a case will take that action. I believe that the Yuendumu Council has a strong case against him.

Mr Coulter: What about the Power and Water Authority?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes!

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent my moving the following motion forthwith: that this Assembly censure the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries for deliberately misleading the House by stating, in response to a question, that the government had not sought to restrict the rights of pastoralists to make public comment on BTEC issues, when incontrovertible proof exists that the government has so done.

Motion agreed to.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Question Paper.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

The honourable minister has now had 24 hours in which to get to the bottom of the outrageous attempt to stifle freedom of speech through a legal deed, as was outlined in the House yesterday. Who in the government directed the draft deed to be drawn up in that manner and why was it drawn up in that manner?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a pleasure to answer the honourable member's question and to assist him with his diversionary tactics to deflect media attention away from the Leader of the Opposition's communications debacle earlier this week and the problems he faces with the unions, not to mention the opposition's bereft situation in terms of its inability to put forward its own policies and programs in terms of what it offers to the Northern Territory as an alternative government. I am quite happy to answer the honourable member's question, but first I would like to place it in context. I would like honourable members to be aware of the circumstances which existed at the time when the document was drawn up.

The pastoralist concerned, since named in the media, is Mr Dunbar from Nutwood Downs. As honourable members would know, he has a long history of criticising BTEC, my department and others through all arms of the media - on local and national radio and television and through the press. Notwithstanding that, Mr Dunbar has not obtained a great deal of support from the industry, and that is curious when one considers the extent to which he went to put his cause against BTEC to the public. It is interesting to ask why that is the case. The reason is that the pastoral industry generally in the Northern Territory expected that Mr Dunbar, like itself, would proceed with a BTEC program. Most of the pastoralists in the Northern Territory proceeded with their BTEC programs on a voluntary basis. They did that, notwithstanding that it was a difficult program, because they could see that, at the end of the day, there were distinct advantages to a national program to eradicate disease from Australia's cattle herds. They have never indicated any great support for Mr Dunbar because they wanted the Territory to be free of TB and they did not want to be faced with the problem where an island property - Nutwood Downs in this case - would be infected in the middle of a group of clean properties, thus preventing them from gaining TB free status, access to markets elsewhere in Australia and overseas and preventing the program from progressing in an orderly way.

Mr Dunbar made a number of allegations which were investigated by the police. The police report was considered by a prominent QC and those allegations were found to be without foundation. The problems that Mr Dunbar faced are not confined to the Northern Territory. I have here a press item from The Australian of Monday 19 April. It gives details of the problems that a pastoralist in Queensland faced with the BTEC program. In fact, his property was totally destocked and it appears from the item that he faced ruin because of that.

Honourable members opposite should recognise the fact that it is a national program. They should recognise also the fact that a small number of pastoralists face difficulty with the program and a small number oppose it very strongly. They should put that in the context of the present circumstances that we face. If consideration is given to the circumstances that existed at the time when this agreement was drawn up between officers

of the department and its legal representatives and the pastoralist and his legal representatives, given that there was considerable hype in the media against the department, the Cattlemen's Association and the cattle industry in the Northern Territory that had been worked up by Mr Dunbar, it will be appreciated that that would be a very difficult set of circumstances in which to try to put in place an agreement to proceed with the BTEC program on Nutwood Downs.

There was no set procedure. There was no set approach that clauses such as those that the member for Stuart has brought to our attention would be included in all agreements. Dozens of these agreements have been drawn up and they have been put in place through negotiation with the pastoralists concerned, tailored to suit the needs of particular properties and the particular difficulties involved in trying to get pastoralists to proceed with their BTEC programs - and, in this case, extreme difficulties were involved. Notwithstanding those difficulties, the department persevered, and the draft agreement that was tabled in this House yesterday came as a result of that. I emphasise that that was a draft because, as I understand it, Mr Dunbar was not asked to sign that document. That document was prepared following consultation with the Dunbars and their lawyers. The legal representatives of Mr Dunbar then came up with an alternative agreement, which was the agreement that was signed, by us and by them. Through their legal representatives, the Dunbars were a party to the drafting of the agreement. It was put in place, they signed it and the program was adhered to following that time.

One of the disappointing aspects of the criticisms that have come from Mr Dunbar in relation to the BTEC program is that he never gives a shred of evidence in relation to the assistance and the positive sides of the program which he has experienced. I have indicated in this House and elsewhere that, to March last year, Mr Dunbar had benefited to the extent of \$600 000 in BTEC funding. Nothing is ever heard from him about that. It is never mentioned that he has received \$600 000 in low interest BTEC loans in de-stocking compensation.

Mr Smith: He is entitled to it.

Mr REED: The Leader of the Opposition is right. He is entitled to it, just as all other pastoralists are entitled to it. However, because he receives public moneys and industry moneys, he is required to adhere to the requirements of the program. This year, my department is responsible for administering \$19m, and the department has to ensure that those funds are spent responsibly, not under its guidelines but under guidelines laid down by the National BTEC Committee, by cattlemen from all over Australia and representatives of governments all over Australia.

I ask honourable members opposite to bear those facts in mind. I would ask them also to consider that, on the one hand, we had officers with Mr Dunbar's lawyers trying to negotiate an agreement amid enormous press and media opposition to the program, initiated by Mr Dunbar. Those were very difficult circumstances in which to reach an agreement. On the other side, officers of my department had the cattle industry in the Northern Territory saying to them: 'This man must comply with the program. He has been the recipient of enormous amounts of BTEC funding'. The Leader of the Opposition laughs, but we are talking about \$600 000, perhaps more, since this agreement was put in place. The people listening to this on the radio will be aware of the sham that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart have put up in this case. It is another BTEC beat-up. People

have heard it all before. I have no hesitation in standing up and answering questions in relation to the BTEC program.

That was the situation in which officers found themselves in relation to reaching an agreement with this pastoralist. On the one hand, the pastoralist was being uncooperative - and it would be fair to say that - and, on the other hand, the majority of the members of the industry, bar 2 or 3 other pastoralists in the Northern Territory, were saying that he must not be permitted to impede the program in the Northern Territory. The message from the other pastoralists was: 'We have gone into the program on a voluntary basis' - albeit agreements had been negotiated and put in place with officers through their legal representatives - 'and we will not stand by as an industry and allow 1 person to impede the program, and to threaten our livelihood and our future and the future of the cattle industry in the Northern Territory. He must be made to comply'. That was the message that the department was receiving from the industry.

I ask the member for Stuart, who aspires to become the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, to look not only at 1 recalcitrant pastoralist - and I believe he could be called that - but rather at the other 300. He should consider the position of the majority of pastoralists. The department is administering \$19m this year in industry funding from cattlemen all over Australia. The member for Stuart sits there and smirks and laughs, but he does not understand the program.

I reiterate that this agreement was put in place by officers of my department, and it was agreed to. The legal representatives of Mr Dunbar participated in that process. The agreement was prepared and signed by the pastoralists and by the department. It is not simply the department's agreement. We have seen the member for Stuart presenting as the Labor tough man who stands ready to ambush the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries. I am not afraid of cowards who stand in ambush. I am happy to stand in this Chamber and answer questions. I will take any opportunity to do that, just as the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart will take opportunities to score political points. However, I will not take criticism of this kind of the BTEC program merely because there are producers who are difficult to get on with. That is a fact of life. I do not deny for a moment that, if Mr Dunbar or anyone else wants to criticise the program, they can do so. They can criticise myself too, and they have done that. However, there are circumstances involved in negotiating agreements where particular requirements have to be taken into account, and the department has to be able to proceed with the program and ensure that it goes ahead. In cases like this, that can be done only where specific agreements are drawn up.

As far as admonishing someone in the department goes or sacking someone, I have had officers examine and report to me in respect of what happened in this instance. It was an isolated case. Perhaps if it was to be done again, it might not be considered necessary to be so hard in terms of the clauses proposed. I must say that, given the circumstances that I have described in which the officers had to work, I have some sympathy with their plight, particularly given the pressures from Mr Dunbar on one side and from the industry on the other. It was not an easy set of circumstances. I am advised that it has not been applied to any other program. Of course, all this happened more than a year ago. If it was a matter of such concern to the members opposite and to Mr Dunbar, and if he wanted to protect other people in the industry, why didn't he come forward with this matter much sooner?

Mr Ede: It is pretty obvious, isn't it?

Mr REED: Why didn't Mr Dunbar stand up at the time and say: 'I had difficulties in preparing this agreement. Other pastoralists could suffer as I have'? Why wait for a year to protect the industry?

Another important point in relation to this question is that the Department of Law was involved in the preparation of these legal agreements, together with representatives of my department. That, of course, involves the Attorney-General who may also be able to contribute some information in relation to these legal documents.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

We have just heard the honourable minister admit that he singled out the Dunbars because they were critics of the BTEC and that an effort was made to shut them up. He said that that that was justified because ...

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member is supposed to be asking a question, not making a speech.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Stuart will ask his question.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I have asked this question before and it has not been answered. Who directed that the draft deed be drawn up? It was either the minister or a senior public servant. Who was it, and on whose authority were they acting when they directed that the draft deed be drawn up? Who authorised this act of blatant revenge?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask the honourable member to refer his question to the Attorney-General.

Flight Services Operations

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Honourable members will be aware of concerns expressed recently by the general aviation industry in relation to the relocation of facilities at Darwin Airport. Further concerns have now arisen in relation to the closing down, by the Civil Aviation Authority, of flight services operations throughout Australia. What impact will such a closure have on the general aviation industry in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if one is involved in a mid-air collision, it does not make much difference whether one is in a small aircraft or a large aircraft. I imagine that even Warren Snowdon would not like the proposed changes to CAA air space management. He would have a bit of trouble flying into Tennant Creek in his Falcon jet, mixing it with light aircraft and KPT F28s without those aircraft having the benefit of simple traffic information.

Mr Bell: That is scaremongering, Fred.

Mr FINCH: Much has been made of the member for MacDonnell's flying prowess over the years. I can remember the story about the difficulty he had in starting the engine of a Cessna at Darwin Airport. He forgot to switch on the fuel. However, in spite of his limited experience and knowledge of flying, one would think that, if he had consulted the industry, he would know very well that there is a considerable amount of concern over the changes which are to be implemented early next year.

The Territory is highly dependent on light aircraft for communications to and from remote areas, for tourism and for a broad range of needs. Given that high dependence, increased charges at Darwin Airport levied on general aviation operators by the FAC will have a considerable impact, and Senator Collins has yet to address that matter. There are imminent increases in the price of fuel for aircraft and the operators will have difficulty in getting a return from their customers who, in the main, are people on Aboriginal communities who cannot afford great increases in aviation costs. Following the savage increases that the CAA has already told industry that it is up for in licence renewal fees etc, we now have the federal Labor government's own unique approach to commercialisation which will impact on the safety of Territory citizens and the pilots of the Territory.

The strip at Jabiru experiences a high level of activity in that some 20 000-odd air movements per annum occur there. I would think that the member for MacDonnell has flown to and from Jabiru on occasion and that he would be aware that it is a very busy strip.

Mr Bell: Several times.

Mr FINCH: It is a very busy strip and, on some days, activity there peaks ...

Mr Bell: Try Yulara.

Mr FINCH: I will come to Yulara in a minute.

That activity peaks on some days with almost 200 aircraft landing or taking off from Jabiru, quite apart from the hundreds of aircraft that fly over the strip.

The member for MacDonnell may recall that, as he approaches Jabiru, he is given information on traffic in the area. He will be given details of other aircraft that are approaching the strip, the type of aircraft, their speed and direction and the anticipated time of departure or arrival. The member for MacDonnell may recall that this is the current practice. He may also have had the odd experience where, even given that information, drops of perspiration have formed on his forehead because he has not been sure of the exact whereabouts of another aircraft that he knew to be in the vicinity of his own plane when approaching or departing from a bush airstrip.

Due to the limitations of human sight, it is extremely difficult to detect the small speck on the horizon that represents another aircraft, or against the background of a cloud or of the ground, particularly when such an aircraft is flying at a similar or faster speed than your own. With very fast aircraft, the risk is increased as a result of the need to detect and quickly identify something as another aircraft. Because of the peculiarities of human sight in vast air spaces, that takes time. One needs to be looking in the right place at exactly the right moment to register that first glimpse and it is then necessary to identify the aircraft and

estimate its speed and the direction in which it is moving, and to take preventive action if there is any likelihood of a collision. All that must be done in a very brief period, and it can be very difficult to accomplish on occasions.

If you have not been made aware that other aircraft are in the area, the situation becomes much more dangerous. Even the member for MacDonnell would have to agree on that. It is likely that he has flown in and out of Gove, Groote Eylandt, Tennant Creek or Tindal, where flight information zones have been established around the airports and a precise control mechanism is in place, regardless of who you are or where you are coming from, to ensure separation of aircraft. All of those flight information zones are to be deleted. For the benefit of honourable members, I will table this CAA document which contains the proposal. They will note that, in September 1991, unlike the glorious east coast of Australia, the only controlled space in the Northern Territory will be at Darwin and Tindal where it will be retained because of the military establishment. It will not apply to Yulara, which experiences 20 000-odd air traffic movements a year, and now 737s, F28s, single-engine aircraft and helicopters will all be flying on their own without the benefit of information from outside. See and be seen will be the only rule that will apply. It will be all right for the big aircraft, which may have radar, when they are flying 30 000 ft above the ground but, if they are flying in and out of Jabiru or Gove, it will be a different matter. Gove has a great mix of aircraft flying in and out, as the member for Nhulunbuy would be aware, although that will not be of interest to him for much longer. Elcho Island sees some 9000 air movements each year.

Mr Leo: The level of your comprehension is zero.

Mr FINCH: The member for Nhulunbuy may be prepared to turn his back on the safety of his constituents.

Mr Hatton: Remember the hassle of getting an air traffic controller for Gove?

Mr FINCH: The member for MacDonnell has navigated his way around the Northern Territory with its vast open spaces ...

Mr Hatton: You ought to keep your mouth shut, Danny.

Mr FINCH: ... with its smoke haze during the dry season and its cloud over the wet season, with limited visibility ...

Mr Hatton interjecting.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The members for Nhulunbuy and Nightcliff will immediately cease their cross-Chamber chatter.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, this is a serious matter. It relates to the federal government's rather lunatic interpretation of commercialisation and its attempt to save a few dollars by moving 20-odd staff from Darwin. This is in addition to the vast numbers who will suffer as a result of the consolidation program in which staff will be shifted to Adelaide so they can talk on telephones to people who want to file flight plans in the Northern Territory. What will happen to the local knowledge component which is so

important in search and rescue and offshore oil and gas operations? How do those people feel about all these changes?

Mr Bell: Nervous.

Mr FINCH: It will save the destitute Labor government a few thousand dollars and it might mean the loss of a few jobs to the Northern Territory. But, my goodness, what about the potential danger? I believe that even some major commercial operators support the view which I am putting. The new arrangements may be fine for flying on the east coast in fully-controlled areas with complete radar facilities, for flying at 30 000 ft, or for landing at places like Perth or Darwin. However, it is quite a different matter at Gove, Groote Eylandt, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Alice Springs and Yulara. F27s even fly to Jabiru. If one is involved in a mid-air collision, it does not much matter whether one is in a 737 or a single-engine Cessna. The only difference is that in the 737 you will have a bit of company on the way down. That might sound emotional, but the federal Minister for Aviation Support has so far turned his back on every legitimate issue raised on behalf of Territorians. He has not addressed any of these matters to date.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Transport and Works has been on his feet for 10 minutes delivering a most insubstantial diatribe against the federal government on an issue of vital importance to Territorians. I suggest that the minister introduce a statement about the changes at Darwin Airport and changes to airspace control. This is crazy.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have been listening to the Minister for Transport and Works with interest and I find that he is answering the question asked by the member for Karama. I will take a very serious view of any further interruption from the member for MacDonnell in the form of an unwarranted point of order.

Mr FINCH: I understand the discomfort of the member for MacDonnell. That discomfort has been shared by Senator Collins in relation to every issue I have raised with him during the last few years, particularly since he became a minister. It demonstrates that not only is he incompetent but that he does not care about the interests of Territorians, his own constituents. He will come out ranting and raving again, and accuse me of trying to grab a headline. That will not change the basic fact that the federal Labor government's commercialisation thrust is occurring with no consideration of community interest. This proposal will only cause further concern to the local industry. Nobody likes increased costs but, even more importantly, nobody who uses aircraft, Territorian or tourist, will appreciate reduced safety levels which will come about merely in order to allow the federal Minister for Aviation Support to save a few dollars. It is up to him to change the direction which developments are taking at present.

BTEC

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

One can always tell when a government is in trouble. Two questions in 33 minutes is a new record for this Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will ask his question.

Mr SMITH: We have already heard this morning why the Dunbars suffered this outrageous invasion of their liberties. It was because they dared to criticise BTEC. Because of that, an attempt was made to shut them up. Will the minister provide a categorical assurance that the Dunbars were the only property owners who were confronted with this outrageous draft deed or a draft deed containing similar provisions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I reiterate that the Dunbars were part and parcel of the preparation of this document. Through their legal representatives, they ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I asked a specific question about whether pastoralists other than the Dunbars received similar draft agreements. Could the minister please answer the question?

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition did refer to the Dunbars in the early part of his question. There is no point of order, but the minister will answer as precisely as he can.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, the Dunbars were party to the formulation of the agreement which they signed in the end.

Mr Ede: Wrong.

Mr REED: Yes, as far as I am aware.

Mr Smith: As far as you are aware?

Mr REED: As far as I am aware, this clause has not been used in any agreement since. I will give an assurance that it will not be used again.

Mr Smith: So the Dunbars were singled out, were they?

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, I have explained already to the Leader of the Opposition that these agreements are struck with the pastoralists. They cannot all be the same. No one can go out with an agreement and say that every producer in the Northern Territory has to sign it. It is an indication that the Leader of the Opposition has never had to make a decision in his life. He has no idea how government works. Clearly, agreements had to be negotiated on an individual basis with individual pastoralists, to suit their individual needs, the needs of the department and - and I emphasise this - the expectations of the industry. The industry had a high expectation that the department would deliver the goods in whatever way it could in relation to ensuring that Mr Dunbar and others proceeded with their BTEC agreements. Perhaps they went a bit over the fence on this occasion.

Mr Ede: A bit over the fence!

Mr REED: However, the agreement had to be put in place. It was formulated with the pastoralist or his legal representative. The pastoralist entered into the agreement and has performed.

Mr Ede: Not that one.

Mr REED: Precisely. Not that one - because it was part of the consultative process.

Mr Ede: Oh, come on!

Mr REED: Officers of the Department of Law are as involved in this matter as are officers of my department because they were the legal representatives of my department. I would suggest that the Attorney-General could contribute very positively to this debate from the point of view of officers of the Department of Law formulating these agreements with the legal representatives of the Dunbars.

CLP Party Platform

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Is the minister aware of his own party's platform? Members of the government are always throwing this at us. Is he aware that article 5 of his party's philosophy reads as follows: 'The whole basis of Northern Territory Country Liberal Party philosophy is the recognition of the freedom, rights and responsibilities of the individual in an open society'. Can the minister imagine a greater load of hypocrisy than this?

Members: Yes, you!

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart stands up in this House and refers to upholding one's party platform. The Leader of the Opposition appeared on television earlier this week where he upheld ALP party platform. The people listening will remember his shameful exercise on Monday night. He said: 'Communications in Australia are enshrined in the party platform. People in Australia can rest assured that their rights will be protected'.

Some 2 or 3 minutes later in the very same program, the Leader of the Opposition was asked by Dennis Driver: 'What about the party platform with marijuana?' The reply was: 'Well, we are not going to proceed with that, certainly not in our first year. Do not worry about the platform'. The next question was: 'What about the 35-hour week?' The reply: 'I think the 35-hour week has passed its time'. That is not in the platform either, Mr Speaker.

The member for Stuart has the hide to stand up here today and quote sections of party platform to me. It is absolutely incredible that the member for Stuart should have the hypocrisy to say that people should stand by their party's platform. I have no concerns about the CLP party platform. The party platform of the CLP stands firm. In relation to the agreement that was put in place, it had the interests of the industry and the national BTEC program at heart. It was negotiated with the legal representatives of the person concerned. The member for Stuart should be ashamed of himself for standing up here quoting party platform after the disgraceful performance by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not know how many times they have discarded parts of their platform and walked away from them in the last few months. The ALP cannot stand up in here and start supporting party platforms.

Grants to Local Governments

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand Darwin City Council has been critical of the Northern Territory Grants Commission and the way untied grants are divided between

councils. Is it possible for the government to provide higher funding to the council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was a little surprised to read comments in last evening's paper that were critical of the way in which the Northern Territory Grants Commission distributes funds to local government in the Northern Territory. It is probably timely to advise honourable members on just how funds for local government are provided to the Northern Territory through FAA grants from the federal government, and then redistributed to local government bodies throughout the Territory. It is done by means of a similar process right across Australia. It is not one that is unique to the Northern Territory. The only way that the Northern Territory is unique is that the Territory government provides additional funding.

Over quite a few years, one of the areas of major concern to the Northern Territory government and to local government has been the fact that the federal government, in distributing moneys for local government, distributes those funds on a per capita basis. Given that the Northern Territory has only about 1% of the Australian population, we receive only 1% of the funds. In fact, it is a very minor sum of money. There is about \$6.5m this year from the federal government for distribution directly to local governments. This is probably one of the most disadvantaged areas of Australia. Given that local government is very new in the Northern Territory and given that there are new and emerging local governments every year, we are expected to distribute those funds, not on a per capita basis as they are provided to us, but on a needs basis.

To do that, we have appointed an independent body comprised of an independent chairman, the Director of the Office of Local Government and representatives of both local and community government associations. That body travels around the Territory, examines the needs and distributes moneys accordingly. Basically, the criteria on which it distributes those moneys have been handed down to us from the federal government. We have sought to alter the criteria at times in order to ensure that all factors are taken into account reasonably. In fact, on occasions, we have signed an agreement.

I do not make the decision on how the funds are distributed. It is done basically on agreement between the federal government and the Territory government. Only last year, the federal government believed in its wisdom that it knew best how the funds should be distributed. I was not prepared to go along with it. In fact, it withheld money from local government for quite a long period. I am not prepared to allow the federal government to impose its will on us willy nilly. We are bound by the criteria laid down by the federal government, and we distribute the funds accordingly.

Local government is fully aware of the Territory government's position on this. We have entered into a joint submission to try to have the federal government change its attitude to the distribution of local government funding. The Commonwealth has now agreed to reconsider its position on the distribution of those grants. Given that, it is surprising that local government is critical of the Territory government in this regard.

We have some 50 very disadvantaged councils in the Northern Territory which pick up about half of the local government funds from the Commonwealth - about \$3m. Another \$3m or so is picked up by the other 6 municipal councils - Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Litchfield and Palmerston. These funds are distributed in accordance with

the Grants Commission agreement that was agreed to by the Commonwealth and the Territory. Those funds are much less than what would be distributed to similar councils in other parts of the country. I know that Darwin is disadvantaged on a per capita basis. However, of the \$3m that go to municipal governments, it picks up about \$1m. The other \$2m is divided between the other 5 municipal councils. However, whilst it is disadvantaged in per capita terms, in real terms it is probably no more disadvantaged than any of the others. Certainly, based on the needs criteria that are laid down, it is not disadvantaged. We try to get that as even as we possibly can.

Because the Northern Territory government knows that the funds provided by the Commonwealth are insufficient to meet the needs of the very disadvantaged communities around the Territory, it adds a further \$11m to the moneys distributed by the Grants Commission. Those moneys go to the really disadvantaged communities. I do not think that we have anything to be ashamed of in the distribution of grants, nor do we have any answers to provide to local government or to the people of the Northern Territory, particularly in Darwin, in this regard. The answers have to come from the Commonwealth which, once again, dictates how much money the Territory receives and how it is distributed.

I know that that is pretty typical of Labor governments. I would like to outline for honourable members and for councillors who may be listening what the opposition is likely to do through its interference with local government. One of the things that we pride ourselves on in the Northern Territory is that we do not interfere with local governments in their genuine desire to provide good services to the people of the Territory. We are the first government to provide general competence powers to local government so that they can do what they want to do without interference from the Northern Territory government. We are proud of that.

At the local government conference held in Darwin recently, I was amazed to hear the opposition's spokesman say that a Labor government would interfere with the way that local governments assess rate charges in the Northern Territory. It would intervene to ensure that local government did not force people out of a particular area by the way it assesses rates. It will require local government to charge a particular rate, on a household-to-household basis that is dependent on the means of the person. I was amazed by the suggestion of that type of interference with what is clearly a matter for local government, not a matter of the Northern Territory government whether it be Labor or CLP. We pride ourselves on the fact that we would not do that.

Certainly, we will not tell local governments that they will employ full-time labour and not contract labour. Nevertheless, local ALP policy states that it will determine whether local government employs contract labour or whether it employs day labour. I think that that is outrageous. If local governments think that Labor would do better for them, I will be very surprised. Labor would also ensure that government employees work a 35-hour week for no less money. Those are the sort of interfering antics planned by the people opposite. Considering that this comment from local government came at this time, I wonder whether it was not driven by 1 or 2 of the Labor Party politicians on the Darwin City Council.

Berrimah Crossroads Reconstruction Work

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to a project that I have been involved in for some 2 years with departmental staff and local citizens in ensuring that urgently-needed attention be given to drainage and reconstruction requirements at the Berrimah crossroads. Whilst I am encouraged by the inclusion of some \$700 000 in the budget this year for the project, will the minister confirm that the project will commence this year, and give the Assembly some indication as to the scope and duration of the works to be undertaken?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is correct in acknowledging the works that have been done already in an effort to expedite the movement of traffic at that increasingly busy intersection, particularly the traffic from the Trade Development Zone and that industrial area. I am not sure whether the major upgrading works are even at the design phase yet. There is much to be done by way of traffic monitoring. I am not certain of the exact timing, but I believe that the project is due towards the end of the financial year rather than in the near future. Without any more detailed information from the department, that is about all I can say at the moment. Certainly, we will be trying to meet all of the safety-related obligations as soon as possible.

BTEC

Mr SETTER to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Has the Solicitor for the Northern Territory offered any BTEC contract similar to that offered to the Dunbars to any other pastoralists, and who instructed the inclusion of the confidentiality clause in the draft document that was tabled in this House yesterday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been advised that the Solicitor for the Northern Territory has not presented any contracts containing a confidentiality clause in the form that was presented to this House yesterday when a draft copy of an agreement was tabled which included a specific clause preventing a party to it talking to the media about the BTEC program in general. However, the second part of the question is more important. It asked who instructed that the confidentiality clause be included in the draft that was presented to this House yesterday.

Mr Speaker, before I go any further, it is important to realise that what has been claimed in the media and in this House this morning on several occasions is that the Solicitor for the Northern Territory presented a document to the pastoralist for his signature. That claim is patently false, and it was pointed out very clearly yesterday that it was false. In fact, the member for Stuart was censured by the House ...

Mr Ede: Come on! You gagged debate and did not even let me answer.

Mr MANZIE: It is important for us to pause for a minute and consider what we are talking about. We are talking about BTEC. We are talking about tuberculosis- and brucellosis-free cattle in the Territory and in Australia

by 1992. We are talking about a process that involves the Commonwealth, the pastoralists and the Northern Territory government. If that process is not finalised by 1992, that will totally destroy the Territory pastoral industry, not 1 or 2 pastoralists who claim to have been wronged but all the pastoralists and all the people who work for the industry, either directly or indirectly, and all the towns and the small communities that depend on the pastoral industry for their existence. As well as destroying the Territory's pastoral industry, such a failure may affect even the total Australian industry. That is how important BTEC is. Under those circumstances, it is vitally important that that program be completed and I think everyone is aware of that. The Commonwealth is aware of it. The Commonwealth is heavily involved in the campaign and the pastoral industry has demonstrated its commitment to the tune of several millions of dollars that it has put into the program.

Let us come back to this particular set of circumstances. There was a pastoralist who was doing everything he could to prevent this area proceeding to BTEC free status. Pastoralists around him were very concerned, to the extent that they were putting heavy pressure on the government to stress to that pastoralist the need to move to ensure that the Territory obtained free status because it would affect everyone in the industry. That was what was occurring. In order to come to an agreement with that pastoralist, a number of meetings were held, several of which took place on the pastoralist's own property. Present were the pastoralists themselves and an independent pastoralist as an observer. The pastoralists' solicitor and the pastoralists' junior counsel were present as well, and they were in direct contact with senior counsel in Sydney. The Northern Territory government solicitor and an officer from the Department of Primary Industry were also present. Clearly, that was not a scenario in which the government was putting pressure on a pastoralist.

The next part is very important because it destroys totally the accusations that have been made, and I am pretty sure that the member for Stuart knows that the accusations he has made are based on untruth. When discussion was proceeding on the kind of negotiated agreement and contract that would be put together, junior counsel for the pastoralists - their counsel not ours - indicated that they would have no objection to the inclusion of a media confidentiality clause in the contract. That was suggested not by the government but by the pastoralist's own junior counsel, one of 3 legal representatives who were representing him. That is where the instruction came from. After they had sat down and negotiated this, the ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Attorney-General will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: After this group of people had negotiated this - a group in which the government was heavily outnumbered both by legal guns and by other people including an independent pastoral observer - the solicitors went away to draw up a document that reflected the tenor of those meetings and, as is normal in these processes, the solicitor for the government sent a draft to the solicitor for the pastoralists, and most people in this House are aware of what a draft document is. It is simply that. It is sent out for people to examine and to suggest amendments if necessary. That was what occurred on this occasion. The draft went to the solicitor for the pastoralist, who sought advice from his eminent counsel. The solicitor for the pastoralist amended the document by deleting certain words ...

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: The Leader of the Opposition is having a great deal of difficulty in listening, and the reason is that he knows that his spokesman on primary industry has deliberately misled, not only the House but also the whole community, by trying to insinuate that an instruction was given to government lawyers to include something when he knew that that was not true. That is a very serious matter. The Leader of the Opposition really has to talk to the member for Stuart about the way he is doing things because I do not think that the media likes to be gypped any more than anyone in the community likes to be gypped. To mislead people deliberately is a pretty serious matter.

The normal processes were entered into. The draft agreement went out ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! There was a suggestion by the minister that the member for Stuart had deliberately misled people. I would encourage the honourable minister either to withdraw that statement or to bring on a substantive motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order because of the debate yesterday on the amended motion of censure for deliberately misleading the House. That debate took place yesterday and this is the same question.

Mr MANZIE: The solicitor for the government sent the draft. It was amended and changed, and a new draft contract was sent to the Solicitor for the Northern Territory which included, by the way, a confidentiality clause which excluded discussion with the media regarding that contractual arrangement. That was accepted by the government. The government accepted the proposed contract. That is a normal process.

That is the end of the story, but I think it is important to realise that the government does not agree with the requirements in that draft which indicated that no discussion should occur about any aspect of BTEC. We have made that very clear. In fact, the original suggestion was made by junior counsel for the pastoralists, and the Dunbars indicated that they would have no objection to the inclusion of a media confidentiality clause. The suggestions that have been put forward have been shown to be incorrect. Certainly, we do not resile from the fact that there are problems with BTEC and that many people find it a pretty hard row to hoe. The minister has done pretty well and deserves some truthfulness in relation to criticisms of the program.

Mr SPEAKER: I advise the Attorney-General that I have had an opportunity to reread the amended censure motion which was passed by the House yesterday. Within the terms of the motion, I find no reference to the member for Stuart having misled the House. Therefore, I ask the Attorney-General to withdraw his comment.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the comment.

Documents Relating to Indemnities from Prosecution

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

I direct my question to the Chief Minister. If he feels he is unable to answer the question because it involves both his department and the Attorney-General's department, I ask him to refer the question to the Attorney-General. A moment ago, the Attorney-General tabled 2 documents which I assume are the ones that were circulated at the press conference yesterday. My question relates to those 2 documents. Allegedly or reportedly, they are 2 documents that provide some form of indemnity for the prostitute Rhonda. Are these documents relating to indemnity for the prostitute Rhonda the ones that were circulated yesterday, and is the Chief Minister aware that the document signed by Commander Baker is so badly drafted that it is probably of no legal value to the prostitute Rhonda at all? In relation to the second document, could the Chief Minister advise who requested Mr Minahan, the Senior Crown Prosecutor, to write this document, and under what section of what act the document has statutory force?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will refer the honourable member's question to the Attorney-General because questions of immunity versus indemnity fall more appropriately within his portfolio. I will say that the member for Barkly is trying to be not only an amateur investigator but also an amateur lawyer. He is treading on pretty dangerous ground.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I gave very explicit details of the process of immunity and the documentation involved in the personal explanation which I have just made to the House. Obviously, the member for Barkly was not listening, as is usual for him. The honourable member has now to substantiate the unfounded allegations ...

Mr Tuxworth: Just answer the question.

Mr MANZIE: ... that he has made against my integrity. I would refer him to my personal explanation, which made it quite clear. There is a normal common law process under which police and Crown law officers have the ability to make decisions in relation to prosecutions.

Sanderson Primary School

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of the situation at Sanderson Primary School, where student numbers have increased to the point at which several classes are sharing a general purpose room, and that it is anticipated that student numbers will increase further next year? If the numbers increase as expected, will the minister give an undertaking to approve an extension to the school to provide further classrooms so that the students and teachers involved are not disadvantaged?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no formal approach has been made to me nor, I believe, the department, in relation to a requirement for extra classrooms at Sanderson Primary School. My understanding is that it is one of the schools which is close to capacity. It was a design-and-construct school and I understand

that it has a capacity for approximately 360 students. As far as next year is concerned, I believe that numbers at the school will continue to be within that capacity and that the available classrooms are satisfactory.

I understand that some classrooms in the design-and-construct schools were slightly smaller than those in the older schools in Darwin. It may be that some have seen that as being a disadvantage in the smaller schools. The whole issue of school standards is being considered by the government to ensure that the facilities are satisfactory and provide an appropriate environment for students and teachers. In the past, we had the open-classroom concept. In some cases, it worked extremely well but, in other cases, people disagreed with the whole approach. I am quite happy to take on board the concerns of the member for Ludmilla. As I indicated, I am not aware of that particular situation and I have not been approached formally in relation to it. Now that he has raised the matter, I will take it up with the department.

Lancewood and Gutta Percha

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

At recent hearings of the Resource Assessment Commission in Darwin, suggestions were made that the harvesting of lancewood and gutta percha in the Newcastle Waters area posed environmental problems. What were those suggested problems and what is the status of the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to correct the misinformation about this project that is being circulated in the community. During the May sittings of this Assembly, I announced the issue of a licence for this project. The licence was issued to a Darwin company, Central North Trading Pty Ltd. It is a forestry licence to harvest lancewood and gutta percha from pastoral leases in the Newcastle Waters area. I might say that the Commonwealth government has issued the company with an export licence. To obtain those licences, the company had to satisfy both Territory and federal authorities that the operation would not be ecologically destructive and that it would abide by stringent licensing conditions which are aimed at the protection of the environmental, cultural and heritage values of the area.

For example, under the conditions of the forestry licence, the company must ensure the protection of special types of flora such as bulwaddy that occur in the area, as well as fire protection, protection of areas on the interim list or register of the National Trust, location and construction of roads and tracks to avoid potential soil erosion problems, protection of Aboriginal and heritage sites and the reporting of any such types found during harvesting operations. The operation involves selective harvesting by which individual trees are removed. There will be no clear felling. This is in contrast to a local television report, referring to evidence presented to the Resource Assessment Commission, in which some film was shown of clear felling operations somewhere else in Australia. In the same report, a representative of the Environment Centre was quoted as saying that some 10 500 km would be logged. Other comments about environmental threats said to be posed by the project are also in the realm of fantasy and they seek to take advantage of the public's lack of knowledge about the matter.

Lancewood and gutta percha occur in dense thickets in a band across the middle latitudes of the Territory and Queensland, and by no stretch of the imagination could it be said that they are endangered species.

Nevertheless, the harvesting operation that has been approved involves the most stringent measures to protect the environment. One item of evidence presented to the Resource Assessment Commission by a Mr Richard Whitting from the Environment Centre was a copy of an internal Conservation Commission minute which said that inadequate information was available on the timber resource. That was the case at that time, which was 2 years ago. In the period leading to assessment and approval of the project, a large amount of information was assembled and collated. This includes herbarium and fauna records, field surveys of flora and habitat, the Gulf land system surveys, the initial print-outs of the vegetation map, data on cultural and heritage sites, and special surveys of selected lancewood and gutta percha stands. This information was used to identify issues which needed to be controlled and addressed in the licence conditions, including provision for further monitoring and data collection. One of the conditions was that the company pay for a full-time research officer of the Conservation Commission to monitor the project to ensure that no damage occurred.

The project is in the very early stages of development. Only sample amounts have been harvested as part of the process of proving markets, methodologies for harvesting and environmental monitoring. If it becomes apparent during the process that any environmental threat is possible, then the company will be required, and is prepared, to take the necessary steps to prevent such a situation occurring. The licence conditions provide for environmental protection and for continuing data collection and monitoring of impact as the project gears up. In this way, we can anticipate problems and act before they have any deleterious effect.

This is one project, involving the harvesting of natural resources, that can be truly called ecologically sustainable, and it has been very disappointing to me that organisations, such as the Environment Centre and the Australian Conservation Foundation, have sought to exploit public concern for the environment by promoting totally unjustified criticism of this project. It is particularly deplorable when these organisations choose to ignore the facts presented by the Conservation Commission. I have now arranged for Mr Whitting to visit the operation site to see the project for himself. As well, an invitation has been issued to the ABC to inspect the site and, hopefully, to obtain some realistic film to accompany any of its future reports on the project. That offer has not been taken up as yet. Any other media representatives interested in the project would be welcome to visit, and I will extend the invitation too to members opposite who may be thinking of disputing the evidence of the Conservation Commission's researchers and scientists. The project is environmentally sound, Mr Speaker, and I will always stand behind it.

Mr Bailey: Release the PER, Steve, so that we can read it ourselves.

Mr HATTON: The offer is open to the member for Wanguri or any member of the media or members of the Environment Centre to look at the project themselves and to examine the evidence. It is wide open.

Mr Bailey: Release the PER so we can read what you have based it on.

Mr HATTON: If the member for Wanguri would shut up and listen ...

Mr Bailey: Can we read the PER?

Mr HATTON: ... he would hear what is going on.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to the explanation made to this House by the Attorney-General today, and I do not want to comment on that statement or to discuss any of the related issues. I have 1 simple question. Is the matter of the Attorney-General's relationship with Officer Woods the subject of the internal investigation by the police which is being supervised by Bob Mulholland QC?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members are well aware of the 3 particular matters the investigation into which is being supervised by Mr Mulholland. With regard to all of the witnesses who are interviewed during those investigations, the transcripts of interviews are transmitted to Mulholland so that he can be satisfied that all that should be done is being done to pursue all the arms of that investigation to the nth degree. I think that may answer the honourable member's question.

Industries Commission Report

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

If the federal government adopts the recommendations of the Industries Commission Report announced last week, what impact would that be likely to have on the Northern Territory economy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Jingili for his question. In view of Australia's current economic plight, the question is indeed very timely. Of course, the Industries Commission itself has examined in considerable detail the value of known resources not currently being developed in Australia. In particular, the commission looked at the artificially restrained uranium mining industry and Northern Territory deposits so far undeveloped. It estimated that mineral exports to the value of at least \$4000m a year could occur if uranium mining were put on a strictly commercial basis, and the great bulk of those earnings would come from the Northern Territory.

The 5-volume study commissioned by the federal government, which will go to the federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, strongly recommends that Labor's so-called 3-mines policy be scrapped and that the uranium mining industry be permitted to find its own way in the world without the dubious assistance of politicians professing to know the market and what it will pay for what volume of yellowcake. It is interesting to reflect that the infamous 3-mines policy, without doubt the most ridiculous and illogical policy statement ever issued in Australian politics, was devised by the current ALP National Secretary, Bob Hogg, and Senator Bob Collins when he was leader of the Territory opposition. It is also interesting that both now disown it and discredit it. In fact, Mr Hogg tried to list the subject for discussion at the recent special Labor telecommunications conference, and he wanted Labor's uranium mining policy to be changed at Labor's National Conference next year.

Mr Ede: It is not true.

Mr COULTER: We will talk about what is not true and what you achieved down there if you want to ask me a question about it.

In the meantime, the Labor Party in the Territory wanders around aimlessly without a real policy on the subject. The Leader of the Opposition has had the humiliating experience of serving on a national review committee that has been gazumped by the Prime Minister, ignored by the party and reduced to meaningless status. The political reviews have failed, and they have failed because the Labor Party is hopelessly divided on the issue.

The Industries Commission has come up with a factual study which is devoid of politics and the answer is the obvious and logical one. All the lobby groups had their input and, at the end of the day, the commission found conclusively that the 3-mines policy was a nonsense, and that is something that all Territorians, other than members of the Labor Party opposite, have known for years. The federal government should get out of the mining business. Hopefully, in the Hawke government's new mood of economic realism, that is what will happen. The effect of a large mine like Jabiluka opening in the Northern Territory would have a major stimulating impact on the local economy. It would mean many hundreds of jobs on site and many hundreds more in the supply and service areas.

The Industries Commission found also that the supervisory responsibilities of the Office of the Supervising Scientist should be transferred to the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy, and that is something that we have been saying for some considerable time. I have been advocating that it go to the Northern Territory University. It has one of the best scientific laboratories in Australia today and we should have Territorians working in it to provide a future for our kids. Duplication means wasted expenditure, and the expanding empire of the Bondi-based Office of the Supervising Scientist has gobbled up large amounts of cash doing the job the Territory Department of Mines and Energy is required to do under legislation. I look forward to the day when valuable scientific work is coordinated in the Northern Territory with the added expertise of the Northern Territory University.

Finally, the Industries Commission discovered that the federal government's decision-making process about competing land use created uncertainty and considerable cost penalties for the community. The particular example quoted by the commission was the on-again off-again Coronation Hill. Who will ever forget the Leader of the Opposition returning, after speaking to Senator Richardson, and saying that Coronation Hill would go ahead? He told us that would happen 2 years ago.

It is not news to Territorians, but now another battler is to try to take it to the federal Cabinet. I have today's paper which was faxed to me: 'Button to push for states' cooperation'. He is a real battler, but he has not been doing too well lately - and nor has Kerin. It is pretty hard to get logic from the federal Cabinet. Just ask the member for Stuart's father-in-law. He had a fair bit of trouble. Senator Button says that the Industries Assistance Commission, or the Industry Commission as it is now known, has indicated that there are penalties and inhibitors in Australia to downstream value-added processing that would not exist in Europe because those countries are so fiercely independent. He intends to raise the matter at the Premiers Conference.

I hope that, when he attends the special Premiers' Conference to talk about duplication, the Chief Minister will have the opportunity to raise the

matter of ATSIIC. The federal government is seeking to avoid duplication, yet it has now created one the biggest duplication monsters in Australia's political history. I hope the Chief Minister will have the chance to support Senator Button because he will not be very successful - and we will read about that in days to come - in his hope to have this raised at the Premiers Conference. Mr Hogg was unable to raise the 3-mines uranium policy at the ALP's special conference on telecommunications. However, let us hope that some logic and common sense will prevail. Billions of dollars of wealth is locked up because of a nonsensical policy that originated in Adelaide or Hobart as an appeasement in the factional fighting within the Labor Party. Let us hope that that policy is thrown out and that the federal government can take its foot off the Northern Territory government's throat and allow Northern Territorians, both Aboriginal and European, to get on with the job of developing the vast resources that this country has. Instead of hearing about \$1800m deficit figures, as we did last week, we could actually produce some wealth for a change.

Attorney-General's Personal Explanation

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer the Attorney-General to a statement he made in his personal explanation this morning: 'I certainly spoke to the police in general terms about whether or not I had given an indemnity to Rhonda, and about my general relationship with Woods and whether he had ever approached me in relation to an indemnity for Rhonda'. We heard that the honourable member had recovered from his memory lapse at yesterday's press conference and that, in fact, that conversation took place on 25 June. Why didn't he think that the issues raised with him by the police on 25 June, over 3 months ago, were of sufficient importance for him to advise the Chief Minister that he had had such a discussion with members of the police force?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did.

Attorney-General's Personal Explanation

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

When did he advise the Chief Minister of that discussion?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, very shortly after the interview. I should reiterate that, in my being questioned as a witness, there was never any suggestion of any wrongdoing or of any impropriety in my role as Attorney-General. It is important for the integrity, not only of the Leader of the Opposition but of everyone, to ensure that before any accusations about myself, my integrity or my role are believed, the member for Barkly be asked to provide concrete evidence that the allegations about me have some truth. If that could be substantiated, possibly the following scenario could follow ...

Mr Smith: When did you tell the Chief Minister?

Mr MANZIE: Very soon afterwards.

Mr Smith: How soon? Days, weeks?

Mr MANZIE: Within the same day.

National and International Awards for Territory Schools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Recently, I read in the NT News a letter from the President of COGSO acknowledging the many successes of Northern Territory school students. In recent times, Territory students have won national awards almost every week. Mr Creswick was joining in congratulating those involved. I understand the Northern Territory School Libraries Association won an international award. Can the minister provide the House with information on these successes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was indeed very pleased to note that COGSO was making positive comments in relation to some of the achievements of students in our schools system. I hope that, from time to time, other members of the community and the press will promote those major achievements by our students. The President of COGSO, Richard Creswick, referred specifically to the national competition on managing the Australian economy. Economics students from Casuarina Secondary College travelled south to compete in that competition. All states and territories were involved in the competition and the team from Casuarina won.

Recently, a student from Darwin High School won the Plain English Speaking Award. That was a major achievement, bearing in mind that we are not competing only within our own boundaries. Each state and territory has competitions to select its best student. The winners then compete for a national title. Kylie Thomas won that award, and I wish Kylie well for her future.

The member for Jingili referred to an award gained by the Northern Territory School Libraries Association. I do not think enough publicity was given to this. It won an award for its project which was titled 'Networking in the North Down Under'. The award originated at the 18th Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship. The membership of this organisation is from over 50 countries throughout the world and some 25 associations applied for this award. I am talking about major library services. For example, the library services of North America competed in this competition. The point of the competition was to acknowledge outstanding and innovative work on projects which could serve as models for replication by school libraries.

The School Libraries Association of the Northern Territory was successful in this competition. Its project was called 'Networking in the North Down Under'. Such achievements, whether by Northern Territory students, teachers, associations, departments or groups, need to be acknowledged. We do fare very well in comparison with any other part of Australia and, indeed, the world. One has only to consider the fact that our school library service covers an area of 1 600 000 km² to realise what an important role it plays in helping to relieve the isolation of people who live in the bush.

Congratulations are in order for all of the people who have been involved in this exercise, particularly the School Libraries Association of the Northern Territory, and I hope that there will be many such successes. Unfortunately, as I said, such successes do not seem to achieve much

publicity. However, they are major achievements and they need to be acknowledged. I understand that another announcement will be made in the near future. I cannot say anything here, but it relates to a national competition and the students of Tennant Creek Primary School have done extremely well.

All of these achievements indicate very clearly that our system in the Territory is good and that not only our students but our associations and organisations are able to compete well in Australia and in the world arena. These achievements deserve to be acknowledged.

Irresponsible Use of S7 Poisons

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I ask the minister when - not will - he amend the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act or its regulations to take account of the perceived increasing level of irresponsible use of S7 poisons? These poisons can be used in normal horticultural practices. However, a small minority of users are not using them with care for neighbours who realise that S7 sprays must be used responsibly in horticulture and farming at the appropriate times.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question presupposes a necessity to amend the legislation, which is a matter of some doubt. This matter has been the subject of recent discussions between the Department of Health and Community Services and the Litchfield Shire Council. It is true that some complaints have been made. The honourable member's question referred to 'perceived misuse', and she was quite careful not to say to 'known' misuse. That is the fundamental problem at present. One cannot say that there will never be misuse of any chemical, any more than one can say that there will never be a murder or robbery committed or any law broken. Of course, such things can happen. However, perception is not in itself enough to justify amending a law.

All persons, whether primary producers or pest control operators, who carry out spraying, as occurs with mango trees in the rural area, are bound by the Pesticides Code of Practice issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council. This is included in permits. Of course, this applies only to the schedule 7 substances referred to by the honourable member and to all situations in which a person applies pesticides for fee or reward.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You cannot police the misuse.

Mr HATTON: Obviously, as the honourable member suggests, the department cannot be present for every application. Certainly, it does rely largely on public reporting of problems. Some licences may be issued with limited provisions, as occurred recently in the Litchfield Shire when a licence required its holder to report all intended spraying to a neighbour.

The department is working on some amendments at present. Amendments can occur as a result of the work of the National Health and Research Council or as a result of amendments to the Commonwealth poisons and dangerous drugs legislation. In the current process of formulating amendments, an invitation has been issued to the Litchfield Shire Council to bring forward any matters which it believes should be taken into account in any legislative review.

However, in undertaking this process, we cannot guarantee that there will be no breaches of legislation, although people who are found to have been in breach will incur the necessary penalties. Nor will such legislation eliminate complaints which arise from nuisance smells rather than toxicity, such smells being the cause of many complaints. Neither can legislation successfully overcome neighbourhood feuds in which departmental poisons inspectors are used as weapons in border wars between neighbours. We cannot resolve such issues through legislation.

I can say that, in dealing with this problem, public education programs concerning appropriate use of poisons are vitally important. For the vast majority of people, who really do want to do the right thing, education and training in the appropriate use of chemicals, which are necessary in the horticultural industry, can and should be made available. I might say that I am advised by the minister responsible that the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries is running workshops etc for people on the appropriate use of chemicals as part of that public education process.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: But, unfortunately, the irresponsible people do not go to those workshops.

Mr HATTON: That is exactly the point. The irresponsible people do not go there. Some amendments to the legislation are under way. If the honourable member herself has any specific suggestions on amendments that need to be made, I invite her publicly to make those available and I will ensure that they are considered.

Attorney-General's Personal Explanation

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In the Assembly this morning, the Attorney-General indicated that he had a meeting with police on 25 June and, by interjection, he indicated that he advised the Chief Minister of that meeting on that same day. Yesterday, at a press conference, the Chief Minister indicated that he had no knowledge of any interview of the Attorney-General with the police until last week. Who is telling the truth?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the explanation is this. When I was asked yesterday, at the press conference, I replied that it had come to my attention recently. However, the Attorney-General has informed me, and I accept it totally, that indeed he mentioned to me that he had been interviewed by the police some time ago.

Mr Smith: Did you minute it?

Mr PERRON: No, I did not minute it at all.

Mr Speaker, let me make a point which is very important because the Leader of the Opposition is becoming a little guilty of believing the member for Barkly in this matter. Irrespective of when I was advised that the Attorney-General had had a meeting with police officers, the facts are these. In this country today, thankfully, no person is guilty of any wrongdoing by the mere fact that he has spoken to a police officer or a police investigator. Each year, hundreds of people are spoken to about investigations ...

Mr Smith: It is not too often that they are Cabinet ministers, and first law officers.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I have been interviewed by police officers, though not in regard to these matters. I have been interviewed on a number of occasions about incidents in our community that have possibly involved me as a witness or otherwise. The Leader of the Opposition is drawing a long bow if he thinks that Cabinet members are somehow immune from police investigations. In the atmosphere prevailing at present, it is very important to say that, because a person has been interviewed by police, that does not mean that he is guilty of anything whatsoever. I would hope that our society stays that way. And I would hope that, in many respects, there is a large degree of privacy about these matters, and that people who are interviewed by the police do not have that fact broadcast. I would think that most citizens would appreciate that very fact.

The honourable members opposite have received a very brief description by the Attorney-General of what he was questioned about. The member for Barkly has decided, of course, that there is much more to it than that even though he has no evidence whatsoever. It does not matter when it was brought to my attention that the Attorney-General was interviewed by police because, if the Commissioner of Police believes that there is any implication that would impact on a member of the government, I have a long-standing arrangement with him that such matters will be brought to my attention forthwith for any action that I might care to take as Chief Minister. Of course, that is entirely appropriate, and I am sure that it is a practice that operates elsewhere. However, until such time as there is some evidence - not allegations, but some evidence - that a member has done wrong or is implicated in a crime of some description, then that person ought not to have his status changed as a result of that interview. Honourable members are trying to read a great deal more into this than is the situation.

Construction Industry

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Last week, the Chief Economist of the Commonwealth Bank, Mr Paul McCarthy, predicted a 2- or 3-year Australia-wide downturn in the non-residential construction industry. Could the minister advise whether or not this gloomy outlook for both the residential and the non-residential construction industry applies to the Northern Territory and, if so, to what extent?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, naturally enough, the Northern Territory will suffer its share of this downturn in the construction industry that is being well and truly experienced interstate already. In summary, approximately \$90m-worth of downturn in the Northern Territory is projected for this year. Fortunately, the Northern Territory government's budget is almost on line ball and, as a result of the foresight of the government in terms of the Supreme Court project and the Parliament House project, that figure has been maintained at a reasonable level. Of course, that is not the case for the federal government. In the last 3 years, we have seen a halving in its capital works program from almost \$60m to less than \$30m. Of course, that was up until last year. We have not been able yet to get the 1990-91 cash flow into the Northern Territory from federal capital works programs even at this late stage. Industry needs to know how much cash will be spent on what

projects during this financial year, and it needed to have known it well before now.

The only project on which I have been able to get any idea of cash expenditure this year, and that came from industry itself, was the fitting out of the new office for Warren Snowdon, the federal member for the Northern Territory. \$100 000 will be spent on that little project.

Mr Collins: He could go flying all over Australia for that.

Mr FINCH: In fact, he did fly all over Australia for \$100 000, but that was only 3 months expenditure.

However, whilst that might be good for those people who are working on fitting out that office, it is not much good for the thousands of other Territorians in the construction industry who are being made aware by the Master Builders Association that, whilst it cannot get information on cash expenditure, at least it has been informed that defence spending has slipped, that the 2nd Cavalry facilities have been delayed, and that the significant expenditure on Larrakeyah Barracks will not be undertaken this year. It is an abysmal situation and it will be until Warren Snowdon comes clean on this business.

It is no wonder that the federal government did not print its capital works program this year, because we all know that it is miserable. It is miserable for Territorians. That is not to mention, of course, that the honourable federal member himself is not too shy about having \$100 000 spent on a new office, which is totally unnecessary, so that he can relocate his computer and other devices for the purposes of the Territory Labor Party candidates in the forthcoming election campaign. That is all well and good. He loves the trappings of office, but he turns his back on his responsibility to Territory businesses. Until we get some straight answers from him, Territorians will not know what is in store for them in this forthcoming year.

It was a lie in the Wanguri by-election to refer to \$500m-worth of capital works when only \$30m was spent. They are even telling lies now. Questions were directed to the Sessional Committee for Expenditure in the federal parliament as follows. What are the cost savings of not printing the papers this year? What is the explanation for not expending the moneys allocated in previous years? What cash will be allocated this year? What projects have been deferred or cancelled? The answer is 12 lines which say simply nothing. There will be no state-by-state breakdown. There will be no explanation of this year's federal capital works program.

ABC Interview with Chief Minister

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to an answer he gave in an interview on ABC radio this morning. In response to a question, he said: 'Can I say to you this. I do not know, and I say this in all honesty, I do not know who the politician is who was referred to by the prostitute in the 7.30 Report'.

Mr Perron: Do you know?

Mr EDE: Can the Chief Minister advise this House honestly that, following serious allegations on the 7.30 Report, a member of his government

was implicated in this matter yet he never sought to find out who it was and what his side of the story was?

Mr Hatton: It might have been you.

Mr EDE: No, it is the government.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is really somewhat of a pantomime. If the Leader of the Opposition who, sadly, holds quite a high office in the parliamentary process in the government, is prepared to accept his public duty to have a full police briefing on the matters that are under investigation and that are being supervised by Mr Mulholland, members of the opposition will have the answers to basically all the questions that they are seeking to obtain publicly. He has refused, persistently and absolutely, to accept a briefing. I would really like to hear an explanation from the Leader of the Opposition one of these days as to why he is not prepared to have a briefing. We can all assume that the reason that he does not want to have a police briefing is, firstly, because it will give him the truth and, secondly, it will deprive him of the opportunity to make a song and dance in the parliament.

Mr Smith: Tell us the truth.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I do not regard myself as an investigator, amateur or otherwise - and amateur is certainly the category into which members opposite fit. I will not respond to allegations made by self-confessed drug addicts and prostitutes or the 7.30 Report which takes some morbid interest in this matter. I leave investigations to the police. I do not know who was the person who was referred to in a conversation and who allegedly was a friend of a friend of somebody else in this amateur hour show that the 7.30 Report put on. As Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, I have better things to do than to pursue such allegations.

Mr Ede: Worry about the propriety of your ministers.

Mr PERRON: Honourable members opposite seem to think that all and any allegations that are made have some substance or a shred of truth. They are running their campaign to obtain publicity on the basis that people have things to hide. Because a drug pusher and prostitute cares to say that someone said something to her allegedly about a member of government, that does not mean that we should all fly into some sort of tizzy and believe any of it. I fail to fathom the preoccupation of members opposite with wasting the time of this House on these very matters. I can inform the Leader of the Opposition that I have no idea who was the supposed member of government referred to. It may well have been myself.

Local Government Staff Qualifications

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What steps are being taken to improve the qualifications of staff employed by the Northern Territory government who operate in the vital areas of community development and local government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would begin by referring to the very good work that is carried out by field officers of the Northern Territory government, particularly in relation to Aboriginal communities. Over the last few years, I have been proud to be associated with the Office of Local Government and the very good field worker staff that we have in that office. The office operates with a fairly limited field staff when compared to organisations such as ATSIC, DEET and the land councils. Those organisations maintain very large field service operations.

We have a fairly lean field worker staff in the Office of Local Government and some other departments carry field workers as well. Quite clearly, our organisation is on top of the job of dealing with remote communities in the Northern Territory. In fact, their efforts are one of the reasons why the Northern Territory government spends such substantial sums on the ground compared to federal agencies. The Office of Local Government spends 90¢ of each dollar of its budget in Aboriginal communities or in communities generally. ATSIC, with its enormous bureaucracies, will not have even the level of funds that DAA had available to put on the ground. Even DAA expended less than 50¢ in the dollar. Probably, because of the enormous bureaucracy, it was closer to 40¢ than 50¢ in the dollar that actually landed on the ground in Aboriginal communities. We are well aware that, notwithstanding the fact that they have run Aboriginal funding into great debt, the land councils do not put any legitimate dollars on the ground in Aboriginal communities. I use the word 'legitimate' advisedly.

Something we see to be absolutely essential in the Northern Territory is that our staff are well trained. In the delivery of services to people in remote communities, it is essential that we ensure that training is available to our field staff. Consequently, we have advertised for, and retained the services of, a Territory-registered company by the name of Concord which, in conjunction with the Northern Territory University, is now designing a course for field workers which I believe will probably prove to be the forerunner of similar courses around the country. The states and federal agencies, like DAA, ATSIC and DEET, have shown some interest in the course. It will provide training for our field staff through the auspices of Concord and the Northern Territory University. It will ensure that the number of young people coming into the field service areas of government departments will have the continuing capacity to deliver.

I would like again to commend the field service area of the Office of Local Government for its efforts in past years, and the Office of Local Government generally for its handling of this situation and on gaining the interest of interstate and Commonwealth agencies in using the facility that we will have in place.

Bagot Community Council Funding

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer him to a question he answered in this House last week relating to the reduction in annual funding to the Bagot Community Council. In referring to this, he spoke about the community moving to a more commercial approach in handling its affairs. Firstly, is he aware that a special committee to assist the Bagot community to achieve this aim was set up in 1987? It has met, but it never seems to reach any conclusions. Secondly, will he instruct his departmental staff once again to initiate

assistance to the Bagot community to enable it to decide whether there are steps that can be taken to excise services which are normally Northern Territory government or Darwin City Council responsibilities and, if not, will he adequately compensate them for providing those services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in answer to the first part of the question, whilst I may have been told, at some stage, that such a body was established in 1987, I am not aware really that such a body is in existence. However, let me say this. When representatives of the Bagot community came to see me a week or so ago, I assured them of the support of the Office of Local Government in taking up the challenge, and it is a challenge to them, to commercialise their activities in some way. I made it clear also that we would provide support in drawing up a plan for them to achieve that situation.

I am aware of some anomalies among the town camp organisations, not only at Bagot but throughout the Territory, which need to be addressed by municipal councils in those areas. However, there are also some anomalies which I think perhaps over-generously subsidise those communities. There is a clear responsibility on individuals in town camps to take up part of the burden. I am not saying that some are not doing that now. Some are, but some are not. There are some areas where I believe a town camp could be likened to a unit title development and, to my mind, we should be working towards a situation where people in those communities bear their fair share of the burden. Municipal councils must bear their share also and, where it is appropriate, I can guarantee that the government will maintain its commitment.

Government Policy on Ministers and Police Investigations

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his previous answers in respect of the investigation being supervised by Mr Bob Mulholland QC and to the aspect of that investigation that involves the relationship between the Attorney-General and Officer Woods. I would point out that ...

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member to ask his question.

Mr BELL: ... what I believe and what the Chief Minister believes about that relationship is irrelevant. I remind the Chief Minister that a Premier of New South Wales stood aside in very similar circumstances ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for MacDonnell to direct his question now to the Chief Minister.

Mr BELL: Is it this government's policy that ministers in the government, who are subject to investigations of this sort, should stand aside?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I know little of the matters relating to the former Premier of New South Wales, but I understand that, in that circumstance, either he was charged or allegations had been made relating directly to him. In this situation, other than what has been said by the member for Barkly under privilege in this House, there has been no suggestion whatsoever of any impropriety at all on the part of the Attorney-General. I repeat that, if

at any time, as a result of any investigations at all, matters come to the attention of the Commissioner of Police that he believes should come to my attention, he will lay them before me forthwith in order that I should make a decision as to whether or not it would be appropriate for a person to continue in office.

With regard to the Attorney-General, I can assure honourable members that there is no information that I am aware of, from any source - and I discount the drivel put forward by the member for Barkly. Interestingly, that honourable member thought the police investigators were fine fellows when they were investigating his former activities as far as travelling allowances and possible credit card fraud etc were concerned. They were fine investigators then and did not need any supervision at all. However, apart from his allegations, none have been made about the Attorney-General. Being interviewed by police in order to assist them in their inquiries does not imply even that the person interviewed is necessarily involved in any way.

Mr Smith: How do you know?

Mr PERRON: If he was involved, I would be told. Right?

Draft Codes of Practice for Animal Husbandry

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Is the minister aware that the second draft of the draft model Codes of Practice for Animals has been issued recently by the subcommittee of the State and Territory Agricultural Council? The subcommittee deals with animal health. To my knowledge, drafts have been issued covering pigs, poultry, deer, goats, transport of animals and saleyard practices. I know the Northern Territory government has representatives on this committee from the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and, whilst in no way querying their professional qualifications, nevertheless I believe that there is a serious lack of consultation with the public on the 2 draft codes that I am concerned with - namely, poultry and goats. This lack of consultation amounts to a certain untenable arrogance which cannot be tolerated. If a sensible, community-oriented ...

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Koolpinyah is testing the patience of the Chair. I ask her to put her question immediately.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: When will the minister ensure that there is input to these draft model Codes of Practices from members of the community concerned with those particular animals and animal practices in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is correct. Draft Codes of Practice are being prepared. I understand that they are available and that there is consultation. If the honourable member is not satisfied with that consultation, I will ensure that the consultative process is broadened and that she and other members of the industry are involved. I understood that officers of my department had been in touch with the industry in relation to the various matters that she mentioned - pigs, poultry, cattle, sheep etc. Now that this has been drawn to my attention, particularly as it relates to the subject of goats and poultry, I will ensure that she has an opportunity to provide whatever comments she wishes.

Work Health Act

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Following public concern about the operations of the Work Health Act, the minister responsible has agreed to review the operations of the act. The Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act is in a similarly bad state in terms of benefits payable to people injured in motor vehicle accidents. Will the Chief Minister undertake to order a review of benefit levels under the MACA legislation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can take on board the honourable member's suggestion. I appreciate that there are some similarities between the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and the Work Health Act in terms of benefits payable. In fact, logically, some of the benefits have been tied together reasonably closely. However, they are not identical.

I would like to make a particular point because the opposition seems to be taking only one side in the debate about benefits to citizens who are injured in accidents, be they at work or in motor vehicles. I guess that the bottom line is that you get what you pay for. It is quite clear that a government can set the benefits at any level at all and that the corresponding premiums will flow from those levels. In the Northern Territory, we have abolished common law actions under the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and the Work Health Act. That has been a very significant step forward, although I would not go so far as to say that it has been copied by the states. In fact, some states had limited common law application in their motor accident schemes even before we abolished common law completely. However, the appalling backlog of claims, and the size of claims which are being awarded under the common law system across Australia, has caused such concern and such an enormous debt level for future premium payers that governments have looked increasingly towards limiting the cost of these workplace and motor accident claims. In the Northern Territory, in abolishing the common law, we have made it a no-fault scheme. In my view, those 2 principles are tied together.

It must be remembered that many people benefit under the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme who would not benefit under a common law scheme because of the no-fault principle. Many, perhaps even most, of the road accidents in the Northern Territory are single vehicle accidents. Under the common law fault scheme, the injured persons, particularly the drivers, had no claim to any benefits at all. The driver did not receive any medical benefits, let alone any weekly benefits. Victims of hit-and-run accidents also missed out entirely. Under the MACA scheme, if you can demonstrate that you were injured by a motor vehicle, even though that motor vehicle may never be identified, you will be covered by the full benefits under the scheme. Under the old scheme, unless you could find somebody to lay charges of negligence against, you went straight on to the Australian social security system and received whatever payments were due to people who could not work. Your hospital bills were picked up by the welfare system as well. In considering the benefits that are payable to people under these schemes, particularly the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme, I urge members to take a balanced view and to bear in mind that there are very significant advantages under our MACA scheme which would not apply if we reintroduced common law and dropped the no-fault scheme.

Alice Springs Hospital Services

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In the minister's budget statement in the Assembly last week, he referred to improvements in the delivery of services at the Alice Springs Hospital. Can he give more details of progress made in this regard?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to provide more details in respect of this. It is true that some significant changes have been introduced to the delivery of services. I should point out that these follow from recommendations arising from a major review of the management of the Alice Springs Hospital. That review began in September last year and was initiated as part of the Department of Health and Community Services' normal process of regular review of service delivery areas.

The purpose of the review was to assess the organisational structure at the hospital, with particular reference to the senior staff structure. Partly as a result of this review, the hospital gained 10 new jobs in 1990-91, including a chief executive officer position, a nurse clinical instructor, an equipment officer to free up more nursing staff hours, a staff counsellor, an operations manager and 5 Aboriginal health worker positions. The liaison mechanisms between the hospital and the community have been improved considerably. In September 1989, a liaison nurse was appointed. In November 1989, a social welfare officer was appointed, with emphasis on child protection. In November 1989, a community liaison team was formed, comprising 3 social welfare staff, the community liaison nurse, the paediatric liaison nurse, 2 Aboriginal staff and the hospital's Aboriginal health workers in mental health and pediatrics.

In February 1990, new proposals for substantial increases in staffing of Aboriginal health workers were introduced to enhance the cultural relevance and continuity of care elements of the hospital's services. In April 1990, a senior health worker was transferred from Rural Health to the hospital to provide clinical access, communications and liaison services. In September 1990, 5 new Aboriginal health worker positions were provided, as was mentioned in the budget debate. In addition, revised staff orientation programs, a series of on-campus seminars surrounding Aboriginal culture, and an approach to the Institute for Aboriginal Development for assistance are examples of initiatives taken to enhance the hospital's staff awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture.

The department is working also to improve its relationship with the independent health services in the Alice Springs and Barkly Region. This process of consultation will continue, and I am sure that positive results will flow from it. That is in addition to a range of other surveys that have been and are being conducted in respect of the hospital to address a number of issues. During the course of this year, a major nurses' review has been undertaken at Alice Springs Hospital. Results are expected very shortly from some preliminary information on that review, which was conducted in conjunction with the Nurses Federation. I authorised 5 additional positions to alleviate some of the pressures that the nurses are under in the hospital. I must say that the hospital efficiency review at Alice Springs showed an exceptionally good result for the performance of our staff at the Alice Springs Hospital, and they should all be congratulated for the work that they are doing, often under very trying circumstances.

In addition, a medical officer's review is under way at the hospital and we have now completed a very substantial review of the hospital's physical assets and layout. The latter has been included in a submission to Cabinet concerning the staged upgrading of the entire hospital campus at Alice Springs. That project is important, and I am very confident that it will gain the support of government over the next 3 years and will improve a range of services, including disability services, mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment programs as well as in-hospital programs, pathology, MEB and the outpatients area. All areas have been fully reviewed, including the staff quarters. The planned upgrading of the entire campus will bring the hospital up to date. A similar process is occurring in respect of the planned upgrading of the Royal Darwin Hospital. Of course, this year we have announced the final ward upgrading at the Katherine Hospital.

This is a part of an ongoing program of review and updating of physical facilities, backed up by review of the staffing services and training and support for staff throughout the Department of Health and Community Services. I am sure that honourable members will find that these programs will not only maintain our excellent health services in the Territory but will focus them more appropriately, particularly in places like Alice Springs where the emphasis on Aboriginal health issues means that the cultural appropriateness of service delivery is very important. The review has included rural services and hospital services with involvement from the Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association, CARPA. The aim is to ensure that the hospital and rural health services work together as effectively as possible. I am sure that all honourable members and people in the community will be quite pleased with the results of all this work.

Undertaking by Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I remind the honourable minister of a statement he made at his press conference last Wednesday following revelations of an attempt to stifle a certain pastoralist's freedom of speech. He stated that he would have the matter investigated and that it might lead to a reprimand. Leaving aside the question of ministerial responsibility for the moment ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will ask his question.

Mr EDE: Has the minister instigated an investigation? If so, is the investigation complete and has any action been taken as a result?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that the honourable member repeated precisely what I said. My recollection is that I was asked what action might occur, and I think that there was a suggestion of a sacking or something along those lines. I said that we would look at what had happened and determine what action might be appropriate. As far as that process is concerned, I have asked the department for a full report. I have some information about what has transpired although the investigation has not yet been completed fully. It seems to me that perhaps there has been no particular breach. It was indicated that there had been no repetition of the actions which occurred in this case and I have instructed the department not to repeat them in future negotiations concerning such arrangements.

I would make it clear that the confidentiality clause does feature in other contracts. I will read from this document, which is from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. I will quote the clause in Australian Construction Services contracts that I understand is still being used: 'The contractor shall not issue any information, publication, document or article for publication in any media which includes details of the work under the contract without prior approval of the principal'.

I indicated that those types of clauses are common in agreements that are struck between different parties. The matter under discussion is no exception. The point is that the issue is of little concern to the pastoral industry. There has not been a murmur from the industry in relation to the matter. That is an indication that the industry which funds the program does not view this matter seriously at all. As I indicated in the House last week, the industry's concern was to have the program put in place and to ensure that the eradication of disease proceeded without hindrance. In this case, I reiterate that it was a point negotiated between the 2 parties. The few words that were included in the draft will not be included again. However, it is a fact that such confidentiality clauses are common in commercial agreements. The industry is quite happy with the way the program is proceeding. All it wants is for the diseases to be eradicated. If there is any action to follow from what I have asked the department to report on, I will advise the Assembly and the honourable member in due course.

Assistance for School Leavers

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What help can the government give to young Territorians who will be leaving school and looking for jobs at the end of this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is timely because we are drawing close to the end of the school year and young people will be considering what their future may be. It is probably appropriate that we let those young people know exactly what is available for them in the Territory. The Territory government believes it must encourage and help young Territorians to seek jobs when they leave school. We seek to keep those young people in the Territory. Where job opportunities exist, they ought to be local because it is important that young people continue to have the support of their families. In the past, some have had to go away from their families - some interstate - to gain employment. The onus has been on the Territory government to create employment much closer to home.

One of the ways that the government has done that is by creating a healthy local economy. We can talk about the hype of a downturn in the economy. I would suggest anyone who is concerned about downturns in economies should look at the states. Do not look at the Northern Territory for an economy in downturn. Look at Victoria, look at Tasmania, which is broke, look at South Australia, which is almost broke, and at Queensland which is going broke. We are all aware of the problems in Western Australia. It too is in a situation that the Northern Territory will not find itself in under a Country Liberal Party government.

The range of programs that we have developed in the Northern Territory has been good in that it has included private industry. We have not promoted a government-led proposal to create employment. We have included

industry at all levels in providing jobs for our young people to avoid their having to go interstate for a career. We want our young people to know that they do not have to live thousands of kilometres from home in order to get advanced technical, professional and other post-school training to succeed in their chosen careers. The Northern Territory government has created a strong TAFE sector and provides a sound university education. Whereas people had to go interstate in the past, now they can study here.

The programs we have instituted help to promote the Northern Territory not only as an attractive place in which to raise a family but also as a place which can offer secure prospects for the up and coming generation of Territorians. A range of programs is providing assistance in the form of pre-vocational training through to tertiary scholarships for 749 Territory school leavers this year. Similar levels of assistance will be available at the end of this year and these programs include the Australian Traineeship System, which is a scheme that is supported by the Northern Territory government in which the public service and private enterprise employers employ trainees in a range of projects. They spend 3 days a week at work and 2 days in formal off-the-job training.

There are also cadetships. The Northern Territory government subsidises the salaries of cadets employed by private enterprise in technical professions, mainly architecture and engineering. Cadetships last for 4 years and encourage the recruitment and training of local staff. The disadvantaged scheme is one of which I am particularly proud. We put it in place only in the last couple of years, and it provides jobs for people who are either physically or mentally disabled. The scheme is coordinated through a local agency that specialises in assessing the skills and abilities of disabled people.

The pre-vocational courses have been operating very successfully in the Territory, though not so successfully interstate. However, the federal government, which has assisted with pre-vocational courses in the past, has ceased funding them and we will have to phase them out. Fortunately, the processes will be picked up in other ways. Pre-trade training strengthens employment prospects for young people who have left school without adequate skills to enter into trades. We provide a 1-year course, and the proposal now is that that training will occur in the final years of high school. Assistance will be provided, but it will be provided within the school system.

Scholarships are available to people in the public and private sector to undertake degree studies at the Northern Territory University. Studies cover 4 disciplines: finance, administration, the arts and science. If appropriate courses are not available in the Territory, the scholarship program will support study at an interstate institution. The Tradeswoman on the Move Program is now under way. That is a program that was initiated in the Territory by my department, and handed over to the Department of Education to administer. There is support from the federal government, but it is a program that cannot operate without the state or territory's support, and we were one of the first to have this program in place.

The group training companies and other employing organisations receive funding to assist their objective of employing apprentices in various industries. Assistance was necessary because of the limited number of companies big enough to afford to recruit and train apprentices full time. Under the scheme, apprentices are indentured to the group training company and are transferred between operating enterprises appropriate to their needs. That has worked extremely successfully in the Northern Territory.

Currently, there are 3 group training companies in the Northern Territory and these are providing ongoing support and training for apprentices in a range of industries.

There are miscellaneous schemes that have been developed to suit individual needs, and those are in some rather way-out occupations perhaps. There is one in saddle making - there was seen to be a need for a limited saddle-making course - and also one for sewing machine mechanics. Mr Speaker, as you would be aware, sewing machines have become very common at the Trade Development Zone and there is a need to provide mechanics to attend to the maintenance of those machines. We have been able to provide courses in that area.

A similar range of courses to those will be available next year, and I think that young Territorians can be assured that they will not have to travel interstate to obtain training for their chosen professions next year, unless it is something that is fairly unusual and something that we cannot provide here as a result of lack of numbers. The range is very broad now and the possibilities are there for anyone who really wants to be trained in a trade for the future of the Territory.

I commend those private sector organisations which have taken part in the training schemes that we have in place. In fact, the group training companies are now taking over much of what the government has been doing in the past, and are providing input from their own resources which was not available to such a degree in past years. I commend them for their efforts, and they can be guaranteed of continuing government support.

Alice Springs Power Station Industrial Dispute

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

My question relates to the industrial dispute at the Alice Springs power station. The workers at the Alice Springs power station have been very loyal over the years, and are non-union oriented. Is it true that, across the board, the workers at the Alice Springs power station are 2 levels on the pay scale below their counterparts at Channel Island?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a timely question because I understand that a stop-work meeting is being held at this moment. I believe it was due to commence at 10.30. The facts are that a new award structure was established at Channel Island for multi-skilling when the power station went on gas. A deal was struck and, in fact, the Channel Island power station people have been receiving an additional allowance because of that multi-skilling award which was struck. At the Ron Goodwin Power Station, multi-skilling does not exist.

Mr Collins interjecting.

Mr COULTER: They are not driving the crane there at the moment. I do not know where the honourable member gets his information in terms of their being very loyal people and anti-unionist.

Mr Collins: Over the years, when Stokes Hill was ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sadadeen will allow the minister to answer the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I have provided the member for Sadadeen with a briefing on this matter. Perhaps I can read it for the benefit of all members. I understand that it is now business as usual in Tennant Creek. They have lifted the bans at Tennant Creek. That would not be of much concern to the member for Barkly because he is not standing in that electorate. He intends to stand in Goyder. The only reason he is going to Goyder ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Mines and Energy will answer the question asked by the member for Sadadeen, otherwise I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr COULTER: Yes, Mr Speaker.

The maintenance workers at the Ron Goodwin Power Station have taken industrial action since last Thursday week over claims for higher payment. This industrial action started with a 2-day strike and, since a return to work, it includes work bans. The workers are seeking wage parity with Channel Island Power Station workers. When the Channel Island station was commissioned, workplace agreements were established with the unions to man the station with a more broadly-skilled and a flexible work force. These arrangements are the very essence of what award restructuring is about and the Power and Water Authority has negotiated comprehensive agreements with unions to achieve these benefits across its work force.

The Ron Goodwin Power Station maintenance workers are trying to achieve these benefits through industrial action rather than under the award restructuring process and, unfortunately, they are being supported in this endeavour by some local union officials, despite the existence of industrial agreements to the contrary. The authority has acted urgently to remedy this situation by bringing it before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Despite the fact that the commission has recommended the lifting of the bans, this recommendation has not been supported by local union officials and the bans remain in place. The current situation is that, if they continue, they may affect power supplies to the Alice Springs community and, if the station is required to run on diesel instead of gas, the escalation in fuel cost will impact on the authority's budget.

It is not the authority's intention to escalate this dispute. As I said, meetings are occurring there today. We replied to the union demands yesterday. We hope that we can obtain a settlement and that the bans will be lifted. We are happy to negotiate with them and to pay them the extra money - about \$20 a week - provided that they become involved in the multi-skilling and broad-banding which has been achieved at the Channel Island Power Station.

Mr Ede: It has been done already.

Mr COULTER: It has not been done, Mr Speaker. As I understand it, they have a painter and a welder, and nobody in the place can do any painting or welding other than that painter or that welder.

Mr Ede: That will come later, when you have award restructuring.

Mr COULTER: No. We have had this brought before the Industrial Relations Commission and Commissioner McKenzie has recommended strongly that they return to work and that they do not have a case.

Mr Ede: No, that is not it.

Mr COULTER: I will provide you with the information. As usual, I think you will find that, when it comes to the facts, you are wrong.

I hope that this matter can be resolved. We are trying very hard. We do not want to give in and simply hand out the money. It has to be arranged under the conditions in the industrial awards which have been struck with the union movement. We will not buckle under any blackmail in this case, especially when the Industrial Relations Commission has said that the bans should be lifted immediately. We are trying to resolve this matter, and I hope that it will be resolved today.

There are some problems. The No 9 turbine in Alice Springs is due for maintenance and an expert from Sweden is here at the moment. It is very expensive to bring experts to Australia to have the gas turbine stripped. I understand that the workers are refusing to work with that person to allow that turbine to have its scheduled maintenance. I do not agree with the member for Sadadeen that these are loyal people and that they have been very loyal over the years. They have put some very stringent demands on the authority.

Mr Ede: They simply want equal work for equal pay.

Mr COULTER: Their demands are outside the recommendations that have been put to us by Commissioner McKenzie. It is as simple as that. If they do equal work and, if they come under the same awards, we will pay them.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

My question relates to the police investigation supervised by Mr Bob Mulholland QC into matters which were the subject of a 7.30 Report program in April this year, matters which have been the subject of debate in this House and of public comment on a number of occasions by the Attorney-General and the Chief Minister. I refer the honourable Attorney-General to his answer to a question on 28 September, when he was interviewed by Mr Tony Walker of the ABC. The question put to him was: 'Have you ever met Rhonda?' Rhonda, of course, is the pseudonym of the prostitute who is involved in these issues. The Attorney-General's answer was: 'No. To my knowledge, I have never met her and I have no knowledge of any illicit affair occurring'. Can the Attorney-General confirm that he has never met Rhonda and that his answer was truthful?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that answer was truthful. To my knowledge, I have never met the woman.

Illegal Capture of Native Fauna

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What is the success rate of Conservation Commission officers who are involved in seeking people who capture fauna illegally in the Northern Territory? If it is necessary to seize fauna, where are the fauna specimens kept until legal proceedings are finalised? What forms of identification are used to distinguish specimens? What is the ultimate destiny of the seized specimens? I understand that the minister has had prior notification of this question.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not received prior notification of the member for Koolpinyah's question, but I will certainly seek to obtain the details which she has requested and to make them available during the course of these sittings.

Proposed Closure of Roper River to Commercial Fishing

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I understand there has been a recent proposal to close the Roper River to commercial fishing. What is the current state of play in relation to that proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was intended that the Roper River be closed to commercial fishing at the beginning of this year. However, that did not occur because of subsequent legal action. A decision has now been taken to seek public submissions in relation to the future of commercial fishing in the Roper River and whether it should or should not continue. That will be done by means of a call for submissions from commercial fishermen, the general public and amateur fishermen. The call will be made in advertisements which will appear soon in the media, and 1 month will be allowed for receipt of submissions. I hope that interested people will take the opportunity to put forward their views on this matter, which has created much interest and has been the subject of considerable attention in recent months.

I will be asking the Barramundi Fishery Advisory Committee to put forward its comments in relation to the matter. In fact, it will be meeting this coming Thursday. At present, the committee is considering the draft plan for the barramundi fishery and, in conjunction with that, I will be asking it to consider the future of the Roper River. I thank the member for Jingili for asking the question. The issue is the subject of much interest. Anyone who seeks to put forward a submission in relation to the matter will have the opportunity to do so in the very near future.

Proposed New Waste Incinerator at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In this House last week, the minister made some confused comments in relation to the proposed new waste incinerator at Royal Darwin Hospital. In response to a previous question, he said that the specifications for the incinerator met both the New South Wales Pollution Control Guidelines and the anticipated amendments to those guidelines, which are assumed to comprise the forthcoming national scheme. A recent edition of 'Waste Management and the Environment' said specifically that the guidelines recommended that a buffer zone of 500 m should exist between the incinerator and any hospital or sensitive receptor. Can the honourable minister clarify how an incinerator built within the actual hospital building can comply with the 500 m separation guideline? Further, given that one of the purposes of the incinerator is to burn cytotoxic waste, can the minister explain to this Assembly what cytotoxic waste is?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Wanguri might like to take advantage of his remaining time as a member to revisit the officers of the Department of Transport and Works to gain another full technical briefing on this matter. Quite simply, he failed to understand his first briefing. Officers of the department advised me that they had explained the matter to him, and I have no reason to doubt that.

The member for Wanguri has been wrong in all his comments on this matter to date. The consultants re-checked and advised that, in fact, the incinerator did meet the guidelines and the expected amendments to the guidelines in so far as the technical specifications of the equipment itself were concerned. I will repeat for what is probably the third time, for the benefit of the honourable member, that there were questions about operational modes and sequences relating to the equipment in terms of whether they would serve the purposes advocated by the honourable member. In his vain attempts to represent a minority radical environmental group, the member for Wanguri should reflect on his performances in this place during the last 2 years.

Mr Bailey: 1 year.

Mr FINCH: I am sorry. The time has gone so slowly. I recall the abysmal performance of the member for Wanguri in his response to the environmental statement put forward by the Minister for Health and Community Services.

Mr Bailey: You cannot answer the question, Fred. What a load of tripe!

Mr FINCH: His performance on behalf of the Green Independents, who put him into this place, was shocking. He gave a 3-line response to a ministerial statement of which he had 24 hours notice. I suggest that he do his homework a little more carefully this time. I will arrange for yet another briefing, although I think he ought to take along Dennis Bree or someone else from the opposition's staff, who has some intelligence, to hold his hand so that he gets it right this time.

Artificial Reefs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Late in the dry season of 1988, the oil rig tender Marchart 3 was scuttled some 20 nautical miles west-north-west of Darwin to create a new artificial reef near Fenton Patches. Has that project been successful, who benefits from it, and has the minister any plans to create additional artificial reefs in this region?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of course, the member for Ludmilla is a well-known boating enthusiast and keen fisherman. The sinking of the Marchart 3 on the Fenton Patches in August 1988 has been a very great success. My predecessor in this portfolio, now the Chief Minister, began a program of establishment of artificial reefs for fishing and diving for use by the people of the Northern Territory. It has been a most successful program. Within a couple of weeks of the Marchart 3 being located at Fenton Patches, fish were congregating around it. That has continued to such an extent that the number of boats visiting the area sometimes makes it quite congested. It is

a very popular diving spot and an extremely popular spot for reef fishing. It is attracting fin fish and game fishing is improving greatly.

An FAD, or fish aggregating device, has been located in the area in association with the Marchart 3 and, given the success of the Marchart 3 artificial reef, it is intended to locate another similar reef nearby. In fact, the member for Ludmilla will be pleased to hear that tenders have been called for that project. Because no derelict ships are available at the moment, discarded steel materials will be used. These include an old crane body and jibs, the crane framework and a few pontoons. The materials will be joined together and placed on the ocean floor within a couple of kilometres of the Marchart 3. Further FADs will link the 2 artificial reefs and will provide a trolling alley. There are plans to place further wrecks in the area as the years go by.

This program has received a great deal of support. I am sure that fishermen in the Darwin area and elsewhere will be pleased to hear that the artificial reef at Fenton Patches is to be expanded. Details are available in the Northern Territory Fishing and Boating Guide, which I launched earlier this year. I do not believe that I have had the opportunity to table it before, but I will do so on this occasion. The booklet is the first produced in Australia by a fisheries department and it is one that has been very well received, not only in the Northern Territory but nationally. It has attracted considerable attention to the fishing potential of the Northern Territory and is certainly providing a boost to our tourism industry. The guide provides a good deal of information about the artificial reef program, the fish that can be caught on the reefs, and the other benefits that derive to recreational and game fishermen in the Northern Territory. I am pleased to advise the member for Ludmilla that we are about to proceed with the extension of the Fenton Patches artificial reef and I am sure that he will convey that information to fishermen in his electorate. Mr Speaker, I table this document.

Territory Wildlife Park

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Next month, the Territory Wildlife Park will have been operating for 12 months. Can the minister report on the progress of the park's development, and its potential as a major visitor attraction?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the first anniversary of the opening of the Territory Wildlife Park is this Saturday, and this is an appropriate time to give an update report to this Assembly on the success that the wildlife park is enjoying. The Minister for Mines and Energy has developed a particular affinity with one of our rare and endangered species which is benefiting greatly from the scientific work under way at the wildlife park. I am referring to the bilby which is quite a pretty animal and one which is the subject of a very successful program of management, development and repopulation into the wild. I am pleased to note that my colleague is so keen about conservation matters.

As honourable members are aware, the wildlife park commenced 12 months ago with a week of free visitation to the park and some 27 000 people visited it during that first week. That really introduced local Territorians to this new asset of theirs, because it is very much an asset of the people of the Territory. Since then, we have seen depredations on

the development of that park as a consequence of the Hawke-Keating inspired pilots' dispute of last year. That dispute was pushed very strongly, clearly for the sole purpose of paving the way for deregulation in the interests of their mates in the big airlines, and I must say they did it very successfully. It was done at the cost of some thousands of small businesses in the tourist industry. The wildlife park did suffer during that period. However, as a result of a very excellent promotional campaign being run by the park, we have seen attendance build up steadily during the course of this year. I can advise that visitor reaction has been exceptionally favourable and a total of 79 800 people have visited the park since its opening. Visitation has been increasing steadily. In addition, there has been a seasonal pattern of tourist visitation which resulted in 13 282 people visiting the wildlife park in July this year - the best month since the park began regular operations.

This park has lived up fully to our expectations and, in some months, has exceeded projections. Stage 1 of the park has been completed, with the exception of the aquarium, and the total cost of the development was \$8.7m. With respect to the aquarium, a matter of some interest to everyone who asks a question about the wildlife park, work is proceeding to correct the design faults that were discovered. I can advise that the critical glazing has now arrived. I understand that work is to commence next week on the glazing of the aquarium. The glazing, water filtration, air-conditioning, quarantine area, drainage and landscaping will be proceeding and it is expected that the aquarium will be completed in December of this year. An interesting aspect of that is that the aquarium is located about halfway around the wildlife park and, when the air-conditioning is installed there, visitors will have the opportunity to cool down before proceeding on through the bird walk and other exhibits.

Of equal importance is the fact that design work has been approved for the construction of stage 2 of the park, at a cost of \$4.1m. This additional development will include a birds-of-prey display, a diurnal display, a macropod area, a butterfly house, an education building and a fast food and bistro facility. Design briefs for stage 2 have been completed for the birds-of-prey display, the macropod area and the educational centre, and \$2m has been provided in this year's budget for the construction of the new exhibits and facilities.

The park is steadily building up its displays through the acquisition of birds and through births among the resident animal population. Quite apart from the continually breeding bilbies, 2 very popular youngsters at the wildlife park are the 2 dingo pups which are gaining a great deal of support. Honourable members will remember that we have 2 dingoes in the park who go by the name of Bonnie and Clyde. They have produced pups and have developed into a nice little family at the park. Visitors greatly appreciate the opportunity to see these young pups and their parents in a family group.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You had better tell Wicking so he can do something on them.

Mr HATTON: I am sure Wicking would love to have a look at the dingo pups at the wildlife park.

Recently, 5 red kangaroos were acquired. These are now in quarantine and will be on display very shortly. We have 5 Rusa deer which were acquired from a deer park in New South Wales, and these will complement the existing feral animal display. Rusa deer were introduced to Australia in

the latter half of last century and are found on a small island near Groote Eylandt.

A commercial operation commenced recently to provide visitors with an attractive alternative way to get to the park. A company called Waterways and Wildlife Tours is operating a 9.7 m catamaran from the Darwin wharf on a tour to the park via the Blackmore River. This is an innovative idea which is very much in line with government's intention that the development of the park should provide opportunities for commercial operators. I wish Waterways and Wildlife Tours every success in its venture. We are still in the early days of park development but, with the enthusiastic response by visitors, we are particularly encouraged. Certainly, it confirms the potential of the concept of this wildlife park.

A 10-year development plan for the park is being prepared on behalf of the Department of Transport and Works and it is expected that that will be completed in the very near future, certainly by next month. This park is creating an interesting and important additional tourist attraction for Darwin. We have Litchfield Park, Kakadu and other facilities, but we have had many calls for man-made displays to hold people in the area for longer periods. Certainly, this wildlife park is the most exciting and successful such venture in the Northern Territory. It adds to the loop tourist route through Batchelor and into Litchfield Park. It provides not only a display for tourists to enjoy, but also an important research and educational unit to further understanding of our wildlife and for developing management techniques for the protection of fauna in the wild. I am quite confident that this wildlife park will develop as a scientific facility as well as a very successful centre for tourism.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Karama.

Mr PALMER: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I did not realise that my weight loss program was so effective as to make me almost invisible.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to resume his seat.

Hats Program by Schools

Mr COLLINS TO MINISTER for EDUCATION

No doubt the minister is well aware that, as an anti-cancer measure, certain schools in the Territory have a program to encourage the primary children to wear hats and to adopt sensible attitudes towards being in the sun. It has been brought to my attention that some schools are reluctant to adopt the program despite the fact that parents and others believe it to be a very worthwhile project. Will the minister do what he can to encourage principals and school councils to consider the matter most seriously and to take it on board?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I indicate to the member for Sadadeen that I fully support the efforts of people to have their children wear hats. As the member pointed out, many school councils are supporting that proposal. There is no departmental policy in relation to the uniform wearing of hats. We are unable to enforce the wearing of hats. However, I am sure that most members of this Assembly and of the community would believe that children should wear hats and that, wherever possible, school councils and staff should encourage children to wear hats. In a climate such as ours, we must be very

much aware of the risks that the sun poses for us and that skin cancer is a serious problem. I support moves to have students wear hats. All honourable members should be encouraged to promote the wearing of hats in the schools in their electorates.

Victoria Highway Upgrading

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

During the last federal election campaign, amid much fanfare and beating of chests, it was announced that \$94m would be spent on the upgrading of the Victoria Highway. How much cash has flowed to that project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of the \$17.1m committed by the federal Labor government for this project prior to the last federal election, only \$10m has been allocated to date for this financial year. That is of great concern to us. We have designed and documented the first lots of work to be put out for tender: Scott Creek roadworks at some \$2m, 13 bridge widenings at \$4.5m, and roadworks to be let between now and February at \$5m. Unless we receive some cash commitment for the Victoria Highway, as promised by the ALP, we will not be able to proceed with those works. We will not be able to spend the \$17m if we do not receive commitment for it now.

Despite the protests of Warren Snowdon prior to the last federal election, when he suggested that he received agreement on these works from the federal minister, Bob Brown, at Christmas last year, we still do not have the cash. This federal Labor government will be remembered for this budgetary year as the 'no speaks' Labor government. We have received a very positive commitment from Snowdon, from Brown, from Collins and even from the Territory ALP President, Margaret Gillespie, who jumped on the band wagon when Helen Galton had the audacity to question where the cash was. Margaret Gillespie said that all the cash had been promised. It is typical that we witnessed all the beating of the chest and the trumpeting and, when it comes to the crunch after the election, it has all disappeared. We have \$10m out of \$17.1m. In December of last year, we were promised that 2-lane bitumen seal would be provided as part of a special program to complete the national highway network. That was a \$200m commitment from the federal minister and half of that was to be in the Territory. I do not know where that money has gone. The \$10m that we have to date has come from the highways program.

There is also the \$100m Provincial Cities and Rural Highways Program. Bids for that came in at the end of last month from around Australia. For the \$100m that Bob Brown has to distribute, he has had bids amounting to \$300m or \$400m. How is the Territory to obtain its \$7.1m out of that total package of \$100m for Australia when promises are being made around the country? Yesterday, we heard that he is in trouble in his own electorate of Newcastle. Peter Morris said: 'The pork-barrelling is finished. We are in trouble'. We are not after pork-barrelling here. We want a commitment and a promise to be fulfilled. We have had promises from Warren Snowdon and promises from the ALP president, who now aspires to be a Labor member in the northern suburbs. It is time for them to start answering. How will Warren Snowdon find the \$7.1m that he has promised, not to mention the funds that he is now telling Maggie Hickey that he will find for the diversion of the Barkly Highway? There is a big gap in Labor's credibility. No wonder people become cynical when they see broken promises followed by more broken promises.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Immunity from Prosecution

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, during the adjournment last night, the member for Barkly asked a question relating to immunity. I supplied some information then, but I have further information now.

An immunity or indemnity is a formal document under the hand of the Attorney-General granting a person an indemnity from prosecution for offences which he or she may have committed. Generally, it is given when witnesses in a case will incriminate themselves when giving evidence, and such an immunity or indemnity allows witnesses to give their evidence without the fear that they may later be charged with criminal offences. However, there are others in the prosecution process who can give an undertaking that charges will not be laid. A former Attorney-General for the United Kingdom stated:

True immunities are uncommon because it is now the practice not to go further than to give an undertaking that any confession obtained as a result will not be used against the maker. For example, a person who is involved in a drug plantation may subsequently leave and, on being interviewed by police, make a statement incriminating himself. Generally, if the person is prepared to give evidence against the others involved, the confession obtained will not be used against the person who made it.

The effect of these undertakings by a law officer of the Crown was discussed in *MacDonald v R* 1983. The Privy Council approved the New Zealand Court of Criminal Appeal which said:

It is, in our view, immaterial whether such an undertaking is one which is a matter of law strictly binding on the Crown. We say that because it is quite unthinkable that such an undertaking would not be honoured and, in reality, the importance of such an undertaking in relation to the evidence of an accomplice lies in the practical effect it will have both in protecting that accomplice and in bringing about a state of mind on his part wherein, as far as possible, he is removed from the fear of consequences of giving evidence incriminating himself and knows that he has nothing to gain by giving false evidence.

The Attorney-General's formal role arises only when a specific formal document is required for presentation in court. This has not been required in the matters concerning the prostitute known as Rhonda. After consultation with commissioned police officers, the Senior Crown Prosecutor gave an undertaking that this person would not be charged with any criminal offence which occurred as a result of the instigation of a member of the police force. That was an exercise of prosecutorial discretion, given the peculiar circumstances of how the alleged commission of these offences occurred. To think that this undertaking would not be met is, as quoted above, unthinkable.

In relation to indemnities, honourable members would be fully aware of the unsubstantiated allegations that were made by the member for Barkly in relation to his proposal that, somehow or other, I had some improper arrangement with Officer Woods and that, as a result, I issued an indemnity. You will recall, Mr Speaker, that yesterday I called on the member for Barkly to substantiate those 3 allegations and to produce some

sort of proof. It is 24 hours since I asked that that be done and nothing has occurred. I asked that the honourable member substantiate the allegations or publicly apologise to myself and my family because he cannot substantiate them, or withdraw, or resign. Mr Speaker, 24 hours have passed and the member for Barkly still continues to hide behind the protections of this coward's castle. I ask him to get out of the gutter and be a man. It takes a man to apologise, Mr Speaker, and I would like to see some action in that regard.

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