

## 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?

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 Finniss River

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to my comments on Block H at Finniss 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 Finniss 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 Finniss 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 Finniss 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 m<sup>3</sup> 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 m<sup>3</sup> of low-level wastes awaiting disposal. This is increasing by approximately 50 m<sup>3</sup> 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.



- Aboriginal deaths in custody 153
- Adoption of Children Act, review 218
- AIDS Task Force, activities 189
- Air North, NT government settlement 181
- Alice Springs -
  - police numbers 184
  - video on proposed recreation lake 159, 227
- Apprentices, training 212
- Australia Card 230
- Bagot Road, pedestrian traffic study 160
- Black Jungle, vandalism 188
- Bradshaw Terrace, bus stops 163, 229
- Burgundy Royale, moneys owed to NT government 182
- Chief Minister -
  - delegation to Greek islands 187, 209, 221
  - Department of, petty cash expenditure 211
  - document relating to member for Barkly 312
  - travel costs 206, 208
- Commercial television outside Darwin 207
- Consumer affairs, report 181
- Crocodile meat for restaurant trade 193
- Cullen Bay, marina 198
- Dairy levy 162
- Darwin -
  - Airport, future development 192
  - Bus Service 185
  - Prison, program 230
- Defence facilities 174
- Education, advanced, funding for 179
- Electricity, overdue commercial accounts 185
- Film industry, potential damage by location fees 232, 235
- Finniss River Station, Block H 155, 156, 177, 196, 197, 202, 212
- Firearms, uniform legislation 217
- Frances Bay, mooring basin 220
- Groote Eylandt -
  - airport 216
  - task force coordinator 161
- Housing Commission, purchase of units at Gardens Hill 184
- Japan Australia Railway Study Group 223
- Kings Canyon, development 161
- Lameroo Lodge, future operation 210
- Legislative Assembly, legal advice on 1983 election 226
- Markets, retailing of food 169
- Member for Barkly, document relating to 213
- Mines Safety Control Act, administration 194
- Mining (Validation of Tenements) Bill, assent 152
- Ministerial travel, intra-Territory costs 206
- Missing persons, remote areas 197
- Motor Accidents Compensation Scheme 205
- Ngukurr, health services 182
- Northern Territory -
  - Land Corporation 219
  - Public Service, severance payments 228, 229
- NT government -
  - delegation to Greek islands 187, 209, 221
  - moneys owed by Burgundy Royale 182
  - private telecommunications system 158
  - procedures re persons lost in remote areas 197

review of regulations 166  
settlement with Air North 181  
Offshore oil exploration 155  
Oil, stocks of waste in Darwin region 190  
Planning -  
  authorities, rationalisation 218  
  regulations 228  
Police, numbers in Alice Springs 184  
Radioactive waste disposal, proposal 203  
Road design, reassessment 200  
Roadside inns, review 192  
Royal Darwin Hospital, private wards 191  
Royal North Australian Show Society, access to stables 196  
Sewerage and water charges 201  
Shire of Litchfield (Transitional Rating) Act, deficiencies 153  
Small Claims Court 209  
Soapy Bore, water supply 157, 179  
Speed limits, Territory roads 221  
Strehlow Collection 225  
Subcontractors, payment of 224  
Telecom, effect of increased charges 165  
Telephones, installation costs in rural areas 210, 214, 231  
Tennant Creek, rezoning of drive-in block 173  
Tobacco products legislation 198, 216  
Traditional owners, filming location fees 235  
University College of the Northern Territory \*151  
Vehicle encumbrance legislation 213  
Vietnam veterans -  
  supply of NT sporting ties etc 183  
  transport to Sydney 152  
Water -  
  charges, increase 166, 168, 169, 201  
  conservation program 215