SECOND NORFOLK ISLAND
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

HANSARD

Third Sitting
(7 April 1982)
MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

President - The Honourable David Ernest Buffett
Deputy President - Mr. William Winton Sanders

Brown, John Terence
Buffett, Alice Inez
Buffett, The Honourable David Ernest
Christian-Bailey, Bernard Edwin
Gray, Chloe Barbara
Howard, Edward Davenport
Jackson, Gilbert Wallace
Quintal, Gregory Gilbert Francis
Sanders, William Winton
COMMITTEES

STANDING

Business Committee

Mr. President
Mr. J.T. Brown
Mr. E.D. Howard

Standing Orders Committee

Mr. President
Mr. J.T. Brown
Mr. B.E. Christian-Bailey
Mr. G.W. Jackson

House Committee

Mr. President
Miss A.I. Buffett
Mr. B.E. Christian-Bailey
Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health
(The Honourable David Ernest Buffett)
Surface Transport
Roads, Footpaths & Bridges
Street Lighting
Water Supply
Electricity Supply
Drainage & Sewerage
Garbage & Trade Wastes
Primary Production
Slaughtering
Domestic Animals
Pounds
Pests & Noxious Weeds
Recreation Areas
Cemeteries
Forestry & Timber
Fire Prevention & Control
Quarrying
Prevention of Nuisances
Noxious Trades
Gases & Fuels
Firearms
Explosives
Places of Public Entertainment
Museums, Memorials & Libraries
Boarding Houses & Hotels (food & beverages)
Foodstuff & Beverages
Trading Hours
Markets & Street Stalls
Hawkers
Radio & Television
Telephone Services
Coastlines, Foreshores, Wharves
Lighterage
Registries & Rolls
Social Services
Education
Health
The Environment
Culture & Traditions

Executive Member for Planning, Tourism & Commerce
(John Terence Brown)
Building Control
Advertising Hoardings
Tourism (including Tourist Accommodation)
Fishing
Immigration
Land Use Planning & Subdivisions
Air & Sea Transport (other than Lighterage)
Legislation Planning
Future Planning
Commerce

Executive Member for Finance
(Edward Davenport Howard)
Revenue Raising
Public Monies
Postal Services
Customs
Liaison with the Public Service Board
Retail Price Index
Bond Store & Future Commercial Undertakings
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Adjournment

Adjournment Debate
CONDOLENCES

MR. SANDERS: Mr. President I have two condolences. Firstly, Doris Mabel Walton died on Norfolk Island on 23 March. Mrs. Walton, aged 77 years, was holidaying on the Island with a group of elderly citizens from Auckland, New Zealand. Arrangements were made to take Mrs. Walton back to Auckland on 26 March for burial there.

To her son Robert and other members of her family this House extends its sincere condolences.

MR. President there is a second condolence.

It is with deep regret that I record the death of Mrs. Gladys Violet Ashburner who passed away on 6 April aged 84 years. Gladys came to Norfolk Island in 1958 and since that time endeared herself to us all by her friendly helpful manner which was not lessened by her suffering a disabling stroke a few years ago. She was an active member of the A. & H. Society for many years, was a founding member of the Flora & Fauna Society and was still a very active member of the Country Women's Association at the time of her death.

To her sisters Dorothy, Kaye and Phyllis, her brother Jack and her many friends, this House extends its sincere condolences.

MR. PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Sanders. As a mark of respect Honourable Members I would ask that you stand in silence.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LEAVE FARES FOR N.I. PUBLIC SERVANTS

MR. SANDERS: Mr. President I have a couple of questions I direct to the Executive Member for Finance.

The question is, is there a situation that exists for
public servants of Norfolk Island to have plane fares paid when going on leave?

MR. HOWARD: The answer is yes there is statutory provision that partial payment for the equivalent of economy fares to the mainland is paid for public servants, I think every other year.

MR. SANDERS: Is it a fact that this costs the Norfolk Island public purse in excess of $40,000 per year?

MR. HOWARD: I do not know the exact answer. My impression is that it does not cost that much. It is impossible to predict in advance because it depends on the person actually wanting to take a trip and actually going to Sydney. There was consideration given by the Public Service Board not long ago to eliminating that benefit and substituting it with cash of some kind. Their conclusion was that the public purse was better off to leave it as it was rather than changing it. I do not know what the exact amount is, I think it is probably something less than the $40,000 you quoted.

MR. SANDERS: If this situation is to continue, as it is out of public funds, could members of the public also have their fares paid?

MR. HOWARD: It is a marvellous idea but I really do not think it is in the realm of the Assembly to start passing out airfares to everyone else. The public service are employees of the Government and their terms and conditions of employment and the benefits they get are matters of concern to first of all the Public Service Board, and direct concern to us because we have to vote the money for it, I do not think we could extend that really to the public, although the idea has some attractions.

If I could jump back to Mr. Sanders' previous question - I have just been handed an answer to his second question as to what the cost is - I am informed by the Chief Administrative Officer that in the 1979/80 financial year the actual cost was $9,760, now I do not have a
later figure than that. I thought that figure from what is that, a year and a half ago, maybe of some help.

MR. SANDERS: Would it not be wise to discontinue this practice immediately before the public servants of Australia find out and start making application for 96% of our public servants wages as a take home salary, plus airfares, when they live in their own home?

MR. HOWARD: Nothing is eternal and few things are sacred. I do not know of any immediate reason to make cuts or reduce the pay or the benefits of anybody in the public service. I do not say that that might not become necessary at some time in the future, but I do not see that it is necessary right now. People get very protective of the compensation, the benefits they have received in the past and I think properly so, I think if the thought of dis-continuing that particular benefit is considered it would be only as part of a very broad look at compensation on the whole and would take into account a lot of other things other than just the airfare idea.

POSSIBILITY OF BURNS PHILP & CO LTD RE-ENTERING THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY

MRS. GRAY: If I may to the Executive Member responsible for Planning, Tourism and Commerce.

Is he aware of the item appearing in the March edition of the Pacific Island Monthly referring to the possibility of Burns Philp & Co Ltd re-entering the shipping industry with a line serving the Pacific area, if he is, is he able to advise whether or not discussion will take place between himself and Burns Philp with a view to Norfolk Island being a port of call on this service?

MR. BROWN: I have had discussions with Mr. Angus Cuthbertson the Manager of Burns Philp in Norfolk Island, in relation to this matter. Mr. Cuthbertson has confirmed to me the contents of the brief
article in the March edition of the Pacific Islands Monthly, but he has advised me that the re-entry into shipping by Burns Philp, if it does take place, is not likely to be able to extend to Norfolk Island. I will continue to liaise with Mr. Cuthbertson in relation to this matter but at the moment I am advised that there is no real prospect of Norfolk Island being included as a port of call.

ADMINISTRATION TENDERS

MRS. GRAY: A question to the Executive Member responsible for Finance.

Has he received a copy of a letter calling attention to the reported failure of the Administration to call for tenders in areas of capital and other major expenditure. If he has will he please report to this House what action he proposes to take to investigate the instigation of such system for future expenditure by the Administration.

MR. HOWARD: Yes I am happy to answer that. I think it may be drawing a bit of an unfair inference to refer to a failure to call tenders. I have had a copy of the letter, it sets forth the idea that tenders should be called on a wide range of purchases that the Administration makes. I have talked with the man who wrote the letter, who is an experienced businessman with pretty good judgement, and I am pretty satisfied from my conversation with him that he is not trying to do anything cute or funny, I am quite sure he is not trying to attack anybody or to point any fingers of blame. In discussion with him I got from him the idea that he thought the present system in which tenders are not called for is one that has just grown up over a period of generations and has carried over from the days when the Administration actually bought very little in the way of purchases, very small amounts that were scarcely worth tendering and when it was almost invariably a convenience for the Administration to be able to buy through Commonwealth Government purchasing offices on the mainland or other such sources. He put the point to me that he thinks that the
Administration is becoming a big purchaser these days and that more things ought to go to tender. I think the idea sounds on the surface to be entirely sensible. I have asked the Chief Administrative Officer if he will look into that question. I have forwarded a copy of the letter on to him. I have said to him that I think if there are reasons why it does not make sense to call for public tenders, that there better be pretty good reasons and I would like to know what his response is but I will let the House know more when I hear back from the CAO.

USE OF LOCAL LABOUR FOR AIRPORT UPGRADING WORK

MR. QUINTAL: Mr. Deputy President I would like to ask the Executive Member for Planning, Tourism and Commerce a question.

I refer to an article published in the Norfolk Islander on Saturday 27 March 1982 which stated that the Federal Minister for Housing and Construction had announced that in connection with the project to upgrade the Norfolk Island Airport, the contract for the main engineering works had been let to a New Zealand firm Kiapara Excavators Ltd. The article stated that the contract involved reconstruction of the main runway and various other works including strengthening and rescaling the secondary runway and extending and strengthening the taxiway and apron areas. The contract was stated to be valued at $3.2 million dollars. Can the Executive Member advise whether the firm to whom the contract has been let intends to use local labour to the maximum possible extent in carrying out the work required by this very valuable contract and if local labour is employed will that labour be paid at the same rates as are paid to Administration employees who do comparable work?

MR. BROWN: I am informed that the last Norfolk Island Government consistently stressed to the various Australian Governmental Departments and other instrumentalities carrying out construction projects on Norfolk Island, that it wishes local labour to be used to the maximum possible extent. This is true with specific regard to the airport upgrading project and is also true of
other projects such as for example the construction by OTC of the new Cable Station. This policy of the last Government remains policy of this Government. With regard to the matter of the airport upgrading, the Australian Department of Housing and Construction which has oversight of the project, has been most co-operative in ensuring that all prospective tenderers were well aware of the requirement to utilise local labour as much as possible. I am informed that Kiapera Excavators Ltd who have been awarded the main construction contract, have expressed to officers of the Administration, their intention to use local labour wherever possible in compliance with the wishes of this Government. However there will be a need for some skilled plant operators and supervisory staff to be brought to the Island in order to satisfactorily carry out some aspects of their work. The contractor will need to employ local labour at rates which are high enough to be attractive. However this is a matter for negotiation between the contractor and the person he employs. This Government is not able to require that certain wage rates be paid and it is not known whether the rates to be paid will be the same as those paid in the Administration.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Any further questions. Mr. Quintal.

SUBDIVISION POLICY

MR. QUINTAL: I would like to direct a question to the Executive Member for Planning, Tourism & Commerce again.

The Member will be aware that for at least some 18 months there has been general confusion by the public as to what policy this Assembly and the Department pursue in relation to applications for subdivision. Would the Minister for Planning, Tourism & Commerce as a matter of urgency make a clear and concise statement on policy in relation to subdivisions; make amendments to the Land Subdivision Ordinance to permit applicants for subdivision to proceed in accordance with a written set of guidelines as opposed to a policy
situation that may change with subsequent Ministers; take the necessary steps to ensure that applicants who have had their subdivision refused over the last two years have the opportunity of reapplying in accordance with whatever guidelines or change in the Ordinance arises from the above.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Deputy President the issues here relate to a retained function and if it is to the pleasure of the Members I will take this question on notice and discuss the matter with the Administration and the Administrator in the hope that I can provide a detailed answer to the Assembly at the next sitting. However I can say at this stage that the Executive Committee in early February requested that it be provided with a full report of the present situation in relation to land subdivision and a report as to the problems presently experienced and suggestions as to how they can be overcome. In my discussions with the Chief Administrative Officer last week he indicated to me that that report was almost complete and in fact I expect that it will be available within the next few days.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: I would like to ask a follow on question from that answer of Mr. Brown's. His answer seemed to me to imply that it is entirely in the hands of the Commonwealth and we have nothing to do with it. The first part of Mr. Quintal's question as I noted it down, asked whether Mr. Brown would make a clear statement of what the policies of the Executive Committee or the Assembly are and I want to ask him whether we can't at least go that far, can't we at least clarify what our policies are, then getting the Commonwealth to agree with them and carry them out may be another battle but I ask him can't we at least get our own policies down on paper clearly.

MR. BROWN: Yes I agree entirely Mr. Howard. The purpose of the paper which has been requested by the Executive Committee is to enable the Executive Committee to come to a conclusion and to bring
that conclusion together with recommendations before this Assembly. It is hoped that the Assembly will then either approve or modify that policy and proposals. We would intend at that stage to place that policy and those proposals before the Administrator and ask for any comment that he may care to make.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: Following on the answer just given by the Minister, I would request the Minister that in deliberations concerning subdivision that in the very near future he call all Members together to discuss this matter.

MR. BROWN: That in fact Mr. Jackson is my intention as soon as the paper is available to me.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Any further questions. Mr. Christian-Bailey.

CONSTRUCTION OF BOAT RAMP AT BALL BAY

MR. CHRISTIAN-BAILEY: Thank you Mr. Deputy President. I have two questions without notice directed to the Executive Member for Administration, Education and Health.

The Executive Member may not be aware that the Rotary Club of Norfolk Island as a community service project is planning to construct a boat ramp at Ball Bay and that the Government Honorary Consulting Martine Engineer Captain Ware through the good offices of the Chief Administrative Officer, is due on the Island for this purpose within the next few days. My question is does the Executive Member agree that this is a worthwhile project and of benefit to the whole Island and if so whether the facilities of the Administration can be made available to assist in this project if and when required.
MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President can I firstly say that the matter of a ramp in the Ball Bay was one that was raised in the life of the last Assembly and at that time it was indicated that there was some wisdom in the construction of such a ramp and an indicator was given to a representative of the Rotary Club at that time. In the last two weeks 2 representatives from the Rotary Club have again visited me to again push the project along. They at this time have no concrete proposal in respect of (a) the site or (b) the exact construction, but they wanted to keep the project alive because they feel they are approaching the time when those proposals can be put forward. I confirmed at the time that there had been an earlier decision that it seemed a worthwhile project subject to further detail coming forward and that as I say is progressing but has not yet come forward but I expect it will soon in light of what Mr. Christian-Bailey has just mentioned to this House. As to whether Administration facilities can be made available to assist the project, would have to be a decision taken when detail of the project is known, but in light of the fact that it was earlier considered to be a worthwhile project, I would think from a community point of view, the Administration would want to assist in whatever manner they are able, but again that decision would need to be taken when the exact details of the project are known.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Any further questions. Mr. Christian-Bailey.

CONDITION OF KINGSTON PRISON CELLS

MR. CHRISTIAN-BAILEY: A second question to the Executive Member for Administration, Education and Health.

In view of a recent letter to Members, and I understand it appeared in the local press, from Mr. Mike King in connection with the unsatisfactory condition of the Kingston cells, I would ask the Executive Member responsible whether he would tell me whether there
is any plan to upgrade these facilities and if so when is this work expected to be completed.

MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President I am aware of the letter to which Mr. Christian-Bailey refers, a copy has come to me and it has appeared in the paper as Mr. Christian-Bailey has also mentioned. I do share the concern expressed in that letter and I have had conversations with various authorities who have an interest in that area of responsibility, in other words I have spoken with the Administrator and I have spoken with the Chief Administrative Officer. The difficulty of course with the cells that we have here are that they are rarely used, for years on end they are not used, and regrettably we find that they are not given a great deal of expenditure and attention. There was an instance in the last couple of weeks whereby it needed to be used. At that time the facilities such as bedding etc were not those that are normally in the cells, they were got from other sources and of course meals were brought to the person who was in residence and of course he was accompanied during his sojourn there by one of the officers of the Police. I have asked that there be some tidying and repainting of the area so that it would be more suitable for the use for which it is known for. In the longer term there is a proposal to upgrade that area, I am not too sure whether it be in a cell capacity but there is some restoration work to go on in that particular area. I am not able to quote exactly what it is, it escapes my memory at this time but there is some planning for some restoration within the cell block area.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any further questions. Mr. Christian-Bailey.

AIR SERVICES

MR. CHRISTIAN-BAILEY: I have three more questions which I direct to the Executive Member responsible for Planning, Tourism & Commerce.
In view of the recent announcement from Canberra that the tender has been let for the upgrading of the Norfolk Island Airport and that the introduction of a jet service is likely to be less than a year away, can the Executive Member tell me whether (a) the Norfolk Island Government will be consulted before a carriers licence to operate the service between Sydney and Norfolk Island is issued; and (b) whether the Norfolk Island Government will have a voice in which airline gets the licence and the type of jet service to be used; and (c) if not, what steps can be taken to ensure that the Norfolk Island Government is consulted before any licence is granted.

MR. BROWN: On 17 December 1980, Mr. McIntyre as Minister for Resources and Planning, wrote to the Federal Minister for Transport in relation to these matters and it is my understanding that the Federal Minister for Transport has made certain undertakings to consult with the Norfolk Island Government at such stage as decisions are being made in relation to the matters referred to in Mr. Christian-Bailey's questions. However it is my intention to take this matter up quite shortly with Mr. Hunt, the Federal Minister for Transport, to ensure that these undertakings are not overlooked and in the event that the undertakings do not go as far as the Government of Norfolk Island would like them to, then in that event I will be seeking that the undertakings be extended so that we do have an adequate amount of consultation in relation to all of these matters.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think Mr. Christian-Bailey may wish to continue.

MR. HOWARD: I wanted to move an extension of question time, it is about to run out, may I. I move that question time be extended to allow other Members to ask the questions they may have.

TOURIST BUREAU PREMISES

MR. CHRISTIAN-BAILEY: For many years the Tourist Bureau has pressed for larger premises and more recently the need for
larger street frontage for the Bureau has become obvious.

Firstly I would like to ask if there are plans for a new visitors bureau within the proposed Administration complex in the Rawson Hall area and when can we expect this to take place.

**MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Mr. Brown.

**MR. BROWN:** The question of the proposed Civic Centre in the Rawson Hall area is under examination at the moment and Mr. Howard as the Executive Member for Finance is the Executive Member with responsibility for this project but I can say that no decision has been made at this stage as to whether the project will be commenced in the near future, the distant future or at all.

**MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Any further questions.

**MR. CHRISTIAN-BAILEY:** The second part of the question to the Executive Member for Tourism - I would like to ask if a temporary solution could be found in the meantime by allocating an area of the Customs Office, especially the shop frontage, to the visitors bureau, especially in view of the following - (1) the need for an attractive location from which to offer this valuable service for visitors; (2) the need for a venue for consultations with agents and associated travel industry personnel endeavouring to discuss future business which will support this Island's economy; (3) the need to accommodate telex facilities and other possible marketing aids and earning services; (4) the need to centralise the Island's tourist services in accordance with the Select Committee's recommendations.

**MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Mr. Brown.

**MR. BROWN:** Discussions were held within the last few weeks between the Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Ray Brennan as Manager of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau, Mr. John More the Chairman of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau, and Mr. Kevin Williams as Revenue Manager who has responsibility for Customs.
These discussions did include the question of whether part of the existing Customs office and in particular the section fronting Taylors Road, could be vacated and made available to the Tourist Bureau, however Mr. Williams advised that just as the Tourist Bureau was experiencing space problems so too was Customs and apparently Customs have a proposal which would require the Tourist Bureau to vacate its premises. That meeting ended on the basis that the Chief Administrative Officer and myself would have a look at both offices and attempt to come up with a proposal which would satisfy the needs both of the Tourist Bureau and of Customs. It is a matter which is to the forefront of our attention but it is not a matter which has yet been resolved.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any further questions. Mr. Jackson.

AIR PACIFIC – LANDING RIGHTS

MR. JACKSON: Mr. Deputy President, I direct this question to the Minister for Tourism and Planning.

It was reported over Radio Australia that Air Pacific and Qantas have signed an agreement which gives Air Pacific reciprocal rights to land in Australia. The question is does this agreement give Air Pacific landing rights into Norfolk Island.

MR. BROWN: I have had this radio information brought to my attention Mr. Jackson. I have not yet been able to ascertain whether it will involve landing rights for Air Pacific in Norfolk Island. If it did involve such landing rights then it would be most disappointing in the light of the undertaking which I understand the Federal Government had made to consult Norfolk Island before any such action was taken but I will be continuing my enquiries in this regard and I will certainly make the results of those enquiries known to you.
WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE

MR. JACKSON: I direct this question to the Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health.

At the Executive Committee meeting held in the Committee Rooms on Monday 29 March, water supply and sewerage was listed as an agenda item. Would you be kind enough to inform this House what was resolved out of those discussions.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Buffett.

MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President I put forward a proposal at that meeting that there should be some decisions taken especially in respect of a sewerage proposal. The decisions taken in respect of that proposal at this time was that there should be further consultation between (a) Members of the Assembly; (b) People who are involved in the Chamber of Commerce area and the Accommodation Proprietors Association and also the Tourist Board. I have already commenced arrangements to speak with Members of this Assembly upon the matter, the other bodies are yet to be consulted with.

ISLAND FINANCES

MR. JACKSON: I direct this question to the Minister responsible for Finance.

Would you as Minister responsible for Finance inform this House of the state of the public finances of the Island at the time of taking up office as Executive Member for Finance.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: A pretty broad question. I wonder if Mr. Jackson could be a little more specific as to whether there is some particular aspect of the Island's finances that he would like comment on.
MR. JACKSON: Mr. Deputy President, I asked a straightforward question of the situation that existed, was it a healthy situation, was it a declining situation – what was the state of the Island's finances at the time of this Government coming into office.

MR. HOWARD: I will do my best to answer that. As far as the balance sheet is concerned, assets and liabilities, the Island was in a healthy condition, we had between 1½ million and 1.7 million dollars in savings made over many past years in the bank. That amount of money was enough at that point to operate the Administration for about 4 months if we had no income from any sources. It is enough money in the bank to allow the Island to make a mistake once in a while – a financial mistake once in a while – and have something to fall back on in the event of a rainy day. As to the revenue and expenditure side of the financial situation the Island's position at the beginning of February was not one requiring any sense of panic or alarm but one requiring very close watchfulness and very attentive willingness to take actions if actions become necessary. The amount of money we were bringing in at that point is about what had been expected at the beginning of the year primarily because philatelic income was far greater than ever it had been before. Our other traditional dependable sources of revenue, main ones, I include the customs duties and the bond store in those, were ailing. Whether philatelic can continue to carry a larger and larger share of the load is a question that I cannot answer right now. At the same time at the beginning of February the Island was clearly at the beginning of a financial time of commercial uncertainty. Tourism had been off for some months, at that point at an average of about 15% off for 3 or 4 months as I recall, and tourism of course is the ultimate source of the Island's financial wellbeing.

The expenditures of the Norfolk Island Government have been increasing year by year at a rate that is very concerning to me. At the beginning of February it looked as though the expenditures of the Government through the year to that point were as I recall 30 odd percent higher than they had been in the same period the previous year, and I commented in the House last meeting that the cost of government
cannot go on increasing at that rate. I think that if finance is well and frugally managed by the Island, if we are prepared to act promptly if there are situations that we need to adjust to, I think we will be alright. I think we are tremendously fortunate to have that backlog of savings that goes back for generations in Norfolk's history, money that we have to back us up because previous generations have not spent every cent they got their hands on. I think we will be alright, I think we will need to be watchful. Now whether that answers Mr. Jackson's question I do not know.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Any further questions. Mr. Jackson.

ALTERNATIVE BUILDING SITE FOR MR & MRS GLEN PEDEL

MR. JACKSON: I direct this question to Mr. Brown, the Minister for Planning, Tourism and Commerce.

Mr. Brown, Mr. & Mrs. Glen Pedel and family have returned to their homeland. They were denied the right to build on their land in Kingston, portion 81f, as it was declared a designated area under the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Management Plan. Mr. Pedel and his family were promised an alternative building site, as a matter of fact they were shown over certain crown leases that were available to them, and they made a selection of the site they would like. Now upon returning to the Island to live and build their home they are having difficulty securing title to this alternative building site. I have correspondence relating to what has transpired between various Departments such as the Chief Minister of the day, the Acting Administrator and the Minister for Home Affairs & Environment. It was stated in a letter from the Chief Minister of the day - "it will be necessary for me to prepare some detail of suitable crown lease portions which could be made available. I will keep you advised of progress in this matter". In a letter from the Acting Administrator, Mr. T.F. Paterson...
MR. HOWARD: Point of order, could we hear a question here some place.

MR. JACKSON: I am leading up to the question. I am drawing attention to these related matters.

MR. HOWARD: I think it is a speech Mr. Deputy President, I do not think it is a question. If he has a question he should ask it.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You must ask the question Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: The question to Mr. Brown as Minister for Planning, Tourism and Commerce, is, would you inform this House of all relevant facts you are aware of in this case.

MR. BROWN: Yes Mr. Jackson. Within the last fortnight I have had a discussion with Mr. & Mrs. Pedel who called to speak with me in relation to this matter. Following that discussion I took the matter up with the Chief Administrative Officer. There are some problems. The first problem is that according to the information which has been given to me Mr. & Mrs. Pedel did not own the land on which they proposed to build at Kingston and further there appeared to be no present intention to transfer the ownership of that land to their name. Even in the event that the ownership of that land were transferred to their name, Mr. & Mrs. Pedel were not prepared to consider selling that land to the Norfolk Island Government or to the Commonwealth Government. The next problem related to the discussions which had taken place between the then Chief Minister Mr. Buffett and Mr. & Mrs. Pedel in relation to obtaining alternative land. The former Chief Minister did not have the authority to himself make the grant of the lease, his authority ended with making a recommendation to the Administrator that this procedure be followed, and on looking at the file there is no doubt in my mind that Mr. Buffett has done all
that he undertook to do. However the Commonwealth Government has not yet agreed to grant the lease as requested. Part of the Commonwealth's concern is the fact that Mr. & Mrs. Pedel do not own the land at Kingston in their own names; part of the concern is that they are not being asked to surrender that land nor are they in fact willing to sell the land; another part of the concern is that they have already been paid compensation for the cost of bulldozing, architects plans and other related matters.

This question is under active consideration at the moment. It has not yet been resolved, I am not really able to say Mr. Jackson, when it will be resolved but I can tell you that it is under active consideration and all that can be done by the Norfolk Island Government will I expect be done quite promptly.

MR. JACKSON: Are you aware whether these points that you just raised, such as selling their land, previously been asked of them.

MR. BROWN: I am not able to say whether they have previously been asked to sell the land or to surrender the land but these are questions which have been raised by the Commonwealth and they are questions which I have raised with Mr. & Mrs. Pedel purely for the purpose of ascertaining their attitude to the questions. I have not put a proposal to them that they should sell their land, I have merely asked them their attitude so that in my further discussions with the Administrator on the matter I will be able to advise him of the attitude.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: Well then following on that answer, are you then aware what advice was given by the Administrator to the Minister.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: My understanding is that the Administrator has
not yet given final advice to the Minister and that the Administrator will in fact be awaiting the views of the Norfolk Island Government before he gives that final advice.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Any further questions. Mr. Jackson.

AVAILABILITY OF DRUGS WITHOUT PRESCRIPTION

MR. JACKSON: I direct this question to the Executive Member for Administration, Education and Health.

It has been brought to my notice that drugs for medical purposes which normally would require a doctor's prescription to obtain are being sold off the shelf in a certain shop in the Island. It has also been reported that Dr. Mike Sexton while he was Chief Medical Officer on Norfolk Island, submitted a lengthy report to the then Minister for Health in the First Assembly showing his concern at the sale of drugs without a prescription.

The question is are you aware of this situation and if not would you investigate these two points and report your findings as soon as possible back to this Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Buffett.

MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President I am not aware of any gross difficulty in the areas that have been mentioned, however I do know that there has been an earlier Government Medical Officer's report in which it was indicated if I remember correctly, that there should eventually be some dangerous drugs legislation, whether he was referring to a specific difficulty I am not able to say at this time. I am not sure what stage that legislation is at, I can certainly enquire to see how it stands and I will certainly enquire into the facts of the matter that Mr. Jackson has mentioned and accordingly report.
MR. JACKSON: I direct this question to the Minister responsible for Immigration.
I moved a motion in this House at the last sitting concerning the issuing of enter and remain permits. One of the conditions of that motion was that progress in these matters be reported by the Executive Member responsible for Immigration to each meeting of the Assembly until the new Act comes into operation.
Have you anything further to report on this matter.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes Mr. Jackson I proposed to bring this matter before the House as a statement on Immigration. I am happy to give you that information now and my statements will then reduce from two to one at statement time.

Perhaps by way of summary I should firstly set out the history of this matter.

The Immigration Bill 1980 was passed by the Legislative Assembly in August 1980 and was laid before the Administrator for his assent pursuant to section 21 of the Norfolk Island Act. The Administrator has not assented to this Bill, instead a draft of proposed amendments was prepared pursuant to section 21 subsection 3 of the Norfolk Island Act. This was discussed by the Assembly and a final draft of 7 May 1981 was formulated. That draft was discussed by the Policy Committee of the last Assembly on 24 June 1981 and after some legal examination of its provisions it was again discussed on 8 September 1981. As a result of those discussions a number of amendments to Mr. Ewens' draft were agreed by the Policy Committee as necessary. It was recognised there was a problem in relation to section 18 subsection 1 of the draft in that it may have run foul of the provisions of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 of Australia. On 22 September 1981 the then Chief Minister wrote to the Administrator outlining the amendments to the draft required by the
Policy Committee. On the same date the then Chief Minister wrote to the Minister for Home Affairs & Environment concerning the impact of the Racial Discrimination Act on the Bill. In substance the then Chief Minister by reference to certain points of the preamble of the Norfolk Island Act put forward the proposition that the Racial Discrimination Act should not operate so as to inhibit the rights of persons of Pitcairn descent to have special status under Norfolk Island's Immigration legislation and requested that the Australian Government consider legislative action in that regard. I understand that the then Chief Minister discussed the matter with the Minister whilst in Canberra in November 1981.

I have had discussions with the Administrator since the last meeting of this Assembly. In those discussions it was indicated to me that the responsible officers in Canberra believe that they will be shortly putting before us a further amendment of the Pitcairn descent provisions which they believe will be satisfactory to Canberra and which they believe are likely to be satisfactory to our Legislative Assembly. Those further amendments are not yet available and I will be bringing them to the attention of each of the Members of this House as soon as they are available but that particular matter gives at least some cause for hope.

A second stumbling block had been the fact that the Attorney-General's Department in Canberra had taken the view that the proposed Immigration legislation was a matter not only relating to immigration but also relating to social services. The basic argument was that because the Social Services Act contained a definition of the word 'resident' which referred to our Immigration legislation, the proposed Bill would not only be a matter as to Immigration but also as to Social Services. There has been considerable argument on this point but it is hoped that this argument can also be resolved in the very near future.

These are the two main problem areas and I hope that by the time of the next meeting of this House we will have progressed much further down the line towards having the Immigration Bill brought into law.
MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Brown.

MR. JACKSON: Now that you have linked Social Services with Immigration, couldn't the Social Services Bill be amended to suit Norfolk Island's situation.

MR. BROWN: This is a suggestion that I have put to the Administrator and I am awaiting response from the Administrator in that regard.

ACCESS TO ADMINISTRATION FILES

MR. JACKSON: I direct this question to all three Executive Members.

At the two Executive Committee meetings that I have attended much time was spent debating acquisition of files from the Public Service Records Department. The question is would the three Executive Members state their purpose for requiring these files.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Brown.

MR. JACKSON: I would like to hear from all three. It seems to be an issue that should be opened up here in discussions.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: I am happy to give my answer. There are many laws that put responsibilities on one or another of the Executive Members, for example, if someone wants an exemption from the Public Works Levy, in certain cases the law says it is the responsibility of the Executive Member for Finance to satisfy himself as to certain things and if he is then satisfied to give the exemption. I have to wear that responsibility. If I mis-handle it I am in serious trouble. In the Public Moneys Ordinance misconduct to do with public moneys can land you in jail for five years. If I did something under the Public
Moneys Act that was wrongful in terms of that Act that I had a responsibility to do, I would go to jail for five years, it would not be the Chief Administrative Officer, it would not be the Accountant, I would be the one who goes to jail. In making responsible decisions about the handling of responsibilities that the law puts on us, we need to know what the facts are and the place that the facts are available is in the files and so you need to see the files to know what the facts are so you can reach intelligent, fair, informed judgements, and having somebody else say look not to worry, she's sweet, is not good enough if you carry the responsibility yourself, that is why I need to see files.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any further questions.

MR. JACKSON: I would like to hear the other two Executive Members views because they all appeared to have views in the Executive Committee meetings on this.

Well, if they do not wish to answer I will follow it up with a second part to the question.

MR. BROWN: I am happy to put my views Mr. Deputy President.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Each Executive Member as you know Mr. Jackson is responsible for certain areas and in almost all cases those are areas which are set out in either Schedule 2 or Schedule 3 of the Norfolk Island Act. It is an almost unbelievable proposition to suggest that one can properly carry out his duties if he cannot have access to the files which disclose what has been done in the past in relation to them. There has as you are aware been considerable discussion over the last few weeks in this regard but as far as I am concerned it is simply not possible to properly do a job if you cannot have access to the files in relation to it.
MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any further questions.

MR. BUFFETT: May I also respond to Mr. Jackson's earlier question Mr. Deputy President. There has been an issue about access to files over the past couple of weeks. The guidelines which have been put forward by the Chief Administrative Officer who is the Head officer in the Public Service, an opinion which he has forward to us with legal advice attached thereto, has indicated the extent and the situations which, as he has interpreted the situations based upon legal advice, is that (a) Executive Members and (b) Non Executive Members might have or not have access to the full range or otherwise of Administration files. In all of this it has been made quite clear that it is not a prevention of information being made available to either non Executive Members or to Executive Members, it has not been a matter of information being with-held, it has been a matter made quite clear that all information relevant to the matter that needs to be examined, will be put forward by the Chief Administrative Officer utilising the manpower and facilities that are his to command in respect of the Public Service. Some Executive Members have found difficulty with the matter as he has seen it and made a proposal that a second legal opinion should be sought on the matter. It really boils down to a matter as I see it Mr. Deputy President as to whether one has confidence in the persons who have custody of the records, not only have custody of the records, but have a brief and a responsibility to perform well in their task of assisting the Norfolk Island Government in providing back up services to the Norfolk Island Government. I should make it quite clear that since this opinion has come forward from the Chief Administrative Officer I am quite happy to depend with confidence upon his ability, not only his own personal ability, but his ability to bring forward information within the Public Service area, to the Executive Members, and to me in particular as an Executive Member. I do not feel that I in the normal course of things need to have direct access to all of the files, there may well be occasions when in a particular instance, because of some particular matter, such a request may need to be done but since this has come
forward I have felt confident that the information that has come forward to me has been adequate, indeed more than adequate, has been sterling in quality and I have confidence in that arrangement, and I really want to stress this also in my responding to this question that if the Norfolk Island Government arrangements and its relationship with the Public Service that has a brief to support it, needs to be based upon confidence on both sides to get somewhere, and I just want to express my opinion that I do have confidence in both sides performing satisfactorily and I am not going to go overboard about whingeing and having ill conceived campaigns about this, that or the other on what I think is not a matter that needs to be progressed in such a fashion.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any further questions.

MR. JACKSON: Following on with the second part of the question.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This appears to be becoming a debate Mr. Jackson, are you anticipating questions that are on notice.

MR. JACKSON: This is the second part of my question which I tried to ask a while ago. To clear the air, because I need to have my mind clear, the second part of the question, is it the wish of the Executive Members to randomly select these files just for the purpose of perusal.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Who are you directing your question to Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: Any of the three Executive Members.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Rubbish
MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any further questions.
Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: I have a question of the Minister for Administration, Education & Health.
Will he please apologise now for his totally unjustified, self-pitying, disrespectful inference that the other two Executive Members have been whingeing and going overboard with an ill conceived campaign.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Buffett.

MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President I have said what I consider to be my views on the matter and there they stand.

MR. HOWARD: They are offensive and out of order.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Buffett I ask you to apologise please.

MR. BUFFETT: In what respect Mr. Deputy President.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I believe that it was offensive and disorderly.

MR. BUFFETT: If it is your decision I so withdraw Mr. Deputy President.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett. Are there any further questions.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

AIRPORT CLOSURES DURING UPGRADE

MR. BROWN: Mr. Deputy President I do have one matter from our last meeting wherein Mr. Howard asked me if it was yet possible to
confidently predict the dates upon which the airport is likely to be closed during the forthcoming upgrading.

We had previously been informed that the likely closure dates were dates early in October of this year, however it is now thought that these are most unlikely to be the actual dates and more up to date information is expected to arrive within the next few days, unfortunately it has not arrived at this stage but I will be providing details of the closure dates at the next meeting of this Assembly. Honourable Members will however recall that I mentioned at our last meeting that discussions had taken place with Avdev Airlines in the hope that we would be able to obtain the use of a Heron aircraft operated by Avdev to operate from Lord Howe Island to Norfolk Island during this closure period with the intention that passengers from Sydney and Brisbane would fly by super kingsair aircraft from both Sydney and Brisbane to Lord Howe and would then come on to Norfolk Island on the Heron. Enquiries in relation to this are not yet at a completed stage either but the results are extremely hopeful at this stage.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any answers to questions 1 to 7 on the Notice Paper.

DISCRIMINATORY LAWS

MR. BROWN: Mr. Deputy President in the first question Mrs. Gray has asked that I advise if I am aware of any laws in force on Norfolk Island which discriminate between persons (a) born on Norfolk Island or (b) who are descendants from Pitcairn residents, and other persons, and if so, could I please (c) give the names of the laws and (d) specify the nature of the discrimination.

I have asked the Chief Administrative Officer to provide me with advice from himself and the Legal Adviser in relation to this question. Unfortunately the advice which I have received is not yet complete in that the advice at the moment only relates to persons who are of Pitcairn descent and does not relate to persons who were born
on Norfolk Island. It would probably be best if I await a full advice and answer this question at our next meeting because although there are not many laws which discriminate between persons of Pitcairn descent and other persons, there are a number which do discriminate between persons born on Norfolk Island and other persons.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Brown. Are there any more answers to questions on notice. Mr. Buffett.

ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES

MR. BUFFETT: Question on Notice No.2 Mr. Deputy President stands in my name.

It reads, a question to me, "Has he taken any action in respect of alternate energy sources, if so, could he please state: (a) what that action has been; (b) what he has so far concluded; and (c) what further action he intends to take, and in particular has he considered wind powered generators, and, if so, (d) what has so far been his conclusions; and (e) what further action he intends to take, and if not, why not".

Mr. Deputy President the Island's main supply of energy is provided by a diesel fuel generating plant, that is on a public supply basis at this time and is provided basically by a single 838 kilowatt diesel generator and it uses something like 700 gallons, that is 3,000 litres approximately of diesel fuel each day. The maximum peak loading in 1981/82 occurred in late December when demand reached 770 kilowatts. At the present time loadings vary between say 606 to 650 kilowatts. If the generator becomes overloaded, that is if demand exceeds output, then blackouts will and do occur. Standby power is supplied by two generators of 430 kilowatts acting in parallel but there is no automatic switching between that and the first that I mentioned. The main generator requires an overhaul every 18,000 hours and a minor overhaul every 1500 hours, and when this major generator is down the standby generators are used, should these
fail the only safeguard is an emergency standby, that is two 120 kilowatt generators acting in parallel and these of course as I have illustrated to you cannot meet ordinary demands.

Clearly we are using more and more energy each year and in line with general world trends there is a need to think about when an additional diesel generator might be required, know that this requirement may be, but how can it be deferred by a more prudent use of existing energy, and of course we can look at what alternatives there are to diesel generation for the Island. The Government is fortunate to have the honorary services of Mr. G.F. Hazzard as a consultant on petroleum and energy sources in a general manner and on the Government's behalf he has been conducting enquiries specifically about wind powered generators.

So yes action has been taken in respect of alternate energy sources and discussions on this matter are proceeding between a local consultant that I have mentioned and principally at this time; a group called the Wind Energy Group in London. This group is a combination of British Aero Space, G.E.C. Power Engineering and Taylor Woodrow Construction who have a contract from the British Government for the design and construction of two generators on the Island of Orkney. This is the most powerful research group working on the subject but the outcome of their research and therefore of a possibility for Norfolk Island really will not be known until at least the end of this year.

So basically Mr. Deputy President that is some outline of the situation as far as local generation of energy is concerned, what is being looked at at this time and the time scale that we might get something further definitive out of it on which we can base a proposal to come forward with. It is very much in the enquiry/informative stages at this time.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett.

MRS. GRAY: Mr. Deputy President, if I may, a supplementary question to Mr. Buffett, am I then to understand that the Government is interested and will maintain contact with these people, and will advise us of developments.
MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President what I have endeavoured to describe are exploratory enquiries, if they seem worthwhile and able to fit into Norfolk Island's situation, that detail will come forward for further participation by all Members and hopefully with some arrangement that can come forward as a recommendation, it has not reached that stage at all yet, we are not quite sure whether it can work in Norfolk Island until these details come back to us.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett. Are there any more answers to questions on notice.

MR. BUFFETT: I do have further ones Mr. Deputy President if I may please.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Buffett.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF WATER HYACINTH

MR. BUFFETT: The next one that stands in my name is Question on Notice No.3 Mr. Deputy President. Mrs. Gray asks the Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health - "Has he taken any steps to investigate the possible implementation of biological control of water hyacinth in Norfolk Island, and if so could he please state (a) the nature of these steps; and (b) the conclusions, if any; he has so far reached; and if not, why not".

Steps have been taken to investigate the biological control of water hyacinth in Norfolk Island Mr. Deputy President and I might say at this time there has been assistance by interested residents and I mention two of them, one is Father Scanlon who forwarded an article which has proved helpful, and another is Mrs. Florence Anderson. An approach has been made to the C.S.I.R.O. Entomology Department, which has advised that biological control of water hyacinth by means of a weevil has been undertaken in different parts of Australia with
promising results, and on Monday 29 March 1982 the Executive Committee agreed to seek the assistance of the C.S.I.R.O. to implement a programme of biological control of water hyacinth in the Island, and a letter has been written to the C.S.I.R.O. seeking their co-operation in the conduct of such a control programme.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett.

IMPORTATION OF 245T

MR. BUFFETT: Question on Notice No. 4 also stands in my name Mr. Deputy President. The question asked by Mrs. Gray asks the Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health - "Has 245T been imported into Norfolk Island and if so could he please state (a) the quantity imported in the last five years; (b) where it is being used; (c) the amount used in the last five years; (d) the results of its use; (e) the precautions, if any, that have so far been taken in its use; and (f) what action if any, he intends to take in respect of its continued use".

I respond in this manner Mr. Deputy President, in respect of question (a) - I think it might be useful if I read the question again as I go through, (a) the quantity imported in the last five years - the Administration keeps records of imports of goods which fall into various categories, however these records are not in sufficient detail to enable a reply based on official records to be given to the first part of the question, however a number of firms and individuals who were thought to have imported 245T over the last five years have been contacted and from the information that they have provided I can state that 245T has been imported into Norfolk Island and the quantity imported over the last five years by those persons is estimated to total not more than about 250 to 300 litres which is about 60 gallons; next is (b) where it is being used - the use of 245T has been by private individuals in the main. It is understood to be suitable for the control of woody plants such as lantana, guava, tobacco bush etc,
however in the circumstances information as to just where it is being used is not available to me; (c) the amount used in the last five years - well the amount of 245T used in the last five years cannot be ascertained with any accuracy for reasons that I have mentioned earlier, however it does seem reasonable to assume that the quantity used may roughly equal the quantity that it is thought to have been imported; (d) the results of its use - well I really can give no indication of the results of the use of the product other than to say that it is believed to be effective against the type of woody plant that I mentioned earlier Mr. Deputy President; (e) the precautions, if any, that have so far been taken in its use - there is no available information to enable a reply to be given to this question save to say that I am given to understand that directions as to safe and proper use are printed on the exterior of each container of 245T; (f) what action, if any, he intends to take in respect of its continued use - 245T and the related substance 24D, have been the subject of much debate in many countries around the world for a number of years and a number of scientific papers have been published. It is true that 245T contains a contaminant called dioxin or TCDD. In Australia legislation restricts the level of dioxin in 245T to 0.1 parts per million, the level recommended by the World Health Organisation. 24D does not contain any dioxin. Tests on the toxicity of 245T and 24D have been carried out in laboratory conditions using animals to which comparatively large doses have been administered. When used in the field the effects of these substances on humans, animals and the environment are dependant upon the manner in which they are used, however to quote from an article published in the Queensland Agricultural Journal about two years ago, normal agricultural use of 245T has never been shown to cause birth abnormalities in domestic animals nor is there any evidence to connect its use with human deformities, and again I quote from the same Journal - once 245T is released in the environment it immediately begins to disperse and break down, a significant break down of 245T is caused by soil bacteria and micro-organisms. This process is aided by warm moist conditions and the addition of organic matter to the soil.
Some break down of 245T occurs through the action of sunlight though this is of minor importance. Overall the average persistence of 245T in warm moist soil is from one to four weeks thus the herbicide does not build up in the soil and can be used without accumulation, and the quotation ends there Mr. Deputy President.

As to the action I intend to take regarding continued use of 245T, I advise that some years ago the Norfolk Island Council of the time did ask the Administrator to attempt to discourage the importation and use of 245T, however there is presently no legislation in force to control its importation or use. As a result of that earlier discouragement there has been a swing towards the importation and use of other herbicides on the part of importers, notably a product sold commercially is Roundup which has been imported in recent years. This is a comparatively new product and its effects have not had the many years of detailed study that has been given to 245T and 24D.

I think it is important to bear in mind that all herbicides, weedicides, fungicides and pesticides contain substances that are toxic to a greater or lesser extent. There appears to be a considerable weight of opinion or evidence I should say, that 245T and 24D are safe if used in accordance with the manufacturers directions. Their use is not banned in Australia, indeed there is much to suggest that both of these products are considered to be suitable to the various applications for which they are regularly used in Australia.

In the absence of any clear indication of potential serious risk in the environment to the flora and fauna and inhabitants of the Island from the use of 245T here and in view of the recent decline in its use as a result of the availability of alternative products such as Roundup, I do not believe at this time Mr. Deputy President that any special action needs to be taken on the matter.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett. Mrs. Gray.

MRS. GRAY: If I may Mr. Deputy President, a further question to Mr. Buffett. Are you aware that newspaper articles and other
scientific documents continually and continuously expound theories on the reduction of the permitted levels of dioxin in the product 245T, and as recently as 4 February a recommendation from the European Economic Community recommended that the reduction of dioxin levels be made at .005 parts per million.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Buffett.

MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President I am not aware of the fact that Mrs. Gray has just quoted, what I am aware of is the continued monitoring we seek of the matter from the various health authorities that we have ready access to, that is the Australian Health authorities and a couple of State authorities, that have had considerable experience in the use of the products that I have referred to.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett. Mrs. Gray do you have a further question.

MRS. GRAY: Not at this stage Mr. Deputy President.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are there any further answers to questions on notice.

MR. BUFFETT: Yes there are other questions that stand in my name, asked by Mrs. Gray, Mr. Deputy President.

POINT HUNTER REFUSE TIP

MR. BUFFETT: Question on Notice No.5. Mrs. Gray asks the Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health - Is he aware that the refuse tip at Point Hunter causes a nuisance from time to time by virtue of (a) smoke pollution; (b) rodent and insect infestation; and if he is so aware can he state (c) when the tip will be permanently closed and (d) until it is permanently closed what
action if any, will be taken to prevent the abovementioned nuisances and (e) when it is permanently closed, what use, if any, it is proposed to make of the area now occupied by the tip, and it ends with the peremptory 'and if not, why not'.

I respond thus Mr. Deputy President. Yes I do acknowledge that in the Point Hunter area there is a nuisance caused at times by smoke and insects and to a lesser extent rodents. No firm date has yet been set as to when the tip will be permanently closed however the area is being rehabilitated fairly rapidly by the dumping of rubbish and periodic coverings with earth fill. A substantial amount of the former quarry is now roughly on a level with the grounds of the golf course and it is expected that the filling in process if it continues at the present rate, should be complete in twelve to eighteen months time and that the tip will then be permanently closed. The area is a rubbish tip with specific times of opening during which an attendant is present. The dumping of food wastes and scraps is not permitted so as to discourage infestation by insects and rodents. The dumping of burnables such as paper and plastics is tolerated but in order to prevent such items becoming a wind blown nuisance, regular incineration of burnables is carried out. This burning process is also fairly effective in destroying some food scraps that may have been dumped inadvertently. Whilst causing some temporary nuisance through smoke pollution, the dumping of rubbish at Point Hunter is considered to be of long term benefit and that it is a principal ingredient in rehabilitating the area at this time.

As to rodent and insect infestation, the periodic covering of rubbish with earth fill is intended to reduce both of those problems. Additionally the Health Inspector monitors the area from time to time. Following the most recent inspection he reported finding very little food waste present however there was an evident fly problem and therefore spraying was carried out in an attempt to reduce the fly population. Inspections and control measures will be continued to be carried out. When the area has been adequately rehabilitated it is proposed that it be used as a recreation and picnic and barbeque area. This has already been commenced and part of the
earlier dump area is now covered and well grassed. It is thought
to be ideal for use as I have described as it is close to Emily Bay
which is a major summer recreation area and the ridge to the south-
east provides protection from the wind in that quarter. Some
plantings of pine seedlings have already been made along the north-
easterly perimeter of the area which will provide further wind
protection and for beautification, and it is proposed to make further
plantings as the area is further rehabilitated.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mrs. Gray.

MRS. GRAY: If I may, Mr. Deputy President, is Mr. Buffett
aware that the Government Medical Officer wishes to see more frequent
bulldozing carried out in the Point Hunter area; is he further aware
that the temporary nuisance he speaks of can involve constant clouds
of black smoke across Emily Bay at the height of summer.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Buffett.

MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President, I have mentioned that I
recognise there is some difficulty with the smoke pollution aspect,
if it is to the extent on a continuing basis that Mrs. Gray has
mentioned, then I of course will need to speak in that direction
through the Chief Administrative Officer to try and define more clearly
when rubbish can be burnt. I recognise that if it is a difficulty.

The matter of the Government Medical Officer's thoughts - it
is not a thought that has been expressed to me at this time, if it is
a thought I am very happy to hear it and to try and implement some
action on the matter.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett. Are there any
further answers to questions on notice.

MR. BUFFETT: I regret I am still going Mr. Deputy President.
GARBAGE DISPOSAL

MR. BUFFETT: Question on notice No. 6, which is from Mrs. Gray, and it stands in my name on the Notice Paper, asks the Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health, has he received a letter from Mr. Lester Semple in which Mr. Semple, drawing attention to the effects even rumours of epidemics on Norfolk Island has on tourism, points out that the incorrect disposal of garbage may be a cause of some illnesses and suggests that an incinerator be constructed, and if he has, will he say - (a) whether he shares the concern expressed in the letter; and (b) if he does what action he intends to take in respect of the construction of an incinerator.

The first part I answer thus, Mr. Deputy President, yes I have received a letter to which the question refers, and I do share the concern expressed by Mr. Semple insofar as it refers to the damaging effect rumours of disease outbreaks have had on the Island's tourism. I am also concerned that garbage be disposed of in a manner which neither pollutes the environment nor creates a potential public health risk. Before proceeding to answer the remaining part of the question I wish to state that I have been advised by the Government Medical Officer that the viral disease outbreak which occurred at the beginning of the year has now been identified as the virus Echo 17 and that this virus is usually transmitted by oral ingestion of contaminated food or water. This disease is not as was first thought one that is transmitted by mosquitoes and it is unlikely that garbage disposal methods at the Point Hunter or Headstone tips were even remotely connected with the outbreak of that disease.

As to the second part - (b), this part asks what action I intend to take in respect of the construction of an incinerator, and the reply is this - in May of 1980 the Norfolk Island Government took steps to bring the disposal of garbage under closer control, these steps consisted of restricting the disposal of garbage at Headstone and Point Hunter to certain hours at which the tips at these places are open and attendants are present to supervise proper disposal. Some restrictions were also imposed on the nature of the material that
might be disposed of. Paper and plastics may not be thrown into the sea at Headstone, and food waste may not be dumped at Point Hunter.

It is generally felt that these measures have brought about a considerable improvement in garbage disposal methods. Towards the end of last year Mr. Semple approached the Administration with a cost and proposal to construct a steel incinerator to be installed at Headstone to handle burnable material such as paper, plastics, cardboard etc, which may not otherwise be disposed of there. Mr. Semple's proposal has considerable merit. It will reduce the pressure on Point Hunter of being the only place where burnables may be disposed of, and this may be one of the points that would assist a point raised by Mrs. Chloe Gray earlier, and it will enable Headstone to be used as a disposal point for all types of garbage. The proposed incinerator is not however a complete answer to all the Islands garbage disposal problems. It will not for example handle large burnable items such as tree trimmings etc which will still need to be disposed of at Point Hunter for the time being. The proposed incinerator has not yet been constructed and installed because of the question of finance. It is estimated that construction of the unit will cost about $8,000 and preparation of a suitable site with proper foundations, access for cleaning and a simple flushing system to wash out ash and discharge it into the sea, would cost as much as an additional $3,000, making a total of in the vicinity of $11,000. I propose to bring before the Executive Committee as soon as possible the recommendation that the necessary funds be provided in the current financial year to enable this project to proceed.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett.

MR. QUINTAL: Mr. Deputy President, can I ask the Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health a question on this matter.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes Mr. Quintal.
MR. QUINTAL: Are you aware that Mr. Alec Nobbs made a similar proposal to the Eighth Norfolk Island Council, complete with sketches showing the design etc. It was in line with the recommendations that were recommended by Mr. Semple.

MR. BUFFETT: Mr. Deputy President I cannot recall detail of that proposal by Mr. Alec Nobbs made to the Eighth Norfolk Island Council - that was one Council before the cessation of the Norfolk Island Council - I am pleased to hear it, I am grateful that Mr. Quintal raises it because no doubt if they have been lodged those plans can be examined to assist the cause that I have just mentioned.

MR. QUINTAL: Can I say that I think Mr. Semple should be congratulated for his letter and his concern for this community. That is not a question.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Any further answers to questions on notice. Mr. Buffett.

**RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICER**

MR. BUFFETT: I think it is the final one Mr. Deputy President. Again a question from Mrs. Gray - Question on Notice No. 7 stands in my name - to the Executive Member for Administration, Education & Health - Can he confirm that the Government Medical Office has definitely resigned and will shortly be leaving the Island, if so, could he please state, (a) whether the appropriate Executive Member at any time ever had discussions with the Government Medical Officer on the possibility of the Government Medical Officer being granted an enter and remain permit and if discussions did take place, what the Government Medical Officer was told and what were the results; and (b) in view of the fact that the Administration paid a considerable amount of money for the advice of W.D. Scott on establishing salaries for public servants, whether it is intended to follow the advice when establishing the salary of a replacement Government Medical Officer.
bearing in mind that we have lost three Government Medical Officers
in little over a year, and that recruitment and other costs must now
well exceed $10,000 a Doctor.

I respond in this manner Mr. Deputy President - to the first
part - it is confirmed that Dr. Alan King has resigned from his post
of Government Medical Officer with effect from 26 April 1982. Dr.
King did have earlier discussion about his immigration status and
other matters with which he was concerned and at that earlier time I
understand these matters were not resolved. A number of approaches
have been made to His Honour the Administrator, to the Chief
Administrative Officer and to me, and I do understand to other Members
of the Legislative Assembly expressing alarm at the news of Dr. King's
resignation. I have had discussions with Dr. King to ascertain
whether he might reconsider his decision and whether I could make some
additional effort to solve his difficulties that I have earlier
mentioned, however he informs me that he is now firmly committed to:
arrangements which he has made on the mainland.

The second paragraph contains a question relating to the
determination of salary levels, which is the responsibility of the
Public Service Board - I have no oversight in that matter Mr. Deputy
President, in fact I should have on an earlier occasion conferred
with my colleague to refer that part to him but I have not done that
at this time.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr. Buffett. Mrs. Gray.

MRS. GRAY: Mr. Deputy President, to Mr. Buffett, and then
if I may transfer part (b) of that question to the Executive Member
for Finance - I believe he may be able to throw some light on it -
but before I do that, at the time of Dr. King's initial approach to
you, was the advice of the Immigration Review Board sought or
recommended, was it recommended that he seek such advice.

MR. BUFFETT: Not that I recall Mr. Deputy President.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is a question without notice, does
Mr. Howard wish to answer it.