

Good morning Honourable Members. We commence with Prayer of the Legislative Assembly

Prayer

Almighty God we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessings upon this House, to direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory and the true welfare of the people of Norfolk Island, Amen

Condolences

MR PRESIDENT: Honourable Members I firstly call upon Condolences

MRS ANDERSON: Mr President, it is with regret that this House records the death on 1st October of Evan (Andy) Anderson after a long period of illness in hospital. Andy was born in 1912 in Chester England. As a youth he joined the Sea Cadets and from there enlisted in the British Army in 1931 to the Royal Tank Corps.

He was discharged in 1936 but remained in Colours until 1939. During this time he was the feather-weight boxing champion of the British Army. With the outbreak of war in 1939 he was attached to the 4/9th Royal Dragoon Guards serving extensively in North Africa, the Middle East, France, Holland, Germany and Belgium. He returned from Antwerp at the end of the war and was discharged at Hertford in 1945.

After the war Andy, his wife and three children migrated to Australia. Andy loved the outdoor life but unfortunately his wife did not and returned to England with the children. Andy then travelled extensively, at one stage working in America. In later life he married Eileen Olive (Cul) Nobbs, daughter of the late C C R Nobbs and they returned to live on Norfolk. Cul predeceased Andy in 1981. Throughout his life Andy was always interested and involved in sport particularly athletics, boxing, soccer, and later on, swimming. During his residency on Norfolk Andy was a staunch supporter of the Church of England and was a Parish Councillor. Andy's daughter Susan paid two visits to see him, one a particularly enjoyable visit with her two children. To Andy's family and to his many friends this House extends its deepest sympathies, thank you Mr President

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MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Anderson. Honourable Members as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Mr Anderson I would ask us that all Members stand for a period in silence in their places. Thank you Honourable Members

Leave

Honourable Members, this morning Leave is sought for Mr Bennett and Mr Bates. Is Leave granted? Leave is granted thank you

Petitions

Are there any Petitions this morning Honourable Members

Notices

Are there any Notices

Questions Without Notice

Are there any Questions Without Notice

MR ADAMS: Thank you Mr President. There's a question to Mr Christian as Minister for the Environment. When can we expect a review of the Tree Preservation Act, particularly regarding Registration of Native Trees

MR CHRISTIAN: Thank you Mr President. The review and the foreshadowed amendments are high on my list of priorities Mr President. Now I had hoped to be able to bring them before the House today but unfortunately the Community Services Manager had to leave the Island in a hurry and the lack of a legal draftsman has prevented me from having the necessary legislative changes drafted so when we overcome that resource problem Mr President they'll be brought forward immediately

MR ADAMS: Thank you Mr President. There's a question to Mr King as Minister for Immigration. In the recent granting of a GEP which caused widespread community consternation could the Minister give an undertaking that the conditions attached to the GEP are being upheld

MR KING: Mr President, I don't care to comment specifically in relation to that particular matter but let me say that the adherence to conditions place on entry permits is a matter of day to day oversight by the Immigration Department

MR ADAMS: Thank you Mr President. There's a question to Mrs Lozzi Cuthbertson as Minister for Employment. The recurring report of Norfolk Resorts on initial signing of contracts of employees to the Resorts a requirement is put in the contract for the employee to agree to the retention of a sum of money by the company to be allocated to charity. Is the Minister aware of these reports and if so, what will be her course of action if they prove of substance

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Thank you Mr President. I've heard the reports in the past. I believe that that practise has stopped. If it has started again I am most concerned and I will certainly follow up on it. What is being considered in the review of the Employment Act is the very clear specification that the only employment contract which is valid on Norfolk Island will be that issued by the Government which will certainly cease this kind of underhand practises

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. I address this question to Mrs Cuthbertson. Would the Minister please inform this House as to the progress being made over the negotiations for the nurses salaries and arrangements for a superannuation fund

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Thank you Mr President. The negotiations that were advanced I have a firm proposal from the Director now which I have circulated to Members and with minor changes perhaps, then I will submit to the Healthcare Council because I had referred the matter of the nurses salaries to the Healthcare Council and hopefully, maybe next week the matter will be coming to some sort of fruition

MRS SAMPSON: A supplementary question to that Mr President. Is the Minister going to address the imbalance of salaries weighing that the registration and professionalism that the nursing staff require against some public servants whose salary levels are achieved by birth or marriage, not competence

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Mr President I am not quite sure how I can answer the last part of that but certainly I do agree there has been an imbalance as to professional training and responsibility carried by the nurses as compared to say the salaries of equivalent responsibilities carried by workers for the Administration and yes, that part is being addressed and has been a complex part of the negotiations

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. I address this question to Mr King as Minister for Works. Is the Minister aware of the dangerous traffic situations that are occurring in the Post Office/Bond area and if so, what is going to be done about it

MR KING: Mr President I am aware that there have been some difficulties in that complex. That is a matter that has been discussed in the executive area and agreement has been reached to re-arrange the entrance/exits in that area, to re-arrange the traffic flow in other words to alleviate some of those difficulties. I'm not quite sure the timing but I expect that would be happening in the fairly near future

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. To Mr Christian. Could the Minister please advise this House why some waste minimisation strategies have not been put in place as there are some excellent suggestions in a preliminary report published by Unimelb

MR CHRISTIAN: Thank you Mr President. I think I'll give Mrs Sampson a wide ranging answer which may eliminate the need to ask any supplementary question. Mr President Members will recall that the draft report of Unimelb Limited, the Consultants jointly engaged by the Norfolk Island and Commonwealth Governments to prepare a strategy for waste minimisation in Norfolk was received by me in July and discussed at an informal meeting of MLA's in the same month. The Administrator wrote to ask whether I had any comments on the report before it was simultaneously presented to me and the Commonwealth on the 12th September. I advised that I had no specific comments, that I didn't want to be the co-author of the report but I looked forward to receiving a final report and its recommendations. The report was not received Mr President. On 15th September 1994 the Official Secretary advised the Secretary to Government that Unimelb sought to defer the presentation of the final report due to delays in a similar report they were doing for the Indian Ocean Territories. I instructed the Secretary to Government to advise the Administrator's office that the basis of the joint engagement and funding of Unimelb by the Norfolk Island Government and the Department of Environment Sport and Territories, was that we expect the Norfolk Island report to stand alone from any separate treatment of Christmas Island and Cocos Keeling Islands. I agreed to extend the deadline to 7th October 1994. I am advised that this deadline has also passed as DEST has not prepared their comments in time. I made an enquiry yesterday and was advised that the formal presentation of the report will be made to DEST on 31 October 1994 and I expect to receive a final report before that date which I will make available to Honourable Members. I must say to the House Mr President that I have been unimpressed with the delays and finalisation of this matter, delays which I regard as totally unsatisfactory. The government wishes to be in a position to make a comprehensive response to any recommendations in the final report and I have sought to avoid taking a piecemeal approach. However, in one area that I have been concerned enough to act, I have issued an instruction that car batteries are not to be disposed over headstone but are to be put aside for controlled disposal. They should also not be used for fishing sinkers as the lead content is very harmful to fish and marine life around Norfolk Island. The point I need to make there Mr President is that a lot of the batteries could be dumped over headstone but some of them are kept aside, melted down for fishing sinkers and end up in the sea anyway so we just need to bear that in mind and Mr President, I will consider further measures when the final Unimelb report is received and will advise the House as such

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President and I thank Mr Christian for that. This question would be directed at Mr Bennett but he's not here so I don't know who is picking up his areas. Mr King. Why was a phone installed at the airport that took phonecards only as this appears to be a draconian way of selling phonecards and the last thing a visitor wants to do before leaving the Island is to spend \$5.00 just to make a phone call. Could not a phone be installed that took either money or phonecards

MR KING: Well I would think it fairly reasonable to think that a phone ought to take phonecards and money. I can't answer that question explicitly.

Perhaps I ought to take it on notice for Mr Bennett to have a closer look at it as a matter of great importance

MRS SAMPSON: Just perhaps if I could add to that. It doesn't appear to be a matter of importance but I suggest to Mr King that I have had alot of complaints from visitors as they leave

MRS ANDERSON: I'll address my question to Mr King as he has carriage of the phonecards problem at the moment. I understand that locked boxes have been installed close to the new phonecard telephones in which people are asked to deposit their used phonecards. As local collectors are offering 50% of face value for used phonecards can the Minister advise who has the key to those boxes and who is benefiting from the resale of those used phonecards

MR PRESIDENT: I am assuming that all Members are referring to Foenkaads

MR KING: Thank you Mr President. Unless I've had a couple of beers I don't speak Norfolk very well so I'm afraid I'll have to stick with phonecards Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: That is not available to you at this moment

MR KING: Yes. I am informed Mr President that it is intended that any proceeds which are derived from those used phonecards will be directed to a charity and there will be an auction process that will take place to deal with that

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Further Questions Without Notice? If there are no further Questions Without Notice we have concluded there Honourable Members. There are no Questions On Notice this morning so we move to Papers

Presentation of Papers

We are at Presentation of Papers Honourable Members. Are there any Papers to present this morning

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Mr President thank you. Section 11(4) of the Healthcare Act 1989 requires the Executive Member to lay before the Legislative Assembly the Financial Report on the Healthcare Fund. This I do now.

Mr President under Section 20 of the Norfolk Island Hospital Act I am required to lay before the Legislative Assembly a copy of any directions made under this Section. This I do now.

I have further Papers if I may. I also have a copy of the Strategic Plan for the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise which I would like to lay before the Assembly.

By fax this morning we have finally received a copy of the Financial Accounts for the Hospital Enterprise for 1992/93 in accordance with Section 7(a) of the Healthcare Act 1989 and the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise Accountancy Validation Act 1994 I table the Statement by the Healthcare Manager and Accounting Officer for the year ended 30th June 1993 and the audited statement for the Norfolk Island Healthcare Fund for the same period

MR KING: I would move that the Paper be noted

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that the Paper be noted

MR KING: Thank you Mr President. Those Papers have just this morning been received by Mrs Lozzi Cuthbertson. I would like the opportunity to have a

look at those and at an appropriate time I would adjourn the debate and take it up at the next meeting

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Any participation on the question that the Paper be noted

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: I totally agree Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Then maybe a motion of adjournment.

MR KING: I would so move Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that that matter be adjourned and be made a matter of notice for a subsequent day of sitting

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. That matter is adjourned

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: May I discuss the Strategic Plan of the Norfolk Island Hospital Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: That's one that you earlier tabled? Yes. If you would like to move that that Paper be noted then discussion may ensue

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Thank you Mr President. May I move that that Paper be noted

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. The question is that the Paper be noted

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Amendments last year to the Norfolk Island Hospital Act 1985 provided amongst other things for the development of a three year Strategic Plan for the Hospital Enterprise. Section 9 of the Act provides that the first Strategic Plan will refer to the period to 30th June 1995 and subsequent Strategic Plans will relate to three year periods thereafter. The first Strategic Plan was meant to be developed within three months of the commencement of the April 1993 changes to the Principal Act however the Director of the Hospital is required by the Act to consult with the Health Advisory Council and as we know, the previous Minister had not appointed such a Council before the election earlier this year. One of my first acts on becoming Minister for Health and Education was to appoint a Council under the able Chairmanship of Dr John Duke. The Council has already proven to be a most effective body of volunteers who will bring together wide fields of expertise to benefit the Hospital and Healthcare generally. The Council considered the strategic plan at its last two meetings and as Members will gather, a strategic plan is required to set out an assessment, by the Director, of the major issues relating to the enterprise functions that are likely to arise during the period and secondly, the manner in which the enterprise proposes to perform its functions in dealing with these issues during the period. A Strategic Plan is not designed to be a schedule of capital works nor is it a management structure, not is it intended to intrude into the general delivery of care by doctors, dentists, nurses and other professional staff to the Norfolk Island community. Those are things that a Strategic Plan is not. What the plan is designed to do is to provide a guide to the Director, the Health Advisory Council, the Minister and the staff of the Hospital in improving the approach of the Hospital that the staff and everyone takes to the community to make those services more cost effective and efficient and in essence to ensure that a large business enterprise as the Norfolk Island Hospital functions according to a general plan. This Strategic Plan I am glad to say highlights the importance of forward planning in all aspect of services offered

and it also highlights accountability to the community. That is something very dear to my heart. I am concerned about one aspect that is mentioned. In discussing the need to eventually replace our present hospital buildings the Strategic Plan on page ten point D2 mentions the need to secure sufficient adjacent land as recommended by the architect. Mr President I wish to make it clear right here and now that this is a statement expressing the Director's opinion and perhaps that of the previous Minister, but not mine. The owners of the key block of land required to rebuild the hospital on the present grounds in the manner envisaged by the architect have made it very clear they do not wish to sell it and I see no reason to do anything as arbitrary as to repossess it. A new two storey hospital can easily be built on the present site by using a little more ingenuity and should I be Minister with this responsibility when the time comes, that is the direction I plan to take. Thank you Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Cuthbertson. The question is that the Paper be noted. Is there any discussion Honourable Members

MR ADAMS: Mr President I would like to be given the opportunity to carefully peruse the report and at a later date come back to the House and debate it. I would like to adjourn debate on it until the next meeting

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else care to enter the debate at this time before Mr Adams moves his adjournment

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. I agree with Mr Adams. I have strong feelings about building a new hospital on old ground. I've had problems in the past with nursery's and anything that has a biological content with it is better built on new ground, so I'm just saying that I agree with Mr Adams, it has a far ranging debate with me. Yes, I know we need a new hospital but the bacteriological problems of building something like a hospital on old ground is very wideranging so I agree that the debate should be adjourned

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Any further comments before we proceed further. No further comments. Mr Adams, you might move your adjournment

MR ADAMS: I would so move Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that this matter be adjourned and be made an order of the day for a subsequent day of sitting

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. That matter too is adjourned Honourable Members. Are there any further papers to present this morning

MR KING: Mr President, in accordance with paragraph 41(2)(a) of the Interpretation Ordinance 1979 I table the Tourist Accommodation Amendment No 2 Regulations 1994

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Further papers Honourable Members

MR KING: Mr President I table on Mr Bennett's behalf the Financial Indicators for the month of September 1994

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Did you want to address that matter Mr King

MR KING: No, I have no debate on it

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Further papers

MR KING: Mr President I present the tourist arrival figures for September 1994 and move that the Paper be noted

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that the Paper on tourist arrival figures be noted?

MR KING: Thank you Mr President. I think that these figures have been reported in the local press. I'm not too sure but let me summarise them just briefly. The overall result for the month is an 11.8% increase on the same month of 1993 represented largely by an increase of 30.4% out of the Australian market and regrettably a reduction of 20% in the New Zealand market. Just as a point of interest the major market performances for the month were from Victoria with an increase of 66% and again from South Australia with an increase of 75%, South Australia's share of the market holding steady at about 5 1/2% which is proving to be a very interesting market. Mr President New Zealand remains an uncertain market. There is certainly no consistent pattern to New Zealand but let me just run through the relative figures for the current month. March up 52%, April up 45%, May up 32%, June up 1 1/2%, July down 11.3%, August up 1/4%, September down the 20% odd that I mentioned earlier. I should mention that New Zealand nevertheless remains up over the last six months by 5-6% and I acknowledge that that is boosted largely by the Country Music Festival and Rotary Conference which took place earlier in the year. Mr President I remain of the belief that the outlook really is bright, the industry is still performing on average over the past six months at about 32% over last year and I look forward to seeing continued regrowth over the coming months

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. Has Mr King got any solid explanation as to why the New Zealand market has been retreating

MR KING: No. No I don't. As I mentioned it is not retreating on a consistent basis. It has in fact been up and down. It's all over the place like the proverbial breakfast. I can't explain it. Certainly I'm not a professional in that area, although I've had professional people examining the situation and hopefully they will be able to report back to me in the fairly near future. Obviously we need to do something different over there. I have to say that comparatively speaking, given the size of the market place New Zealand is performing okay. It costs us somewhere in the order of \$25.00 to get a tourist out of New Zealand whereas out of the Australian market it costs us less than \$20.00 so I mean, the effort is there but we have to decide how much money we want to spend in that market place given its size. But we may have some explanations over the next couple of months. I have to say that the figures for October on a preliminary basis, on about a half way mark through the month appear to be a slight increase out of New Zealand for this month so again it's that up and down figure which is leaving us all a little bit confounded

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr King. Further participation? No. The question is Honourable Members, that the paper, that is the Tourist Arrival Figures Paper be noted?

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it. Thank you. Any further papers this morning

MR KING: Mr President in accordance with the provisions, pardon me please, in accordance with subsection 19(2) of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau Act 1980 I table a report and financial statement in respect of the

Tourist Bureau for the financial year ending 30th June 1994 and I would move that the Paper be noted

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that that Paper be noted?

MR KING: Thank you Mr President. I will understand if someone at a later stage adjourns this debate for the next meeting. I have no difficulty with that since they have only been circulated over the last couple of days or so, but I want to say that there is some aspects of the financial statements which might on the surfact cause some concern to members. First it will be noted that the income for the year is down by some \$100,000 and members could ask themselves how this has occurred. Particularly if government subsidy levels were maintained. The shortfall Mr President is represented by the loss of Qantas contribution of approximately \$25,000 towards co-operative advertising which ceased the previous year when Qantas withdrew from its co-sharing arrangement with Air New Zealand. The differences represented by the Ansett contribution towards co-operative advertising of \$80,000 which is no longer paid direct to the Tourist Bureau but is paid nevertheless on a dollar for dollar basis for agreed advertising, so that whereas a former year that \$80,000 contribution appeared in the financial statements of the Bureau, it will no longer appear in that fashion. Secondly, Mr President, at first glance it may appear that personnel expenses have increased by \$100,000 which could be regarded by members as being somewhat excessive. I have to say that there has been an increase Mr President but in the order of some \$50,000 and that's attributable to increased professionalism which I'm sure members will agree, has produced some reasonable dividends. The difference is due to a change in accounting procedures where unlike former years, marketing expenses have been charged separately or marketing consultancy expenses have on this occasion been charged to office expenses personnel. I'm not 100% sure that that is the appropriate account to be charged but I felt that I should offer an explanation. Finally Mr President, Members might be concerned that the appropriation account shows a debit balance of \$8,800. I should mention that this balance reflects an amount of \$9,700 in the Bureau's creditors ledger which remains in dispute and there are continuing negotiations on those creditor amounts which are more than likely to result in settlements at reduced amounts which in turn will result in adjusting entries in the books for this financial year and that's all I have to offer at this stage Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr King. Debate on the question that that Paper be noted. Any debate? No. Then I put the question that the Paper be noted

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. Further Papers

MR KING: Yes Mr President. I'm not quite sure what I face later on in this meeting in the light of some letters which have been produced by industry organisations over the last couple of days calling for my blood. I wanted to ensure that this matter is fully debated in this House. I had anticipated some questions which I would have fended off for the purposes of having debate and discussion but I wanted to table something so that we could get the ball rolling on this so that in the event, at a later time that there is a move towards my execution then I will accept that with as much respect that I have for the parliamentary and democratic process, which is a lot. Mr President let me table a letter from the Norfolk Island Chamber of Commerce dated 18 October addressed to me which concludes with the remarks, "the Norfolk Island Chamber of Commerce is of the opinion that such conduct by a Minister for Tourism is totally inappropriate and unacceptable and that you should resign the portfolio forthwith." Let me table also a letter from the Norfolk Island Accommodation and Tourism Association

Incorporated dated the 17th October which concludes with the words "the ATA feels that this vital portfolio, or any other, can no longer be entrusted to a Member lacking the necessary competence and our members therefore request that all other elected Members of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly address this situation affirmatively at this Wednesday's meeting" and I table those two papers Mr President and move that they be noted

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr King. The question is that those Papers be noted.
Mr King

MR KING: No debate at this time thank you

MR PRESIDENT: Any debate in respect of those Papers Honourable Members

MRS ANDERSON: Thank you Mr President. I think the concern that has been raised in the community is based principally upon articles which have appeared in the mainland press in which Mr King is reported to have said that the Island is afraid of being overwhelmed by marauding tourists and comments of that ilk. I believe that that is a most inappropriate statement for a Minister of Tourism to make. Mr King has also reported that the tourist accommodation is almost fully booked. The Accommodation Proprietors are of the opinion that that is not the case and that bookings for the balance of this calendar year are a lot lower than they would normally expect. There has been a large increase in the number of visitors to the Island this year and I believe that the Minister and our marketing personnel are to be commended for the increase and for their efforts, however to say that the increase is 33% one should look at what that 33% is based on. It is based on last year which was an absolutely disastrous year for tourist visitors. We are only now getting back to the levels of tourists that we require to maintain our income base to be able to run the Island in the manner in which the Island people and residents would like the Island to be run to fund our road maintenance programmes, our healthcare schemes and all the other things which we need. I'll leave it at that for now Mr President

MR ADAMS: Thank you Mr President. As I understand it the submissions from the ATA and the Chamber of Commerce indicate a lack of faith and confidence and I believe this arises from the fact that the Minister did mention a cap on tourist numbers. I think that is really the essential item that these two submissions actually put forward. As I understand it the Minister's statement and I quote "residents are not prepared to compromise their lifestyle, their culture, their history, even though tourism is almost the sole industry of the Island employing more than half the workforce." I understand he went on to say "we pursue a policy which is set in cement that the Island is first and foremost the home of its residents and secondly a tourist destination. There is no desire to change that at all". Mr President I think it is a sad day for the Island when a Minister is thought incompetent because he makes a statement giving high regard to the lifestyle and culture of the Island. I believe that as a Minister for Tourism he has a wider obligation to the community, not perhaps to one area of the community.

I think what we need to do is sit back and have a look and see who is actually making these statements and when we do that we see that it is not actually the community in general, we see the people who are making these statements that the Minister is incompetent is first and second stops for direct tourist business after the airline. I see in these statements there is no mention of cultural values. There is no mention of resource capability. Particularly water, electricity to name but two. We only see here question of numbers. Does not the ATA and the Chamber have any concerns on these matters that I have mentioned. Mr President as far back as I believe 1982, the Select Committee looked at ways of capping numbers and I think what is significant about that is they didn't look at whether or not we should have a cap on numbers they actually looked at the cap therefore indicating that it was desirable to have the cap so therefore this is nothing new and Mr

President a number of recommendations actually predated the Select Committee on the capping issue and I understand there were three. The Westerman Report, the Coldham Report and I think these two were followed by the Nimmo Report in 1976 in which Justice Sir John Nimmo mentioned a cap he thought desirable of 20,000 by 1980. Mr President I think it would be fair to say that a fair percentage of, as I see on the Chamber's list of 24, possibly weren't around in 1980 or 1982 therefore were probably not aware of the reasons for the recommendations on the cap on numbers were put in place. These reasons Mr President I don't believe have changed I therefore don't share the core or the concerns of the ATA or the Chamber of Commerce thank you

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. I agree with Mr Adams comments. I think he put them quite succinctly there. The 30,000 was a mythical number which has always been bandied around and from an environment point of view the number of feet walking over the Island in the summertime, the number of cars which are driven around by tourists must have a detrimental effect on the environment and I feel that even going to 35,000 which the Minister has mentioned possibly would get my endorsement but past that particular point I cannot see that the Island can cope with any more than 35,000 in any one year and therefore there should be a cap

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Thank you Mr President. I feel awkward in this situation as I see both sides of the question in many ways. First and foremost I think it should be known that the Minister was advised to make these statements, and I'm sure he will say this for himself, by our marketing consultants. They saw it as strategy for promoting more tourism and a better kind of tourism perhaps. When I saw the advise come through while the Minister was away I must admit that I was torn both ways. Phsycologically it makes excellent sense, you make something special you highlight its value, you highlight how many people want it and you then point out that only a limited number of people can have it and you ensure the continuity of demand will be there. These are experts in marketing, I am not an expert in marketing, I can just see the logic of what they advised the Minister to do. They have done an excellent job so far so we have to trust them, at the same time how things are reported in the press is something quite different and the words that are placed in a Ministers mouth in the press obviously may not have been what the Minister used and having seen the draft press release that was attached to this advise certainly no such words like marauding tourists were included. That is pretty colourful language used by newspapers and certainly not by marketing experts. That is regretable but unfortunately the moment you try to use the press for any purpose you are in their hands. I trust that tourists that may have read the statement or potential tourists, would have used their judgement to realise that an Island that does depend on tourism to a great extent does not think of tourists that way and I think Norfolk Island has earned a reputation as a destination that treats its tourist well, cordially, makes them feel welcome and makes them feel like individuals that are prized as people. I think anybody that has been here would dismiss a word like marauding tourists, or a description like that as something utilised by the paper to stir the possum rather than to describe how the Minister might have spoken but I leave the Minister to say just what words he used. The only concern that I have is that I hope this marketing strategy was put in place in consultation with our airlines and our agents. They need to know that yes, we are trying to ensure that our marketing continues, that if we are highlighting how much people like coming here and how much our tourism has recovered by comparison to other tourist destination it has recovered so much better, and for them to know that we do have vacancies on the Island, that we do still want tourists for the rest of the season and that is an ongoing situation. At the same time I also really support the idea that the place should not be overrun by great quantities of people at any one time or continuously. This island is first and foremost the home of the Norfolk Island residents and we all feel very strongly about that. I think it is nice to share it with tourists who come here and enjoy it and learn to respect it and like it and show the kind of admiration

that we have for it and they wouldn't keep on coming here, those kind of people unless we also protected the environment, protected the Island and kept alive these standards that everybody has worked so hard towards establishing. It is a very hard thing to manage, to balance the two objectives. I do hope our marketing consultants were right again, I do hope the people out there have formed the opinion that this is a good place, that they should continue to come here but not as hoards, in controlled numbers so that they too can enjoy it in a controlled way.

Thank you Mr President

MR CHRISTIAN: Thank you Mr President. I agree with most of things Mr Adams has said. I disagree with Helen Sampson in principle and Nadia has hit the nail on the head in regard to tourist numbers. What we should be concerned about on Norfolk Island is not setting a cap, we should be concerned about the total number of tourists on Norfolk Island at any given time and Nadia has made that quite clear. Mr President at the moment we have 1246 registered beds, if you project that out on an annual basis, it gives us a capacity to handle almost 65,000 tourists in a given twelve month period and I think that's what we should concern ourselves with Mr President, is filling the licenced beds that we have in circulation now. I don't intend supporting the ATA or the Chamber of Commerce's calls for Mr King's resignation. I accept Mr King's explanation that what the articles were trying to achieve was a feeling of exclusivity to Norfolk. A feeling of closeness to the community, come and be part of it and not spoil it. Mr President I also understand the ATA's figures indicating that there are some 12,000 room nights vacant between now and early next year, is also of concern and I trust that Mr King will closely monitor this over the coming weeks and if an incorrect signal has been sent to the travel industry that Norfolk is full or overflowing and we do not need any additional visitors then I would hope that Mr King would take the appropriate action to send the correct signal

MR KING: Thank you Mr President. The old adage of course is that any publicity is good publicity. I don't acknowledge that that holds so in tourism to a great degree. Some of us can recall the Denge Fever publicity of the early 80's which was very damaging but that of course was adverse publicity. My press release in Sydney took a careful and considered approach as Mrs Lozzi Cuthbertson rightly observes, on professional advice that the slant given to the release was simple and truthful. Simple in its objective of gaining publicity which might not have been otherwise available and I would emphasise Mr President that there are about 10,000 other tourist destinations out there all vying for publicity and all of whom would give their eye teeth for the kind of publicity that my press release generated. Truthful Mr President because regulating tourist numbers is precisely what we have been doing for years, which is what Mr Adams observed. This is not anything new and I'm sure that I don't need to remind members and the community that the cornerstone of our policy is that the Island is first the home of its residents and that policy has been the major support for tourism activity or tourism debate in this forum or in the community for many many years. I suggest that those who think it should be otherwise should speak up now. Simply speaking Mr President, to continue at our present growth rate indefinitely would in fact spell disaster for Norfolk Island's features. It's social features, its culture, its identity, its special place. What I have endeavoured to put across to the media is that those special values is what makes Norfolk Island a wonderful place to live and to visit and that a community debate on tourism numbers must take place sooner rather than later. That should prove to be an interesting debate Mr President. As it progresses, responsible people will consider the impact of length of stay and they will recognise hopefully that the average length of stay decreases then pure numbers will need to be increased to compensate for reduced economic impact. People will also need to consider the fact that if increased demand is to be satisfied and in fact wanted, then perhaps more accommodation should be licensed. It is certainly not for me alone to determine how many numbers of tourists we want in Norfolk Island. I certainly have my own views and I think I have left people in

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no doubt as to what they are and I'll be standing firmly behind those views. It wasn't until I received these letters from the ATA and Chamber of Commerce yesterday afternoon. Well obviously I didn't get one from the ATA since it was calling on everyone else to sack me - one of my colleagues was kind enough to show me a copy. The other one from the Chamber of Commerce, as I mentioned earlier simply calls on me to resign. It is not quite clear to me who is expected to take up the area of tourism should I surrender it but I have my opinions on that. I, as suggested in these papers and in Mrs Anderson's statements that the 33% of the past six months comes from a low base and indeed it did come from a low base but I would ask the Chamber of Commerce not to conveniently overlook the fact that it happens to have been a record six months, an all time record six months. If we continue at this present growth rate, if we sustain a 30% increase for the entire year that projects out to 38,000. If it comes back to 20% which is probably more realistic it pans out to about 34-35,000. I suggest it is time Mr President to take stock and perhaps to do it a little better than what has been done in the past but I'll talk about that a little later on. If there is a suggestion that I have damaged Norfolk's image or Norfolk's ability to rebuild its tourism industry, let me say Mr President that I reject outright those suggestions. How can it be possibly said that the ability to espouse the attractions of Norfolk Island through seven or eight media outlets on prime time radio or in the print media is damaging to our image. How can it possibly be said Mr President and I only have a couple of articles, and I can assure Mrs Anderson much to her horror that there will be more to come over the next few weeks, how can it be damaging to be able to say, residents want to preserve Norfolk Island's natural beauty and history at all costs. How can it possibly be damaging to say we don't expect growth to continue at this rate adding that residents want to preserve the Island's natural beauty. We see ourselves as an Ecco tourism destination and this is something we want to preserve at all costs. How can that possibly be damaging. How could it be suggested Mr President that my press release and media activity can have adverse impact on the tourism industry. We are talking here of significant media exposure, in fact, free media exposure. An opportunity to say here we are, it's a lovely place, we are responsible and environmentally friendly people, we are not going to mess it up, we are not going to close the doors but if you want to come here you had better get in early. Mr President, the same marketing and publicity theories apply in this case as apply elsewhere. Let me say that if Foodlands tomorrow were to advertise that there were no spuds on the boat they would experience a pleasant boost in spud sales over the next few days. It's the same theories. I'm not going to admit Mr President that this has been a publicity or promotional ploy but let me say that if it was it has been hugely successful. Mrs Lozzi Cuthbertson observes quite rightly, because Mrs Lozzi Cuthbertson unlike some others has had some experience with the media and indeed I don't go using terms like "marauding tourists". I love the tourists. They put bread and butter on my plate. I guess to a certain extent they keep me in a job and probably my son, my wife, my daughter in the near future. I love them. Marvellous people. Each plane load that comes from Sydney brings with it somewhere around \$70,000 and has an economic impact of around \$210,000 so it's wonderful. So you will often see me fall to my knees as the planes fly over to land. It was suggested that I should have perhaps put this release or campaign in place in consultation with the wholesalers and the airlines. Well I didn't do that. I don't feel obliged to do that and certainly they don't expect it except where there are joint promotional dollars coming forward but what I did have and did receive from the industry in Australia and the wholesalers, the operators was nothing but applause, nothing but support, nothing but encouragement. I did not hear one word of criticism about the manner in which I conducted myself with the media or in the industry area itself. Maybe the Chamber and the ATA appear to have overlooked, that I know all these industry operators. I know them all on first name basis. I have a good solid working relationship with them. Pacific Island Travel Centre is our if not now, it is certainly emerging as our largest wholesaler out of our biggest market in Australia. The Executive Director did in fact go into a huddle about the campaign with the company owners and with

their Board of Directors and they have said to me, or have authorised me to quote them in how they regard the situation "...they are extremely and totally supportive of the concept and of the Minister, that their clients do not want anything else but what the Norfolk Island offers in terms of the tourist product". Ben Sanderlands Mr President is the doyen of travel writers in Australia, a former travel writer for the Bulletin, currently the editor of Travel Trade. His article is due to appear I think, today. I hope it says the right things. I'm sure it would because Ben has authorised me to say, and I quote him that the approach that I have taken "...is extremely responsible and it will ensure the integrity of Norfolk Island as a tourist destination". There are currently discussions going on with the Pacific Asia Travel Association, a world respected regional tourism body with Ian Kennedy and they are very keen to use Norfolk Island as a case, or model for ECO tourism because we exercise constraints, because we exercise control, because we are I think, responsible people. Sydney's Channel 7 have picked up on the press release and the campaign and my utterings and I quote Mr President "...in today's Australian I read with interest the article about the Island's adoption of 'a tourism quota to protect its environment and lifestyle. This in itself would make a great story. Where else around the country are attractions so popular that limits have to be imposed. Obviously Norfolk Island has lessons for the rest of Australia. 11.00 am is screened around the country on the 7 network etc etc and they'll be coming to the Island and the Chamber of Commerce and the ATA will probably have to hogtie me to the ruins to prevent me from talking to them. I'm sorry to be so long winded with this but I just feel that I needed to defend myself a little bit from attacks of being incompetent and no longer have the trust of the industry organisations. I can talk for a long long time about the history of tourism in Norfolk Island and the development of controls. As Mr Adams has pointed out, this is not new but let me talk for a little while about controls Mr President. Mr Adams pointed out that yes, the debate commenced somewhere around the middle '70's and he was almost totally correct. But the greatest emphasis was put on Butland who recommended capping tourism at 20,000 by 1983. Our Council was a little bit more conservative than that. They said, oh let's watch out now this could be damaging, let's make it 20,000 by 1980 and they sat next door I guess and said we'll do this. Hadn't put any controls in place to ensure that it happened because when the debate re-emerged in 1983 it had already gone through the roof to 24,000 so what did they do here in this chamber. They said, why, we better make it 24,000. Great. What controls did they put in place to ensure that that cap was maintained. None. Come 1986 the debate commenced again and they sat in this chamber and said to themselves, well it was 24,000, now it's 28,600, what'll we do now. I know what we'll do, we'll make it 30,000. Someone said no, let's not be too explicit let's make it something obscure like "tourism should be no more than 820 persons on the Island on any one day during our peak months". Now what's that mean? How can you enforce that. There was a lot of laughter and hilarity in the community at the time suggesting that there ought to be a Force standing behind the hibiscus trees at the airport counting them as they came off the plane and when it got to the 821st they would be beaten around the head and pushed back on the plane because there was no other way that it might be enforced so that was adopted in 1986 supported by the Assembly in 1989, supported again in 1992 as being the policy. Read Hansard and you will become quickly aware that what that 820 meant was a way of disguising a desirable limit of 30,000 and in fact that was the original motion in 1986 by Mr Bennett. Others around this table may remember, certainly the Clerk and Mr President will remember. Mr Bennett moved that the limit be 30,000. This is after the horse has bolted. So it was designed and this is where the figure, although it is an unofficial basis, an unofficial count of 30,000, this is where the mythical figure comes from, 30,000 because that was what this 820 during the peak four months was designed to achieve. So here we are now in 1994 and we are saying to ourselves, it's already exceeded. The horse has bolted already. Now what I'm saying to the community is, let's have the debate, let's be fair dinkum, let's genuinely ensure that we protect the Island. The 1981 Select Committee on tourism is very interesting to read, in fact Mr President I'll

leave this sitting on the table. I won't table it formally Madam Clerk, but I'll make it available for those new members, those people who weren't around Norfolk Island in the early '80's and the late '70's to read because what it follows through is the Select Committee's tourism debate, what are we going to do about protecting the environment. It makes very interesting reading. It talks about the Select Committee's findings and how the growth of tourism changed life on Norfolk Island, how land prices rose and speculative subdivision of land became common, it spoke about the need for immigration laws for intervention by the Commonwealth because immigration got out of control because of lack of objectivity and lack of planning. It spoke about the pressures which gave rise to brand new telephone systems, now we've got fax's and phonecards and all sorts of modern contrivances. It talks about Norfolk importing more and more because local production had faded away. It faded away because the locals had a pace of life change. They saw a quick quid in tourism because they experienced 20% per year on average for the preceeding years, 20%. It identified very clearly the bad effects of tourism, it warned the community in no uncertain manner as to what the bad effects would be and where you could end up. It said we do not believe that residents have any entitlement to expect tourism to continue growing forever at the rate of the past decade. We are exceeding the rate that they refer to. They conclude further growth in tourism may be harmful. The government should monitor trends watchfully and should take reasonable steps that are available to restrain rapid growth. Now that was in 1981 befor ethe horse bolted. It's bolted from one paddock to another.

They placed heavy reliance on the ratio of residents in the Island to transients when they were developing the policy that Norfolk Island should the the home of its residents first and a tourist destination second. They said that once there were more transients on the Island then there were population then it become primarily a tourist destination and secondly the home of its residents. I offer a note of caution Mr President. Just as the Select Committee did in 1981, that that figure is very fast approaching. I am sorry that Members of the ATA and the Chamber do not trust me to perform my duties. I regret that very dearly. I put in a lot of effort and a lot of time and I put up with a lot of much and this is the greatest lot of much that I've ever had to put up with. I resent very much being called incompetent, I resent very much being charged with having a lack of understanding of the industry, I resent very much being charged with being out of touch with industry operators and industry wholesalers and airlines. Thank you Mr President, that's all I have to say at the moment

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr King. Further debate Honourable Members

MRS ANDERSON: Mr President I would like to make it clear that at no point has any member of the Chamber of Commerce or the ATA to whom I have spoken suggested that they want in any way to harm the natural beauty and history of Norfolk Island.

If we didn't appreciate that we wouldn't be living here in the first place. I would also like to point out to Mr King that we have not at any time suggested that the number of tourist beds should be increased, that we do as Mr Christian suggests, have a cap on the number of tourists who can come to the Island because of the number of available beds. There are some 1200 beds available but I don't think at any time have those beds ever been full because alot of them would be five to one unit that unit would be occupied by two people, so therefore there are three beds not being used. The only person I have ever heard advocate that we should have additional beds on the Island is Mr King when he suggested that we should have a backpacker hostel and at a later date he suggested we should have a first class hotel. What I particularly object to is Mr King's attitude towards the potential tourist as reported in the newspaper. I think it was smug, I think it was inconsiderate and I also wonder why he would make such comments when as he has earlier this morning presented to us, the figures of the expenses of the Tourist Bureau, we as a community are spending vast sums of money to attract people to the Island, why would we now say that we don't want any more. Thank you Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Anderson. Further debate Honourable Members

MR KING: Mr President I haven't said that we don't want any more. What I have said on a number of occasions is to say that, in fact, in earlier times what I have said is to restore tourism activity in Norfolk Island to the levels that we have previously enjoyed, that is the zenith of '86-87 at current length of stay we need about 35,000 to maintain tourism activity. I haven't said that we don't want any more. What I have said is that the community debate must commence now. I respect my constituency base Mr President. I know what they want. I hear what the ATA want and what the Accommodation Proprietors want. When this debate commenced in 1981 the Accommodation Proprietors in fact said that they would be very happy with 70% unit occupancy as a result of the 1981 debate. Now, they're talking about 80%, 100% occupancy. People are never happy. I can understand that. People want to enhance the return on their investment. It's a natural thing. But I'm saying Mr President that my constituency to a large extent says whoa back, I love this place, I want to maintain it the way it is. Maybe I am smug and inconsiderate. I try not to be. I know that I'm very impetuous from time to time, I know that I don't talk a great deal or communicate a great deal to Members but then again I'm not sure that they have a desire to talk to me at any great length either because they don't come and see me. Publicity come in different forms Mr President. An adage is that the greatest publicity is word of mouth. I think that no-one can deny that. I had an interesting letter the other day which will serve to illustrate the nature in which my press release and press campaign was received and it will also serve to illustrate that there are other factors and other types of publicity which play a part in tourism in Norfolk Island. This is from Mr and Mrs Bishop. "Just twelve months ago I spent a very enjoyable week with my family on your Island and we plan to return. In today's Australian you are reported as wishing to limit tourists to 35,000 and to seek out wealthier tourists. None of that I object to of course as maintaining the Island's identity is crucial. I just want to make the point that wealthy or not, tourists want value for money. For example I paid \$110 per night each for two one bedroom units which were of good quality and recommended by my friend. They were not serviced during our stay. Although the surrounds were beautiful and well kept, no pool, no tennis court or entertainment facilities existed. The barbeque arrangements were primitive. I just wish to sound a note of caution that high prices with little return value will not encourage repeat business which is the lifeblood of the successful tourism." And I regard that Mr President as being a plus for me, a bouquet for me and a brickbat for the kind of publicity that operators in the industry are called upon to generate. Lots of kinds of different publicity

FMRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: I'm concerned that we went on and on and on without perhaps spelling out in a final statement for our tourist who may be listening to this debate that we do value the tourists, that we do want them to come, that part of maintaining the standards and the quality of the Island is to ensure that they also can share what we see in this wonderful place and I want to dispell any possible bad image that has been caused by some of the acrimony that has been generated in this debate but it wasn't in any way aimed towards the tourists. Norfolk Island does prize its tourists, wants them and we welcome them. We all want to maintain controls to ensure that the place remain what they see as a beautiful unspoilt place, thank you

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Cuthbertson. Final debate Honourable Members. No. The question is Honourable Members, that the paper, that is those two letters tabled by Mr King be noted?

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it. Thank you. Any further papers this morning

MR KING: Yes Mr President. In accordance with the provisions of section 32(b) of the Public Moneys Ordinance 1979 I lay on the table of the House a schedule listing those funds which have been transferred by way of virement since the 3rd August 1994

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr King. Does that conclude Papers? Papers are concluded Honourable Members

Statements

We move on to Statements. Are there any Statements this morning?

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Thank you Mr President. I would like to make a brief statement about Healthcare Private. I have recently received from the Risk Manager an updated plan for an optional health insurance scheme which will provide members with cover for expenses not currently covered by our compulsory healthcare scheme.

Essentially the first step, the Norfolk Island Government will need to take in order to finalise a proposal to put to the people of Norfolk Island is to frame and circulate a questionnaire which will seek to establish what kind of cover people require and are prepared to pay for. The Risk Manager also sent us a draft questionnaire which is now being examined and amended and will soon be circulated widely. I ask for the co-operation of as many people as possible in completing and returning it to the various collection points which will be set up for everyone's convenience. There is no point in developing a scheme which does not meet people's needs and the only way this can be ascertained is through a questionnaire. I wish to reassure everyone the questionnaires that are returned will be treated confidentially and will be analysed off the Island. I also want to say that I recognise the importance of this issue and am keen to get together whatever information is needed in order to put the best possible proposal to the people of Norfolk Island, thank you Mr President

MR KING: Mr President I have a couple of statements, and I'm sorry I take up all the time. I wish to make a very brief statement on the nature of my visit to the mainland of Australia a couple of weeks ago just to inform the House and the community if they are interested in my activities during that period given of course that it was suggested in the local press last week that I had spent all my time prancing the corridors of Canberra, that certainly was not the case. Mr President I first visited the Richmond River Shire Council and spent one day in the company of the Chief Works Supervisor for the purpose of having a look at their road building and maintenance techniques and looking at quarry and crushing operations, plant maintenance schedules and procedures. That is not something I would have done late in the term of office, but something I thought would be beneficial early in the term of office and that certainly proved to be the case. I spent some time on tourism activities, meeting with Members of the travel industry, issuing press releases which resulted in more than simply stirring up media interest, I launched on Sydney side the Norfolk Island Foenkaad at St Mary's which was interesting. It was an industry gathering, a collectors gathering, Norfolk Island Foenkaads were very well received and indications are at least in that market that sales would be quite promising. On the Canberra side where I spent two days, or more precisely a day and a half I made a number of calls. I called on the Head of the Department of Tourism, Helen Williams, to say hello to talk to her, I called on Ron Gibbons of Asset Management Services, Ron who members may be aware was here in recent times talking to us about computer management systems for control of assets which is an area in which I have a particular interest and I am convinced that the kind of systems which were presented to us by Assets Services are simply the way to go. Not necessarily by taking up the offer of Assets Services, but heading in that direction. I called on the Australian Capital Legal Aid Office and the Chief Executive there Cris Stanaforth who had visited the Island

and who had been asked by the Commonwealth authorities with our blessing to put together a report on a legal aid system for Norfolk Island. I received his final report which is now here in the Island. I called on an executive of the Standing Committee of Attorney's General and Members may or may not be aware that one of the difficulties we have had in the past in our relationship with Australia or with the Commonwealth is having very little time to comment on the possibility of extension of Commonwealth pieces of legislation to Norfolk Island despite measures that have been put in place over the years where we have been called upon to comment in as short a space as 24 hours in some cases. We have found that to be totally unacceptable and of course it stirs up emotions over here regarding Australia pushing pieces of legislation down our throat. I have a very clear impression that they don't want that to happen, they want to give us every opportunity to do those things here ourselves and by having some access at least to the paperwork and the offices of SCAGS, the Council of Attorney's General, we will know what is taking place in the area of law reform in Australia and we will be given a far greater period of time to consider our own position and to move towards perhaps producing our own legislation if that's what we want or to muster and gather our thoughts on opposing the possible extension of Commonwealth legislation, so all that was good stuff and I believe that that is an area that we ought to pursue and that falls into Mrs Lozzi Cuthbertson's area and we will be pursuing that. I made a number of courtesy calls in Australia and I would regard them as being no more than courtesy calls. I called on Parliamentary Secretary Warren Snowdon who we know, Bob Chinowyth, the Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on National Capital and External Territories, called on Senator John Falkener who is the Primary Commonwealth Minister, Tim Fischer who we all met here in the Island some weeks ago, leader of the Federal National Party and interestingly called on Grant Tambling who is the Opposition Spokesman on External Territories and had a talk with him and met all their minders. Generally I was very pleased with the way those meetings took place. I will in a short time Mr President, in fact immediately after this unless someone else has a statement to make on the Joint Standing Committee's activities

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you, further Statements

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. As other Members will be aware I was off the Island for two weeks at the beginning of September attending the Eleventh Australian and Pacific Regional Seminar from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Apart from the fact that I have a very nasty dose of the flu I survived it but I would like to make a few comments that perhaps could be passed on to the Parliamentary Association, but I would say that briefly, I felt that this one could have been better organised. There were some subjects that were presented as Papers that were quite irrelevant to the intention of the seminar. There were no workshops either officially organised or came to pass unofficially. Over half the delegates had very little notice of the seminar itself and were not aware that papers for discussion were being sought. Unfortunately at the time that the seminar took place there were outside serious political events that prevented at least four delegates from attending and I think this distracted from the seminars effectiveness but in all fairness there were circumstances beyond the organisers control. Our minders did an excellent job considering some of the travel difficulties that were encountered but I felt that the time and money spent could have been much more effectively utilised, such as a unifying theme that each delegate were given sufficient prior notice and could submit a paper to his or her parliament for discussion on this particular theme and that the venue be in one location only thus saving an incredible amount of travelling money that was spent.

Notwithstanding all these adverse comments, the paper that was presented by myself which was done after consultation with other members of the Select Committee here on electoral matters on the topic of what voting system is best for a small community was very well received and provoked much discussion and when the hansard proceedings are received I will make a formal paper and incorporate it into the

Select Committees proceedings

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Sampson

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: Thank you Mr President. I would like to briefly report on the work of the Steering Committee on Domestic Violence and what it has been doing lately. We have drafted a pamphlet which will be reviewed this afternoon and if all members agree will be circulated later this month. We have boosted the membership of the Committee which up until now has been mainly comprised of service delivery people such as doctors, teachers, councillors, members of the Churches and so on, by inveigling a number of local residents to become members of the local Steering Committee. I think that was most essential that the policies, the direction that the committee took really is a reflection of the residents of Norfolk Island. After all the objectives of this committee is to be of benefit, of help, not to antagonise people unnecessarily but to help people top move towards a better way of dealing with conflict. Another meeting of the Steering Committee will be held this afternoon and hopefully we will start planning an education and public awareness campaign which will make it clear again that when we talk about domestic violence or family violence it is something that is happening all over the world and is not something that is happening just on Norfolk Island. Hopefully it might be better here, we do not know, we have no statistics at all but knowing what is happening elsewhere and knowing of the various cases that have come to notice we are aware that it is in fact taking place here and that there are people who are suffering and who need assistance. We have also had the first seminar for volunteers, that was held last Sunday. Although some 17 people volunteered to take part, unfortunately because it was Sunday and because of other commitments a number of people could not attend but eight women and three men did attend the seminar and their reaction at the end of the day, the forms they filled anonymously were really most positive. They all thought it was a very worthwhile exercise. None of them seemed to resent wasting their Sunday in this way, in fact they want more. They want more seminars, they want more information, they want more experience for better ways of assisting people that might be referred to them in the future. I think it is very positive that the community have reacted in this way. To have seventeen people to volunteer and most of them really wanted to attend, the ones that didn't attend had very sound reasons not to do so. I think it is a remarkable reflection on the people of Norfolk Island that they are prepared to give up their time to be of assistance to other people. It is also important to recognise the contribution of the people who are taking part in the Steering Committee. They have devoted a great deal of their own time to get the Committee to this point and I would also like to mention the sterling work that Mrs Barbara Shelley and Pastor Shelley have been doing in helping us to train ourselves do a better job to help other people. Mrs Shelley in particular has had a great deal of training and expertise in this field and she is sharing it with us and guiding us with unstinting generosity. Thank you Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Cuthbertson. Mr King?

MR KING: No thank you Mr President. I foreshadowed a Statement about the activities of the Joint Standing Committee on External Territories. I recall having reported to the House previously that the Report of the Standing Committee on their enquiry into Freight and Passenger Transport to Australia's External Territories would be tabled in the Federal House, firstly in October. I subsequently reported whether in this forum or the informal forum that it was likely that that would occur in November. That is next month. I also foreshadowed in one forum or another that a visit from the Parliamentary Secretary Warren Snowdon would follow the tabling of that report so that some discussions might take place here, preliminary discussions might take place on its content. I received yesterday advise from the Secretary to the Committee that they will be conducting a further public hearing in Brisbane on the 21st November. I will quote from the

letter which will give members an understanding of the reasons why - "The Committee has decided to conduct a further public hearing on this enquiry following the receipt of late information on some significant issues effecting Norfolk Island including the proposal to operate a Stern Landing Vessel in Norfolk Island and the proposed increase in Australia Post Parcel Post rates to Norfolk Island

[PLANE FLIES OVERHEAD]

MR PRESIDENT: Mr King you said that you would fall on your knees when such an occurrence happened

MR KING: You do listen Mr President. I beg your pardon. Now you've thrown me right off Mr President. Where was I. So we cannot now expect that this report will be tabled in the Federal Parliament in November. It is more than likely, probably that it will be tabled in the Federal Parliament in the new year sometime, probably around February. It is interesting Mr President in the dispute that we have with Australia Post regarding their parcel post rates to the Island that there is significant support from both sides of the House in Canberra, in fact, everyone is on side. What we had overlooked here is that the issue fell squarely within the brief of the Joint Standing Committee. We didn't refer it to them but they were able to take up the issue themselves so it allows us the opportunity to talk to them about our feelings on the manner in which Australia Post has treated us so hopefully that will be helpful but nevertheless I foreshadow that the report to the Federal Parliament will not be tabled in their House until some three or four months time

MR PRESIDENT: Further Statements this morning. Statements are concluded Honourable Members

MR PRESIDENT: Honourable Members Mr Adams has proposed a matter of public importance this morning and I will read the matter that he has raised with me. "I raise as a matter of public importance a recent statement by Mr Warren Snowdon MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Sport and Territories, made at an Australian Labour Party Conference in Hobart, in which the Parliamentary Secretary questioned whether Norfolk Island's present negotiated status and relationship with the Australian Government, remains appropriate. I quote from his address -

"Norfolk Island has its own unique circumstances that require an active Federal Government role. However, I question whether or not the Norfolk Island's self governing and economically self sustaining system of government, put in place by the Fraser government in 1979, has in fact provided island residents with mainland equivalent standards and conditions.

The Island community is not subject to federal taxes and as such residents do not have the same access to Commonwealth resources or programmes as other Australian citizens or state, territory or local governments or indeed the other territories in the Indian Ocean.

Given this state of affairs, it may well be appropriate to review arrangements between Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth."

As can be seen this statement raises the question whether our present status with the Commonwealth of Australia is about to change at the initiative of the Australian Government.

If so it is certainly a matter of public importance that we as Members should discuss. And that is signed by Mr Adams. Now Honourable Members Standing Orders provide that before discussion may take place on such a statement that three members including the proposer Mr Adams indicate approval by rising in their places. Is such support available. Support is available Honourable Members. Thank you for that. Mr Adams you have the call

MR ADAMS: As mentioned, Warren Snowdon's speech at the ALP conference in

Hobart is very much a matter of public importance to us here on Norfolk. I think it was a significant speech and I think it was important. I see the speech as read containing some foreshadowing of another possible Commonwealth foray into our affairs - our local affairs in general and our tax affairs in particular. Mr President I don't believe the utterances by Warren Snowdon that gave rise to my fears are appropriate as Norfolk Island moves continually and significantly along the road to a situation of greater self government, of greater autonomy and therefore of greater responsibility for our own affairs. Mr President in an earlier section of Warren Snowdon's speech at the conference he states and I quote, "stewardship of these external territories will continue to be successful if we remain committed to pursuing the objectives of devolution of decision making and administrative responsibility. Mr President this passage and later passages which questions the way in which Norfolk does business and then goes on to suggest a possible foray into our affairs are quite clearly contradictory as regards each other. Mr President I'm in no doubt and I'm sure members will support me on this, that there are areas on Norfolk Island where we can as a community and as an Assembly do things differently. Perhaps we can do things better in alot of areas.

No doubt every community in the world is the same to a lesser or to a greater degree in this respect and as long as there are people in the equation this will continue to be the case. It is not Mr President for Warren Snowdon or the incumbent ruling political party to attempt to steer us one way or the other on their own initiative or to attempt to influence our direction or agenda to make it conform with their agenda. If our direction is somewhat different to theirs as regard our own affairs so be it. Mr President in summary I feel that the statements made at the conference in Hobart are not appropriate, it is somewhat paternalistic and perhaps ill considered. All the more so when the lack of consultation with the Norfolk Island Assembly is taken into consideration. In closing Mr President I would like to make mention that as the Minister appears concerned at our economic situation I would welcome assistance from the Minister and the ALP to allow Norfolk direct representation on area conferences which would have a beneficial effect in allowing us to increase our development in economic prowess and ability. I speak Mr President of the South Pacific Forum

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. I entirely agree with what Mr Adams has had to say and I found that at the seminar that I was attending in Apia and Adelaide that members of the Australian Labour Party were paranoid about Norfolk Island residents not paying income tax. I don't know why it gets up their nose so to speak but I had great difficulty with a couple of people that I was in company with for two weeks of trying to explain that there were some things in life that can't be bought. There were things that we had here that is beyond price and I left with each member of the seminar a copy of the Norfolk Island Report which was 1992-93 and these people could not see why we didn't abandon our style of government and go over to the Commonwealth and be ruled by them and I suggested that the ALP should put their own house in order before they start on ours thank you

MR CHRISTIAN: Thank you Mr President. I agree with everything that Mr Adams has said. I don't know whether there is a hidden agenda to try and force Norfolk's hand. I think what needs to be taken into account when one reads this document is the forum in which the comments were made. Mr President it was a Labour Party Conference in Hobart and Mr Snowdon is a Parliamentary Secretary and I feel he was probably out to impress in his own words "his comrades" to so try and speed up his progression and elevation within the ranks of the Labour Party. I feel we could safely take it from the comments of Barry Jones that he's failed to impress them and is probably going nowhere. I hope that this humbling of Warren Snowdon will cause him to lend his ear to us in a more favourable way Mr President

MRS CUTHBERTSON: Thank you Mr President. I feel that it is unfair that we should focus on just part of the comments that Mr Warren Snowdon made in regard to Norfolk

Island without leaving also reading into them the last sentence which comes after the one you quoted Mr President. "Given the state of affairs it may well be to review the arrangements between Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth". The next sentence after that one says "this is an issue which can only be advanced after appropriate consultation and indeed negotiations with the Norfolk Island community to the Norfolk Island Government". Now that's really a pretty important statement and it should be taken into consideration and the statements made in the rest of the speech need to be balanced against that. There seems to be no intention of pushing anything down our throat. Maybe a push here and there to make us move faster on certain issues, certainly I think we can anticipate those and we've already had some of those but in all fairness, at least in my opinion the kind of push we have received from Mr Snowdon and the Commonwealth have been to advance the welfare and better services for our community. Earlier comments also quoted all indicate that that's what the government in power in Canberra at the moment is concerned about, to ensure that the welfare of the residents of Norfolk Island is no worse than the welfare of the rest of Australia. I think that's a laudable ambition. I wish they had a little more confidence that we are able to do that and that we are trying to do it to the best of our ability and to the best of our resources. I really don't think this statement was all that serious, quoting Mr Jones comments at the very end of the speech it says "this progressive visionary policy is in fact the only one before conference in which there has not been one word of change between 91 and 94". Now it seems to me that what Mr Snowdon was going over was trying to ginger up with perhaps a few emotive comments, a policy statement that has stood there unchanged, unrevised because there has been no reason to revise it, for three years. I don't think that we should read too much in this statement. Maybe it could have been worded better but I don't think it indicates any major ambition on the part of the Commonwealth to interfere too seriously with Norfolk Island. Anyway if they do, it is certainly up to us to resist it, to stand up for our rights and to ensure that they understand that we are doing a good job, thank you Mr President

MR KING: Thank you Mr President. I guess I welcome the opportunity of debating this matter. I think it is important to discuss from time to time our relationship with Australia and in fact to focus some attention on some of the matters which are putting a strain on that relationship. It is also an opportunity Mr President for me to make some comment on some nonsensical remarks that were made in the local press about me in relation to this same matter. I first want to say that contrary to the inferences contained in the newspaper at the last weekend I'm not in bed with Warren Snowdon. I would consider that to be a most unexciting prospect. I do consider that his remarks were ill times and ill considered and I don't feel in any way that I should sit here and defend Mr Snowdon however, like Mrs Lozzi Cuthbertson I think it is fair to say that his remarks about a review of arrangements shouldn't be looked at in isolation from his overall remarks about Norfolk Island and Labour Party policy on external territories. I think each of the Members sitting around this table Mr President including myself advocated at election time the continuation of the existing self government arrangements for Norfolk and the existing association with the Commonwealth and in doing so I would expect that each of us acknowledge that the Commonwealth government has a role. None of us Mr President can possibly sit here and say that they didn't expect that the Commonwealth role included an oversight function and the possibility of Commonwealth pressure or criticism if we were headed in the wrong direction. That of course I acknowledge is different from what a review of arrangements might contemplate but it also acknowledges that there exists within some areas of the Labour Party and indeed parts of the coalition, the feeling that Norfolk Island should be fully integrated into Australia. The same feeling exists incidentally Mr President among a significant proportion of our own community and many in our own community find some comfort, some solace in the fact that if we fail in self government that Australia is there to pick up the pieces and I think we would be fooling ourselves if we denied that those feelings in fact exist nevertheless Mr

President, integration as explained quite succinctly in the policy statement doesn't form part of either the Australian Government policy or in fact coalition policy. What we have to do to ensure that those policies don't change is to perform. I think it appropriate for us to argue our points of view from time to time. Very much so, that is consistent with our obligations under the Norfolk Island Act and our obligations to our constituents but I suggest further Mr President that it is irresponsible and risky to ignore long standing commitments and undertakings that we have given. I have over a number of years often been critical of the performance of self government in Norfolk Island, even as a member of this House. I've called on Members to assess the value or the benefits of self government for the average man and women in the street. What have they got out of it. I've been critical Mr President of the regressive and inequitable nature of our taxation regime and the regular and constant depletion of our reserves. I've also been critical of the lack of objectivity and planning in crucial areas of government. I can recall federal ministers from both sides of the House, Ellicott, McVeigh, Uren in the early days of self government sitting in this room and making statements in one place or another calling on the government to identify, develop and implement community plans. To have a look at our medium and long term infrastructure requirements and plan our capital expenditure. Fifteen years later we still don't have a plan so I can't concede Mr President that the concerns expressed by the Commonwealth are in fact ill founded. What we all have to do is accept that we have the ability and the opportunity under our self government arrangements to deal with the concerns of the Commonwealth, and they are not concerns about which we are uncomfortable. We have all expressed our desire to deal for example with the social issues of access to justice, domestic violence and administrative decision review, consumer protection and the like. They're not new things to us and a number of us around this table have indicated a willingness to get on and address those things. We may not be signatories in our own right Mr President to international human rights instruments but as a democratic society in a western world surely we must embrace the principles that are set out in those instruments. Now having said that, I think we simply have to get on and deal with the issues in our own way. My assessment following my discussions with officials and parliamentarians in Canberra is that every assistance will be given to allow that to happen. I don't believe there is any threat of integration at the moment but I stress Mr President that we must perform

MR ADAMS: Thank you Mr President. Just a few more short words to cap this off. I agree with Mr King in his closing statement where he says we have to get on with issues in our own way. That is precisely the guts of what my former statement was about. I believe we have to confront and fix our issues in our own way. Now I agree with Mr King and alot of other members who have indicated that we need good relations with the Commonwealth. It is certainly desirable. It is good for business. It is easier to proceed. It is easier for us to get on with the job however I will not put good relations up at the price of subservience. There is no way that I would allow us, on behalf of good relations to have things basically put upon us that is not in keeping with our agenda as we progress. Now if there is somebody at a Parliamentary Conference, and say Hobart in this case, who is out to impress, that is there agenda. They're out to impress - don't do it at our expense. There's a point Mrs Cuthbertson brought up regarding welfare of mainland residents and a suggestion by Warren Snowdon that perhaps the welfare of residents or people on Norfolk Island are not up to the same level of mainland residents. I would like Mrs Cuthbertson and Warren Snowdon to indicate whether those residents live at Redhill or in the Red Centre. I think there is a substantial difference in the standard between these two. I agree that there is probably no hidden agenda from the Minister. It may well have been a flippant remark. I still maintain it was not appropriate and I would ask people like him in his position to be more careful next time

MRS ANDERSON: Thank you Mr President. I would just like to comment that

during the recent visit of the members of the Law Reform Commission and the Attorney General's Office they seemed very keen on going through their check list to make sure that people on Norfolk Island had all the lurks and purks that people on the mainland have. I think it's very important that we make clear to them although we cannot tick all the boxes we are looking after our community in our own way and I don't think that we have to have all the benefits and advantages that Australian people have called by the same name they are called by in Australia just so long as our people are being protected and looked after to the best of our ability

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Any final debate? If there is no further debate Honourable Members then I will seek a motion that discussion be now concluded if we are at that stage

MR ADAMS: I so move

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr Adams. I will put that question

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Thank you. Discussion has now concluded on that matter

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

MR PRESIDENT: I report the following message from the Office of the Administrator Message No 76 from the Administrator advising that on 27 September 1994 he declared his assent to the Postal Services (Consequential Amendments) Act 1994 which was Act No 20 of 1994; and the Indictable Offences Procedures Act 1994 which was Act No 21 of 1994. Dated the 27th September 1994 Alan Kerr, Administrator

MR PRESIDENT: Reports from Standing or Select Committees. No we move then to Notices Honourable Members

NOTICES

NO 1 - PUBLIC SERVICE ORDINANCE 1979 - EXTENSION OF APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

MR KING: Mr President I move that this House recommends to His Honour the Administrator that, in pursuance of section 8 of the Public Service Ordinance, he vary the terms and conditions of the appointment of Eric Roy Mitchell as Chief Administrative Officer as determined by the Deputy Administrator on 26 March 1993 by, in item 1 of the Schedule (Period of Appointment), omitting the words '2 years' and substituting '2 years and six months'. Mr President Members will be aware that under the provisions of the Public Service Ordinance the Chief Administrative Officer of the Norfolk Island Administration is appointed by the Administrator on the advise of the Government and following a resolution of the Legislative Assembly. On the 26th March last year Mr Eric Roy Mitchell was appointed for a two year term. The Government has been very pleased with the quality of Mr Mitchell's stewardship over the Public Service and his wise counsel in matters of policy. Accordingly we were delighted when Mr Mitchell agreed to a request from the Government to stay on for at least a further six months from his intended original departure date. The effect of this motion is to vary Mr Mitchell's original contract by extending his term to October 1995 and I would commend this motion to the House

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr King. Debate Honourable Members. There being no debate Honourable Members I put the question which is that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it. That motion is agreed thank you

FIXING OF NEXT SITTING DAY

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: I move that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday 23 November 1994 at 10 am

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Cuthbertson. That is the fourth Wednesday isn't it. Any comments or discussion in respect of that proposal? Then I put the question that that motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. That date is agreed

ADJOURNMENT

MRS SAMPSON: Mr President I move that the House do now adjourn

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that the House do now adjourn. Any adjournment debate?

MRS SAMPSON: Thank you Mr President. I've got a paper here which I will read and if you will bear with me I will refer back to a paper which I got hold of at the recent seminar. The role of the back bencher is my paper here. The role of the back bencher is always a contentious one and largely depends on how it is handled by both the person concerned and by the perception of the Executives. In the Fourth Assembly which was between 1986 and 1989, the non executive members all had areas of interest and this resulted in the work load, although not the responsibility being spread over the nine members. Although there were often disagreements and differences of opinion between the back bencher and the Executive to whom that member reported, at least the non executive member felt that he/she was making a contribution to the overall government of the Island and was earning one's salary. This arrangement was suggested at the first committee meeting of this Assembly but was quickly rejected, the reason being given that there were too many personal conflicts involved - I suspect that power sharing was not to be contemplated. It has now become apparent that the willingness to work and any expertise that the non executive members may have is being under utilised albeit that we have offered to assist in areas where we felt competent. Mr King makes many pointed reference to "The Executive" "My Government" and "My Ministerial Colleagues" and apparently wishes the back benchers didn't exist as they are only a hindrance to the process of "His Government". Mr Bennett has accused us of "grandstanding" by using the "Question Without Notice" time and comments that we don't take much interest in debates. I suspect that this comment comes about because, if there is little debate, some of the Executives don't have an opportunity of "grandstanding" themselves. I have read all of Hansard available since the commencement of this Assembly, and apart from the Budget sessions, the work has mainly been tidying up loose ends left from previous Assemblies and little else of a controversial nature. As I had some problems with a few Budget items and, not only criticised them in debate but voted against the Appropriate Bill, I was then accused of "irresponsibility" so obviously the back bench is damned if it does or damned if it doesn't. Nine members were elected to this Assembly, and as one chooses not to enter into debates, this leaves us with eight effective members on the floor of the House - four executives and four non executives and this leads

me to the subject of Committees. At a recent Seminar I attended, an interesting paper was given by a New Zealand delegate on "Select Committees and the Executive" and I'll present quote from some portions of that paper. By way of a little background information, New Zealand has a unicameral Parliament and the Select Committee system would appear by the members as being parallel to a Lower House whilst the Executives are acting as an Upper House of Review - this New Zealand committee system was referred to by some other delegates - all Australian ones I think - as a "New Zealand disease" so it obviously does not find favour in a bicameral system where the Executives can come under scrutiny. We have three independent committees where that do not change with each election, namely, Social Services, Immigration and Building board, so they do have a voice that does not necessarily reflect the incumbent Minister's thinking. Both the Tourist Board and the Health Advisory Committee are hand picked by the relevant Minister so independence here must be questionable. The internal committees such as the Business and House Committees are under the control of the President, and, as such, rocking the boat has been definitely discouraged, in other words, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be etc. To return to the New Zealand paper and some of its implications, and I will quote - This is Select Committees and the Executive, present by Ian Revel who is the National Party Member for Birkenhead in Auckland. "New Zealand subject select committees carry out both legislative and scrutiny functions. All the subject select committees have the power to consider departmental Estimates, review the performance of departments and inquire into the policy, administration and expenditure of departments and non departmental government bodies. The revision of the select committee system in 1985 had as its rationale the strengthening of the accountability of government to Parliament. This was seen as highly desirable given the growth in the range and complexity of government activity and the demand for efficiency, economy and effectiveness in the use of public resources. There was a strong case put for more systematic, comprehensive scrutiny of government activity. The regular and systematic monitoring of the activities of government departments and related organisations in policy implementation, administration and expenditure; and also arising from the regular monitoring of departments, detailed investigations into specific issues over which there may be some concern eg the level of performance in the execution of a particular departmental responsibility. It was not intended that the select committees have unlimited scope. The Standing Orders Committee set out factors which would define and focus the scope of their investigations: the first one was a primary concern for matters in which Parliament has an interest by way of, for example, the appropriation of public money or policy embodied in legislation and two, an emphasis on accountability. There are two other clauses there which do not affect this Government. The Business Committee also believed that greater emphasis should be placed on select committee reports to the House. It was suggested that they be debated when the Government's response was tabled in the House. Since 1985 Ministers have not generally been members of select committees. This gives committees a degree of independence from the Executive and encourages effective scrutiny of government activity. Clearly it is important that committees be free of ministerial influence for their scrutiny work. Most select committees have had little time for inquiring into any issues in depth. A few significant inquiries have been conducted and committees have used their inquiry power to procure information on various issues. I am taking select parts out of this paper which I have marked so members are quite welcome to have the paper. Select committee inquiry reports are presented to the House without debate and are set down for consideration next sitting day. The Government is required to respond to a select committee's recommendations in a report on an inquiry by tabling a report in the House within 90 days of the select committee's report being tabled." Now the paper is there and I will leave it but I will not table it. As is now evident, much of this paper is quite relevant to our situation here and, whilst four non executive members cannot be in all places at once and cannot be privy to all executive deliberations at least their continued presence on Committees that meet at regular intervals and can fulfil some of the functions outlined would be

perceived by the electors of Norfolk that we did have a role to play in this Assembly and we did earn our money. I have always decried the waste of resources, time and money, none more so when it is all paid for from the public purse. I intend to pursue this matter over the next few months and Committees that could be formed are Public Accounts, Public Works, Primary Industry and Environment - the latter being particularly important one in view of current matters and I make a comment here that the non executive members were given less than 48 hours to comment on a 110 page Preliminary Draft Plan of Management for the National Park, Botanic Garden and Phillip Island when there was apparently one available copy for perusal and its whereabouts were unknown at the time the direction was issued although it had been in existence for over two months. I also add that over the past six months this Assembly has been in existence, liaison between the Executive members and the back bench has not been good, and, although we have access to Executive Meeting minutes and correspondence it is apparent that information is withheld from us, either deliberately or from a disregard of reasonable communication, thus curtailing our ability to enter into meaningful decisions, either in or out of the House. In conclusion Mr President I have given this paper to Mr Adams and Mrs Andersson who saw it before I read it and Mr Bates before he left had made some comments that he wished the non executive members to have meetings on a regular basis so when I use the word "we" I am encompassing the other three members of the back bench thank you

MR KING: Mrs Sampson has apparently excluded you from these arrangements Mr President which concerns me a little since you are also a member of this House and indeed I guess there have been some occasions on which it has been desired that you make a greater contribution but nevertheless you are a member of this House and a full participant. Well. What do I say. I'm a little bit taken aback by some of the comments of Mrs Sampson. Earlier on in the life of this Assembly at an informal chat over a couple of beers Mrs Sampson accused me of espousing the principles of communism and I said Mrs Sampson you have it all wrong. Now why don't you go away Mrs Sampson and find where I have made these espousals and come back and show members so you can prove that you are right and I am wrong. Mrs Sampson hasn't done that of course because she was unable to find such espousals and I would call on her again to find any reference I have made or I have used to the term "my government". I have never on any occasion put myself up on a pedestal of that nature. That is a totally ludicrous suggestion. Pretentious. I am not a pretentious person. I don't regard my.. or the government as being my government. I have never used such expressions in my life. I have certainly made an attempt to have the backbenchers involved in certain things and in fact I have done so with Mrs Sampson. I can recall talking to Mrs Sampson in the confines of my office during which she asked whether I had anything that she might do. Well I think I gave Mrs Sampson an extensive list of questions in relation to the Review of the Public Service Ordinance, and I gave Mrs Sampson a letter saying that she might turn her mind to aspects of the Immigration Law and Policy which was under review and provide me with some comments either oral or in writing. Now in respect to the first matter indeed Mrs Sampson did reply but I must with all respect say it was very very very scant. I mean I certainly was looking for more than simply yes/no answers but nevertheless perhaps Mrs Sampson has more to say to me on that particular matter. I certainly haven't received any comments either oral or in writing in respect of the review of the Immigration Policy. We have made an attempt as a Government to ensure that the back benchers are informed on the content of executive committee deliberations, in terms of making available the minutes and the agenda of such meetings, there is a filing system which I concede falls down sometimes, but that system is designed to ensure that copies of our correspondence are placed in certain files so that the ordinary members have access to them so that they can inform themselves on the matters that the executives are dealing with. Now I don't know to what extent those members avail themselves of those facilities but the facilities certainly exist. I also have a belief in the use of the Select Committee provisions. The difficulty here in Norfolk Island is

that we have limited resources and we want to be very careful that we don't tax those limited resources but Mrs Sampson, like any other member of this House has the facility to bring forward a motion to form a Select Committee just as Mr Adams did successfully and I look forward to seeing the substance of those motions brought forward undoubtedly by Mrs Sampson in the future

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON: If Mrs Sampson feels that the back benchers are being left out then we need to do something about it. I think it is essential for everyone's talents and commitments to be utilised. I'm feeling a little defensive because at the very beginning I said to everyone of the back benchers, is there anything on my portfolio that you are interested in, would you like to be involved. Mr Adams immediately indicated his interest in the Employment Act and we have been working on a Review of that Act and he certainly has been making a very valuable input and will continue to do so because we haven't quite finished. Mrs Sampson herself has become involved in the Domestic Violence Committee and if she is interested in any other aspect of my portfolio I would be delighted to have her involved in more ways but I think it is something that if this is how people are feeling we need to look at it and do something about it. Apart from that and suggestions in the paper that Mrs Sampson read perhaps implementing some of those suggestions might be worthwhile, but yes, we need to be accountable, we need to be available, how we can improve it I'm really very keen to hear

MRS ANDERSON: Thank you Mr President. Mr President as I'm sure Mr King will agree I am very green in matters politic and I would welcome any opportunity to learn and assist in the government of Norfolk Island and I would welcome any initiatives that might be taken along the lines that Mrs Cuthbertson suggests thank you

MR ADAMS: I, like Mrs Sampson, have some concerns that information derived from the Old Military Barracks is perhaps not as good as could be. I don't really intend to apportion blame perhaps one way or the other. I can see a fault perhaps in that lack of information might equally be apportioned perhaps to myself as to the executives but I'll pick up on a point that was mentioned by Mrs Sampson and prior to this on some other occasion by Mr King, I think Select Committees certainly do have a worthwhile function here, I don't believe to date they have been properly utilised, going back to what I said in the Warren Snowdon point, I think one of our problems is actually conceding that we have areas where we can do better and one way of doing that is ensuring that we have correct planning procedures in place for medium and long term and that's in a lot of areas, primary industries and as Mr Sampson has indicated, environment is certainly a leading area where we can do things better. We can put things in place and I think select committees as mentioned by the two members are an excellent way of doing it. As to whether or not someone is a communist or not, I really don't give two hoots. I think under the system we run which is a democratic system you can be what you like. I have no points that way. That is all I have to say Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you. Any final participation in the adjournment debate. Honourable Members the question is that the House do now adjourn

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it therefore Honourable Members this House stands adjourned until Wednesday the 23rd November 1994 at 10.00 in the morning.

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