

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 SPEAKER Thank you Honourable Members. I firstly ask if there are any Condolences this morning? Mrs Anderson

MRS ANDERSON Thank you Mr Speaker. It is with great regret that this House records the death of Blanche Byers Kurtz at the Norfolk Island Hospital on Friday, 25th August. Bidy, as she was affectionately known, was born at Coonamble, New South Wales on 17th October 1919. She was the youngest child of Ellen Elizabeth Fisher and Albert George Fisher. She had one brother Geoff Fisher who predeceased her and a sister, Belle Whytt, living on Bribie Island. Born into a pioneering family, Bidy spent her early years in the Central West of NSW, where she developed her love for and understanding of rural life and this love stayed with her for the remainder of her life. Like so many bush children, bidy was educated initially through the correspondence system and was then sent to Presbyterian Ladies College, Orange, to complete her Secondary education. She trained in child care at Norland in Sydney and worked there during the war years, spending some time in Melbourne in the same occupation. Bidy married Gordon William Kurtz of Mudgee in Coonamble on 8th March 1947 following Gordon's return from active service and a period of imprisonment at the hands of the Japanese. They lived on their property "Beverly Downs" near Coolah (NSW) for a number of years until they sold it and came to make their home on Norfolk Island in about 1973. They were granted the privilege of residency status and embraced and enhanced the lifestyle of their new home. They had a nice house in Grassy Road and were very popular with a wide circle of friends, while supporting community activities. Being a country girl, Bidy, naturally was very much involved with equestrian events, particularly in the earlier years of her life on Norfolk. She was also a member of Red Cross and will always be remembered for her "concoctions" as she entered into the competitions of the "Lady with the prettiest Hat" at the Red Cross Melbourne Show luncheons. She had a great sense of humour. Bidy and Gordon were denied the blessing of children. For the last few months Gordon's ill health meant that they were forced to live separate lives as he is now living in a retirement home for ex-service personnel at Narrabeen, Sydney. Bidy was a great correspondent, and had many friends all over the world. They will be much saddened to hear of her death, as are her many friends on Norfolk. To Bidy's husband, Gordon, her sister Belle Whytt, her niece Priscilla Low of Bribie Island, uncle Len Fisher of Narramine, nephew David Whytt of Warren and sister-in-law Carmel, widow of Geoff, and all Bidy's other relatives and friends, this House conveys its deepest sympathies.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Anderson. Honourable Members, as a mark of respect to the memory of Bidy Kurtz, I would ask that all Members stand in their places for a period of silence. Thank you Honourable Members

Presentation of Petitions

MR SPEAKER Petitions. Are there any Petitions?

Notices

MR SPEAKER Notices? Are there any Notices?

Questions without Notice

MR SPEAKER Questions without Notice? Are there any Questions without Notice? Mr Bates.

MR BATES Thank you Mr Speaker. My first question is to Mrs Lozzi-Cuthbertson who has responsibilities for Education. Could the Minister explain the situation regarding the continued employment of the Headmaster.

MRS CUTHBERTSON Thank you Mr Speaker. The Headmaster of the Norfolk Island Central School will continue in his present position until the end of his normal three year contract which expires at the end of 1995 and I had, however, earlier asked him to stay for an extra year outside of normal immigration arrangements to help me with what might be a possible year of transition at the Norfolk Island School. I have since withdrawn that offer and Mr Walsh will be finishing in his position at the end of the this year.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Further questions without notice.

MR BATES Thank you Mr Speaker. A further question for Mrs Cuthbertson who has responsibilities for the Public Service. Recently the Minister mentioned that she intended to restructure the Public Service Ordinance. Could she explain what this means.

MRS CUTHBERTSON Thank you Mr Speaker. I think restructuring probably was an incorrect word if I used that. What is intended is to review the Ordinance. Many comments have been made by people who work under its direction, under its control as to the inadequacies of some sections of the Ordinance and I have proposed that once the new CAO is in place and has found his feet so to speak in his position a committee should be formed comprising the CAO, hopefully myself as well, any member of this Assembly who might be interested, but certainly members of the Public Service Association and will consider who else perhaps could be involved and we will work through the Ordinance together, look at what functions and what doesn't function, look at other Ministers and the previous CAO, the present CAO I mean to say, suggestions where things should be looked at and work out what amendments should be put to this House in due course.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Further questions. Mr Bates.

MR BATES Thank you Mr Speaker. A question for Mr King, Minister for Finance and responsible for Electricity. Can the Minister explain the situation regarding supply of electricity to residents in areas not covered by the present network.

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker. I am happy to. The present situation is as discussed informally among Members in recent times is that consumers who, or connection to remote properties is at the consumer's expense. That is the situation which has existed for some decades as far as I am aware and indeed a situation which exists in other jurisdictions. At our recent meeting there was a clear expression by a number of Members that the Policy ought to be revised and I have taken that expression on board. At this point in time I cannot offer any timetable as to when that review or revision, if any, may take place. But of course it includes a very close examination of potential costs. I would be unwilling as to, Mr Speaker, implement any changes without being fully and properly aware of the cost implications.

MR BATES Thank you Mr Speaker. On the basis of costs, how does the Minister justify the expenditure over half a million dollars on electricity reticulation for which no additional electricity can be expected and yet deny residents access to this service.

MR KING I am absolutely unaware of the circumstances to which Mr Bates refers. If he wants to be more explicit I might be able to answer it. Having had the responsibility of Electricity for only a few weeks, I doubt very much

MR BATES The undergrounding through Burnt Pine Mr Speaker.

MR KING The underground in Burnt Pine. Well I understand that is an integral part of the beautification of Burnt Pine. It was removal of telegraph poles and in fact catering for future electricity consumption beyond that area by laying down of the high tension cables. I can't remember the extent to which it caters for future growth Mr Speaker, but it's quite substantial.

MR BATES A supplementary question then Mr Speaker. Does the Minister hold with the view that Norfolk Island is firstly the home of its residents and secondly a tourist destination.

MR KING To the extent that that's relevant to what appears to be a debate, yes.

MRS ANDERSON Thank you Mr Speaker. I have a question for Mr Christian as Minister for the Environment. At the May sitting of the House you advised that an options paper was being developed which would explore the possibility of allowing certain fruits to be imported into Norfolk Island. At the time you envisaged that this paper would be ready for discussion in June. Can the Minister please advise the status of this option.

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I am still awaiting advice from the relevant sections of the Administration about suitable places from where fruit maybe imported without threat to our environment. I have also given instructions to the Legislative Counsel to prepare a short Bill to amend the Plant and Fruit Diseases Ordinance 1959 to implement the import of specified fruits into Norfolk Island provided the Executive Member has declared the particular fruit and provided he or she has also specified the origins of the fruit. In doing this the Executive Member will of course have to satisfy himself or herself of the disease free status of the fruit and the exporting region. I hope that this Bill can be introduced in the October Assembly Meeting. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Further questions. Mrs Anderson.

MRS ANDERSON Thank you Mr Speaker. I have a question for Mr King as Minister with responsibility for Telecommunications. A private individual recently put forward a proposal to install and operate a AMPS Standard Mobile Cellular phone on Norfolk Island. Can the Minister please advise what progress has been made on this proposal.

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker. There has been very little progress been made on that particular proposal. I should say that that proponent has been responded to in terms of our letter. In fact the interim response firstly and a second response, the second response has suggested, has said, that the Administration itself is presently looking at the pros and cons of a Cellular Mobile network for Norfolk Island and I should stress that it is not an interest which simply arose because the private sector expressed an interest. It's an interest which has coincided or existed prior to that expression being made. So in interests of the Telecommunications Undertaking we, the Norfolk Island Government or Administration will be satisfying itself firstly on whether it ought to be operating a Mobile Cellular network and a response in those terms has been supplied to that person.

MR SPEAKER

Further Questions without Notice. Mrs Anderson

MRS ANDERSON Thank you Mr Speaker. I have a question, I am not sure whether I should have addressed this to Mrs Cuthbertson as Minister responsible for Public Service or whether I address it to Mr King but I will try Mr King anyway. Can the Minister please, in his responsibility for the Government Business Enterprises, can the Minister please give a brief outline of the roll and responsibilities of the new Commercial Manager.

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker. I am happy to take that question on board although I don't have the executive responsibility for the Public Service but Mrs Lozzi-Cuthbertson has just given me a nod. Yes indeed the Commercial Director has commenced his employment within the Administration and Mr Muchsin Russ and indeed he is here in the Chambers with us today and I say hello to him. Mr Speaker, he is responsible for the efficient oversight and operation of the business enterprises and over the last few weeks I understand that he has been familiarising himself with those different undertakings. Another important aspect of the Commercial Director's position statement is that he is to consider areas where the enterprises are under-utilized or where there are opportunities for the Administration. In this regard the officer will have an entrepreneurial role and I am confident that the person we have recruited has the necessary experience and flair. Finally, Mr Speaker, the Commercial Director will be a principal economic advisor to the Government and will provide briefings and support in that important direction and if I can dwell on that particular aspect of his duties just for a moment I would like to expand a little, just to illustrate how Mr Russ is going to be a very, very busy man. Under that broad heading of economic development generally, as I mentioned earlier, he has responsibility for oversight of the Government business ventures and involvement including the preparation of business and strategic plans. Many of which we regretfully we haven't had for many years or forever in some cases. Additionally assistance in the promotion and marketing of agricultural and horticultural products for export consumption, the design and establishment of national accounts for Norfolk Island defining GMP, GNI and other economic indicators. So that's a particularly important aspect of his work and one which I hope he will be giving some priority to because we have been without objective data on which to base our decisions, also the provision of information that would be investors in Island business activities, employment creation programs, negotiation of agreements in Telecommunications and other fields involving commercial considerations, encouragement of a cost recovery and user pays regime for some Administration services, review, for example, of the cargo handling and lighterage situation and further development of those arrangements. So, Mr Speaker, Members will see that he is indeed going to be a very busy man and I am optimistic that the Assembly's decision to allocate funds for the post of Commercial Director will be justified by performance and by results.

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Speaker. A question to Mr Christian, Minister for Broadcasting. I have been approached on a couple of occasions and I have a letter to back up the request for the reintroduction of the ABC Radio Station JJJ to be rebroadcast on Norfolk Island. Could the Minister investigate and perhaps instigate the reintroduction of that service please.

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd be more than happy to explore the possibility of having that program reintroduced with the management of the Radio Station.

MR SPEAKER

Further Questions without Notice.

MRS SAMPSON Thank you Mr Speaker. One to Mr Christian as Minister for the Environment although this might not be environmental matters. Is the Minister aware of the damage to the Cascade Jetty and if so what has been done about it.

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Yes I have been advised of some deterioration of the concrete within the Cascade Pier, including cracking which is consistent with damage by fire. Mr Speaker, In January this year a Royal Australian Navy vessel visited Norfolk Island for a brief visit and I am advised that some members of the crew, who were ashore overnight, lit a bonfire on the Pier, using as fuel some hardwood pallets. It appears that this fire has led to the damage which is now evident. I have written to the Administrator asking him to pass on the situation to the Navy and advising that an amount of compensation, hopefully, equivalent to the replacement of Cascade Jetty will be sought.

MRS SAMPSON Thank you Mr Speaker. Any if I may just make a comment, well done Mr Christian. One to Mrs Cuthbertson, could the Minister give an update on the progress of the Healthcare Private Scheme.

MRS CUTHBERTSON Thank you Mr Speaker. We now have all of the information we require. It has been discussed by the MLAs. A paper for circulation to the community is being drafted and will be submitted before it is circulated to the MLAs so that the community then will be consulted as to whether they are interested in such a scheme and hopefully will post attachment reply either at the Post Office in a box that will be made available or here down at the Administration indicating whether they would like to take up such a service. Given the kind of response we receive then we can proceed to the next stage of costing the system depending on the numbers who take it up.

MRS SAMPSON Thank you Mr Speaker. On another subject, still to Mrs Cuthbertson, has any decision been made about the introduction of the bankruptcy legislation.

MRS CUTHBERTSON Thank you Mr Speaker. No decision has been made as I mentioned sometime earlier the question of introducing our own bankruptcy legislation here on Norfolk Island creates all sorts of problems with regards to the cost, the size of the kind of legislation that would be required and the cost involved in keeping it updated. Alternatives are being looked at and the Crown Solicitor is preparing a paper for attention of MLAs suggesting another means of doing it and then it will be up to Members to decide whether we should progress along those lines or not.

MRS SAMPSON Thank you Mr Speaker. A final question of mine to Mr King. Has the Minister received any definitive answer to the problem of the stabilisation of the Cascade Cliff and perhaps Mr Christian's comment about the Australian Navy paying for the Jetty might extend to the Cliff. The problems of the stabilisation of the Cascade Cliff.

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker. I am not sure whether it can be called a definitive answer, but indeed the question has been progressed in recent weeks as Members are aware. We have had a specialist engineer geologist over looking at the cliff face. There is a proposal which Members are aware is in or can be called loose form at this point in time. I have received some papers in recent days which will result in a formal proposal being put before Members to proceed with the benching of the cliff face with our first priority being, of course, to ensure safety in the area, the second priority or second objective, of course, is that it will produce an amount of quarriable rock for our crushed rock needs over many years. So I am hopeful, Mr Speaker, that that matter can be given some, over the next month and if it is necessary, I'm not sure that it is absolutely necessary, to come to this Chamber to proceed, but certainly by the time of the next Meeting, I'm hopeful that decisions will have been made which will result in that job getting underway, but whether it's a definitive answer no one really knows.

MR SPEAKER Further Questions without Notice.

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Speaker. A question to Mr King, the Minister for Tourism. I have been made aware, whether rightly or wrongly, that the Norfolk Island's Marketing Manager, Mr Bob Doyle who is our full time Marketing Manager, has taken on the position of Marketing Manager for Lord Howe Island. Do you think that that's appropriate that he has taken on Lord Howe as well as Norfolk Island. Do you think there is any sought of conflict of interest in there and firstly, I guess, what I'm asking is it true and do you have any concern about it.

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker. In all circumstances I would shy away from talking about individuals in the House. I don't regard Mr Doyle, the Marketing Manager as a public servant, he knows, well he's a consultant to the Bureau which is a separate statutory entity and on this particular issue, maybe it does need some airing. Firstly I should say that he is not the Bureau's full time Marketing Manager, absolutely and categorically he is not, we have always made it aware to anyone who is interested that he is a part time employee or consultant. He works for us on approximately a half time basis. It is understood, in the Bureau and by myself, that we simply can't afford a full time Marketing Director of that calibre. This issue really comes back to cost. The Bureau and myself have known for some time that Mr Doyle was looking for supplementary work and it wasn't until I think maybe about three weeks ago that it was confirmed that he would be taking up a position with Lord Howe in a marketing sense on the basis of two days per month. Now it has been considered very closely by myself. I was, I must say, initially concerned and troubled by it. I have discussed the matter with him at length and with others in the Bureau and I am not uncomfortable with the situation, in fact I have now concluded that I see it being it more as complimentary rather than a conflict situation. Complimentary in this sense that Mr Doyle's involvement in that area coinciding with the reintroduction of regular passenger transport service between Lord Howe and Norfolk Island could well result in a restoration of some five or six percent of our twin Island business which we have enjoyed for many years up until the Seaview disaster. Five or six percent of our business is very, very significant and I believe that Mr Doyle can play a vital role in that. In addition to that, I should say that the operators to Lord Howe Island are a subsidiary of Qantas and that in itself gives our marketing man an entree, as it were, to the Qantas preferred retail network. That in itself is a good point. I understand from principles in the New South Wales Tourism Commission, Tony who is their chief executive that he sees it as being a complimentary posting. Now as well as that, Mr Speaker, I would say as well that it won't result in any decrease in the Norfolk Island work or the Norfolk Island effort undertaken by Mr Doyle. So I hope that makes Mr Smith perhaps feel a little bit more comfortable about it. Sure I think we got to be grown up about these things and say that we have to keep any eye on it but at this point in time I have to again reiterate that I'm comfortable that it is more complimentary than in conflict.

MR BATES Thank you Mr Speaker. A question to Mr Christian responsible for the Environment. Could the Minister give a brief report on the present situation of success or otherwise regarding the green parrot and boobook owl breeding program.

MR CHRISTIAN Mr Speaker, I can't give a definitive statement at the time. I think I can say that the green parrot program in particular has been running for eleven or twelve years. It's been a massive learning process, results have been extremely slow but nevertheless still encouraging. The bird is still endangered not as close to extinction as it was before the program was started. There have been improvements in recent times made to the aviary area up there to largely increase the area available for the birds in captivity. There has been a substantial effort to put a number of artificial nesting sites out into the wider

MR SPEAKER Any further Papers to present

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON Thank you Mr Speaker. In accordance with paragraph 41(2)(a) of the Interpretation Ordinance 1979 I table the Employment Amendment Regulations 1995

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Any further Papers to present this morning

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker, I table the Financial Indicators for the month of August 1995 and move that they be noted

MR SPEAKER The question is that those Papers be noted, Mr King

MR KING Mr Speaker these indicators have been circulated among Members. I move the question so that they have an opportunity to debate them. Just by way of a very brief comment let me say that these indicators are for the first two months of the financial year. Traditionally low months in terms of economic activity. I don't propose to make any grave analysis of these except to say that things are proceeding reasonably well, the financial institutions levy has been boosted somewhat by some increased deposit activity in the banks. The other taxes area which indicates 69% of the pro rata revenue for that period, members should understand that some of the taxing measures are done on the basis of levy periods, for example the accommodation levy, the first levy date has not yet fallen due and won't be falling due until the end of August so they wouldn't be reflected in these figures. On the expenditure side we are looking at an overall total of 83% pro rata planned expenditure for that period so other than that Mr Speaker I have nothing at this point of the financial year to say on those figures

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Any further contribution on the debate that that paper be noted? I put the question

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it, thank you

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker. I table the inbound passenger statistics for August 1995 and move that the Paper be noted

MR SPEAKER Thank you. The question is that that Paper be noted

MR KING Thank you Mr Speaker, some very brief comments. These figures indicate a downward trend. The figures for the month of August and indeed for the financial year to date are down on the tourist visitor figures for the corresponding period of last year. That ought not to be seen as any great concern at this point in time. I know I emphasise from time to time the brighter side of things rather than the darker side of things but let me just stress that whilst they are down on last years figures, last years figures were all time record figures. For example, August last year was up around 49% so we are comparing from a very high base. It is probably more appropriate for members to look for example at the long term averages for August and you would find that the figures for this August just passed in 1995 were about 4 1/2 - 5% greater than the long term average for August, taken over a ten year period, so there is no great room for concern. I'm quite comfortable about the way the visitor statistics are holding up for the year Mr Speaker, and the load factors for the remainder of this calendar year are looking reasonably well and I remain confident of a good overall result for the financial year

MR SPEAKER Thank you, Mr Smith

continue for another six months, it could continue for another twelve months

MR KING I fear I must respond. I think there is little I can say to ease Mr Smith's concerns and I'm grateful to hear his concerns, and I'm grateful to hear his views about tourism and tourism performance since he is a former tourism Minister and it is good to have that sort of expertise around. Sure, compare apples with apples and not with oranges and all that. I never thought for one moment that we could sustain the regrowth that we experienced in the first six months of 1994. It would be irresponsible to the community to suggest that that might happen, it would be irresponsible to the environment to hope that it would happen. How could we sustain 30-40% increase every year, year in year out. We simply can't do it and it is foolish to expect that it could happen. Nevertheless, I can reflect back on what happened during that period which gave us those nice numbers and the overall result for the financial year ending June 1995 was mainly something like 5% up in tourist numbers on the year before. It would have been nice to have a bit more but I've said time and time again that I would not be attracted to a continued annual growth rate of 15-18% that we experienced every year right up to the mid eighties. I mean it is just grossly irresponsible in my view to aspire to that. It would be lovely in terms of economy and everyone would have jobs but you would have tourists running all over the place and the infrastructure and environment would be affected adversely but I hear Mr Smith's concerns and I certainly take them on board and do the best I can to ease them Mr Speaker, although I suspect that that may be somewhat difficult

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Further contributions? The question is that that Paper be noted?

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it, thank you. That Paper is noted. Are there any further Papers

MR KING One more Paper if I may Mr Speaker. I table the report which summarises community comment on the Assembly's tourism policies and move that it be noted

MR SPEAKER The question is that that Paper be noted

MR KING Mr Speaker, this is the last step in the process of reviewing our tourism policies, a process which began in, as I recall, December last year. It is not the final step but it is one of the final steps. I regret that the process has been somewhat inordinately delayed over the last several months for reasons which I needn't go into here. Part of that process included a mail drop some several months ago which invited members of the community to comment on our existing tourism policies which members will recall have been substantially in place since about 1981/82. That invitation Mr Speaker drew attention to all the existing policies, about eighteen of them, a number of them, but it focused on a smaller number of the major policies and sought to stimulate some comment on specific issues and whether those policies have been effective. It is fair to say Mr Speaker that the comments received are many and diverse. Some of the comments spoke in unflattering terms of the Minister which may not surprise a lot of you. Some comments spoke in flattering terms for which I was very grateful and which did not surprise me Mr Speaker. Mrs Anderson whom I thank very very much for the effort and assistance that she has given in putting this together with her computer skills, which I certainly don't have, and a job well done and I am happy to have Mrs Anderson working with me, with a view to bringing forward to this House hopefully at the next meeting, some proposals in respect of the tourism policies and where we might go to for the future. I don't propose to comment in any detail on the community comments, Mrs Anderson may care to as part of the debate, but I

will leave it at that at this moment and foreshadow Mr Speaker that on the next occasion we may be addressing some new tourism policies. I thank the community who responded to this exercise, I think there were some 60 odd responses which in Norfolk terms is reasonably good and I thank those members of the community for taking the time to express their sentiments, kind or unkind, thank you

MRS ANDERSON Thank you Mr Speaker. I commend Mr King for undertaking this survey of the feelings of the community towards our current tourism policies and I also thank him for affording me the opportunity to assist him in collating the responses. The result of the survey is enlightening. The message from the community is that without tourism, Norfolk will not survive. There is little criticism of the existing policies as they are currently worded, however there is a suggestion that several of them should be abolished because they are not so much policies as a statement of the obvious. More prevalent is a call for a review of our tourism strategies to offset the decline in tourist bed nights. As Mr King states in the questionnaire, "an effect of the dramatic reduction in average length of stay is that at the current average stay 33,300 would be required to equal the number of bed nights achieved in 1986/87. When considering the question of whether tourist numbers should be increased a substantial number of respondents answered in the affirmative but I believe that what many were advocating was "more than we are getting now" rather than "more than the maximum stated in existing policy". As well as commenting on existing policies, many of those who returned the questionnaires responded to the invitation to "Have your say" and as Mr King has suggested, made a number of suggestions which I believe the Assembly should consider. Mr Speaker, tourism is virtually Norfolk's only source of income. It requires nurturing and forward planning. Our tourism policies were formulated some fourteen years ago. Are they still appropriate? Do they reflect what Norfolk wants today? In collaboration with the Minister I shall be bringing forward some proposed amendments to our current policies at the next sitting of the House. While I agree that we should look at additional sources of revenue if they present themselves, we should not waste time or resources in trying to find something that may not even exist, however we must encourage private enterprise which is willing to try something new and to take a calculated risk. Any astute businessman will tell you that it is much easier to build on an existing infrastructure to market a recognised product to existing customers than it is to start from scratch with something new and untried. Tourism is our recognised product. It is suitable for the Norfolk context. It is non polluting and provides a wide range of employment opportunities. We have an existing customer base. Let us nurture our tourism industry, carefully plan for sustainable growth, provide secure employment for our people. Mr King has set the ball rolling by undertaking this survey. Let this be the first step towards a brighter economic future for Norfolk Island. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Further contributions? The question then is that this Paper be noted?

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it, thank you. That Paper is noted. Are there any further Papers to present. No

Statements

Are there any Statements? No Statements this morning?

Messages from the Office of the Administrator

MR SPEAKER Honourable Members I have received the following message from the Office of the Administrator. Message No 85. "On the 29th August 1995 pursuant to section 21 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 I reserved the following proposed laws for the pleasure of the Governor-General. The Dangerous Drugs Amendment Bill 1995 and the Poisons and Dangerous Substances Amendment Bill 1995. Dated the 29th day of August 1995, Alan Kerr, Administrator"

Reports from Standing and Select Committees

Any there any Select or Standing Committee Reports? Mrs Anderson, have you any

MRS ANDERSON Mr Speaker as I foreshadowed at the last meeting, Mr Adams who is a member of the Select Committee on Constitutional and Electoral Matters is currently off the island so I will be holding over the tabling of our report until his return

NOTICES

Thank you Mrs Anderson. We have concluded some of the preliminary arrangements for this mornings meeting Honourable Members and we are now at Notices. Mrs Anderson if you would be so kind as to take the Chair

NO 1 - ACHIEVEMENT BY MRS GORDINA BEVERIDGE OF HER 103RD BIRTHDAY

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Mr Buffett, Notice No 1

MR BUFFETT Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I move that this House by this motion, recognises the achievement by Mrs Gordina Beveridge of her 103rd Birthday, and offers her congratulations and the warmest of wishes upon her celebration of this happy event. Madam Deputy Speaker there are two motions which are to come before us this morning which acknowledges achievements by esteemed individuals here in Norfolk Island and this is the first. Mrs Gordina Beveridge within the last week has achieved the grand age of 103 years. She is a Norfolk Islander of the noted Nobbs family and she has made outstanding contributions to this community including being matron of the first Norfolk Island Hospital which was here in Kingston and management contributions to the Norfolk Island Hospital in its subsequent locations. And there are acknowledgements that were made of her various contributions to this community in 1992 which was for her 100th birthday when equally at that time, 100 Norfolk Island oak trees were planted in her honour along New Farm Road. You will note Madam Deputy Speaker that two other Norfolk Islanders have reached 100 years. Jemima Robinson in 1970 and Charlotte Bailey in 1985. Mrs Beveridge has now achieved 103 years. 103 years. It is a wonderful achievement and I do invite members to participate by support of this motion which on the communities behalf, says to Mrs Beveridge, we are proud of your longevity amongst us and wish you well in this the week of your 103rd birthday celebrations

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON Well I will not go on at length Madam Deputy Speaker but I really would like to echo Mr Buffett's good wishes and congratulations to Mrs Beveridge for achieving 103 years which is really quite remarkable and to be as bright and as interesting and as much of an inspiration to her family and to the people who know her, at that remarkable age and I think it is probably an indication of how good life is on Norfolk Island that a number of people are reaching that kind of age and congratulations Mrs Beveridge

MR BATES Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. There is little to be said other than to support Mr Buffett in his initiative on this issue. I would just like to add my personal congratulations to Auntie Gord and to note that two of her nieces have recently arrived on the island to spend a couple of weeks with her and hopefully there are happy times up there near the airport

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Bates. Is there any further debate? No further debate I put the question that that motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you Honourable Members

NO 2 - NAMING OF ROADWAY LEADING TO THE MEMORIAL PARK AND THE GUIDES AND SCOUTS HALLS

We have Notice No 2, and Mr Buffett you have the call

MR BUFFETT Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I move that the roadway (presently unnamed) which leads off Middlegate Road at its northern end and which provides access to those portions of land occupied by The Memorial Park and The Guides and Scouts Halls be named "Faye Bataille Drive", in recognition of her outstanding and continuous contribution to the Norfolk Island Community. Madam Deputy Speaker again, this motion is to acknowledge achievement within Norfolk Island. Fay Norma Bataille, which is the subject of this motion in the naming of the road is a person equally being a Norfolk Islander who has done a number of things, many things within this community of Norfolk Island and I'll just briefly give a summary. She has completed forty years service teaching at the Norfolk Island Central School. She has taught at least three generations of Norfolk Islanders there. She has completed something like forty-five years as Guide Captain in the Norfolk Island Girl Guides Association. She has given a lifetime to the youth and community within Norfolk Island emphasising things, that there are standards to be set, there are standards to be met and individuals should strive to meet them and she has done those things within this Island and has made achievements that no other has been able to do with that sort of encouragement. She has been very active in the Royal Norfolk Island Agricultural and Horticultural Society of which she is presently Vice President, within the Church of England Parish in Norfolk Island in which she had something like in excess of thirty years as its Secretary, she has taught continuously until very recently at the Church of England Sunday School. She has been very active in a whole host of Norfolk Island community activities, from the very young to the somewhat elderly. Having said that I will just mention that the Guide and Scout Hall is on a portion of land up near the school here that we all know about. It was established some years ago now. The road that led to it has been until recently unmade. In the last two or three months there has been activity in that area to present what has now been opened and unveiled and dedicated as a memorial park and during that process we as Members and the Minister in particular who has responsibility for roads has been able to ensure that that road has not necessarily been sealed but has been made and metalled and made very presentable. Very presentable for access to what are two very fine areas now for community activities. Members may well remember that not only all of those activities have been undertaken by Miss Bataille but she has been a prime mover in endeavouring to ensure that that road, that access road, has been brought into good nick, and that has been finally achieved. And so the thought Madam Deputy Speaker is that Miss Bataille's community contribution should be connected with that area. I'm talking about her total community contribution, has connections with that area and that we should acknowledge that here this morning by placing her name on that road and calling it the Fay Bataille Drive. I commend this step to Members

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. Participation Honourable Members

MRS SAMPSON Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I entirely support Mr Buffett with his motion. Myself and my family have been here twenty years. My

children have been to school, have been taught by Miss Bataille. The girls when they were younger were Brownies, also under Miss Bataille's guidance, I think it's fitting that she has a hall named after her and now a driveway going to the hall. It will be a lasting memorial to her, and I don't mean that in any other way, I think a lasting positive contribution to remember her name and I think it's a very positive contribution to put a name on a road. There are negative contributions to this island with names, as I drive around I think of somebody called William Taylor, Dead Rat Lane, but apart from those few negative names that get labelled I think it is only fitting that Fay should have the road leading to her hall called after her, thank you

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Sampson. Further participation Honourable Members

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Again I congratulate Mr Buffett for putting forward this motion. I think it is essential for people who have contributed as much as Miss Bataille has contributed over the years to the welfare of the young people of the island and of the elder as well that their achievement and contribution and dedication should be recognised. A great many people labour in silence and quietly without being noticed. They make a great difference to the kind of community we build and the kind of community that Miss Bataille has made to the community of the island is significant and I think it is wonderful that a roadway will be named after her and it's nice that it's going to a hall named after her and I hope that everyone who drives along that driveway is inspired by the kind of work Miss Bataille has done and perhaps follows in her footsteps

MR BATES Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I can only echo the sentiments of the previous speakers, but speaking back on reflection I think it is interesting how times change. I can recall when Miss Bataille used to teach at the school, her main job was to translate the Norfolk language into English for the young kids first starting school and they couldn't speak English. It's strange how things have turned around completely now, and they are now teaching the language at school and I'm sure Miss Bataille would smile about that and I just bring that up, and support the motion

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I support Mr Buffett's motion before the House today in naming the road after Fay, and I would just like to add a little bit. Mr Buffett has spoken in depth about Miss Bataille, and I call her Miss Bataille quite affectionately, about her achievements. However, one achievement of Fay's that David has not mentioned but one that is important to me, in fact, dear to me, is that of a sporting talent scout. For many years Fay would draft young children starting school, at the Central School, into one of the three sporting houses, Nepean, Norfolk and Philip. Fay's keen eye for talent ensured over the years that her favourite team, Nepean dominated sport at the school for a number of years. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very proud to say that Fay taught me at school, she was one of my first teachers, I'm also proud to say that throughout my entire school life here at the Central School I was part of the Nepean sports team and rose to actually be Vice Captain of that team in the final year at school so Fay I say thank you, and I fully support the naming of this drive after you. I suppose my one regret is that it is not a bit longer, that is, the drive

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. Further participation Honourable Members, then I put the question that that motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Thank you the ayes have it

LEAVE TO INTRODUCE MOTION

Mr King, I understand you want seek leave to introduce a motion which is not on the Notice Paper

MR KING Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker I seek leave of the House to move a motion in respect of the appointment of a new Chief Administrative Officer

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members is leave granted? Yes, leave is granted

NO 10 - APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

MR KING Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I move that this House, under section 8 of the Public Service Ordinance 1979, recommends to His Honour the Administrator that John Patrick Rankin be appointed Chief Administrative Officer with effect from a date determined by the Administrator, on the terms and conditions specified in the Schedule. Madam Deputy Speaker Mr Rankin is forty-four years old and presently a senior executive of the Joint House Department of the Australian Parliament, responsible for Corporate and Parliament Services and Building Management. Previously he has worked in the Department of Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories with oversight of the Indian Ocean Territories and previous again, in the Departments of Education and of Immigration. Mr Rankin has tertiary qualifications in Business Administration Management. He has experience in Senior Public Sector Management, Commercial Management experience, experience in Parliamentary and Executive Government processes and importantly, budget and financial management. All members who had the opportunity of meeting Mr Rankin and his partner, Miss Jill Baker on his visit for interview in the last two and a half weeks. Mr Rankin is able to commence duties at the end of November. To achieve this starting date Madam Deputy Speaker, the present Chief Administrative Officer Mr Roy Mitchell has kindly agreed to extend his present term by six weeks. Now I have a subsequent motion to effect that extension which I will move in a moment, and I commend this particular motion to Members

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr King, participation Honourable Members

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I would like to support the appointment of Mr John Rankin to the position of Chief Executive Officer. All of us who were involved in his selection had the opportunity to hear of his achievement and his abilities and to then get to know him in a little less formal situation, were most impressed with the kind of abilities and experience he will bring to the task and I think we can look forward to having a person who will match the abilities of our present Chief Administrative Officer so that the high standard that he has established will continue. I am grateful to the Chief Administrative Officer Mr Mitchell for his willingness to extend his stay until Mr Rankin can take over and to ensure his smooth transition between Chief Administrative Officers. We have not had that very much in the past and it will be good to have it this time. Anyway, I would like to say I look forward to working with Mr Rankin and I would like to thank Mr Buffett and Mr Mitchell for the way that they conducted the whole process of selection and arrange the interviews etc. and the evaluation process. It all worked so smoothly. It enabled us all to understand exactly what each individual was bringing to the task and to make, I think, a very constructive selection. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Cuthbertson. Further participation Honourable Members. No further debate. I will put the question then. The question then is that the motion be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. Mr King I believe you want to bring forward another motion that is not on the notice paper.

MR KING Madam Deputy President it is necessary again to seek leave of the House to move a motion in respect of the extension of the appointment of the existing Chief Administrative Officer.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is leave granted Honourable Members. Leave is granted Mr King.

MR KING Thank you very much. I would then move that this House recommends to His Honour the Administrator that in pursuance of section 8 of the Public Service Ordinance 1979, he vary as follows 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 and varied by the Administrator on 25 October 1994 in clause 1 Period of Appointment, omit for 2 years commencing on the 19th April 1993 and substitute from 19th April 1993 to 26 November 1995. In clause 4 in respect of gratuity in lieu of superannuation and long service leave omit subclause 4(1) and substitute the following 4(1) the officer shall receive a gratuity payable at the end of the term. The amount of the gratuity shall be a sum equal to the product of multiplying the annual salary payable at the end of the term of a number of years or parts of years enticing the term. Thank you. That's the end of my motion.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Mr King do you wish to speak to your motion.

MR KING Just briefly and to say publicly thank you to Mr Mitchell for agreeing to stay on to ensure that smooth transition. I regret the cumbersome nature of this motion but regretfully that's necessary by statute to proceed along those terms and I would commend the motion.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr King. Participation Honourable Members. There is no participation I would put the question and the question is that the motion be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. We move then to Notice No. 3 appearing on the Notice Paper.

NOTICE NO. 3 - COMPOSITION OF TASK FORCE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE INTRODUCTION OF A GOODS AND SERVICES TAX ON NORFOLK ISLAND

MR BATES Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I seek leave to move the motion appearing on the Notice Paper in my name in the following amended form.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members is leave granted. Leave is granted. Thank you.

MR BATES Madam Deputy President I move that this House agrees (1) that Kevin Ransford Pereira, Norman Dennis Buffett, Ian Ross Mackenzie Anderson and Brian George Bates form a nucleus of the task force which is to consider the matters agreed in the motion of this House on the 23rd August 1995 regarding the establishment of a Goods and Services Tax on Norfolk Island and (2) to enable the

MR BUFFETT Madam Deputy Speaker I would just like to make two points in respect of this motion. The first is that Norfolk Island, obviously does need to search diligently and continue to search diligently for methods to widen its financial base and of course this effort to examine, and I stress Mr Bates has indicated that this is an examination process. It's not necessarily at this time a proposal that this is what should happen. It's to see whether it's a suitable arrangement that may work for us in Norfolk Island. If it turns out to be, of course, if this does have the prospect of widening the financial base within this place and that will be good for us if that was how it was, turned out to be. The second point is just about GST itself. GST, of course, has had a checkered career. We know just recently an election was lost upon it. So you know there are pluses and minuses about all of this. What Mr Bates has stressed to us is that there will be an objective, an objective examination of this particular method a Goods and Services tax to see whether it has suitability for us here in Norfolk Island and if it has suitable points they will be brought forward. Equally he has stressed to us that if there are pitfalls and difficulties, they too will be brought forward. In other words an objective evaluation as to how this might sit here in this place and I think that is a very good idea and Mr Bates deserves compliment as has already been accorded for initiating that and bringing it forward and I support this motion.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. Further participation Honourable Members. There being no further debate, I put the question and the question is that the motion be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you Honourable Members.

NOTICE NO. 4 - CITATION OF LAWS BILL 1995

MR KING Madam Deputy Speaker I present the Citation of Laws Bill 1995 and move that the Bill be agreed to in principle. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker I table the explanatory memorandum. Madam Deputy Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to re-name principal laws made before self-government in 1979 so that they are no longer called "Ordinances" but are re-named "Acts". Ordinances were, of course, a type of delegated legislation made by the Governor-General under the Norfolk Island Act 1957 and its preceding legislation. As Mr Buffett will recall, as a Member of the last Island Council prior to self-government, the law making process here was for proposed Ordinances to be drafted in Canberra and then sent to the Island Council for consideration and any views. The Ordinance was subsequently made by the Governor-General on the advice of the Commonwealth Government. Following self-government in 1979, the Legislative Assembly was established and given power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Norfolk Island. These laws are referred to as Acts. The difference in citation of principal laws applying in Norfolk Island is potentially confusing. Retaining the name "Ordinance" does not reflect the legislative activity of the Assembly over the last sixteen years. For example, since 1979 the Liquor Ordinance has been amended fourteen times by fourteen Acts, and yet it is still called an Ordinance. Similarly the Customs Ordinance 1913 and the Public Service Ordinance 1979 have been significantly amended and they too remain called Ordinances. The Bill contains provisions to make distinctions between Norfolk Island Acts and Commonwealth Acts. It also provides that an instrument or other document, including printed forms, will not be invalid merely because they use the word "Ordinance" instead of "Act". This will enable the Administration to use up old stock. The Bill is expressed to commence on 1st January 1996 which will give time for the relevant officers in the Administration, particularly the Legal Unit, to

re-draft the Legislation Tables and to make necessary changes to the reprinting programme. Madam Deputy Speaker, this legislation should be both uncontroversial and also welcomed by Members of the Assembly. It is, of course, another milestone on Norfolk Island's road to internal self-government and I commend the Bill to the House.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr King. Participation Honourable Members. Mr Buffett.

MR BUFFETT Madam Deputy Speaker I of course applaud any road passage along the road that would lead us to internal self-government. It certainly is one of the things that I habitually now refer to within this Chamber and elsewhere. Just interestingly Mr King has referred to the historical nature of how Ordinances used to be made, that is prior to 1979, when there was a Norfolk Island Council and of course on most occasions Ordinances were brought to the then Council for comment, for endorsement or otherwise but whether the Council endorsed it or whether the Council had another view it didn't always mean that there was a change in the legislation which subsequently went through the Australian Houses of Parliament when it was tabled by the appropriate Minister there and if not disallowed within a certain period of time, of course, became law within this place, Norfolk Island and so you will still find, of course, some relics of Ordinances that were made but were not necessarily made with the concurrence of the elected group, although non-executive and non-legislative elected group, here in Norfolk Island. Not that those pieces of legislation are matter of contention today but the interesting procedures of earlier times may be just worth quoting on this occasion. What is proposed of course is that a common mentature is now used for laws that are in force here in Norfolk Island and, of course, you will know that we now have the capacity in a much wider range of powers to do things legislatively within Norfolk Island that are appropriate for us and that authority has been transferred in many instances from the Commonwealth to us. All very proper and fitting and this new arrangement I think is something that demonstrate that much of that has been done.

MR KING Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that the debate be adjourned and that resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members the question before us is that the debate be adjourned and the resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you very much.

Fixing of the next Sitting Day

MR BUFFETT Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that this House at its rising adjourns until Wednesday 18th October 1995 at 10 o'clock in the morning.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. The question is that this House at its rising adjourns until Wednesday 18th October 1995 at 10 am.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you.

MR CHRISTIAN

Madam Deputy Speaker I move we hold of till later.

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Honourable Members the question before us is as put by Mr Christian. I believe the question before us is the House do now adjourn.

QUESTION PUT

AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. I have omitted to ask for debate on the question. Is there any debate Honourable Members.

MR KING

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I thought I would take this opportunity in the adjournment debate to voice some comments, perhaps some disappointment about matters that was said, quality of the debate perhaps, that importantly the accuracy of the messages that we are transmitting to the community from this forum. Regretfully, Madam Deputy Speaker, I wasn't able to be present at the last Meeting of the House and I missed the opportunity of participating in some fairly interesting debates. I guess immigration quota, minimum wages, state of the economy. Perhaps had I've been here I wouldn't have been as apparently hesitant or reluctant as some Members obviously were in correcting some of the inaccurate statements which formed the foundation of some fates. Madam Deputy Speaker, I certainly don't have any difficulty or problem in Members using this forum to express their opinions, indeed that is what we are here for, but I do take exception to Members basing their arguments and opinions on statements which are totally inaccurate, misleading and sometimes incomplete. We do, after all, have duties of care and obligations, not only to our constituents but to the wider community and believe it or not there are people in fact listen as much as we may think it not the case, but do listen to what we say down here and many of whom hang on our every word as being authority. The immigration quota debate was one such instance. It missed the point entirely, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I hesitate to sound like a know it all, although I am told that I do that pretty well, but I would have thought that an essential part of that debate was to note that the proposed quota was an objective number calculated to give effect to the policy of having a desired growth level of two percent per annum. The policy which was established two years ago and is due to be reviewed in the very near future, therefore the motion brought by Mrs Lozzi-Cuthbertson was in effect a consequential motion. It wasn't an economical initiative and it certainly had nothing what so ever with respect to the Minister to do with the population target of 2,500 by the year 2000. That is simply inaccurate. From reading the debate, which I only did last night, Madam Deputy Speaker it seems that there was a great deal of concern that quota places are not being filled but I would remind Members that such a possible outcome was not over looked with the Assembly set its desired growth rate of two percent in 1993. Prior to that time there was very little objectivity in setting GEP quotas and largely they were concerned with simply catering for those who were already on the queue waiting. So it lacked objectivity and of course, indeed, for a number of years there was in place the CDD scheme (Compensating Declaration Departure - one in one out scheme) which was abolished in 1993 as well.

Obviously the best outcome in respect of GEP quotas is to fill them and to enjoy to gain and to enjoy the economic benefits which might flow from that and I don't deny that that would be the most attractive outcome. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, having in my view lost sight of policies and objectives set two years ago the debate had some further focus on population levels. Presumably as part of the argument for a quota of seventeen and I submit that that was where people, the listening public, really got confused. The population was invariably described as both stagnant and shrinking. One minute is was a higher number which included temporary entry permit holders, the next minute a lower figure which apparently did not include temporary entry permit population. One Member made the extraordinary statement that the total population had increased by 335 over the past six and half years, then said that only 1,290 live here at the present time, representing 58.3

percent of the July 1995 population figure. Madam Deputy Speaker, all that is mythical, totally mythical and if I suggest that it's based on official information that is given to Members or the Minister then I would question the quality of that information and advice very, very seriously and the manner in which it has been interrupted and explained to. To make things worse, Madam Deputy Speaker, and even more confusing, one Member in a later debate made a very clear and categorical announcement that our population had fallen from 2,000 in 1985 to 1,500 in 1995. It took my breath away, I have to say it took my breath away, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I suggest that heaven help the community which listens and often relies on what in this situation has been absolute rubbish. Mr Smith, of course, then seizes on all this to reinforce his view that the population is shrinking and further to bolster his arguments. He misquoted the absent Minister which of course was me and since I was the only Minister that was absent at the time. He quotes me as I end that, referring to the economy, that there is nothing wrong out there, that everything is okay. He even said that I sought to prove it by producing a graph to show how electricity sales were up. Now that's all a bunch of porkys, Madam Deputy Speaker, a total bunch of porkys and it insults my intelligence. Mr Smith's quests last month for information and statistics might now prove somewhat more difficult then it might have been before since I am now very reluctant to provide what is my own personal analysis and statistics and information if Mr Smith is going to treat my information with such content and I very much regret that. Again I take this opportunity to remind Members that we have obligations to the community, to the listening public to report in an accurate and informative sense and we ought to do better in avoiding rubbish and inaccuracies. Thank you very much.

MRS CUTHBERTSON Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I take serious objection to some statements that Mr King has just made. Unfortunately I do not happen to have a copy of Hansard in front of me or exactly what was said that day but I certainly shall study it in detail before making a detailed answer. Let me state, however, that I did not restate the objects of the quota. Because I was only asking for an extension of the quota Mr King had asked for in February and I think I refer to that, that this was the second half of that. What I went on to discuss was how perhaps immigration could be used to assist the revival of the economy if that is a good enough word but certainly to stimulate the economy. It can play a role in that. I mentioned at some length how it can do that, that other studies have demonstrated it and that if we could at least fill the quota that was set ourselves we might in fact liberate a number of people who would like to leave or reasons of all kinds and encourage people who are prepared to spend and revitalise existing businesses and who want to come and allow people who may be sick or may have family ties or other things to pull them away, the opportunity to leave in an orderly and satisfactory fashion. It is not much point having people forced to stay because there are no buyers to their places. It is detrimental to the economy, that is a simple, obvious fact. People come in full of positive ideas. They will spend money, they will invest, they will buy simple items, household goods, new housing, do all sorts of things. All that is good for the economy. That was the import of my comments in general. In the course of those comments I refer to a study of which I could not lay my hands on in the last few minutes of when I arrived in the office and Mr King a brief advice that this might be coming up but there is definitely a study that I have read in detail which looked at the population in Norfolk Island which suggested which would be sensible targets to be reached by the year 2000 and a figure of 2,500 was definitely quoted. It outlined a number of really good reasons of why such population levels would be good for Norfolk Island. A constructive situation with the community would have sufficient numbers to be more self supporting to create more economic activity, more jobs for young people coming out of school and so on. I will certainly find that study before the next meeting. As to objectivity, well perhaps we have different standards of objectivity, but looking at the figures as I did last time, our population has gone down. Our population has gone down since January and February of this year. They are not huge numbers but with the small population base that

we do have here it is significant and we should be concerned and we should be doing something to deal with that problem. The more people leave, the more the Island becomes aware that perhaps there might be something we are not doing. The more people express their feelings about the situation by moving away, the more we should be paying attention I think. Anyway, it is a complicated subject. I do not have the statistics in front of me but I certainly shall come back to them at the next meeting of this House

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Cuthbertson. Mr Smith

MR SMITH Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I think I need to reply to Mike's comments Madam Deputy Speaker. I think Mike's right. Mike, you are totally right that we should be careful what we say in the House. Sure I do believe that there are a number of people who take a lot of notice of what we say. I can assure you there's a lot that don't on the other hand. I'm a little bit surprised Michael that I've been talking to you over the last few weeks since I got elected and I thought we were sort of on the same track of what I've been talking about. I'm a little bit surprised that you have said, that when I said in the last meeting that you had shown me a graph where electricity was up for one example, that is actually true Michael. I remember you showing that to me because I was really quite amazed but my whole interest in getting information, past figures, whether it be tourist numbers, resident population, is purely so we can get a picture of what is happening. I know that there is something wrong out in the community Mike. I think that a lot of the Members here agree with that. They certainly did at the last meeting. I can only go by facts. I don't make things up. I'm a little surprised at your comments about the resident population. I have here a computer printout which I think you've been saying that they are not totally accurate, this is one of the things that was given to me by the Minister, Mrs Cuthbertson, from that last meeting and you can tell me if these figures are wrong, but why are they wrong. In June or July 95 there were something like 1190 residents on island, there were 927 residents off the island. Now I know that 10% of the population is pretty well always off island and 927 residents living off the island, there is something wrong. That is 41%. Those figures have been up around that for quite some time now. If you go back to February 89 on this computer printout 28% of the people were off the island, that is 28, 34, 34, and it's got up to 42, 38, 40%. Those are the sort of figures that I've been trying to get to see if we can pinpoint any sort of a problem. I mean, we know there is a problem and I don't think sitting around here saying that Members are using the wrong factors, are any way to achieve what I'm trying to achieve and to find out what it is that we need to do. There is definitely some things going wrong in the system and I must admit that I feel a little annoyed Mike that you've brought this up in this debate here saying that I, and perhaps only me, have used this area here to score points or something. It is certainly not that. I would like to think that we can all look at these figures, whether they be totally accurate or not quite accurate, at least we can get an idea of what is happening around the island. Thank you

MR KING Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm sorry, I won't prolong this to any agonising lengths but I really have to say a few words in response to Mr Smith. I'm sorry if I annoy you George. I'm sorry if you are surprised at some of the things I've raised but let Mr Smith be in no doubt that I will not take every opportunity to protect myself, particularly where I've been misquoted. Now, I have the debate. I've read it. I'm sorry that I hadn't had it prior to last night which was the first opportunity to read it because I can assure you that I would have taken these things up in the House, but having said these things in this forum it is perfectly appropriate for me to respond in this forum and defend myself, and defend myself I will. I do not have any such ridiculous graph which says that electricity is up 3000 or something and that's what you said. And you said further that I used that graph to prove that there is nothing wrong out there. Absolute poppycock. Absolute poppycock. Let me tell you precisely

ordinarily resident, not status under the Act or anything like that, ordinarily resident, GEP's TEPs residents, in terms of those. That's the ordinarily resident population. It has remained the same for fourteen years with minor fluctuations. The permanent resident segment which comprises residents within the meaning of the Act, plus General Entry Permit holders has increased during that time

MR SMITH ... I mean we can quote numbers here but you're saying ...

MR KING I haven't had a look at the figures. I mean you can press a button on any day, any day you can press a button and the computer will tell you how many people are here on the island at that particular day. It will fluctuate from month to month depending on the travel plans of residents, depending on how many come back at Bounty, the figures are inflated at Christmas time by a certain amount, but you have to look at these things in perspective over a long period of time. I know there's been a fall on one hand in the tep numbers, I quite agree with that and I know there was a period of time about a month or year, year and a half ago when the tep's are up quite significantly on what they are now. I don't deny any of that but the only thing I stress to you is that the messages that were sent out by the quoting of numbers in the debates last month were incorrect

MRS LOZZI CUTHBERTSON Thank you Mr Speaker. A great many of the points that Mr King has made with regard to the interpretation of figures, Mr Smith has quoted from actual statistical tables and if we are going to interpret figures then I think we need to agree on the terms of reference on which we are going to use in interpretation. To say that the graph that demonstrates that about 41.7% of the people who are now called residents are now off the island, we would have to have a great deal more information to judge whether Mr King's assertion that a great many of those people are dead or not lived here for years and so on. The thing that most people realise though in the daily interaction with people on the island, with people that they know, is that there was a reasonable exodus at the beginning of this year of people who could be described as ordinarily resident on this island. That was not a huge number but it was significant in a small population like this.

Although that 41.7% of residents who are off the island at present may include a number of people who are dead or have not lived here ordinarily for a long time, it is still significantly higher than it has been for some time, that figure and it seems to be climbing. We all know that it is difficult to get work out there, we all know it is difficult to operate to function to live an ordinary life, we know that alot of people are under employed, all those things are of concern. Now we can argue about the meaning of statistics at length but the reality of everybody's experience out there is that people are leaving, that people are thinking of leaving and would like to leave if possible but are held back here because they have considerable assets and all sorts of other ties to the place. Now for us to show concern and to refer to that I think is important and to do something about it is even more important but without my statistics in front of me I certainly cannot argue much further than that at this point and I will leave it

MR CHRISTIAN Madam Deputy Speaker I move that the question be put

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER Mr Christian has moved that the question before us be put, agreed? The question before us then is that the House do now adjourn

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Thank you Honourable Members. The House stands adjourned until Wednesday the 18th October 1995 at 10 am.

--ooOoo--