

## 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 I have since withdrawn that offer and Mr Walsh will be finishing in his position at the end of the this year.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 know 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 forest area within the National Park and this is to compensate for a lack of natural nesting sites. The boobook owl program, I'm not able to comment on it at this stage but I can certainly ask some questions after the Meeting and get back to Mr Bates and if he wants to put it on notice we can do it that way.

MR BATES                    Thank you Mr Speaker. A question for Mr King, Minister for Finance. What has the Minister done to ensure that EFTPOS is not another avenue that can be used to evade FIL.

MR KING                    Absolutely nothing, Mr Speaker, and now that Mr Bates has brought it to my attention, I will be happy to look into it.

MR BATES                    Final question for Mr King. On a previous occasion I asked if the Minister was aware that some clubs and tour operators were providing liquor to the public but not paying the six percent licence fee levied against those who operate from licensed premises. Could the Minister inform the House if he intends to do anything to correct this anomaly.

MR KING                    Thank you Mr Speaker. Consequent upon Mr Bates raising this matter on previous occasions, I have sought some information from the Administration. I don't have that information by way of a response from the Administration yet, but I will follow it up in the next couple of days and keep Mr Bates informed.

MRS ANDERSON            Thank you Mr Speaker. I have a question for Mr King. This time with his responsibility for the Airport. Can the Minister please advise what the current situation is regarding of the construction of the new Airport Terminal building.

MR KING                    Thank you Mr Speaker. The current situation is that this Assembly has decided or was it the previous Assembly

Tape 3

MRS CUTHBERTSON ... 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 Taskforce to fulfil the requirements of the motion of the House. It may (1) consider any matter relevant to its inquiry, (2) coo the services of other persons and (3) request the Chief Administrative Officer to make available the services of the senior public servants. Madam Deputy Speaker, there will be those who will probably think that this is a taskforce of people who favour the introduction of GST and therefore it's findings will be bias. It is my opinion that a Taskforce of those in favour of GST will work well simply because they are in favour of it. I can assure you that it is my intention to actively pursue the negatives of GST and there are several which come to mind and if this Committee cannot find satisfactory answers to those negatives I will say so. I will also give you the answers they do provide to those negatives so that you can form your own opinion about them because it is the people of Norfolk Island who through the nine elected Members who must ultimately make the choice about GST. I must say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I am sufficiently, quietly confident that this is an exercise that needs to be done and it does have a chance in ending with a beneficial result. We talk about our economy, hard times etc., we agonize over finding solutions, we mostly achieve little and fall back on the usual unpopular methods of raising funds for public purposes. I don't think any tax will be applauded but I don't think it is constructive to say that it is wrong because a few enthusiasts are doing the research. You the elected Members guided by the public will make the decisions and not the Taskforce. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

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

MR KING Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. I am happy to support this motion and offer my thanks as a Member of the Assembly and Government to these people from the community who are willing to give us their time in this exercise. It's not going to be an easy exercise. I myself have papers which are stacked about 18 inches high, I don't know how many centimetres that is, 18 inches high. It's a very complex issue which is going to require a lot of time to get to the nub of it. I don't envy them their task at all. Obviously they are keen enough and interested enough in this particular matter to give us their time but they oughtn't to be under any illusions that it is going to be an easy task for them.

MRS SAMPSON Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I commend Mr Bates for bringing this motion to the House, although I am not au fait with much of the economics on the Island, I have some business here for fifteen years and now semi-retired but I hope that I can make some contribution to it from the point of view of, I think what Mr Bates has called, the hated FIL. I look forward to being able to offer some suggestions in it. I'll leave it at that thanks.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Samspon. Further participation Honourable Members.

MRS CUTHBERTSON Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I congratulate Mr Bates for bringing this to the House and to suggesting that this study should be undertaken.

I think it is essential that we look at alternative ways to raise our finances and of spreading the load a little more evenly throughout the community. There are certainly organisations that manage to avoid sharing some of that load and I think we should do our best to ensure that this does happen in future. If some of the taxes which do have for our economy, eventually are done away with and something a little fairer and less burdensome is introduced in its place I think it will be really good for Norfolk Island. I support the initiative, I hope it is successful and I will certainly study the results with great attention. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Further participation Honourable Members. Mr Buffett.

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 it 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 advise 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 than 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