

PRAYER

Almighty God we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing 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

There are no Condolences this morning Honourable Members

LEAVE

Leave is sought for the Chief Minister, is leave granted? Leave is granted thank you

PETITIONS

Are there any Petitions? No

NOTICES

Are there any Notices this morning? No

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MR BATES Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My first question is to Mr Ion-Robinson, Minister responsible for Primary Industry. The question is how is the proposed hemp seed industry proceeding and how many licences have been applied for and how many have been granted.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Yes there have been applications in for several licences to grow. I brought before the Members of this House the list and there seems to be no objections to them but it's still progressing. Just off the top of my head about 6 or 7 licences have been applied for.

MR BATES Question for Mr Robertson, Acting Chief Minister. Has a firm date yet been set for the Intergovernmental Meeting and has it been agreed that non-executive Members may attend even if only as observers.

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Advice has just been received that the Minister will be available to come over here on the 10th of July which is a Friday and that he would be meeting with the Government at 2.30 that afternoon and on the 11th at 9.00 am he will be meeting with all of the Assembly Members so that everybody can voice their opinions and he will be flying out later that afternoon. I was going to make that as a Statement today but you beat me to it Brian.

MR BATES Another question for Mr Robertson, Minister for Tourism. Recently we have seen a number of visitors come on short day trips or so called shopping visits. Can the Minister indicate how successful this has been for the commercial sector and is it possible to strike a separate column in the Inbound Passengers Statistics so as not to distort the figures.

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Bates. Yesterday was the third flight of these day excursions, the first 2 being last Tuesday and Wednesday. I understand that

when the original intention of those flights to take place there was an allocation of 10 seats per flight to be used in these low fare structures. On the first day there was approximately 29 I think and about 35 or something the 2nd day. Last night I think there were 48 and one of the things that has happened is that whilst the first 2 arrivals on the last Tuesday and Wednesday didn't get in until 5.00 or 5.30, last night's was a little bit more successful and there was prior advice given to the Chamber of Commerce and to the Bureau to advise that there were a number of people that wished to purchase goods and so forth whilst they were here in that short time. To that end the Chamber were to have a meeting, a normal monthly meeting. They cancelled that and remained open. I have not yet received any advice from those that remained open as to whether or not it was a success night. I understand that there's about 48 due in tonight and a similar sort of thing will take place and maybe after that we can look at assessments as far as. With regard to the 2nd part of the question with statistics, the Bureau is keeping a very close eye on the one day trips.

MR BATES I have another question for Mr Robertson, the Acting Finance Minister. Have 2 reports been commissioned regarding an Offshore Finance Centre, one on Communications and one on other facilities and if so, when does the Minister expect those Reports to be forthcoming.

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. There is a Company called Maine Marketing which has made a presentation to Norfolk Island Government, or actually to the whole of the Assembly at which they have been engaged by the Assembly to look into 2 things. Firstly is the communications structure on the Island and secondly to look at the communications being upgraded to be able to enable Offshore Finance Centre to operate should it be deemed that it would be able to be done here. Part of their brief was to look at both factors. I understand that before they could even operate either of these things, they would need to have the funding which the Government has applied to the RTIF which is the Rural Infrastructure Funding in Australia to seek an amount of money that would cover some of the costs of Maine Marketing's investigations.. To date it is proceeding. I understand that the application forms have been completed and that there was a number of things happening in Canberra and the RTIF are actually looking at the proposal and hopefully within the next few days will be able to get a firm answer on the end result. One of the things that is happening of course is that both the communications investigation and the Offshore investigation whilst they are basically linked together they are not totally dependant on one another. So if one doesn't continue then the investigations into the Offshore will continue on with Maine until such time as we come to answer on that.

MR NOBBS Just a question for Mr Robinson. At the last meeting I asked a question related to the approval by the Tender Board of vehicles purchased to the tune of some \$55,000. You advised that the tenders were advertised and that the results were both included in the Gazette. There was no Gazette available to the general public which shows these details. Can you explain why.

MR ION-ROBINSON The short answer is no but I'll have another look Ron.

MR NOBBS Would you check this out please and give us some details on. Do you know the details of the tender at all.

MR ION-ROBINSON Not off the top of my head no.

MR NOBBS Second one for Mr Robinson. What plans are in place for the old whaling station site.

MR ION-ROBINSON At this stage we're looking at including it in the Reserve that is down there. It hasn't progressed much beyond just looking at it at this stage. It hasn't even come to the Assembly for consideration so that's as far as that's at this stage.

MR NOBBS Just a supplementary. Would the Government be interested in a private organisation putting up a proposal in relation to that area.

MR ION-ROBINSON I don't see why we wouldn't be interested in looking at something. Needless to say it would be the decision of the whole Assembly as to what sub-leasing of the land is used for.

MR NOBBS Just one for Mr Brown. How are Magistrates appointed to the Courts on Norfolk Island John.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker Magistrates are appointed from recollection by the Administrator on the recommendation of the Executive Member at the time.

MR NOBBS Just a supplementary. I understand there's some 8 Magistrates appointed on the Island at the present time, is this so and do you intend appointing or recommending the appointment of additional Magistrates or an additional Magistrate.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I have this morning posted letters to 3 of the present Magistrates whose terms will expire shortly asking if they would be willing to accept re-appointment. I in fact spoke with 2 of those Magistrates yesterday and they confirmed to me at that time that they were willing to accept the appointment. I expect that the 3rd one will be willing and I intend to then recommend that those 3 Magistrates be re-appointed. At the moment there has been a recommendation that an additional person be appointed as a Magistrate. Whether that will eventuate I can't say at this stage.

MR NOBBS Just one for Mr Robinson. The paper wasp appears now to be accepted as a resident having passed through the TEP and GEP stages. Is there an ongoing program to attempt to produce an eradication strategy, and if so, what is being done.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you. With the report I tabled in the House, there's actually not a lot we can do apart from what we've been doing with the wasp Ron but we're still looking for ways, and until one is developed or comes up I'm afraid I really don't know what we can do about them.

MR NOBBS Just a couple of follows up to that. The first one. Is there any assessment being done of the negative impacts such as stings that have been reported and treated at the Hospital, impact on other insects etc. Is any of that being done.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I don't understand that there are, but it's certainly a good idea to keep some statistics so we can further investigate them.

MR NOBBS Just a supplementary. Given that stings are capable of creating problems, and I understand that there's been one case at least that was extremely serious. What's been done to warn people, particularly visitors of the dangers.

call a detailed application but there certainly are a number of other discussions occurring but at this stage if your question Ron is how much can we add to the budget for the current year, I'm not really able to give you an answer. I certainly am hopeful that we will see a revenue stream from this year. I can't give you an answer as to how long that revenue stream might last if it does commence. It certainly wouldn't be something that we should be basing our current expenditure on but it will hopefully be something that will be a significant contribution to necessary areas of capital spending.

MR NOBBS Another one for Mr Brown. At the last meeting mention was made of Mrs Bronwyn Paddick advising on immigration matters to the Norfolk Island Government. Can you explain John some details of the deal and has there been a contract signed etc.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the package of work that Miss Paddick is presently completing will cost, I expect just under \$10,000. It was certainly to be not more than \$10,000. It involves work in relation to the Immigration Act, the Immigration Policies, and to such extent as they relate to those things examination of parts of the Norfolk Island Act and of our Interpretation Act. I have received some preliminary material from Miss Paddick, which she had in fact posted to me before her last visit and it arrived after the visit. When I spoke with her by phone within the last few days, she told me that I could expect to have some reasonably final material from her within the next 10 days, the aim when she left Norfolk Island on the last occasion was to achieve that within 4 weeks and I think that we're pretty close to that time frame. So I am hopeful of having material to distribute to Members in the next 10 days and when Members are able to look through that material they will be able to get a better idea that I can give by describing it to the work that has been done.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My first question is to Mr Brown the Minister with responsibility for Health. Minister can you inform the House of the present situation regarding the Hospital debt level and in particular the debt level relates or rather owed by an offshore federal department.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the total of Hospital debtors according to the list which was delivered to me yesterday is presently \$350,000 or 350 something but less than 360. There is a fair fluctuation just after the end of each month when the bills go out to Southern Cross, to DVA, to HMA, workers comp scheme and any other administration type charges. I'm expecting that once those payments are made for the current month the balance will come down to about \$270,000 which is still a long way higher than what we would like it to be. There is a federal department which receives accounts from the Hospital and those accounts got into considerable difficulty in recent times but that department has been working with the Hospital in order to reconcile the outstanding balance and regular cheques have now commenced to flow in order to reduce that balance as the reconciliations are completed. I don't have a time frame for having the thing right up to date. I certainly am very hopeful that we are not looking at more than another 6 weeks but there has been a very significant effort made over the course, particularly the last 6-8 weeks to try to get that under control.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My next question is for the Minister for Community and Resource Management. Minister in the respect of an owner of a property who has either the whole or part of that property listed by a third party on the heritage register what is the owner of that property at the time of that application for listing informed of the actual listing or the application for the listing.

MR ION-ROBINSON To give you an accurate answer I really couldn't tell you at this stage, although I did receive a letter from the National Trust saying that she has received no nominations since forever, but I see your point and that's well worth looking into. It's obvious that if a person is having his or her property nominated for listing the least they could do is be informed of it.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I was referring to the actual Norfolk Island Heritage Register and supplementary to that Mr Deputy Speaker if the Minister is able to inform us at this time is what right of appeal does an owner have in that situation.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Actually Rob asked me a question on this before and I have the answer in this pile here somewhere if you can give me a few minutes I will sort through them all.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I have a joint question for the Minister for Community and Resource Management and Mr Robertson acting as the Chief Minister. In the recent past a Motion was passed by this House to do with a water catchment situation where assistance is given to people with a desire to put in place dams on their property. Could either/both of the Ministers Mr Deputy Speaker give us a progress situation on that Motion

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Yes there are 3 sites at the moment being looked at and considered and we're hopefully finding some prices on it.

MR ROBERTSON I'm unaware of any particular thing at this stage, I haven't been informed but other than what Ric has just said that there were some properties looked at.

MR ADAMS Supplementary to that Mr Deputy Speaker. Are the costs that Ric referred to, are they reflected in the budgetary sense.

MR ION-ROBINSON Until we get a pricing, I don't know whether, I'm fairly certain that the money was allocated in the budget, I was just having a quick look through and I can't find how much it was. I think it's something like \$10,000. There is no intention to build aswarm dams around Norfolk Island so the idea of looking at the 3 properties is to see if we can in fact afford them in that budget and hopefully we can but until we get the figures in we can't be sure.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Another question for Mr Robinson with responsibility for Community and Resource Management. Is the Minister able to at this stage inform the House on the situation regarding the rat management program in the National Park.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Yes as a matter of fact the problem with the rat program at the National Park is that they ran out of rat bait. They have something like one and a half tonnes from memory to the value of about \$45,000 of a particular type of rat bait which is made by Bayer I believe in Germany and it's somewhere on the water, which of course doesn't help our rat problem at the moment but it is on the way.

MR ADAMS Supplementary Mr Speaker. Is the Minister able to inform us of what type the rat bait is.

MR ION-ROBINSON I'm afraid it's just my bad memory that can't do that at the moment but I certainly can find out for you.

MR NOBBS Just one for Mr Robertson. Fuel supplies. We've had a problem in the last few weeks I understand. This is for fuel used for servicing the aircraft for the tourist industry. Why did this occur and what's been done to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I advised Members 2 weeks ago of the difficulty that was being experienced by the Mobil agents with regarding the arrival of the tanker with the fuel for the jet aircraft. It would appear on investigation that the previous tanker only just made it as well and that there wasn't much of a leeway of the tanker arrival and the usage that's currently being asked for by the aircraft that are flying at the moment. The matter is now being pursued by Mobil and they are looking into the possibility of, the alternatives are that instead of about once every 8 weeks that the tanker is brought in a little bit earlier or sooner so that doesn't happen. In fact it was very close. They had to get a charter to another tanker that arrived not the usual one that comes to be here to get the fuel in time, but having got the fuel here, samples of that that was loaded into the tanks then had to be sent off down to Melbourne to be analysed before approval was given that it be used in the planes. That was done on I think it was the Thursday morning and it was right down to touch and go but it is now being looked at and negotiations are underway to ensure that we can get continuity of fuel at all times.

MR NOBBS Just another one for Mr Robertson. Gary with these shopping fares that are coming over here, what did you call them.

MR ROBERTSON Excursion fares.

MR NOBBS ...Excursion fares. Are they paying landing fees.

MR ROBERTSON Yes you will notice in the adverts that the fare is advertised as a \$99 fare plus Government taxes which is \$36-60.

MR NOBBS Just one for Mr Robinson. This is winter time now. What plans are in place for reduction of combustible material and provisions of other fire control measures in the Admins Eucalypt forests before next summer.

MR ION-ROBINSON To get a precise plan on the fire hazard out there I'd have to seek the advice of the Public Service and I'll do that for you Ron.

MR NOBBS Mr Robertson. Last meeting I asked you some questions on notice in relation to the waiver of landing fees. Will you be making a Statement on that.

MR ROBERTSON I have all of those questions you asked ready to be answered at the appropriate time Mr Nobbs.

MR NOBBS Another one for Mr Robertson. Will you be making a Statement on Burnt Pine Upgrade budget and expenditure on Stage 1A, and also the current activity Stage 1B.

MR ROBERTSON Mr Deputy Speaker the budget for 1A and 1B was circulated to all Members as it came to hand last Friday. Before making comment on that particular budget there was a meeting to be called by Steering Committee at which we will totally go through that budget and look at some of the costs that have accrued since that time and where we're going. That meeting

has been scheduled for Friday morning. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend that meeting, but straight after that we will be able to advise the people as to exactly where we are, but the budget is circulated to Members basically brought us up to 2nd or 3rd of June or whatever it was, on that date.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Before I call you further Mr Nobbs, Mr Robinson have you located the answer to that earlier question.

MR ION-ROBINSON Yes thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. In answer to Chinny's question. The Heritage Act 1996 has no formal avenue of appeal against the proposed listing of an item on the Norfolk Island Heritage Register. However, before any proposed listing can take effect a number of processes must be followed and these are: the Executive Member must invite public submissions on the proposal by notice in the Gazette. The Executive member is empowered to take any other reasonable measure to ascertain public opinion on the proposal. No earlier than 28 days after the Gazette notice, the Executive Member may lay before the House the draft proposal. A report on the public consultation process and any submissions received. The Assembly may approve their proposal, amend it and then approve or reject. In urgent cases the Executive member may bring a proposal before the Assembly without undertaking the public notification stage but must explain the reasons for such action. Once an item is listed or is proposed for listing any action in relation to that item which would have a substantial effect on the significance of the item to the heritage of Norfolk Island requires that an application be made under the Planning Act for approval. The activity is defined as a Category 2 application which requires a decision by the Executive Member on advice from the Planning Board after it has considered public comments on the application. The decision of the Executive Member is appealable to the Administrative Review Tribunal. The Heritage Act while providing no formal appeal process does require full public consultation other than in special circumstances, and that all listings be approved by the Assembly. The practical effects of the listing are subject to normal appeal rights.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable members time has expired for Questions Without Notice. There are no Questions On Notice this morning.

MR ADAMS Mr Deputy Speaker I move that Questions Without Notice be extended for a further 10 minutes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is that proposal endorsed.

AYE

DEPUTY SPEAKER Fine. We have a further additional 10 minutes.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Sorry to about the issue but I wonder if I could get some clarification from Mr Robinson on part of the answer that he's just given to the House. Could the Minister explain to the House which part of the Executive members decision is appealable through to the ART.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.. It appears that if there is an activity to be done on the proposed listed site.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Could the Minister explain to the House if in the case of a listing by a third party is the applicant named.

MR ION-ROBINSON Without digging up the Act and having a look at it I can't tell you but I will certainly find out.

MR ADAMS A last and further supplementary to that Mr Deputy Speaker. Could the Minister explain to the House why a listing on somebody's property is not that situation not appealable by the owner to the ART.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you. I'll put that on my list of questions.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Further Questions Without Notice.

MR GARDNER Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My question is for the Acting Chief Minister and Acting Minister with responsibility for the Public Service. Minister what policy is currently in place in regard to the use out of hours of Administration plant by employees of the Public Service and who is responsible for re-fuelling and damages to plant associated with use out of hours.

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. A good question. Unfortunately I haven't got that at my fingertips at the moment having briefly been in this position but however I will seek the answers and get it in for next meeting.

MR NOBBS Just another one. You should be able to answer this one Gary although it's supposed to be for George. Mr Robertson we were briefed on a system based on the GPS which will reduce considerably flights which arrive at Norfolk Island but are unable to land due to weather conditions. Is this an acceptable system and owing to the impact of these aborted flights why don't we immediately install the system.

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I can answer that. The briefing that you had the other day was I guess a preliminary discussions on what will be available in the year 2000 to 2001. We have to do a certain amount of upgrading within our own system at this stage and the first thing that would be going in would be the Pappi system which will start to give a better lighting system for the aircraft as they approach. As far as the GNS system or using the GPS, they have done a number of experiments already on the Melbourne Airport and they have done it in Canberra and they have been looking at progressing it further at Armidale and I understand that as of the 16th and 17th of next month there will be a seminar and discussions taking place in Canberra which both myself and Pinky have been invited to attend and actually address the meeting on the problems associated with Norfolk Island airport. This invitation just came in yesterday and the result of all that is that we intend to progress this but it cannot be done until about the year 2001 is the actual timing for the equipment to be available and ready in Norfolk Island and we intend to try and be at that time one of the first. No there is no millennium bug.

MR NOBBS Just a supplementary. So it's not correct that we've got no bread because it was all used on the airport terminal.

MR ROBERTSON No that's not correct at all.

MR NOBBS Just one for Mr Brown. I ask a question in relation to the Hospital Enterprise and the carriage of staff on official business to and from the island. Does the Hospital have a contract with specific airlines and if so what are the details of such contracts.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker there are no contracts of which I am aware.

MR NOBBS Is it correct that instructions have been given to the Hospital staff that they must utilise one particular airline.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I think if you have a look at the airlines that patients have flown out on you will see that there is no instruction that people use only one airline.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Further Questions Without Notice. Then we have concluded Questions Without Notice this morning Honourable Members. Presentation of papers. Are there any Papers to present this morning.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

MR ROBERTSON We do have some answers to Questions on Notice

DEPUTY SPEAKER There are no Questions on Notice Mr Robertson. Can I just remind Members. There is a procedure for Questions on Notice. They need to be written, lodged with the Clerk and they appear on the Notice Paper. When they have gone through that process they become Question on Notice

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. You may be aware that Mr Nobbs answered a number of questions at the last meeting of which one was to do with the FOC's that have been given permission to and I table a list from June to October 1997.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Further Papers to present

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I do have some Statements to make regarding some questions. One was made by Mr Bates when he sought the question ...

DEPUTY SPEAKER If you want to make Statements Mr Robertson, that's fine, but we are at Presentation of Papers. If there are any Papers to present we will complete that process and then I will give you the call to commence Statements

MR ROBERTSON I am sorry Mr Deputy Speaker, I've jumped the gun here

DEPUTY SPEAKER Did I interpret correctly that maybe there are some Regulations to table this morning?

MR ROBERTSON I think I'm right this time Mr Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning and in accordance with section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1979, I table the Airport Amendment Regulations 1998

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Anything further

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker in accordance with section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1979, I table the Road Traffic General Amendment Regulations 1998

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you. Any further Papers

MR ROBERTSON

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I table the Administration Financial Indicators for the month of May and I also table the Report from the Project Management Arrow, regarding the Norfolk Island Airport Redevelopment Progress Report No 4. I also have the SMET Report which is the Geo Technical Assessment from the Cascade Cliff Safety Report and I also table the inbound passenger statistics for May 1998 and I think that's about it thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you. Any further Papers. Thank you.

STATEMENTS

We move to Statements and if I give you the call now Mr Robertson to attend to those matters thank you

MR ROBERTSON

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I sound like Mr Ron Nobbs at Question time. Mr Deputy Speaker acting on Mr George Smith's behalf, a question was asked by Mr Bates on the Deputy Speaker. Last November you undertook to seek an authoritative response on how the Commonwealth views Norfolk Island in the overall scheme of things should Australia become a Republic. Could you please bring the Members up to date on what you have done and the responses you have had if any? What I have here is a fairly extensive document and I would suggest that I copy Members with this particular document, if they are in agreement with that. Unfortunately the Chief Minister hasn't signed this off at this stage I notice, so I think I might just leave that for the moment and then come back to it. There are questions without notice from Mr Nobbs and Mr Deputy Speaker, at the last meeting of this House Mr Nobbs asked a Question Without Notice on the procedures available for holding enquiries into the management of Norfolk Island's affairs such as landing fees or Burnt Pine or any others that Members may wish to raise. The short answer to that is that there is no legislation making specific provision for the holding of an inquiry into the management of the affairs of the Administration or of its instrumentalities or business undertakings, however, the Government is held fully accountable for the operation and management of those bodies through the following mechanisms. The examination and approval of appropriation bills by this House; annual audits of public accounts; and tabling of audit reports in the Assembly in accordance with the Norfolk Island Act 1979. The right of Members to ask questions at Assembly Meetings of Executive Members relating to matters falling within the Executive Members portfolios and in the case of some statutory boards and authorities, a statutory obligation to prepare annual reports details the operations and performance in the preceding twelve months. Regular tabling in the House of financial statements and indicators. Honourable Members I would venture to suggest, that taking into account the above mechanisms, Norfolk Island Governments are among the most accountable in the world. Thank you Mr Speaker

There is another Question Without Notice here on the Administration tendering process. Mr Deputy Speaker I would like to make a Statement in the House regarding the recent enquiries from Mr Nobbs about the Administration tendering process. The policy at one time was not to Gazette the results of the successful tender in the Government Gazette but at a Meeting of Members on the 12 November 1997 it was agreed that the results of the Administration tenders be published in the Government Gazette. These details were to include the tender number, the successful tender and the tender price of the accepted tender. All Administration registered tenders are processed as per policy and guideline circulars No 512, they are given a tender number and then advertised in the Norfolk Island Government Gazette showing particulars of the tender and the closing date. The tender

the enactment of a proposed law entitled "An Act to authorise expenditure from the Public Account for the year ending on 30 June 1999". The message is dated the fourth June 1998 and signed A J Messner, Administrator

NOTICES

APPROPRIATION BILL 1998

We move to Notices and Mr Robertson, you have the call with Notice No 1, the Appropriation Bill 1998

MR ROBERTSON Mr Deputy Speaker I present the budget for the revenue fund for the period 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. The budget as presented for this period shows a possible small surplus of some \$45,000, however whilst at this point a small surplus is shown, this may be adjusted when we review the budget in six months time or sooner. This budget has been prepared by the Hon George Smith, Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning and unfortunately any specific comments that he may wish to make in respect of the budget is not possible at the present because of the necessity for him to be with his mother who is ill. Mr Deputy Speaker in presenting this budget I am advised that the policy of the responsible Minister was to achieve a balanced budget for presentation at this time. The processes used in the preparation of this budget was to have the various sections of the administration prepare the bids, then to have the Chief Administrative Officer and Branch Managers peruse and prioritise the needs and programs within their respective areas. Following this process the separate areas then discussed the contents with the responsible ministers. Mr Deputy Speaker if I might mention the specific areas that make up the budget and highlight areas of interest. On the revenue side of the budget there is estimated revenue of \$9,798,000 for the forthcoming year. The responsible minister has indicated that there are no proposed tax/charges increases at this time, however this may need to be reviewed. Income flowing into the revenue fund comes from the following areas: revenue from taxes, revenue from charges and revenue from earnings. The estimated level of income from these areas are as follows.

Revenue from taxes \$6,214,000 which is an estimated increase of some \$272,000 on last year. This estimated increase is expected to come from a slight increase in

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| Customs duty of: | \$100,000 |
| - a marginal increase in land registration fees | \$20,000 |
| - introduction of personalised number plates | \$125,000 |
| - increase in departure fees | <u>\$30,000</u> |
| Total | \$272,000 |

Revenue from charges are estimated to return an amount of \$698,000 which is a decrease of some \$148,400. Revenue from earnings - \$2,886,600 and it is expected that no significant changes will take place in this sector for the forthcoming year that will significantly impact on revenue. Mr Deputy Speaker in turning to the expenditure side of the budget it is my understanding that the Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning has contained proposals for expenditure within the range of funds available based on expected revenue. This obviously means that critical examination of the salaries and wages, recurrent, and capital expenditure was done to ensure that essential services are maintained and any new proposals for capital expenditure are able to be accommodated given that there are significant government capital programs already in progress. Mr Deputy Speaker in addressing the key areas of expenditure I make the following comments: Salaries and wages Salaries and wages for all areas contained in the revenue fund totals some \$4,705,000 which is projected to be \$344,850 more than the revised salaries and wages for the present year. Increases have occurred in the following areas

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|---|-----------------------|
| General | 32,400 |
| Health/quarantine | 7,400 |
| Education | 210,600 |
| Police | 10,800 |
| Library | 300 |
| Roads | 25,800 |
| Forestry | 25,900 |
| Tanalith plant | 6,300 |
| Works | 28,100 |
| Fire service | <u>16,400</u> |
| | 364,000 |
| Less minor adjustment in Other areas | <u>19,150</u> |
| | <u>344,350</u> |

Mr Deputy Speaker in turning now to recurrent expenditure. There is a projected decrease in the cost of recurrent expenditure and this has been brought about because certain costs such as Rock royalty, concept design studies, (eg retirement village proposal), refund of school fees, computer consultancy would not be, reoccurring during this year. Mr Deputy Speaker whilst the recurrent expenditure budget as presented shows a projected decrease, certain matters will need to be addressed at the budget review time that are now shown as 2nd priority items. These are things like;

- * Staff training costs
- * Subsidy for the healthcare fund
- * Grant to the tourist bureau and
- * The tourism promotion fund

Turning now to capital expenditure. In the year ending June 1998 some \$1,048,600 was set aside for capital works and purchases. The amount set aside for the forthcoming year in this budget is \$743,900. Mr Deputy Speaker there is an amount of \$730,500 which has been placed in 2nd priority and is in accordance with what I understand to be the Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning's policy in respect of capital expenditure. A prioritisation of capital works by members will take place within the scope of the available funds and therefore items will change between 1st and 2nd priority. Mr Deputy Speaker quite clearly this budget will need review within the next six months. It will need review to facilitate decisions not yet finalised by this government. Mr Deputy Speaker I refer to the strategic review report and the draft strategic plan which are still out for comments. Mr Deputy Speaker this budget allows for the government to continue to function at an acceptable level in the provision of and delivery of services subject as I previously said to some vital decisions that will need to be made within the next 6 months. Mr Deputy Speaker I foreshadow that once a clear view is taken on matters raised in the strategic review report and in respect of priorities for the strategic plan consideration of a supplementary budget will need to be discussed. This budget leaves the accumulated revenue fund reserves of \$m1.1 in tact. Mr Deputy Speaker I urge that Members accept this budget and lay the document on the table.

MR ADAMS

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I think Gary in this case Mr Deputy Speaker has the unenviable job of attempting to present a sow's ear as a silk purse. Mr Deputy Speaker my comments in relation to the budget will be fairly focussed at this stage and I won't be addressing the wider context of the budget until perhaps the next meeting, but essentially, it appears to me that this budget is linked to last years budget in regard to spending and I understand that that was linked to the previous years spending as well, so in effect, what we are looking at Mr Deputy Speaker is a 1998 budget at 1996 spending costs. Probably in fact it is less because of such

items that were not around in 1996, are around now and yet the spending is essentially the same, and one of those things Mr Deputy Speaker as Members may or may not remember, is politician's pay rise to the tune of \$50-60,000. Mr Robertson has just explained to us that the Public Service periodised the bid items. I frankly think in the environment where the elected members of the community are the ones who are accountable to the public, that is an unsatisfactory situation. It should be prioritized by Members of the Assembly. Nevertheless, looking at the budget, we see a figure in a second priority column of \$1,229,500 against a first priority figure of \$9,753,600. Mr Deputy Speaker I think what that is clearly telling us is the fact that this budget is underservicing the Island's needs and I think the Minister in his explanatory speech indicated exactly that. We are looking at a budget that at the author's own admission, needs a serious overhaul within six months. It's a disappointing situation. Mr Deputy Speaker it is understandable that the Finance Minister's only apparent goal in compiling this budget is to simply cut everything until the number at the bottom is similar to last years, which is a reflection itself of the year before. But the reality is that in compiling this budget in such a manner, with so large a figure in second priority against so many things that need attention and will no doubt get costlier because of procrastination, is simply ignored. I believe again Mr Deputy Speaker, that it is an unsatisfactory situation. It seems to me that another important issue emerges from the pages of this budget and that issue Mr Deputy Speaker is the situation where other income streams over and above what is presently available to us, have not been given due attention and by and large have themselves been totally ignored. Norfolk Island's need for fresh income is eternal. That need is definitely something that requires budgetary recognition. For instance to me the concept of an OFC on Norfolk Island, the Offshore Finance Centre issue, is a matter that definitely holds potential for Norfolk Island, and naturally enough it will need a tremendous amount of focus work to get to a position deciding whether it is achievable or not for Norfolk Island. Once that point is reached, to do the doings if it is determined to be achievable, to do the doings that are necessary and required to put that facility into place and of course, that is going to cost, but the cost has to be viewed in the context of an investment in the Island's future. Unfortunately Mr Deputy Speaker, there does not appear to be any money specifically placed in this budget against that project. Another area that I believe has potential and indeed a need in the interests of the Island health, coupled with an increase retention of money on the Island is the rural sector. We all know of the continuous difficulties faced by the community and visitors alike in respect of the shortage of fresh rurally produced foodstuffs. Mr Deputy Speaker, in the recent past, two motions were accepted and agreed by this House that would serve to improve the ability of the Norfolk Island rural sector to increase and improve its production. These two motions were the meat production review and a quarantine glasshouse project. Mr Deputy Speaker we look to the budget and the meat production motion appears to have been totally ignored, the quarantine glasshouse facility has been cut by the Finance Minister back to \$30,000 and I would suggest that it would be at odds where the House's agreed figure contained in the motion of some months ago of \$50,000. Mr Deputy Speaker against this background I intend at the right moment to make certain amendments to this Appropriation Bill. (1) in respect of the Offshore Finance Centre, a line be drawn through the bottom line on page 16 of the budget where it contains a line that says, Rawson Hall improvements, whatever that mean, and I say whatever that means Mr Deputy Speaker, because that is something that has never been satisfactorily explained or discussed with the Membership of this House and that \$60,000 allocated there in second priority be moved to the Offshore Finance Centre matter as a first priority figure. The second amendment that I intend to move at the appropriate moment Mr Deputy Speaker, is that \$20,000 be put against the meat production review in first priority, again, in accord with the House's expressed position on this matter. Similarly, along the same lines and part three of that package of amendments is that the first priority sum for the quarantine glasshouse be raised to the motions original agreed figure of \$50,000. I have a serious concern Mr Deputy Speaker in respect of the sum also allocated to the Strategic Planning matter. We have a situation where my understanding is because it has never been formally explained to us nor tabled, that the cost of that

Review is in the area of in excess of \$90,000. We see a sum in this budget of \$30,000 to undertake a range of things against that. Mr Deputy Speaker I view that as unsatisfactory and it was something that I intended to move an amendment to but the Minister in his explanatory speech has taken that into account and I understand there will be some forthcoming attention given to that area. Mr Deputy Speaker it is probably unusual, I would imagine for somebody to be moving formal amendments to a budget that has actually gone as far as formal tabling in the House. Essentially Mr Deputy Speaker my reasons for doing it, I think it at least two informal budgetary sittings that the Membership has had, the Finance Minister's opening line was "we are not here to make decisions". Mr Deputy Speaker, if that is the case, then the only forum left open to me is this one and I shall be seeking your guidance and advise on various points of that and when the appropriate moments are, to put in place those amendments, thank you

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker thank you. As has been said there is nothing really new in this budget. It's much the same as last years, but it should be remembered that in dealing with this budget it doesn't include budget information related to the GBE's, like Telecom, the Bond, Electricity, Hospital, Government Tourist Bureau etc. A breakdown, just as a comparison with last years budget, which we did at that time, and also this years, we see there are three main components in there, salaries and wages and there's total recurrent and capital expenditure. Salaries and wages last year was 49.3% of the total budget. This year it's 48.2%. If you break total recurrent expenditure down you find that recurrent expenditure which is the support for the administrative staff and things like that, last year was 33.6% of the budget, whereas this year is a fraction under 30%. External subsidies which are for the hospital and other places was 7.5% in 1997/8, that's the year that we are talking about, this current year that we are looking at, next year, it's just a fraction over 15% of the total budget so total recurrent expenditure of those two, that is, recurrent and also external subsidies, rises from 41.1 to 44.1%. Capital expenditure on the other hand dropped from 9.6% to 7.7%. Just last year, combining the salaries and the recurrent, the 1997/98 budget, those two items took 90.4% of the total budget. In this one now that we are looking at it is 92.3% so in reality there's not alot to play with. However, just getting back to a couple of interesting facts on salaries and wages, there are two significant items in that. Education in the salaries vote accounts for 30.2% and on the administrative side it is 34.3% of the total so those two totalled together gives you two thirds of the estimates of salaries and wages. Mr Deputy Speaker we have before us the Howard Report and no decisions made as yet in relation to that report yet we have in this budget \$35,000 for new staffing. That equates to the equivalent of at least one new position. I find this sort of thing with all the rhetoric of planning, quite difficult to understand. Mr Deputy Speaker individual cost centres within the budget, a budget which totals 9.7 million in expenditure includes, administrative costs are \$2.2m or 22% of the budget; education 1.6 or 17% of the budget; tourism, we are spending \$770,000, 7.9% of the budget; health subsidy to the Hospital 495,000. The Healthcare subsidy, \$100,000 total 595,000 is 6.1% of the budget. It is interesting to note that the Healthcare subsidy is held at 100,000 although the original bid was 300,000. We are warned that additional may be required at the budget review come 1 January. Just turning to the welfare vote Mr Deputy Speaker. Benefits amount to \$380,000 and medical expenses \$260,000 for a total of \$652,000 or 6.7% of the total budget. That does not include the cost of the salaries and wages for those administrative staff in this area of course. Courts and Lands total \$238,000 or 2.4% of the budget. It is interesting Mr Deputy Speaker to note that it includes a figure of \$7,000 for court reporting. Hopefully, this may mean court reports back in the Gazette. There is some real expansion in the Budget though Mr Deputy Speaker. The latest Government Department has an increase of 67%. That's the Sports Association. In reality we are tied to a considerable degree by fixed commitments. However, I believe there are within those commitments the ability to make savings without the need to reduce services. Of particular concern is the use of computers. We seem to have a significant annual commitment to provision and maintenance of computers. There was a figure of \$30,000 in

the 97/98 budget for a consultancy to buy some computers. I don't know whether this consultancy has been completed or not as yet, as we've seen no report on it. My fear is that the figure this year of \$40,000 for computers in this budget will also be expended without this advise. Computers have a potential to provide greater efficiency. John Howard in his report made comment on the information technology systems being unable to provide budgeting and financial management information. Surely critical to any efficient organisation. I will say again that the budget ignores specific areas which are crying out for assistance. Recommendations were requested and have been provided but not progressed in the area of agriculture and they go beyond those two items that Mr Adams spoke of a few minutes ago. Mr Deputy Speaker while we scratch around with hemp seed and attempt to progress exports, the main benefits to the Island are ignored, that is to provide as much as possible of our needs and to provide much needed import replacement. This final point Mr Deputy Speaker, on the revenue side, there is no plan to regularly re-assess the fees and charges. The perfect example is the Healthcare Scheme which we saw recently have a significant increase, all in one hit. A gradual increase I believe would have been more acceptable and would not have had such a significant impact on the retail price index as has occurred I believe with the Healthcare increase recently. In conclusion Mr Deputy Speaker I hope this is the last budget driven by something other than planning.

MR BATES

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. We have before us the Appropriation Bill of 1998 and I intend to support that. Not to do so would be irresponsible and I have already mentioned that to a previous Member of a previous Assembly that without supply nothing happens. But as a budget it is nothing more than an embarrassment. I'm embarrassed to sit here in this House and talk about this as a budget. If you look in the second priority items we have \$1.2m of second priority items not addressed. We have a plan which has been circulated to the public. Not addressed. Or lip service paid to. And in the plan itself, just picking one small item out of it. Building and Maintenance infrastructure. The plan that we have circulated to the public says, the following projects will commence immediately and so on. It says, ..."Creation of the infrastructure development fund. Time Frame. The arrangements for the infrastructure programme will be completed by mid June of 1998." Well it's not mid June. It's a few days away. A programme of works that will commence in 1998/99 will be announced in June as an addendum to this plan. It goes on to say that establishment of processes for market testing support funds. The processes and procedures for market testing will be completed by June 1998 with a view to commencing in 1998/99. Now that's only one tiny little thing that I happened to note from glancing through. This business of coming out with a balanced budget, or in this case a small surplus, saying that that is what the community expects. How clever we are. What great things we've done. And again, fourteen months later we end up with a small surplus. Again. What great politicians we are. What great people we are in this community. We have balanced our budget and we've got a small surplus. I'm sorry Mr Deputy Speaker but this does nothing for the economy. It does nothing for anything other than just... well. We ignore recent reports, claiming that we are running down our assets. The Commonwealth Grants Report did that. We don't talk about what we are going to do with any surplus that we may have created through our strategy in balancing the budget and turning up with more surpluses. These things need to be addressed and it is quite clear that what I have realised for some years now is that if we are to continue to fund internal self government on our present revenue base, we are going to go down the tube. I think Mr Nobbs alluded to the fact that our capital expenditure this year is only 7.7% of our total budget and that that's down a couple of percent from what we actually achieved this financial year. It's very obvious, and I think Mr Adams talks about under resourcing the needs of the Island and it is quite obvious when you come to it, that what I said some years ago that if we continue on our present revenue base on internal self government we will go down the tube and this only supports those words. This business of sending the budget or the needs out to the public service and getting them to prioritize the issues, coming

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. This Bill authorises the Administration of Norfolk Island to borrow \$3,000,000 for the purposes of the stabilisation of the Cascade Cliff. The Public Moneys Act 1979 requires administration borrowings to be credited to the loan fund established under that Act. The Bill establishes a Head of the Loan Fund of the public account, the Cascade Cliff Loan Fund into which the loan will be paid and sets out the purposes of that Head. Under the Public Moneys Act 1979 moneys standing to a Head of the Loan Fund can only be expended for the purposes defined for that Head. The other controls over management of Public Money established by the Public Moneys Act 1979 also apply to the loan fund, for example, public reporting requirements under section 8A. The Bill requires that all royalties from rock sales must be paid into the fund but that no other money, for example, from consolidated revenue, can be paid into the fund for the repayment of the loan. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR ION ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I objected to the loan in the first place. I object to borrowing \$3,000,000 when we had an offer to do the job for nothing. I will just voice my opinion now and let you know that I will be voting against it

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Further debate. No further debate. Then I will put the question to you Honourable Members that the Bill be agreed to in principle

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| MR ION ROBINSON | NO |
| MR BROWN | ABSTAIN |

Do you want the House called Honourable Members? No. I have noted your vote. The motion is carried and therefore the Bill is agreed to in principle. Is it the wish of the House to dispense with the detail stage. We so dispense with the detail stage and therefore I seek a final motion

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I so move

DEPUTY SPEAKER The motion before us now is that the Bill be agreed to and I put that question to you

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| MR ION ROBINSON | NO |
| MR BROWN | ABSTAIN |

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker would you note that I've abstained and that I have also abstained from debate on the question

DEPUTY SPEAKER That will be so noted in Hansard thank you. The result of that Honourable Members is that the Bill is agreed to

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NORFOLK ISLAND STRATEGIC PLAN

We are resuming debate on the Norfolk Island Strategic Plan. You will recall earlier Honourable Members that we agreed that this matter would come on for further consideration and it is so called on today

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. The Strategic Plan was tabled at the last meeting and it lay on the table for the public to give input as to some thoughts that may or may not be pursued today. The carriage of this of course was the Chief Minister who unfortunately is unable to be in attendance today and whilst I have a number of issues which I feel may or may not be of importance at a later date, I don't have anything to say at this stage and I leave it open to the Members if they wish to pursue the matter further

MR ION ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. The second dot point quoted in the vision quoted in the front of the Strategic Plan says, and I quote "protecting and preserving the Island's unique heritage, traditions and culture", yet when we turn to page six under the heading "Culture and Recreation" it only mentions support for and maintenance for sporting facilities. I have got no particular beef about that except that perhaps we could add the words "invest in a Cultural Adviser or Officer to protect and preserve the Island's unique heritage, traditions and culture". Failing that, the plan itself does not continue with the thrust of the second dot point in the vision so I would like to move that the words or similar words to "invest in a Cultural Adviser or Officer to protect and preserve the Island's unique heritage, traditions and culture" be included in that in page six under "Culture and Recreation"

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Is that a formal motion?

MR ION ROBINSON I will wait for debate on it first if you like and then put it in as a formal motion

MR NOBBS Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I'm not debating Ric's motion, I'm just doing the whole thing if that's alright. Mr Howard's Strategic Plan has been circulated and some may see it as an all encompassing answer. I see it as Mr Howard's Strategic Plan. But just taking a step back a bit. Much is made of Strategic Planning and the question may be asked what really is a Strategic Plan? It sounds pretty impressive and it sounds very important. My mate, Michael Hickey as a Football Coach would have had a Strategic Plan as would most housewives. Sure, these plans would not have cost us heaps of dollars, they would not have been neatly typed or bound, they would not have been put into everybody's letterbox, but they would be in some form and put in perspective the future direction proposed to be taken. So I think Mr Acting Deputy Speaker we should get the magic out of Strategic Planning. Just taking that further, Michael as a Football Coach would have a plan which would map out his rough expectations over a long period. He would concentrate mainly on the period from Grand Final to Grand Final. That's about twelve months. He would assess the players, their strengths and weaknesses, and maybe suggest some recruiting. He would set his expected achievements, I think they call them goals nowadays, for the team and individuals. He would map out his training programme, number of sessions, contents of the sessions, how he could improve the players strengths and weaknesses. He would assess support staff and their requirements and finally he would develop basic tactics. I could go on but I hope this example has made it clear. Strategic planning is not mystic. It's pretty simple stuff. Sure it can be made very mystic and there are plans which are pretty airy fairy. Mr Howard in his plan identifies basic commitments which are required to keep things going on the Island, be they health, education and the like. There are also some new initiatives, such as the integrated infrastructure, maintenance and development programmes which refers to electricity, airports, roads, building, telecom etc. Mr Howard believes that there is opportunity for strategic innovation. Sounds pretty important. What

he really means is that it will create greater efficiency. Infrastructure is an ongoing problem on the Island as has already been mentioned in the previous debate. Of course really, tactics such as robbing Peter to pay Paul, running things into the ground etc. We have ongoing problems relating to keeping some facilities up to scratch, just take a look at the roads, providing for replacement equipment, just look at electricity. These problems were not created by employees they were created by the decision makers. We must get order into the provision of infrastructure. If I could just take you back to the Football Coach. His plan is very dependent on the players he has available. If the Club has heaps of money, then he may buy top talent but usually he has to develop what he has available. Mr Acting Deputy Speaker this is precisely the Norfolk situation. The Admin will largely carry any Strategic Plan developed. The Assembly, like the coach, can plan as much as they like but if they ain't got the cattle, they're in trouble. It's exactly the same as the Norfolk Plan. We have a limited budget dollarwise and there are heaps of fixed commitments. We must remember Admin is required to deliver, so it's important to take the Howard Review seriously, sort out the problems with those who deliver, that's our own players. This must be point one in the Strategic Plan. The question Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, is whether we proceed with planning or not. My view is that we must proceed down this road. The Howard plan is a good basis. It needs some fine tuning. I'm yet to be convinced of the costs attributed by Howard. In some segments he goes to Rolls Royce models. Such things as the review of education, health and services, and income security and also training in land and environment are examples. I believe they can be done for a lot less. Some issues are missed by Howard. No mention of the Immigration Review or the implementation of the Report on Agriculture which has some components in the 1998/99 budget. There is no mention of the Cascade Cliff and budgetary implications if say, land acquisition is considered. I support proceeding down the road outlined in the plan but I feel it requires fine tuning. It is up to this Assembly to do just that. There's an old saying here which is "Tek a daeh f' maek a staat", in other words it takes a day to make a start. I believe Mr Acting Deputy Speaker that the sun has gone down on the first day and tomorrow we should get stuck into it

MR BUFFETT

Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. We really do need a Strategic Plan. There is no doubt whatsoever about that and Mr Nobbs has said very accurately that there is no magic in a Strategic Plan. It's not mystical, and the best Strategic Plan is one that maps out in a practical sense the way ahead for us and I would hope that that is what we would eventually achieve with a Strategic Plan for Norfolk Island. It is essential for us to know the way ahead with some clarity for ourselves as Members who sit around this table and represent the community, but in reaching that stage we need to have a plan that does have the community endorsement behind it because I see a Strategic Plan as something that will be a brief to not only this Assembly but successive Legislative Assembly's because one of the difficulties that we do have is that one Assembly comes in with one set of ideas and another Assembly will come in with another set of ideas and there is to some considerable extent a lack of continuity, but a Strategic Plan in this case, set forward for the next five years, will give that continuity that has been lacking in earlier times. But in addition to that of course, we have made an electoral commitment, some at least. Certainly the Chief Minister has made an electoral commitment and I have been involved in that, to produce Strategic Plan so that it might better serve the needs of the Norfolk Island community. In getting about it, it hasn't been done in House and a consultant, John Howard, was engaged, and that in itself is alright because this is quite a specialist task, but that doesn't mean that we should not be fully involved in all of the processes. The cost of this report is somewhere between \$70,000 and \$100,000. If the Chief Minister were here, and indeed his deputy may be able to respond to this, as to what the real figure is, but I think we should know what that real figure is but my estimates as far as I am able to understand is that it is between \$70,000 and \$100,000. I've got to say at this stage Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, that I don't think we have got value for our money in that process. It has resulted in two documents and they are called the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Review and I

see a number of difficulties and deficiencies, mainly deficiencies, and I'll talk about a couple of those in a moment, but notwithstanding those major difficulties, we've really still got to get on and produce a plan. That is, the product of our collective thinking. In other words, this document that is presently in front of us needs to be improved, we need to complete our input into it. I've got to say that I know that some of us have earlier endeavoured to have views that probably are some of the views that I'm going to express in a moment, not necessarily lengthily, but mention and we rather thought that they may be included in this particular plan but its final product to us has not reflected all of those things and it has given me some concern. It is one of the reasons probably I say that I don't think we have got value for all of the money that we have spent because we have expressed views, we have asked them to be incorporated in a document but they are not necessarily there at the end of the day. But let me now just turn to a couple of instances of difficulties or deficiencies that I see in respect of this Report. Deficiencies and difficulties that I think we can resolve. I think they can be remedied so that we can get along the track and make this a useable document but it's got some further work to be done upon it at this moment. First of all I mention that there are two documents and the one we are looking at this moment is called a Strategic Plan and I think that is a good title for it. The other is called a Strategic Review. It may be better to call the other a Review in lieu of trying to repeat the word Strategic on a couple of occasions because I rather think that we are going to have confusion between the two and maybe the strategic words should stick to the first one which is the Strategic Plan and the second might have an adjustment of title which emphasises that it is a Review of where we are going and it doesn't cause that confusion. It's not a huge document. It's got fourteen pages and that's not too long but you wouldn't want it much longer than that for an encompassing Strategic Plan but you have to get the word right within it. There is a page very early in the piece which talks about our vision for the future, and it very well sets out things that we need to set out, but I have some difficulty with some of the words that are used because they have dwelt in a couple of instances about negatives and if we are talking about a vision for our future we should be expressing it in a positive form and I think that that would be a better way to express our vision. There is a lack of continuity in both terminology and continuity of subject matter through the Report. Let me explain. There is a visionary part of the Report which comes first. Then there is a part which talks about the businesses of the Norfolk Island Administration and when the term Norfolk Island Administration is used in this context, it is in the all embracing sense, it means in the totality of things. The Assembly here, the Public Service and the wider context as meant by the Norfolk Island Act in that wider sphere but it sets out a number of points which endeavours to identify the business that the Norfolk Island Administration is in and there are seven points that are made in that particular one. The next general part of this plan develops some of the detail about those businesses that are so mentioned and then the next part selects the top twelve projects that might arise out of that. Now when I talk about a difficulty in terminology, the lack of continuity of subject matter, I mean this, that in those three parts some subjects don't have a continuity and even when the subject matter does have continuity there is different terminology to describe it and if you are talking about a vision you want it to have clarity and I think we therefore need to do it better than that has been done. There is of course, some items that are missing altogether. For example, the vision part, the very first couple of pages, talks about protecting and preserving the Island's unique heritage, traditions and culture. It mentions other things as well. I'm selecting one to illustrate the point that I am on about, but having been mentioned in the vision which is one of the things that we particularly want to do, we particularly want to preserve, we want to be on about this, we want to be recognised in that way, when you come to the plan itself, what businesses are in it, it doesn't get a mention. When you come to developing the theme on a particular subject it doesn't get a mention except for one small area where it talks about heritage areas of land and therefore when you come to the top twelve at the end of the report of projects that might be on about your visionary things, well of course, if it hasn't been mentioned in those other things, it doesn't get a mention in that too and it hasn't in this particular instance, and I

just want to identify some of the deficiencies that I see in the presentation of this report that we need to remedy. It doesn't mean that we need to throw the Report out. It means that we get on about it and we remedy it and we make sure that the things that are in it are the things that we want in it. Another significant lack I feel is the matter of self government. Well now self government is in the visionary statement and it is in one of the businesses of the Norfolk Island Administration so so far so good, but when you come to develop the theme in the body of the Report - and bear this in mind, that self government is one of the most pressing, one of the most important matters on our plate over the next five years which is the period of this projected strategic plan - but it doesn't get a mention in the development of the points that we should take into account when we are going about it, when all of the others, or many of the others have been so developed, and I think that that is a difficulty, although interestingly enough, when you come to the top twelve, it does get a mention so it really doesn't have full continuity but it has periodic mention and I think we need to do a bit better than that. It is not my plan Mr Deputy Speaker to go on and on about the sort of things that I have mentioned except to illustrate what I am on about with those examples and to say that they are the sort of things that I will now need to register with the Chief Minister. I've already registered it with the likes of Howard and it didn't get there and as I have already said to you, I think therefore, that we haven't really got our monies worth because I know that others equally have said things and they have not been incorporated into the plan also, so we are now reaching the stage where those things must be registered with the Chief Minister in a further effort to ensure that they are recorded in a Strategic Plan for Norfolk Island, but then beyond that, may I come back to one of the earlier points that I made and that is to say that once we have it in an agreed form amongst ourselves, I think we have to say to the community, this is it, and we want you to endorse it. Not just comment on it. We want you to endorse it. Because not only will it be a blueprint for us, in this 8th Assembly, but it will be a blueprint for our successors for the balance of the five year period of the plan

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. With regard to the Strategic Plan I think basically, overall, it has merit but the implementation of the plan clearly hinges on the review of the Public Service Act and the Public Service Reform. The time frames mentioned in there for the implementation are totally unrealistic. An example is the infrastructure managed by the 30th June, especially as the Plan and Review were only tabled here on the 20th May. Now it is fairly obvious that the implementation of the Plan and Strategic Review will not progress if the budget deliberations do not have regard to the funding required for the implementation and the conducting of such reviews. Some things the plan doesn't address. It doesn't address employment; occupation; health and safety issues; review of the legal system; the ability to access family law court on Norfolk Island and as part of the Tourist Retail Strategy we need to look at consumer protection. Future Negotiation Policies, well they've all had an impact on the plan particularly with regard to employment; health and possibly education. There are a number of things which the land touches on. Public Service and the Legislative Assembly. They're rights. Now some of this could be addressed in the Public Service Act. Perhaps the vacancy could be filled by the contract employee for the term of that Assembly. Fiscal Management. Whilst the proposed changes to financial management, I suggest that they are good, the budget constraints do not take in account the resources required and costs associated with administering, implementing changes or taking over functions to achieve self government. Limited staff resources in some areas of the Administration and under utilisation of some staff resources prevent a pro active administration. Administration of issues seems to be reactive and government administration being done on the run. The actual community service which are excellent in the review, and that is the review of the education and the health and social welfare, and these definitely need to be reviewed, however, with all of these reviews and everything else that goes into them, the budget of \$50,000 is what we have in there for a specific education review. Do we have \$50,000 into the health services review in the budget? The land environment and heritage, it would appear that if the responsibility for crown lands are passed

completely to the Norfolk Island Government, the Norfolk Island Government will need to demonstrate that it has adopted and has a commitment to the appropriate land management practices. Now introduction to assent of legislation without adopting codes of practice makes legislation difficult to administer, that is the Employment Act, the planning and building codes. Once again, \$100,000 over a three year period for recruiting staff with skills and experience in environmental services from Australia, would appear insufficient to cover all of those costs. The budget doesn't allow funds for this purpose. Building and maintaining infrastructure. Unrealistic time frames are given in the report but at least there is an infrastructure programme there. The plan places the highest priority infrastructure projects as the construction of port facilities. There have been over the past many many reports on harbours, ports, jetties but it is something which is a very costly figure to put in and it is something which would need to be addressed at a later date. The economic and industry development. Is the budget sufficient to include provisions of skills training and development of the hospitality retailing industry. The establishment of a joint government industry training programme. It's got great merit but will it be the user pays system. Poor service and staffing difficulties can be due to management rather than lack of skills. Perhaps there needs to be an adopting of the codes of practices under the Employment Act and the Offshore Finance Centre Report, which was obviously commissioned, we no doubt proposed to continue with the Offshore Finance but once again, cost implications. Business Government Enterprises. There are a lot of changes which need to be done within that to ensure that the cash flow for the Island is maintained so overall, there are lots of things that need to be addressed but first and foremost is that whilst we will more than likely adopt the Strategic Plan, it clearly hinges on, as I said earlier on, the review of the Public Service Act and the Public Service Reform in total, thank you

MR GARDNER Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. Just a few quick comments on the plan itself from a personal point of view I regard the Strategic Plan that we have in front of us as only a draft Strategic Plan. I've heard David's concerns and they've been noted. For myself the top twelve list, the priority list, and I consider those to only be suggestions and options that are open to us. not a final document that says those are the twelve options that we are going to do and we are going to start with number one and we are just going to work through them and cross them off. It's not going to work. There is no way they can work. Some of those priorities on that list will go but many of them are intertwined. There will be additions to the priority list. For example, projects such as the Airport Terminal; Burnt Pie Upgrade; Cascade Cliff. They have begun and should form part of that priority list until they are completed. We must determine where those other projects fit into the plan, see if there are any spin offs from the projects. Again for example, the Cascade Cliff Project and the marrying of that project with upgrading the pier and harbour facilities. I think at this point in time Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, that's about as much as I wish to say but on the whole, the way I personally view this Strategic Plan, is as a draft only. It is something that we have to mould to suit where we want to go. Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Further contributions? We have a couple of Members absent. I'm not sure if Mr Robinson foreshadowed some amendments but I remind the House that we don't have a motion on this. It is only discussion at this stage and I gather Mr Buffett has suggestions for amendments and a few regard it as a draft only. Mr Robinson do you wish to...

MR ION ROBINSON No thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. We've got a lot of alterations to do to it so I presume it will be held over for discussion at the next meeting so I'll hold off til then

MR BUFFETT Well I move that we adjourn this discussion Mr Acting Deputy Speaker so that we can absorb those things and endeavour to put them into some cohesive form and do that when the Chief Minister is obviously able to assist that process as well. I move that we adjourn it on that basis

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER The question is that debate be adjourned and resumption of debate be made an order of the day for a subsequent day of Sitting
QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it

NORFOLK ISLAND STRATEGIC REVIEW REPORT

We move on to the Norfolk Island Strategic Review Report. Any debate

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. This is of a similar nature to the Strategic Plan and continuation of debate. Mr Deputy Speaker once again the Strategic Review, there are many aspects of it which have merit but it is fairly clear that it's been hastily compiled and the time frame for implementation of certain aspects are pretty unrealistic. One of the difficulties that we have at this stage is that the Assembly as a group have not really sat down and have been led through the structure of a putting a number of things which have been discussed today in place. And other issues of course within those discussions which haven't taken place, there haven't been considerations in the budgeting to ensure whatever we do is able to roll and be funded correctly. Mr Acting Deputy Speaker I don't have much further to say at this stage on the Strategic Review and I guess other Members would like something to do and I will leave the floor to them thank you

MR ION ROBINSON Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I think it's a case of "ditto"

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Mr Robertson do you wish to move an adjournment on this

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker I so move. I move that the debate be adjourned and made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of Sitting

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER The question is that debate be adjourned and resumption of debate be made an order of the day for a subsequent day of Sitting
QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it

PROGRESSION OF PROCESSES OF SELF GOVERNMENT

Mr Nobbs, you have the call

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, the motion has been publicised in the paper and I've read it out before, but I'll quickly run through the points and reasons behind each point again. The motion commences by saying that this Assembly requests the Minister for Territories to progress the process of self government by introducing amendments to the Norfolk Island Act which allow (1) The Norfolk Island Government the opportunity to participate in the

selection and other similar issues related to appointment of the Administrator and Deputy/Acting Administrator. Just on that point I will reiterate that the Administrator's role is as Head of the Norfolk Island Government and the Norfolk Island Government must have a say in this persons appointment. I must say that it is no reflection on the present or his immediate past placement but since self government the role has been confused and being also Canberra's representative. I also believe on the side that "Governor" would be a more preferable title than "Administrator" and like the situation in the States, he should be appointed by her Majesty on the advice of the Norfolk Island Government. (2) The Act to specify only those powers which are reserved to the Commonwealth Government namely foreign affairs and defence. The reason is that the Act should be fairly simple and this takes all the hocus pocus out of it. It removes all the Schedules etc. We should not be required to have a law degree to understand our own Act and also it was recommended by the Grants Commission. (3) Acceptance by the Norfolk Island Government is mandatory to provisions of any Commonwealth Act extending to Norfolk Island. This was I believe an unwritten law in the past and it appears that when self government was achieved and subsequently, the number of Acts which have been just pushed onto us without consultation blew out. Such Acts as the Native Title Act have no relevance to Norfolk Island. 4) The Governor-General be denied the ability to either disallow an Act to which the Administrator has given his assent or introduce a proposed law into the Legislative Assembly. This provision cuts across what one would expect of a self governing territory. Certainly there may be some need for clarification of responsibilities in relation to Australia's proposed retained powers but that's it. (5) Qualification for election to the Legislative Assembly are confined solely as provisions of the Norfolk Island Electoral Act. The reasons for this is that there is no good reason why provisions relating to electoral matters are in two Acts. The Norfolk Island Act as well as our own Electoral Act. (6) The Administrator on advice of the Legislative Assembly appoint Judges of the Supreme Court. The reasons for this is that we are either self governing or not. What God given right has Canberra to select the heads of our judiciary. (7) The responsibility to make grants or other dispositions of Crown land be a function of the Norfolk Island Government. The reason for this is that land management should be divested in full to Norfolk Island. Self government without controlling the land we live on is really a complete sham. The provision will be thus, not a retained power. Just going quickly through a couple of these points Mr Deputy Speaker, I reiterate this point. The motion is aimed at progressing self government. I repeat, it has nothing to do with independence. I've had one comment that it's all about UDI. To me that is Unilateral Declaration of Independence. I thought it was the best joke I had heard all year. it is all to do with removing anomalies within the Act. The Norfolk Island Act is all that we have as a constitution for this Island. After 142 years, that is all we have. I believe we must urgently fix it. I do believe however, that the community must progress developing its own constitution. An appropriate constitution will include far more than in our current constitution, the Norfolk Island Act. There will be a need for significant discussions on this, thus it must come later. At this point we must look to amend the Norfolk Island Act, to redress immediate anomalies in the Act. Owing to our political position, any amendment will be with the support of Australia, and I say Australia, not just Canberra. I really believe that the Australian Government should have not problems with these proposals. I ask you. Will it cost the Australian Government? Will these changes cost Australia dollars in expenditure? Will it cost Australia dollars in income? Will Australia lose a strategic base and a stable aircraft carrier that we are classified as? Will Australia appear in a bad light on the world stage? The answer to these questions are fairly blunt. No. No. No and No. If there is opposition by Australia you may ask what it's all about. Ask me something that's transparent. I look forward to the debate, thank you

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Nobbs. Any further debate

MR ION ROBINSON

Just one of support thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. Just to make some brief mention. We have got to get on the front foot to be serious again about advancing self government in Norfolk Island and these points that are raised by Mr Nobbs are points that are essential to our progress in this overall scheme. I support the motion most certainly. Obviously I've said on many occasions and been involved in the progression of self government for Norfolk Island and its community and I think that this will be a further step but can I just relate this to something else that we've just talked about a little earlier, and that is the Strategic Plan. I mentioned to you that there are some deficiencies in the plan. The development of this sort of detail is not in the plan and that's some of the detail that in fact should be in this plan so that we develop the way we want to get along and have the community's endorsement in so doing and so I see that this motion is something that can be incorporated in the way we handle some of our strategic arrangements over the next five years. I support this motion

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. Is there further debate? Mr Buffett I wonder if you could take the Chair

MR BATES Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I don't think this is a statement of independence. Mr Nobbs has said it isn't and on the basis that it is a move to further the internal self government process then I support the motion in that context but the question that I always come up with is one that I don't think any of us know the answer to and that question is, where does internal self government finish and where does independence start? I believe that some of the things in the motion are certainly not achievable short of independence and I don't think that is Mr Nobbs's idea. But I certainly support the advancement of internal self government because that is what I believe the people of Norfolk Island have agreed to right back in 1979. I think while we retain our relationship with Australia in whatever form, Australia is always going to have an over-riding ability in certain areas. That may come under part 2 of this motion but I think it goes alot further then just foreign affairs and defence. I think that's all I need to say. I support it in the context of the progression of internal self government. I certainly don't support it in any context that may be written into this that has the independence connotations to it, thank you

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I agree with Brian on this. But the interesting thing is that Members will recall that in answer to Brian's question earlier in the day when he asked me as to whether we had had advice from Mr Somlyay as to his arrival, and I said it would be the 10th and the 11th and on the 11th he would be meeting with all of the Assembly Members. No doubt it would be a perfect opportunity for Mr Nobbs to speak to this document, to the people direct and get their reaction. I fully endorse this document. It will be interesting to see how you get on on the 11th.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker this is an endeavour to make some more progress towards self government and in that context I support it

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Is there any further debate? No. The question Honourable Members is that this motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 1998

We resume on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle and Mr Robertson you have the call to resume

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Members will be aware that this particular Bill is purely to make amendments to the Telecommunications Amendment Act 1997 to enable things that were in that Act to be carried out in a manner which is more simple as far as Norfolk Island's jurisdiction is concerned. There is nothing sinister about it. There is nothing difficult with its intentions. Once again, it's like the Airport Amendment Act which we agreed to last meeting. It is purely a case of getting some of the difficulties and anomalies clarified to ensure that if there is a necessity to enforce the Act, at least we have the ability to do it in a simple way

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Is there any further debate? No. I put the question that the bill be agreed to in principle Honourable Members
QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it.

We now move to the detail stage? Is it the wish of the House to dispense with the detail stage. Aye. I therefore seek a motion that the Bill be agreed to Mr Robertson

MR ROBERTSON Mr Deputy Speaker I move that the Bill be agreed to

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is there any final debate? The question is that the Bill be agreed to and I will put that question to you Honourable Members
QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it

ROADS AMENDMENT BILL 1998

We resume on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle and Mr Robinson you have the call to resume

MR ION ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, you will recall that this Bill amends the Road Act 1996 to provide that the owner of land adjoining a public road is responsible for preventing vegetation on the land from encroaching on the road to give the Administration the power to enter the land, clear vegetation and recover the cost incurred from the landowner if the landowner fails to comply with those obligations and to amend an incorrect reference to the Official Survey Act 1979. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Is there any further debate? No further debate. Then I put the question that the bill be agreed to in principle Honourable Members
QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you.

We now move to the detail stage? Is it the wish of the House to dispense with the detail stage. Aye. We so dispense with the detail stage and I therefore seek a final motion that the Bill be agreed to Mr Robinson

MR ION ROBINSON

Mr Deputy Speaker I so move

DEPUTY SPEAKER
Members

Thank you and I put that final question to you Honourable

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it

Order of the day No 6 I will not call on Mr Robinson and Order of the Day No 7 I will not call on Mr Brown. We move on to Order of the Day No 8

LOTTERIES AND FUND RAISING AMENDMENT BILL 1997

We resume on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle and Mr Brown you have the call to resume

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker thank you. The Bill was tabled at our last meeting. It is part of the new Gaming package of legislation. There is nothing that I wish to add to what I said on the earlier occasion Mr Deputy Speaker but there are some amendments that I will seek to move at the appropriate time

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you. Is there any debate on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle. No. Then I will put that question to you Honourable Members

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it.

We now move to the detail stage?

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker thank you. I move that the detail stage amendments dated 9 June 1998 previously circulated be taken as read and agreed to as a whole. Mr Deputy Speaker the amendments are one and a little bit pages long. There are explanations in the material which has been circulated and I don't seek to add anything to that

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Brown. Any debate? No debate. Then Honourable Members I will put the amendments to you then the clauses if they are amended then the remainder of the Bill we will vote upon. Firstly the amendments that Mr Brown has proposed. Those who agree the amendments

AGREED

The amendments are agreed Honourable Members. I ask you whether the clauses as amended are agreed. Are you agreed?

AGREED

The clauses as amended are agreed. May I now turn to the remainder of the Bill. Is the remainder of the Bill agreed

AGREED

The remainder of the Bill is agreed thank you. I now seek a motion that the Bill as amended be agreed to

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I so move

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Is there any final debate?

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker could I just thank you Legislative Counsel for his endeavours in getting this Bill to the stage where it can be finalised today. It is necessary to finalise this Bill in order to actually commence the operation of the Gaming Act and the Legislative Counsel's efforts in relation to this whole package of legislation and the efforts of those within the Public Service who have been assisting, have been splendid

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Brown. If there is no final debate Honourable Members I will put the final question, that is the Bill as amended, be agreed to

QUESTION PUT

AGREED

The ayes have it. The Bill as amended is agreed to thank you

Mr Adams, did you want to make a proposal to the House?

MR ADAMS

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I do. I gather Mr Deputy Speaker I need to seek leave to move my motion that I alluded to before in respect of the budget

DEPUTY SPEAKER

And that is the paper that you have circulated to Members whilst we have been conducting other business? Is leave granted? Leave is granted

MOTION BY LEAVE - APPROPRIATION BILL 1998 - DIRECTION TO EXECUTIVE MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY

MR ADAMS

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I move that the Executive Member with responsibility for the Appropriation Bill at the direction of this House incorporate the following amendments into the Appropriation Bill before the finalisation of this Bill. The amendments are as follows (1) That the bottom line item at the bottom of page 16 of the Budget document be deleted, and the sum of \$60,000 presently recorded there be allocated to a new line item in the appropriate area to be named Offshore Finance Centre Project (OFC). (2). That in accord with the House's expressed sentiments contained in the Meat Production Review motion that a figure of \$20,000 be placed against a line item, named as above. (3) .That the first priority sum for the Quarantine Glasshouse be raised to the relevant motions original and agreed figure of \$50,000. Mr Deputy Speaker I had alluded before to my dissatisfaction with the budget in some particular areas and one of those main areas is the lack of focus, as the way I see it, the lack of focus on new revenue streams and indeed increasing some of the ability of the present situation of returning a better income in particular, in the rural area to produce more freshly produced rural foodstuffs. Mr Deputy Speaker two of these motions have been in fact formally moved, addressed and agreed to prior. It is somewhat disappointing that I now have to come back to the budget table and virtually move a motion to cover another motion that was duly ignored at the budget make up time. In respect of amendment (1), the line item that presently appears at the bottom of page 16 is known as the Rawson Hall improvement programme. I'm frankly at a loss to understand where that came from Mr Deputy Speaker and how it got in there. It certainly was not something that was placed on the table in front of Members and agreed to and I know very little or nothing about that. I see it in a situation where our expenditure and our income is somewhat tight and we need to prioritise and that's effectively what I've done here. I've prioritised something that is very important to us from the point of view of being probably the single matter lying around somewhere in our tool box at the minute that has the greatest potential for returning an excellent and ongoing return to the treasury of Norfolk Island as it were. What I've done effectively is I think, re-prioritised. As I said before, I'm

unhappy with a document that comes to us who are the accountable Members of the community and the thing has in fact been prioritised by somebody else. That's \$60,000. It is presently in an area that is overseen by the Works Minister Mr Gary Robertson and it so remains in his area because he is the relevant Minister with carriage of the Offshore Finance Centre Project. Amendments (2) and (3) are simply a clarification and really giving focus to motions that the House have agreed to in the recent past, thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR GARDNER Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Just some clarification on the ability of a Member to move an increase in the budget. I may be mistaken but that's what it appears to be without having notification from the Office of the Administrator in that regard

DEPUTY SPEAKER Yes. Thank you. That point has been examined. The Bill that is before us is not sought to be increased by this particular motion in a direct sense. It is asking the appropriate Executive Member who does have the authority to take that appropriate action. Further debate

MR NOBBS Thank you. I'm a little concerned that there is \$100,000 involved in this expenditure. I'm a little worried about that because whilst we may have some money in reserves, and we've got \$45,000 I think that's an estimate of revenue over expenditure, one of the problems I have is that we can spend that whole \$1,000,000 and do the whole of the second options and that will be that and we'll be heroes and all the people who have given up things before will look like mugs. As far as I'm concerned I'm in favour of balancing the books and that's all about it and I think anybody who has brought up a family knows that you have to balance the books somewhere along the line. You can only borrow so much and I wouldn't like to see Norfolk in its present arrangements where it is so dependent on one particular industry and it gets its wobbles every now and again that we go ahead with that and put ourselves in any sort of debt and we should have a reserve. And I've asked before that we should establish what the reserve should be. I put it to you it should be equal to the budget this year. Others have said it should be \$500,000, others say it should be none. We've got to come up with something and that should be part of the planning process that we come up with these sort of things and put them into the Strategic Plan because it's not just a two or five year thing, it will go on indefinitely because you upgrade it every year, your Strategic Plan. But getting back to the point, I can't support the \$60,000 off the top of the head into the Offshore Finance Centre. I don't agree with the Rawson Hall Project but I didn't think it was going ahead because it was in level 2. On the second point there I'm a meat producer of some description so I wouldn't like to comment on that except to say that there is \$11,000 in there for control of army worm and I think that if we can get the army worm under control it will be a major factor in meat production. The quarantine screenhouse, glasshouse. The original motion was \$50,000 and I understand it was brought back to \$30,000 on the basis of some design that was available which was acceptable to Quarantine. I presume it was AQIS but I'm not too sure but I understand that it was an acceptable figure of \$30,000. Now one of the problems that I have with this whole glasshouse operation is this, that you bring stuff in here. You put it in this glasshouse. Who's going to inspect it. You have qualified Quarantine Inspectors to do this sort of thing. I would have thought that we should be doing it in Australia under AQIS and bringing the stuff straight in here and then it should be free. That would have been my go, but anyhow that was the story. So Mr Deputy Speaker, I have real concerns in the extra \$100,000 being put up to be expended and I would like to see this motion going on an informal basis to the Minister and seeing whether he can make some savings in the current budget

MR BATES Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, and thank you Mr Nobbs. After all these years I've at least got you to agree part way with some of the things I've been saying

and that is the role of the Revenue Fund. I see I still haven't convinced you that balanced budgets are not always necessarily the way to go but certainly we should be saying what we think and agreeing what we think the revenue fund balance should be and I've said it so many times I won't say it again, but earlier in the debate you mentioned something about borrowing. This is not a suggestion to borrow. It's a suggestion that I see if it were adopted in total would increase the expenditure by some \$70,000 and if my memory serves me right that is pretty close to a balanced budget because there is a small surplus. I can't think exactly what it is but it is around about \$70,000 in the Bill before the House but it goes back to what we said earlier, that the supply bill, and we call it that because it is not a budget, certainly under resources the needs of this community. I commend Mr Adams. He's been quite consistent on these issues, the meat production and the quarantine glasshouse. He's been consistent on issues which effect primary industry ever since he was elected to this House and I can understand this frustration when he has a motion before the House which is agreed to by the House but come budget time he has to cover his tracks and re-invent the wheel and do something about getting motions that have been agreed to in the past, implemented, so on that basis I intend to give him my support in this instance, thank you

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I guess I'll be speaking with two hats here. On item 2, I'm not quite sure exactly why it wasn't put into the budget in the first place so I can't actually answer on that but on item 3 I understand that the Minister for Finance at the time when questioned as to why it was reduced to \$30,000 it was purely a case that whilst the first figure was one that had been established because that was a suggested amount by AQIS or by somebody who makes these types of glasshouses, on investigation and on some quotes that had been received after that motion had been agreed, that they had found that \$30,000 would basically build the requirement that was necessary for Norfolk so he then decided to reduce that and took \$20,000 off because he thought it was a realistic figure. Judging from the amount of plans and specifications that had been received. As far as the first one is concerned it doesn't actually say that you want that lifted out of second priority and put into first priority. Can I just ask a question here of the mover of the motion. Was that the intent?

MR ADAMS The intention is to provide seed money to assist a thing. The Offshore Finance Centre project as it proceeds because the thing is simply to my understanding, is completely unfunded at the moment which means, down the track if we need to have finance put in that area we are looking at virements or indeed, maybe new appropriation bills

MR ROBERTSON Okay. Well as far as that one is concerned, with the Offshore Finance progression at this stage, the Maine Marketing who are currently doing investigation into that, are doing it under a self funding project. Now it's not until we actually get a little bit further down the track that we then become pretty aware of what those costs would be and I would suggest to you that some of those costs may be in the vicinity of \$300 - 400,000 or \$600,000 depending on what happens. In actual fact, the amount of moneys that we have in place and that is through a self funding area which will go on for probably the next two to six months, will get us to the point where we will need to make a fair dinkum look at just exactly how much we do need to put into this if we have to and at that time I would then suggest that maybe we have to look at a new bill coming into the House, so I don't really feel that the \$60,000 at this time would be totally beneficial. I would probably suggest that it could be left in the second priority list because then I guess if we need it we do know that there is an amount registered there and it can come in, but I don't really feel that the \$60,000 would be anywhere near enough at this stage and I would like to see it stay in the second line, but sure. Take over from the Rawson Hall allocation. I don't mind that at all

MR ADAMS Or accepting Gary's suggestion John and I think it's worthwhile, and the present words recorded are not at odds with that

MR NOBBS Alright. If you put it in second priority and just we are changing those two, that's far better. Now the other one is there's \$5,000 left over in the budget so there you go. It's got to go somewhere. Why don't we put that into the Retirement Village

MR ION ROBINSON No, put it in the cultural vote

DEPUTY SPEAKER No further debate. I'll put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

FIXING OF THE NEXT SITTING DAY

MR BATES Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I move that the House at it's rising adjourn until Wednesday 24th June 1998 at 10am.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Bates. That is in two weeks time Honourable Members and it is specifically designed so that the budgetary arrangements can be concluded before the commencement of the next financial year. Is there any debate upon that. Then I put that question to you Honourable Members that the House at it's rising adjourn until Wednesday 10th June 1998 at 10am.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it

ADJOURNMENT

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you.. Is there any adjournment debate?

MR ION ROBINSON Happy 60th birthday Ron

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members if there is no adjournment debate I put the question that the House do now adjourn

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Therefore this House stands adjourned until Wednesday 24th June 1998 10am.

